INTERIORITY AND EXTERIORITY
IN THE WORKPLACE

An exploratory journey into the realm of personal, workplace and societal values as they impact on each other

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
The University of Western Sydney
April 2004

To the best of my knowledge this thesis is original research and has not been submitted for credit towards any other degree of award at any other university or place of learning. Every effort has been made to ensure that no material previously published or written by another person, except to which due acknowledgement or reference is made in the text, is included in this thesis.
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Brian, Ian, Peter, Bob, John and St Jude who made this thesis possible. Thanks also to the many women in my life especially Katie, Tanya, Frances, Helen, Holly, Margaret, Chris and Debbie. Their friendship energised the journey.

My thanks and continued admiration goes to all those who shared their stories with me. They are the unsung heroes of today’s modern workplaces as they seek to remain true to themselves while navigating the murky waters of organisational politics. I am also grateful to those organisational leaders who were prepared to take a chance and allow me to work with their people without the usual security net of assured outcomes.

Lastly, thanks to the many wise scholars whose footsteps I followed and especially to Carol Gilligan, Margaret Wheatley, Luce Irigaray, Brian Hall, Chris Argyris and Charles Handy. Their work stands as a beacon in the darkness of current business press and inspired me to break the silence on workplace politics.
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PREFACE

This thesis explores the relationship between personal and organisational values in business workplaces and in a wider societal context. It does so from the perspective of the researcher as a meaning-seeking individual wanting to make sense of the contradictory situations and tensions in which I find myself. I also seek to understand the values tensions I regularly witness in my professional role as a change agent between organisational members' personal values and expectations and the values that get prioritised in their workplaces.

For the purpose of this thesis:
PERSONAL VALUES refer to the values and underlying needs that people bring into their places of work and seek to have met there. These values typically originate in employees internal worlds and are used in a conscious or subconscious way to filter their experiences of their external workplace context. Such values typically include a desire to enjoy work, to be respected, to maintain self-esteem, to learn and have contributions recognised;

ORGANISATIONAL VALUES refer to those values that are both espoused by organisations as being important to them, and, those values in use that can be deduced from the behaviours that get recognised and rewarded on a daily basis. Organisational espoused values and values in use are typically different. Such differences however are rarely openly acknowledged.

SOCIETAL VALUES are those values seen to be important to the wider society in which business organisations are embedded. These values are evolving and increasingly becoming divergent from the values being promoted within organisations. This gap between societal and organisational values is recognised by external stakeholders (members of civil society) and is having adverse impacts on those organisational members who share society’s values and experience their organisation’s values to be out of step with these.
As an employee I have spent years struggling to understand and liberate myself from the narrow set of social and organisational values that I was socialised into. These I had experienced as devaluing, coralling, and alienating me from the person I wanted to become. I also suspected my experience was fairly typical of many other employees’ struggle to manage the tensions and conflicts between their personal and workplace values.

Personal experiences led me to hypothesise that employees both consciously and unconsciously bring their personal values to work and this impacts on how they experience their organisational context and their levels of satisfaction and overall performance. I approach this research therefore from a hypothesis that organisational members can experience two sets of values; a personal set of values that has been shaped and honed by personal life contexts and then the values that they find operating in their places of work that may or may not align with these.

This area of research is important because currently there is little academic research at the micro level of individual experience of values incongruity in the workplace. My work and consulting experience suggest that this is because organisations jealously guard their privacy and effectively prohibit “outsiders”, including academics, from gaining access to their inner sanctums. This inhibits the development of a deeper understanding of how the peculiar day-to-day dynamics of the workplace context shape employees experiences. I suspect that the absence of such rich information has stymied progress towards more consultative and inclusive management perspectives so that today, some 80 years after the initial time and motion studies, modern organisations continue to promote a mechanistic model of management. In so doing they lag considerably behind the progressive theories being espoused in the business press, such as “values based management” philosophies. Based on my research findings, this thesis puts forward a new perspective on how more employee-centered management practices might be introduced.

My literature review found that it was mainly in the business management press, Shapiro (1995), Handy (1994), DeGeus (1997), Covey (1989), and in the work of ex-
employees-turned-management consultants that rich insights echoing my own experiences of values dissonance could be found. These writers spoke to the day-to-day contradictory signals that people experience at work. Similar to myself, they drew upon their own personal experiences of the internal politics of much of organisational life to highlight how this makes for a capricious workplace context where the rules are never made explicit and the organisational context itself disempowers its members.

The growing business trend towards “values-based management” (Hall 1980; Peters & Waterman 1982; Collins & Porras 1994; Colins & Chippendale 1991) makes it critically important for those who wish to create learning environments in which people can flourish to better understand the dialectical relationship between work and personal values and how this shapes day-to-day experience. Such research is important at both organisational and personal levels as it directly influences our dual roles as employees and members of a wider society.

At the organisational level, it matters because of the increasingly important role business organisations play in society. For many, organisations are seen as the largest and most powerful institution in modern life (Korten 1995; Jackall 1988). Business organisations, unlike governments, are not accountable to the public through the ballot box and yet their power transcends that of many governments and their influence extends beyond national boundaries. Many have also traded their economic power for political power (Korten 1995). Most people will spend most of their time and life interacting with and working within organisations, and yet, according to ongoing worldwide research (RSA UK 1995; World Commission on Environmental Development 1990), they are amongst the least trusted institutions in society.

Apart from legal requirements, business organisations have no recognised universal code or standard for how their members should behave. Business leaders instead are able to run their organisations with great autonomy, choosing their own values and ways of going about their business and setting the goals and outcomes they seek. Organisational moralities are thus contextual and specific and in most cases remain largely unarticulated. Employees who do not agree with the values and success
formulae either get stymied within the organisation or vote with their feet and leave. Their ability to challenge the status quo from the inside is limited. At the same time we are witnessing the continual rise in the external influence of business leaders as they chair parliamentary enquiries; gain ownership of major media outlets and cross-over into full time academic and political life. Their ability to influence and impact people well beyond their organisational domains appears to be spreading unchecked and is little understood.

At the individual level it is important to better understand how organisations impact on employees, possibly shaping the way they behave inside the organisation as well as possibly affecting the way they behave externally if they internalise the organisation’s values and use these to guide their behaviour in their other spheres of life.

For those, like myself, who are concerned with improving employee welfare, it is important that we hone a better understanding of the relationship between personal and work values so we can help employees to make more informed decisions about their attitudes and actions and ultimately who they want to be, at work and at home. At the macro level, we can act as public advocates to shed light on the possible social impacts of the organisational value set and raise public awareness of the social accountabilities that might accompany organisational power.

From a business point of view, we have also now entered the “employer of choice” era (Handy 1998), which necessitates that employers now compete for declining numbers of available recruits. To differentiate themselves and be able to attract the most talented employees, employers will increasingly need to develop a richer understanding of all the needs being sought from modern workplaces.

At the personal level, we have also entered an era characterised by increased personal stress with growing numbers of people claiming have little control over their life (Hall, 1986). This has, in turn, resulted in a growing search for inner meaning and stability around the critical personal values individuals need to have met to keep their stress levels down. To date the disconnection between personal and workplace values has manifested itself in the explosion of self-help and “new age”
programs people turn to reconnect with the values they have lost touch with or from which they feel disconnected. For those seeking the seemingly elusive goal of a better balance between work and personal life responsibilities (work/life balance) the area of personal values and values satisfaction has become an important area of research. Developing a richer picture of this dynamic assists both businesses and individuals to co-create new workplaces that can be mutually beneficial to employers and employees and, through their families, to wider societies. This will enable richer and more mutually beneficial relationships to emerge that are sympathetic to the needs of the time in which we live.

I suspect that the denial of the importance of personal values and the search by employees to have their values met at work creates workplaces that are experienced by many as alienating. Organisations fail to nurture thriving communities because they do not nurture a set of shared values that can transcend individual identity and bind people together with a sense of belonging and shared purpose. Instead of healthy organisational systems sustained by mutually rewarding workplace relationships, what has emerged are workplaces where vast numbers of employees inhabit the same space but remain socially and psychologically isolated from each other. I believe that if employees can be invited to help co-design workplaces, where they can get more of their personal values met, they will be empowered to make more informed choices about the types of lifestyle - as well as workplaces - that will best meet their needs. I believe that this will enable greater numbers of people to live more authentic lives and in turn decrease individual and societal stress levels.

The deep yearning for a sense of belonging, both inside the organisation and in the wider society, as traced by contemporary researchers Houston (1997), Handy (1998), Quindlen (1993), finds its origin in a social need for inclusion and a sense of identity around shared values about what is truly important in life. Sadly, my personal experience suggests that most large organisations unconsciously and unintentionally disempower their members by failing to recognise employee needs to make meaning around the nexus between personal and workplace values.

I anticipate that a better insight into the ongoing dynamic between personal and workplace values will assist future workplace managers to better respond to the new
values and expectations being asked of them by a more demanding and cynical wider society. This richer understanding of the social context of organisations will help managers to finally let go of the old Taylorist (1947) models of management and embrace new mental models that recognise the quantum nature of organisational life and the importance of the inter relationships between our unseen world of needs, emotions and values and the physical world of resources.

The research approach was characterised by two parallel journeys, representing the inner and outer ecology of the researcher, and stands as testimony to the latent power of recognising the duality of work life and our inner search for meaning. By journeying through my own experience to the experiences of others, I seek to deepen my understanding of the complexity of inter-relating in specific workplace contexts. I draw upon my personal experience as a source of data throughout the thesis chapters so that I can stay close to both my research topic and the people with whom I am researching as we both interpret and respond to ongoing workplace events. Since I am exploring the inner world of personal meaning-making, experiences and responses in workplaces, my own experience is presented as one of the stories and as evidence of the dynamic I seek to explore. This personal story is woven as a central thread in this thesis and I have used italics to represent my own voice and to distinguish it from the voices of other employees whose direct quotes are enclosed in angle brackets (<<<>) for ease of reading.

Often, stories of change focus on the outcome and not the process or the “how” and oversimplify the nature and challenges of the journey of change. I hope that, by recording a rich personal journey of experiences in the realm of meaning making, in both the places where I work and in the public arena where I write and speak, I have made visible the processes involved in seeking to realign one’s working life with one’s stated values. This journey had highlighted how critical values integrity is to a sense of well-being and potential for growth; how we are and remain what we think we are and how we become what we imagine ourselves to be. Through this thesis and my public advocacy work I hope to extend to others the same potential opportunities for learning and transformation. As human beings we need to be encouraged to explore our inner space and rediscover a culture of work that caters to
the core needs of the individual human person as well as the collective needs of a society.

I wanted to do more, however, than simply explore the relationship between personal and organisational values in workplaces. My professional role as a management consultant, engaged in workplace change within some of the Australia’s key commercial organisations, presents me with an opportunity to make a difference. I also seek, therefore, to be true to my personal values and, through my interventions, bring about situation improvements for the disempowered groups with whom I work. As a researcher and change agent, I perceive my goal as helping to bring forth more nurturing and inclusive social contexts where employees can enjoy opportunities to self-develop and learn at work. I therefore adopted a research approach in harmony with that goal and approached my task from a distinctly feminist perspective. This perspective emphasises the value of the personal, the relational, the interior life of individuals, while respecting the unconscious as well as the conscious life force within modern organisations. The ideal outcome is regarded as being the emergence of a set of workplace values that will strive to achieve a mutually beneficial way of relating.

My research approach is designed to make the implicit explicit, to surface the latent potential for growth and transformation that lies dormant within organisational communities that suppress their internal worlds. I rely heavily on my own personal experiences to present a phenomenological account of values dynamics as experienced by me as both researcher and employee. Both feminism and phenomenological research are methodologies that are embedded in a new paradigm of academic research that seeks to honour and recognise the subjective nature of our lived experiences and our latent ability to redesign our world. The research is, therefore, approached from a feminist perspective, albeit within a fairly traditional research paradigm as dictated by the research context. This is a perspective that emphasises the interpretative and seeks out the personal, the relational, the interior life of individuals and organisational communities. It contrasts sharply with the more traditional empirical research methodologies that find their relevance in measurement, objectivity, externalities and predictability rather than transformational possibilities. The limitations of my approach also lie in its specifics, as no two
people will typically experience the world in exactly the same way and the business world tends to discount research that cannot be scientifically verified nor help in predicting future behaviour. I sought instead to highlight the unpredictabilities of organisational life precisely because it is the output of dynamic interrelationships. I wanted to uncover the patterns of experience of the personal-workplace values dialectic that connect us. I want to be part of the movement that sings up the complexity of the human spirit in all its pettiness and richness as it plays out in modern workplaces. My research, therefore, has its limitations. I hope the inherent limitations of my research methodology will be offset by its contemporary relevance and by its original contribution in an area that has been little documented to date because of the inaccessibility of commercial organisational life.

I see the workplace in terms of a dynamic social-ecological site characterised by the interactions of competing values and aspirations that hone and change the participants at both conscious and unconscious levels. The thesis has a hypothesis around the dynamic interdependence of these three different sets of values that largely remain unacknowledged but which impact upon each other. It is hypothesised that reconciling these often-competing values holds the possibility of the emergence of a new managerial way of relating to organisational members that is based on a new ethic of care.

Specifically, I have sought to make visible two competing theories on the nature of employees in the workplace; Theory ‘X’ as manifested by the Taylorist (Taylor 1947) traditional model of management and Theory ‘Y’ (McGregor 1969). Theory X describes a management perspective that sees individuals as largely incapable of self-motivation or deriving intrinsic satisfaction from their work. Instead, employees are seen as needing external direction with either the promise of external rewards or sanctions if they are to fully apply themselves to their jobs. Theory Y in contrast sees individuals as capable of self-motivation and seeking intrinsic satisfaction from their labour. From this perspective, employees are capable of self-direction and can share responsibility with management in the design of workplace contexts that will improve their overall performance and output. I have sought to make explicit how competing tensions within the workplace can impact on the uptake of either theory and from this research focus another perspective has emerged on what might be
added to current theory to assist in organisational change programs. A possible new perspective “theory I” (small ‘t’ to differentiate it from a fully researched new theory) evolved out of the experiences recorded in this thesis and seeks to be considered in future conversations on employee motivation and appropriate workplace design. This new perspective - which is really more about creating a space for thinking in new ways about how employees experience their workplace context - explicitly acknowledges how all organisational members actively create their workplace contexts by the interaction of their internal worlds (their interpretative capacities) and their choice of external response. Becoming conscious of this interdependence enables members to co-design new workplace contexts characterised by greater synergy between organisational and personal values and where mutually beneficial relating is an achievable goal. I attempted to champion this new perspective in the ways in which I worked within these organisations and in the analysis of my research findings. I continue to do so in my public advocacy role.

I position myself as a threshold both standing between and watching over the old and the new values as they jostle up against each other in our personal, workplace and wider societal contexts. In this threshold space I explore this new perspective, “theory I”, as I research what is and what could be in relation to employees’ current experiences and unmet expectations at work. My threshold vantage point can be disconcerting at times as I struggle with managing my personal values while presenting myself within a traditional management value set that is very different to my own. This I must do in order to be able to insert myself as a change agent within the status quo.

As a researcher, my investigation evolved on one level as an ongoing exploration between employees and myself and between the employees and each other, as I journeyed with them to map their workplace experiences. This journey of exploration was then captured in formal reports that were presented back to management. This thesis draws on these reports as the secondary data sources that were the product of several of my organisational cultural interventions in the closing years of the twentieth century. During a six-year period I was privileged to be able to map the values that made up the organisational cultures of some 23 different organisations across a spectrum of industries.
What emerged was a picture of modern workplace life teeming with social activity in thoughts, ideas, actions, experiences and interpretations. This hive of social activity, however, was largely silenced within a conversation that gave priority value to abstraction, objectivity and rationality, and resulted in both manifest and latent patterns of human behaviour. The research found that non-managerial employees, in particular, could identify their personal values (e.g., search for personal-development, self-esteem, expression of individuality), but such values were generally disregarded by management. There was a dissonance between “espoused values” and “values in use”, generally recognised by non-managerial staff, but mostly unacknowledged by management. Managerial staff paid lip service to espoused “soft” organisational values, but their behaviour called their commitment into question. There existed a wide diversity of behaviours associated with an organisation’s espoused values, which added to workplace unpredictability and encouraged individuals to become more aware of the differences between personal and organisational values.

At another level, my research process emerged out of my ongoing frustrations at the evolving research findings which pointed to a significant gap between the values organisations claimed to support and those that their employees experienced as characterising their day-to-day experiences. My literature review concluded that most management books were written from a managerial perspective and purported that the managerial experience of organisational life was similar to the employee experience. My research was finding that nothing could be further from the truth. Frustration at the absence of the employees’ voice in the managerial conversation compelled me to face a whole grab bag of personal insecurities and inconsistencies as I sought to champion that voice. I deliberately set about crafting a public persona that would enable me to advocate for increased integrity with espoused organisational values and the need to provide employees with workplace opportunities to reconcile their personal and workplace values. This reluctant role of public advocate brought me into contact with other values-driven change agents who were working at the margins of the business world to raise consciousness that the formality and impartiality of the business mindset was adversely impacting on its members and seriously threatening the vitality of the natural world. Some of these
articles are woven throughout this thesis in dual columns to represent the public voice of the researcher and differentiate it from my role as the academic inquirer.

In the wider domain, the dominant business paradigm that put shareholder interests first was being severely challenged by an emerging societal value set that argued that organisations had responsibilities beyond shareholders to a much wider group of stakeholders. Social and environmental accountabilities were increasingly being championed as being as important as economic impacts in terms of business accountabilities (Hawken, Lovins & Lovins 2000). Environmental champions, such as Carson (1962), Nader (1965), Lovelock (1979) and Elkington (1997), exposed the potential adverse impacts of business and demanded a new set of values and accountabilities from organisations, to safeguard civil society’s quality of life. The results of their writings were the emergence of a new public consciousness of the non-economic impacts of business and the emergence of a new social movement in the second half of the twentieth century that demanded that business leaders see themselves as interdependent with the rest of society in actively shaping the social and environmental landscapes where they operated. This wave of social activism, in turn, paved the way for a more effective critiquing of the underpinning values of the economic marketplace and how it related to local communities and responded to their needs. Growing public disillusionment with a business model that put economic needs before social needs gave rise to a new public debate on the ethics of business and a focus on the moral constructs that were implicit in the current economic order. This new debate seems to be creating a more conducive environment for “theory I” to emerge.

As I wrote up my thesis research, I found myself part of a new business philosophy advocating sustainable business development and working alongside pioneering organisations as they sought to equip themselves to listen and respond to these new values that recognised the innate dignity of individuals, our interdependence with each other and the duty of care this brings. It might be argued that organisations, which invite consultants like myself into their workplaces, have also begun their inward journey to find ways of designing more facilitating environments where all stakeholders can engage in beneficial relating.
In my professional capacity I have progressed from diagnosing values gaps in organisational cultures to working alongside management as a facilitator of organisational learning around the essentially subjective nature of values, and the importance of this initial recognition in building new ways of relating inside organisations and between organisations and civil society. In my personal capacity I continue to search for personal authenticity between the work I do and the values I espouse and to share my learning with others as I continue to write and speak in the public arena.

Shifting social values, new interpretations and the emergence of a new awareness of the interdependencies between the individual, the organisation and society have been the signposts of this research journey. Correspondingly, a growing awareness and discomfort with the ongoing tensions between personal and organisational values has shaped the lived experiences of those who searched with me and responded to the many twists and turns that marked our journey towards greater authenticity. Each shift could be seen as a fractal of a bigger collective values movement facilitating an emerging collective consciousness of the potential for each to shape the other. These dynamics were played out at the micro level within organisations where I worked, and at the macro level, as I participated in a global sustainability movement to challenge the current business paradigm.

The research deepened my understanding of my own personal values and how these continue to shape my workplace experiences. This has enabled me to undergo a fundamental transformation within my own career direction. By the close of my research period I found myself transformed from my starting point of a mid-life crisis point with a decidedly inward focus. By the close of the research period, I had become externally focused and a popularly acknowledged opinion leader in the area of applied business ethics. During my research years I had authored and published over 50 articles, spoken at hundreds of public conferences in Australia and abroad and authored a management textbook on applied business ethics that has become recommended reading for business practitioners. Through both my research learning and advocacy activities I had gradually facilitated the integration of my personal and workplace values into my professional role in life. More importantly, however, I have had the privilege to gain first hand insights and visions of what is possible -
how people can grow and develop from their workplace experiences and come to understand themselves more fully from the process. My experience demonstrates how we shape not only our world but also our sense of self through the work that we do. That work is essentially a phase space of “being and becoming” and that is why we need new ways of thinking about what transpires there.

Finally, perhaps the most interesting results of my research have to do with the emergence of themes other than those which were most obviously manifest, with the presence of that which was latent, the potential for heart-led organisational learning from a deeper understanding of the interplay of the values that make up the social context of business. At a business level, the potential for increased sustainability when greater attention is paid to honing a shared understanding between business and civil society.

My advocacy journey continues beyond my thesis as the journey to organisational renewal progresses. Countervailing forces that arise to defend and maintain the status quo frequently stymie progress so that I find myself continuing in my role as a public advocate, writing in the media and speaking at business forums about the need to recognise organisations and workplaces as living systems where people search for a sense of meaning, personal identity and belonging as part of our innate call to “make a living” and not just secure a wage. This role enables me to bear witness to the backward as well as forward movements taking place as organisations go about their business.

The latent potential that exists in organisations and goes unrecognised because members are denied opportunities to reconcile personal and workplace values continues to frustrate my ongoing consultancy environment, where it seems we are experiencing both the best (the potential to have personal values reconciled with workplace values) and the worst of times (the ongoing denial of our inner self at work).
The following article was written to amplify an increasing phenomenon I was witnessing in organisations around individuals’ search for meaning and values alignment. The theme and structure of the article – designed to raise awareness of a workplace dynamic that has the potential to impact in positive and negative ways – were adopted in many of the articles authored during this research period. It has been deliberately crafted in this way to ensure it fits within the existing management paradigm with its current focus on assessing “costs and benefits” to the business and making decisions accordingly. I would have preferred to write more passionately but I was well aware that such passion could be seen as either a challenge to the status quo, and therefore something to be eliminated, or dismissed as “too soft” and simply irrelevant to business. My advocacy was therefore crafted like a Trojan horse and designed to give the appearance of familiarity while introducing new concepts and information that might otherwise have been suppressed, marginalised or screened from public view.
Walking the talk
Executive Excellence,
20 June 1997, Vol.14 No. 6

Being committed to the company’s vision and remaining loyal are examples of the challenges we face in business.

A friend of mine, Cynthia, worked for 15 years in banking, climbing her way up the corporate ladder to the position of vice president of the trust division. Over time, Cynthia increasingly felt her position lacked worth and purpose. So she quit her job, spent some time in Nepal clearing her head, and wound up at a not-for-profit charity organisation. Although her salary has been cut by a third, she feels that now she has a job whose guiding vision more nearly matches her own personal philosophy.

In Search of Values Alignment

What happened in Cynthia’s case was that the bank failed to offer her a clear set of values, a mission that she could buy into. Hard as it may be to believe in a cynical world, workers actually yearn for values in the marketplace.

People want to feel good about their jobs, to be proud of their employers, and feel that they are contributing something important to the world. Ultimately, workers want to have “values alignment” – they want to be the same people at work as they are at home, to have the things they value in their private lives similarly respected in the workplace.

Employees also want to be safe. In some respects they are like children; they simply want to know the rules so they can get on with the game. When the rules are clear, and function as advertised, an atmosphere of trust is created. Employees then feel safe, they believe they can take risks, and start to grow in their jobs and be creative because they know the boundaries.

All too often, however, the values or rules in a workplace are not clear, or there is a gap between the espoused values of a company and the reality. As a result, rather than an atmosphere of trust, one of fear develops. Workers do the minimum necessary to survive and devote most of their energy to protecting their backs. They then disengage, and only mark time until they can move on. Put succinctly: when managers don’t “walk the talk”, their employees simply walk.

Without a clear set of values driving your organisation, it will be difficult to inspire your workforce. Values are the foundation on which employees’ commitment and loyalty are built, and it is with commitment and loyalty that you keep your employees.

Painting the Big Picture

How then, do you build commitment? The organisation must paint a big picture, establish a vision, that will draw the employee in, something that is more inspiring than just making money. Companies need first to know their vision, whether it is to be the best manufacturer of widgets in Australia, or producing luxury-type goods that are affordable, or what have you. Second, the organisation must be able to articulate that vision easily to employees, thereby allowing them to become part of a creation that is much bigger than anything they might have done on their own.

Ansett Australia, for example, has an extremely stable and loyal workforce, at least in part because they share a simple but galvanising vision – to provide excellent service and to be one of the safest airlines in the world. These goals require constant, exhaustive emphasis, and are enshrined in Ansett’s code of ethics and are the subject of frequent internal training. As a result, Ansett employees truly believe they are the best around, a reflection of a healthy, committed workforce.

With commitment comes “discretionary effort”, that phenomenon that occurs when energised, empowered employees don’t just do the bare minimum, or knock off precisely at 5pm, but go the extra mile where necessary. This kind of extra effort only comes when a worker feels enveloped by a larger vision. If people feel that they are engaged in something bigger, innovating in some way, creating some
service, the chances are that you'll be able to tap into their discretionary effort.

A Win-Win Situation

So much for the employee who is committed to the company’s vision. But how about ensuring that employees remain loyal to their employers? Loyalty implies a contract between the employer and employee. Each delivers benefits to the other, in an unspoken psychological contract. The boss can’t command loyalty, but rather has to earn it, and loyalty is earned by giving workers opportunities to grow and develop, to give them recognition when they advance and to reward their efforts in concrete and visible ways.

This results in a win-win situation. If your people are continuing to grow and develop, you will reap the benefits of their knowledge and their ability to respond to ongoing developments.

Now More than Ever

There are two main reasons why commitment and loyalty are more important now than ever before. First, as a result of extensive downsizing across the labour force, there are simply fewer people around. Second, because of the era of the knowledge worker, the people who remain have more and more valuable information stored in their heads. Losing an employee, therefore, has a severe impact, because there is no fat anymore; a loss means cutting into your core business. Therefore the incentive to develop commitment and loyalty has never been greater, because without these qualities, you risk losing your business.

Allowing people to live their values – even after they cross the workplace threshold – is one of the most powerful ways of gaining commitment and loyalty. It is energising and liberating for an employee to be who he or she really is at work, and not to wait until after hours to be a human being
CHAPTER 1

NOTHING IS AS IT SEEMS
AND IN BETWEEN IS THE THRESHOLD

This thesis is an investigation into the dynamics of the relationship between the personal values of individuals and the values of the organisations where they work, in the context of today’s continuously changing world.

This thesis is also a journey of personal experience into how I as an individual, employee, and member of a wider society, respond to such complexity, having been exposed to different and sometimes competing values. My search is to come to understand how I might live more authentically by achieving a higher degree of integrity between my personal values and those from which I operate at work. This thesis draws upon my personal experience of values dissonance in the workplace and my field experience gained from working in multiple organisations as a change agent investigating if the same phenomena is reflected in the stories of other employees who may also find themselves exposed to a mis-match between personal and workplace values. Even the organisations where we work may be found to reflect their own duality as they seek to live up to contemporary management theories and their published value statements, while their internal day to day behaviour continues to promote a different set of values.

The acknowledgement of dualities is particularly pertinent for me in my dual role as researcher and workplace change agent. My ongoing tensions and challenges arise because I cannot present myself in a way that is true to what I really value. In order to be able to do the work I choose to do and to be invited into organisations, I must be perceived by them as an agent of management engaged to help resolve their issues and yet, it is from the non-managerial viewpoint, the employee perspective, that I approach each new assignment. I take in with me, a recognition of the power imbalances that
exist and I deliberately look for opportunities to champion the rights of the less powerful to have their stories heard.

As a management consultant I draw upon the latest innovative thinking in organisational development theory. Such a perspective can be seen as part of the new paradigm thinking that already exists at the margins of organisational innovation but has not yet, and may not ever, become mainstream. Its adoption remains dependent on the emergence of an enabling workplace environment. Since organisations are at their simplest merely collections of people, the collective values that get rewarded and promoted there, will determine how workplace contexts emerge in the future. I get the opportunity to work within this new paradigm when organisations find themselves frustrated with the status quo - between what is and what is desired or seen as necessary. At this point, I am invited in to bring about some sort of situation improvement. While essentially engaged to work within an old-paradigm organisational context, I am provided with the opportunity to introduce new-paradigm thinking.

The catalyst for organisational change comes in many guises. For some it arises because these organisations have been found to be out of step with prevailing societal expectations of appropriate organisational behaviour. Management finds itself being ridiculed in the media and held to account for the low standards of behaviour allowed to exist under its supervision. In other cases, the opportunity arises because executives wish to better understand the changing wider social environment in which the organisation is embedded to ensure these organisations retain their competitive edge. However, the most typical situation is where management is reengineering their organisation – either downsizing their workforces, merging with another organisation or introducing new management systems - and there is a desire to maintain employee performance and productivity during the transition and beyond.

I situate my consultancy work always within the human dimension of organisational life. I find myself standing in the threshold between what is and what could be. From this vantage point, I seek to focus beyond the current situation - crisis or otherwise - and imagine the long term potential lying dormant within each unique context. However, I still need to work within the immediate cultural imperative and reassure management that my vision for what can be will also meet immediate needs. *The question for me,*
then, becomes how open to change is each situation when viewed from an alternative perspective or when subjected to a re-shuffling of its constituent elements? My professional accountability necessitates that I also question how I can ensure that my intervention will meet immediate needs while balancing concerns for the long-term interests of those organisational members who have not been given a voice in this intervention. This duality – at an emotional level bordering on deception and subversion - causes me some distress or at least discomfort because, for the sake of maintaining the contract, I have to work at two levels simultaneously. I cannot declare my guiding vision and goal at the early stages for fear of alienating the project sponsor. My experience suggests that the existing social morality of organisations – the day-to-day values that get promoted and rewarded – typically goes undiscussed, unmeasured and undervalued. This results in a continuation of a dominant workplace perspective that sees the organisational social context as largely unproblematic and its reality uncontested. As a consultant, I find that for many, the cultural life of the organisation is viewed simply as something of a by-product of the organisation’s business plan rather than a living dynamic that can be nurtured to encourage the growth of a healthy internal environment where members flourish.

The guiding metaphor of a threshold has been used to approach both the research and to make sense of the dualities in which both participants and myself, as researcher, can find ourselves. “Thresholds” have been employed by the scientists of Complexity Theory (Gleick 1991), Wheatley (1992) to portray the point of transition (phase space) in the change of state of an entity from one form to another in the process of relating in a specific environment. It therefore seems both a powerful and potent symbol to describe the current dualities of our personal and work lives and the latent potential for transformation if the gap between what is, and what is desired, can be narrowed.

And so the research is also approached from a methodology of thresholding, a continuous comparison (situating my observation) between the inner world (values of self, work, and wider society) and the outer world of each of these entities – always in contact with each other, always inevitably (ideally, willingly) in transition between one set of values and another. The dynamics of the relationship between the personal values of individuals and the values of organisations within which these individuals work is seen in the light of entities (self, organisation and wider society) inevitably changing.
and needing to accommodate being changed by, each other – in their endeavour to preserve their own being (valued way of existing). Each is always in a threshold place, each way of being always necessarily in transition between an inner world of own values and an outer world of others' values.

At a meta level, the question that arises for me, is why the ethical ideal of the highest possible degree of mutually beneficial relating is so seldom found, and how it might be implemented in the context of our present world. This two-fold question constantly confronts me in my profession as a consultant, and it is central to both the theme of my thesis and how I approach it. I suspect that the underlying morality of the value-set that binds men and women together in business can only be surfaced, explored and perhaps transformed, by seeking to facilitate an understanding of how organisational members experience their workplace contexts as a social construction and byproduct of the values promoted or constrained therein. Consultants like myself, as privileged observers, get to move in and out of numerous organisations and become conscious of their latent power to socialise members into distinct value sets that can in turn shape the sort of people we become into the future. The popular perception of the impersonality of the rules (i.e. professional values) that govern organisational life camouflages the day to day reality of how largely managerial values create a context that then exists as a phase space (Gleick 1991) of being and becoming, for human potential. The tremendous latent power that resides in organisations is perhaps one of the most obviously silent voices in the conversation on human development potential and it is one that this thesis seeks to amplify.

Although I feel privileged as a consultant and observer of this social phenomenon, the vantage point I have also brings with it ethical accountabilities. The assignment of bringing about a situation improvement – implicit in the consulting project – requires me to harness the knowledge learnt from others’ failures while seeking to minimise unnecessary human suffering through changes that certainly cause disturbances if not short term anxieties. This is further exacerbated by the incremental nature of much organisational change. Even where I do manage to bring about situation improvements, the ongoing reluctance of organisations to share their learning in the public arena means that macro change can be slow.
To offset this incrementalism and to help meet my own need to give a public voice to the limitations of the existing organisational contexts, I sought to capture and relay my ongoing learning in a series of business and professional articles – which were written throughout the research period – designed to influence a wider audience. Here again dualities abound. On the one hand I am in a perfect position to learn from others’ experiences; on the other I am constrained by the organisation in sharing their specific learning with others. Standing in the threshold and discerning the repeating patterns of the values that go unmet in multiple situations, and listening to employees’ stories as they resonate with my own experience, encourages me to continue to hone another identity - that of public workplace commentator. In this role I can legitimately expose the inner frailties of organisational life. And so this research thesis must seek to include the public me, who gets to have a voice in the management conversation and who plunges headfirst into a published stream of consciousness. This begins from a place of silence and grows to become a steady voice questioning the existing workplace paradigm and advocating for a new way of understanding organisational life that begins from a recognition of our inner life and our need to make meaning there about what happens to us at work.

I have grown immensely through this research process as it, too, has helped me achieve greater alignment between my personal and work life values. I have had the opportunity to work with a number of organisations in transition; I have been able to assist many people to surface existing values at both a workplace and personal level. I have developed as a speaker and writer on the subject of ethics and organisational culture, such that I have been able to bring a message of optimism and opportunity to a wider audience as a result of my experiences as a change agent at the coalface of multiple organisational sites. I have grown as a person, living my values and learning alongside those that I work with. I have conquered some of my own demons by putting myself in the threshold between the worlds of anonymity and public person. I have been able to provide opportunities to facilitate meaning making and understanding to hundreds of people as a workplace change agent and hundreds more through an intensive public speaking programme, advocating for a new perspective on personal needs in the workplace. My own experience convinces me that the workplace has the potential to offer similar personal growth opportunities to others and that is both its latent power and its ethical opportunity.
PUBLIC VOICE

The article that follows was part of an early series of opinion pieces authored with the goal of introducing psychological concepts gently to mainstream business press readers. It was designed to “sell the benefits” to business leaders, in terms of risk management, in considering a more personal focus on people management, and a recognition of individuality. The article was crafted to subtly expose the duality of organisational life where formal rules and rhetoric belie the very different workplace contexts that employees find themselves in. It is suggested that this gap, between management rhetoric and organisational practice, in turn breeds a cynicism that has adverse consequences for both the organisation and its members. It is the story that I find repeating to some degree in every organisation I go into. As with every article I write, this one ends on a reminder of the latent power of recognising this duality and being willing to work authentically with its dynamics.

Emerging from the shadows

*Australian Financial Review*,
(July 22, 1996)

Beginning with the writings of Jung, psychologists have long noted that healthy personalities necessitate recognition and acceptance of what might be regarded as our negative traits or what Jung referred to as our shadow side. This is the side of our personality that remains out of our conscious awareness but which dogs our actions and often sabotages our best intentions.

Organisational personalities are no different and it is in welcoming in our shadow sides that collective learning, the basis of true organisational learning, can begin.

So what is the shadow side of an organisation and how can it be detected? Ethicists know this territory well and have mapped its boundaries in terms of the "values gap" between what an organisation says it values and how it operates on a day-to-day basis.

Unfortunately, its not just ethicists who know its identity, employees are the first to recognise corporate inconsistencies - the dissonance between management talk and management walk. It is the employee response to such perceived dissonance, however, that extracts the highest cost from the organisation’s health.

Invariably this response can be measured in terms of degrees of personal stress, cynicism, unethical behaviours and other conscious or unconscious attempts to sabotage the organisation’s goals. It is in this no man’s land that we find the behaviour that give rise to internal theft, sexual harassment, abuse of power and a myriad of other unhealthy patterns that take root and are allowed to flourish within the shadow of corporate respectability.

How does the shadow evolve? Very often it can find its genesis in periods of rapid company growth where management’s attention has been focused on the output of the organisation at the expense of the type of organisational culture that is evolving to deliver its output. Focusing predominantly on outputs and neglecting the organisational structure can create a common scenario whereby the structure then works to sabotage the bottom line.
This is manifested by insider fraudulent activities, market place transgressions involving costly litigation and other disruptive practices, which tie up valuable management time and force boards and CEOs’ to reappraise the types of organisations they have unwittingly created.

How does a value gap arise? Too often it's the product of imposing value statements, from above, statements that are found to be unaligned with the company’s internal systems, especially reward systems, and that often in fact compete with the values operating on a day to day basis.

Shadows also emerge because, almost collectively, we refuse to recognise and come to terms with the power dynamics that characterise how many decisions get made in the workplace. Instead we pretend our managers are professional agents who somehow naturally put their companies’ interests before their own. By refusing to recognise the power dynamic, we remain blind to another common scenario where knowledge is seen as a source of individual power, not to be shared willingly, and to be used to promote self-interest rather than corporate interests.

It is only in recognising the potential negative impact of power that we can celebrate its positive contribution and welcome it as an important and vital dynamic within all organisations. Nothing gets down unless someone has the power to make it happen. Power exists at all levels within organisations and is as much a force for good as evil but it is only in recognising its duality that we can learn to mediate its energy so it can be harnessed to the organisation's interests. Ignore it, and chances are it goes underground and its negative potential grows.

Our shadows have much to teach us. On the road of organisational learning this may well be the most productive starting point for most corporations today.
Journeying Into The World Of Personal And Professional Values

For me, one of the most challenging aspects of phenomenological research has been the concept of confronting the personal as an integral process of researching and working to address issues of concern. It is a concept that the socially conditioned me has struggled with. I am constantly made uncomfortable with the degree of self-disclosure required to explore the personal dimensions that are an integral part of my research. Nevertheless, I accept and embrace the notion of who we are shaping how we see the world - Anais Nin’s (1903 – 1977) principle that we see the world not as it is, but as we are.

I have tried to embrace this new way of knowing and to weave through this thesis some bare threads of me the values-laden, values driven individual with an interest in and a passion for workplace change and human development in organisations. It seemed that it was necessary to follow parallel paths - to inform the meaning I was making for individuals in the workplace with the personal meaning making that I was achieving through reflection on the process.

As I reflected on what had given me the greatest sense of satisfaction in my life to date, I realised that it was the sense of purpose, enjoyment and personal growth that I had experienced during a three-year period as a volunteer social activist within the women's movement. I championed the cause of greater equity for women in the corporate management world. I came to understand that my personal value system involved working on behalf of those I felt were oppressed. In the words of Irigaray,

> to remain within the perception of the world without closing it off or closing off the self amounts to forming or watching over the threshold of the world. Changing in response to era, to place, to time...An in self and a for self that always also remain for the other and in a world and a universe that are partway open (Irigaray, 1993: 141).

By this stage I was no longer content to understand how the system worked, I wanted to change it. My personal values meant that I derived my sense of meaning and enrichment by playing a role as a change agent of the status quo. I wanted to challenge the existing order and help create a new, and what I believed to be, a more equitable
system. My world, or more specifically, my social context, is the world of commercial organisations. I spend at least half of my waking life in them and have done so since graduating some twenty-five years ago. I was drawn to the area of personal values in the workplace because I knew myself that I had brought my own personal values into every organisation where I had worked. I believed I could safely assume many others had too.

During my twenty-five years of experiences in organisations in several countries I have found that the people who design workplaces pay very little attention to personal values, and yet this is where most people are destined to spend the most significant proportions of their lives. While researching the work already undertaken in mapping organisational members' personal perceptions of workplace values, I came across The Compass Group and New Leaders Report (1994), an international research study conducted on four continents, including Australia. This qualitative research study mapped the personal values people sought to have satisfied in their work and it presented an alarming picture of unmet needs.

I found I could readily identify with the findings as they reflected my experience as a full time employee in the corporate system. The overwhelming picture that emerged was one of a serious mismatch between employees' personal values and the values espoused by their organisations. It revealed a major trend towards an increasing gap between the employee's quest for personal growth and development opportunities and the degree to which they felt compromised in their work situations. The research found that participant priority values revolved around a desire to be treated as adults, while their experiences demonstrated that the majority of workplaces continued to be characterised by parent/child type relationships. Stress arose for participants from the perceived gap between the stated values of their employing organisations (what management said they valued) and what behavior was regarded as acceptable on a day-to-day basis.

The research highlighted how the majority of the participants had a value priority around learning, but found that their organisations promoted workplace value-systems (cultures) that expected right answers and penalised failure. Organisational members therefore experienced their workplaces as actively inhibiting their learning capacity.
Participants wanted a management style that promoted openness, but found instead that the dominant management style promoted secrecy. Participants said they valued opportunities to derive personal satisfaction from their work and to be able to express their feelings. However, the typical workplace situation was one where they found themselves members of an organisational culture that assumed the only motivation was financial, and existing organisational dynamics stifled any expression of personal feelings. This research was further validated by additional national research study conducted in the US using the same questionnaire. This secondary research reflected similar issues of concern.

Several other contemporary studies in Australia, including Colins’ and Chippendale’s (1991) research, seemed to reflect the same workplace divide between the personal values employees were looking to have satisfied in their place of work and their actual experience of their workplace context where a different set of values operated.

These research findings seemed to paint a picture of a serious mismatch between personal values around intrinsic job satisfaction and workplace opportunities to grow and develop, and the actual values being promoted in large organisations in Australia and elsewhere. I was frustrated however at these researchers' failures to explore at a deeper level, the lived experiences of participants and to present a wider variety of experiences. My experience was that there was a multitude of differences in organisations, that employees’ values differed from each other as well as differing from managers’ and that there was likely to be a multiplicity of variations in the values being sought in any one organisation. The Compass research (1994), in particular, seemed to be an over-simplification of a complex situation where there were, potentially, a wide variety of needs and a wide variety of forces shaping organisational cultures. The research seemed to continue in that traditional paradigm of dualities - employees as victims, employers as oppressors - without exploring the many layers of complexity that arise from human interaction in the workplace.

It was a need to understand the complexities and richness of texture in the interaction of varying values in the workplace, that marked the start of both my thesis research and my personal journey to understand more about the nature of values and how they inform our daily experiences. I suspected there was a large under-estimation of the role
of values in shaping individual expectations and behaviour choices. I wanted to know how employees, as feeling-thinking subjects, experienced values dissonance, and if it was at all possible for them to impact on the organisation’s values as well as being impacted upon.

In fact, it was my own experience that had made me aware that many organisations operated according to a set of values and behaviours that subjugated the needs of many members to bottom line priorities and other business goals. The dominant ideology in business was still the economic rationalist school of thought, as championed by Friedman (1970). This school of thought placed priority on the economic activity and performance of organisations at the expense of its human impact or any wider social responsibility. Friedman argued that the main responsibility of business, and therefore of those who manage it, was to use its resources to engage in activities designed to increase profits. The popularity of this approach to me was indicative of the masculine obsession with a narrowly viewed exteriority - to the neglect of an equally real and present world of interiority both within the organisation itself and its members.

In seeking to become more aware of my own personal value system and, what others and myself had observed, as my strong personal drive to understand the social systems that shape life experiences, I retraced the steps of my early socialisation. I found that several accidents of birth had honed my awareness of how personal, workplace and societal values can interact to shape the person we become.

Firstly, there was gender. I was born female into a household where boys were valued as more intrinsically important than girls and, having what could be seen as both a bonus and a developmental handicap in my five brothers, I can recall from early childhood experiencing a simmering resentment that such accidents of birth could effectively determine how my immediate world would classify and respond to me. Feminist literature was to later confirm that my experience was fairly typical of thousands of other women who felt silenced by a status quo that was largely determined by a male perspective and that served to actively promote male interests. In “Women’s Ways of Knowing” Mary Field Belenky (1987) and others, chart the ways in which some 135 women felt similarly silenced in their families and in their schools.
Secondly, my personal story was not just one of being disadvantaged by being born female, I was further socially handicapped by being born Catholic into a Protestant community in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland in the 1950s, 60s and 70s was effectively a segregated society. Catholics and Protestants lived alongside each other, but they had their own schools, shops, communities, churches and politicians and there were no voluntary social contact between them. In the political arena, however, Catholics had little political power and were awarded second-class citizenship. Their schools and their welfare services were under funded and their representation in parliament was minimal. It was this institutionalised discrimination that gave rise to the "Peace Marches" as the Catholics' bid to get a more equitable allotment of council housing and state benefits; it then escalated into the civil rights activism referred to as "The Troubles" that continue in Northern Ireland to this day.

My response to the prejudice I experienced by growing up Catholic in a Protestant State was to set me on a course of determination to prove that I was as good as both my Protestant peers and my Catholic male counterparts. I had not realised it at the time, but this stance also determined how I would respond to other perceived injustices in the future. I was honing a world-view that the status quo, if experienced as unfair, was there to be challenged. My response to the way I found the world was one of determination to confront and take on the system, and where possible, work to change it. It also begat my intellectual curiosity with the idea that it was an individual's unique experience and equally unique response to social circumstances that might shape their personal value system. The different patterns of response and development amongst my five brothers and three sisters seemed to indicate that it was our individuality, rather than the perceived adversity itself, that influenced how we each responded differently to the same social context. Personal values, I suspected, played a major role in producing such unique reactions.

By the time I had reached my early thirties I had achieved success according to my original criteria. I had made it to a senior management level in the male dominated corporate world (Still, 1993) and enjoyed the material success that went with that position. Having realised my goals, however, and with my 40th birthday looming, I discovered, along with thousands of other women, that my corporate ascent had
plateaued and that my gender and not my ability or commitment would now determine any further career progress.

A major Australian research study, "The Industry Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills" (1995), popularly known as the Karpin Report, on the management structures and philosophies of Australian organisations in the 1990s, echoed the earlier findings of the 1992 "Inquiry into Equal Opportunity and Equal Status for Women in Australia". Both found that women had made little progress, in either the private or public sectors, into the executive levels of Australian organisations. Despite the fact that women comprised 42% of the paid workforce, they remained poorly represented in upper management positions in both spheres.

While cases of overt discrimination continued, the evidence suggested that it was indirect discrimination that contributed more significantly to the existence of the so-called glass ceiling (Still: 1993). Comprehensive research in the 90's (Still: 1993; Karpin: 1994) showed just how few women were actually making it to senior management positions and how even when a few did achieve seniority, their salaries continued to drag behind their male counterparts. Hennig and Jardim (1977) laid the blame on the male construction of work.

"The Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs" (1992) report, popularly known as "Half way to Equal", suggested that women become especially threatening to men as they get closer to the top of organisations, because they bring different values from their male counterparts into workplace organisations (emphasis mine). These female values were perceived by the male dominated management as a contentious desire to change the status quo. Women tended to be viewed as a disturbance to the established order and Still's 1993 research confirmed that, at the deep structural levels of organisational culture, little change had been made to accommodate female managers.

From a values perspective it is important to recognise that cultures (organisational and societal) are not only the values lived out in the everyday world but that they also represent socially constructed meanings held in place or changed by processes of interpersonal and institutional power. At the moment, the prime power holders in
business organisations are men and the deep-seated patterns of culture are derived from our history as a patriarchal society (Still 1993). According to Professor Still, most organisations’ informal systems of relationships find their origins and present function in male culture and male experiences. Her research suggests that its rules of behaviour, communication style and mode of interpersonal relationships arise directly out of the male developmental experience (Still 1993).

Karpin's (1994) research indicated that females compromised their personal values and adapted to the existing workplace values in order to survive within these organisations, and that there was a direct link between women's lack of opportunity in the workforce and its negative impact on their personal development. It seemed that after twenty years, I had come full circle to where I had first begun my adult life's journey. I found myself again resenting the fact that an accident of birth would determine the extent of my career development. My renewed disillusionment with society's typecasting of myself as a second-class citizen, this time in the workplace, led me first to feminism and then, through feminist literature, to a renewed appreciation for my inner world. I came to realise that my inner thoughts, feeling and aspirations shaped the way I felt about myself as well as the way I would respond to external events. In connecting with my inner world, I discovered a new route to the search for meaning and contentment that had so far eluded me. It was a route that I had been unaware of and I was unprepared to take before. I began to explore the concept of self-actualisation - that life for me might be about striving to become everything it was possible to become. In Spinoza's world (1632 - 1677) the challenge is defined as "To be who we are and to seek what it is possible to become". The primacy of self and the idea of exploring self were virgin territory to me but seemed so intuitively right.

Gross (1977) points out that feminist theory seeks to transform and extend the concept of reason beyond "a limited cognitive function". Instead of excluding concepts like life experiences, these are included and acknowledged as necessary for reasons to function:

The courage to be is the courage to affirm one's own reasonable nature over against what is accidental in us. It is obvious that reason in this sense points to the person in his (her) center. Reason as a limited cognitive function, detached from the personal center, never could create courage. (Paul Tillich, 1952: 13).
Feminist theory thus values, develops and presents alternatives to the rigid, hierarchical and exclusively cognitive concept of reason that was so often held as the true basis of knowledge in our society until the advent of post modernism. By reading other women's experiences, I was able to validate the relevance and importance of my own inner world as a prerequisite to understanding my external experiences.

As I became more immersed in feminist theory and research I developed a meta-understanding and appreciation for how and where knowledge is produced, by whom and for whom, what counts as knowledge and what is excluded, and how the system is maintained, perpetuated and disseminated. Researchers such as Reinharz (1992), Matthews (1984), and Seifer (1976) show how female values and experiences come to be excluded from recognition and validation by the status quo. Their research of other women's experiences resonated with my own experience of daily organisational life where the majority of organisational members, males as well as females, were expected to suppress their personal needs and values and subscribe to an organisational set of values that they may or may not have been consulted about. The potential negative impacts of being unable to live their personal values in the workplace or to have opportunities to have these reconciled with the organisation's stated values went unrecognised.

This growing consciousness (Freire: 1972) made me reappraise my outer directed lifestyle and my previous focus on proving myself to males that I now realised was, in fact, validating the very value system that had disenfranchised me - the dynamic that Friere had so clearly captured in his concept of the pedagogy of the oppressed. Without realising it, I had begun to place more value on finding an inner sense of achievement. I was moving from an outer directed archetypal model (Kinsman: 1991) to an inner directed orientation where my internal world would be more valued. Based on the research of Brian Hall (1973) whose work is detailed in the next chapter of this thesis, I undertook a personal values profile, which provided me with insights into my own priority values, and the skills I would need to develop to be able to live them. For example, this values profile highlighted that I had a priority value around being an advocate of change. If I was to live this value, I knew I would have to hone my communication skills, which I immediately set about doing. In this, and many other
ways as will unfold in this thesis, the discovery of my own priority values marked the territory I would have to traverse to experience authenticity and values integrity.

The research of Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) demonstrated how recognising and sharing their experiences of everyday life, experiences that were divergent to those upheld by the status quo, enabled these women to question the validity of the male-defined experience of the world and its values. Questioning its validity then enabled them to move to a position of imagining new possibilities for behaving:

Recognition of common experiences and of real differences from the dominant culture has been a tremendous source of self-knowledge and thus self-respect. (Belenky: 1986)

My professional role as an organisational change agent has enabled me to research the divergent experiences of employees in their workplace context. This research highlights how divergence arises not only because employees hold varying perceptions of how their organisations work, but also because they also have varied experiences of the incongruity between the organisational stated values and the values seen to dominate daily life inside the organisation. In researching and giving voice to employees' experiences of this divergence, I was keen to create the same learning opportunities that Belenky's (1986) women had experienced as they shared their stories.

At the collective or organisational level, I hoped that, by enabling the organisation (via its executive management) to become aware of its own contradictions - where it behaved very differently to its stated values - an opportunity would be created to address and change such shortcomings informed by a more holistic understanding of employees needs. I hoped this move to wholeness would begin to develop once management addressed the existing values gap between its formal and informal values and as it responded to a new awareness of the personal values being sought by employees from their workplace experiences.

Becoming an active feminist had allowed me to focus on the systemic nature of the inequalities experienced by women in all areas of society, especially within commercial organisations that were fast becoming society's major institutions. Most corporations
effectively prevented women from enjoying the same opportunities as their male counterparts. I decided that the best contribution I could make to change was to work from the inside of these major corporations and to help raise collective awareness that personal as well as organisational values were important in shaping people and the organisational cultures that emerged.

My own life experience had demonstrated how seeking a greater connection between my personal and workplace values had been a major catalyst in helping me become a whole person again able to live in a more authentic way. I believed this same opportunity might be afforded to others if they too had opportunities to become aware of personal values and then have workplace opportunities to reconcile these with those values promoted by the organisation. At the organisational level, seeking to close the gap between its official values and those that characterise daily life might help to bring forth enriched workplace contexts where interpersonal relationships are better understood. I suspected that employees' varied workplace experiences were being marginalised in a business management literature, which focused on the managerial perspective, and assumed this to be representative of all.

Gilligan's (1982) research demonstrates how feminism can make sense of a woman's awareness of the conflicts and contradictions she may experience in her everyday life. She stresses the interaction of experience and thought and the value system this gives rise to. Her research highlights how men and women have disparate experiences of self and social relationships. Because, these differences however are relayed in a shared language, that assumes the male experience is representative of both genders, it can lead to individual alienation for women. Using a shared language that is not based on dual experiences also promotes misunderstandings between the sexes that further impede communication and limit inter-gender relationships. According to Gilligan's (1982, 1990) research, affiliation is a priority value for women, while self-enhancement is a priority value for males. For men, the creation of a personal identity revolves around a rational notion of justice, fairness or rights. For females the process takes place in a relationship context. For men, the process of individuation defines and empowers the separate self, while in women, the ongoing process of attachment makes for a more selfless and nurturing individual who places relationships at the core of identity. Gilligan's research highlights how for many, female identity was defined in a context of
relationships. In organisations that do not value relationships, women are disadvantaged by the dominant value system that rewards impersonal ways of behaving.

The Karpin Report (1994) pointed to a dominant Australian workplace value system in which human intellect was valued more highly than feelings. This suggests that other minority groups, as well as males with different values, would also be denied equity of workplace opportunity in contemporary organisations. This certainly was my experience of the corporate world until the closing decade of the twentieth century. Bottom-lined focused workplaces that gave priority to financial outcomes (exteriority) over people processes (interiority) - as documented in The Karpin Report - were the dominant model and workplaces largely reflected a predominantly traditional masculine value system as mapped by Gilligan. Although the hi-tech companies were beginning to introduce more flexible management models, it was still very much traditional masculine values that ran the economy and the country.

I was also uncovering research to suggest that the workplace context itself could be an important variable in deciding which values, organisational or personal, took priority at work. A 1996 six-month CSIRO study in Australia found that men in clerical or administrative positions slowly adopted similar responses to those used by women to reduce occupational stress, such as improving communication in the workplace. Women working in male-dominated fields of science and technology were also found to take their cues from their environment and to become more confrontational when dealing with colleagues.

Much of the field-research into why women choose to leave the corporate system in substantially larger numbers than men seems to indicate that one of the main contributors is a mismatch between their personal values and preferred lifestyles and those values being recognised and rewarded in large organisations. I began to wonder what sort of workplaces could emerge if more attention was paid to designing workplaces where employees could have their personal values met. I also questioned my own values and what role, if any, they played in my unmet need to accept myself as equal or equivalent to my male peers. My search now turned inwards to discover why my own sense of self-worth was so bound up with being seen to be successful within, what feminism had taught me was essentially, a flawed and biased institutional world
where priority is awarded to financial results and interpersonal relationships are valued for their instrumental rather than intrinsic worth. Posner’s (1992) research of women’s corporate experience highlighted how my own story reflected the experiences of many females before me:

They are beginning to realise that the so-called homecoming movement is about much more than going home in a literal sense. It is also about coming home metaphorically. It is about going within. (Posner 1992: 207)

I was keen to learn through my research, if the female experience of having to live out, or up to, or even down to, others’ values, also reflected what might be happening when employees act out of a set of values promoted by their organisation rather than their personal values. If it turned out to be a case of subjugating personal values to fit in, as was the experience of so many women documented in feminist research, did this mean that employees also suffered the same loss of self esteem and powerlessness as was documented amongst these women? Was this the source of the ever-growing experience of lack of control that contemporary employees describe and could this be what was increasingly being referred to as workplace stress or low employee morale? My own participant observations suggested that, under the umbrella of free competition, other values, such as ruthlessness, active and passive aggression, and selfishness, are applauded at the expense of empathy, feelings and relationships. Measurability is valued over intangibles such as morale, self-worth, and the ability to have integrity with what is personally valued and how you are expected to behave.

Going in and out of organisations on a regular basis, provided me with insights into one of the most common ways organisations devalue any sense of the personal. This is done, paradoxically, by undervaluing any sense of collective responsibility to each other. For example, organisations devise reward and recognition systems that mean people are mainly rewarded for individual effort rather than team contributions. This individual orientation is further promoted by the absence of interpersonal training and a widespread failure to formally promote management’s ethical obligations to protect and promote the well being of all members by nurturing beneficial relating. Instead, individuals find themselves pitted against each other as they "climb the greasy pole" - the popular metaphor for the corporate promotional system. This process of promoting
individual merit, subtly encourages and rewards employees to relate to and be loyal to the organisation rather than to each other, because individuals can only succeed at the expense of others not succeeding. The net result is that employees' personal worlds and needs are made subservient to the organisation's needs.

Marshall (1991) contends that those organisations where female management models dominate are relatively devalued. This argument finds support in the lack of media coverage of female dominated sectors such as the direct selling industry. Kaplan (1992), in her research on the direct selling industry, showed how this billion-dollar Australian industry which employs over 300,000 females and enjoys a growth rate of 20% per annum, has also developed a management or organisational value system that is quite the antithesis of the traditional corporate system. In this female dominated industry it is collective effort rather than individual effort that gets rewarded and celebrated. In contrast to the "greasy pole" syndrome, employees here can only succeed by helping those below them to succeed. It is others' success that determines how much profit and status managers attract. Emphasis is placed on personal development as a prerequisite of business success, and management adopts a holistic approach that recognises that if employees cannot feel good about themselves then they cannot feel good about coming to work and will be unable to give their best efforts.

In multi-national direct-selling organisations such as MaryKay cosmetics and Avon toiletries - and Nutrimetrics here in Australia, - the majority of management time is spent on motivating and nurturing employees and building their self-confidence and self-esteem. This model of management is in sharp contrast to the dominant corporate model that promotes impersonality and manages employees through predetermined and generic models of management that may or may not bear any relationship to personal needs. In contrast to the traditional workplace model, individuals are made aware of their exact overall contributions and self-directed teams, informed by a shared vision for the enterprise, determine workflows.

My research into the direct selling industry and the experiences of its members sparked a new vision of how it might be possible for an organisation to nurture a self-actualising system where members could grow and develop because the values promoted by the organisation encouraged self development and mutually beneficially relating amongst
members.  

Could it be that an organisation's values and systems could facilitate employee personal growth as a consequence of workplace experiences?

My literature search found that business researchers, such as Senge (1990) and Hall (1992), had suggested that where there was an organisationally institutionalised value system that was more developed and evolved than the personal value system of new employees, the organisational context became an enabling facilitator of personal growth. I began to look for other organisations that might also be providing a social context that enabled their employees to grow and develop. I was curious to learn whether these organisations enabled their employees to live their personal values at work and whether employees' personal values and organisational values could be synonymous. I was curious to find out if organisations could recognise the intrinsic needs (Herzberg: 1959) of their employees and incorporate these into their organisational designs.

During the mid 90's, discussion around possible new workplace values and alternative workplace models and designs began to emerge. These seemed to challenge the dominant business paradigm and its implicit values. The authors were not academics but ex-employees and business consultants who wrote from their own experiences of the business world as well as from their field research. Handy (1996), Rifkin (1995), Hampden-Turner (1990), Colins and Chippendale (1995), Dattner (1996). This discussion was not yet mainstream but the occasional feature article began to appear in the mainstream business press and in new business publications.

This new value system was concerned with issues of personal meaning making; the nature of relationships in the workplace as they shaped organisational culture, and, the interdependencies and ethical implications of business on employees, the wider community and the green environment. A new academic interest in business ethics was rising. It implicitly recognised the impact of organisational values on how employees behaved. For example, an "employee-values" survey amongst the top 300 companies in Australia in 1994 found that 38.9% of top managers made decisions that conflicted with their personal values and many of those surveyed indicated that they still required permission to place ethical considerations on their corporate agendas. The researcher concluded:
Clearly, there exists within the business culture those who are conscious of a betrayal of personal values’ (NSW University Values Newsletter 1994:6).

There was opposition from the business community, and for the moment much of the discussion on these new values stayed at the level of consultants and academics. I began to suspect that my personal journey to seek to live authentically by reconciling my inner and outer life was perhaps being mirrored in the new journey being embarked on by corporations seeking to move towards values-based management philosophies. The research of Collins and Porras (1994) into top performing U.S. organisations found that values alignment between what companies said they valued and what got rewarded in their workplaces, was their distinguishing feature and their point of differentiation from other organisations. These organisations had cultivated a distinctive competence in the development and promotion of a set of organisational values that were understood and shared by their employees.

My lived experience and my research, together with the research of others, as just outlined, seems to indicate the possibility now of a gradual change to a new emphasis on the interconnectedness of personal values and organisational values - between employees and organisations, as well as between organisations (as collections of people) and the societies in which they are embedded. This new perspective would appear to demand a greater awareness (by both employees and organisations) of the potential for their own development implicit in giving a priority to their inner world and seeking to hone a better understanding of how to avoid possible mismatches between desired values and those lived out on a daily basis. It raises some challenging questions to guide my research process:

- is it possible to reconcile personal and organisational values?
- will such reconciliation herald a new era of organisational transformation that puts the individual’s needs on a par with the organisation’s?
- will reconciliation dissolve the current work/life divide and enable greater self-actualisation to take place facilitated by the workplace context?
- by becoming aware of the role of values, will organisations become more responsive to value shifts outside the organisation?
- will this new approach dissolve the blocking function of a workplace established by a masculine focus on exteriority?
The published “opinion piece” on the next page was again written for the mainstream press and designed to make public some of the “undiscussables” that characterise day to day workplaces but which often get hidden in consultants reports so that the business community does not get to see the repeating patterns and learn from this. These “undiscussables” can be more immediately and easily exposed in media press because such writing does not necessitate the backup of the same rigorous field studies that would be demanded by the academy before such opinions could be expressed. These articles also enabled me to draw on my consultancy experience to make explicit links between business performance and organisational members’ well being - a necessary perquisite for anyone seeking to have a voice in the business conversation.

**Employees want work that satisfies their values**
*The Australian Financial Review*
Published: Friday, 29 January 1999

At the close of the century, a growing awareness of the chasm dividing employees’ work lives from their personal lives is shaping a new wave in employee motivations.

We are now witnessing a growing army of employees who are embarrassed to admit where they work. Whether they are employed in banks, legal firms, accountancy practices or the medical profession, they are recognising that the values they hold as individuals are at odds with those being demonstrated by their employers.

If employees feel so compromised, they will not bring their full potential to the job. The result is low organisational performance, compromised and stressed employees and employers who chase an apparently elusive dream of high performing workplace culture.

Perhaps it’s time we had a major rethink of ways to reward and motivate employees.

The traditional ‘unspoken’ employer-employee contract involved employers setting clear rules about what was expected of employees, providing security of employment in exchange for acceptable performance and additional material incentives for excellent results.

Employees committed to follow management’s directives, deliver predetermined performance levels and observe varying degrees of company loyalty. The new workplace psychological-contract looks very different.

Intellectual capital has now become the most important element in organisational success, resulting in a shift in the balance of power from would-be employers to potential employees. Leading companies depend on the quality of ideas for their success and these belong to individuals. It’s up to employers to attract and retain high-calibre employees by distinguishing themselves as ‘employers of choice’.

Members of the new workforce are first and foremost independent and mobile and actively work to maintain this status. They owe allegiance to no one.

External job security has been traded for mobility and flexibility. Personal security comes from within rather than from any
one employer. They seek to maintain self-sufficiency by continually honing their skills so they remain highly tradable. They are not confined by international borders, but see themselves as talented employee nomads who can add value to any potential employer.

Employers have become their clients; employment contracts temporary project management assignments.

Carrot and stick reward and recognition systems no longer work. These would-be employees are looking for opportunities that are satisfying because they appeal to their personal value systems. For many, this intrinsic satisfaction comes from being able to experience “a fit” between their personal values and the values promoted by potential employers.

The opportunity to “feel good about oneself” is an alluring benefit. Other benefits sought include opportunities to learn and develop on the job. Learning, however, has moved beyond technical skills. The new learning is for self-awareness and life skills, such as stress and time management, to enable employees to respond optimally to the interdependent demands of personal and work lives.

Close on the heels of the new knowledge workers come the Generation Xers with their demands. A survey in the UK found that the majority of Generation Xers seek work and leisure as fellow travelers in a time continuum. Fun and work are compatible. They want employers who recognise that they can add immediate value because of the adaptability, flexibility and learning speed and that these have replaced experience and longevity as the new determinants of performance.

Then there are the needs of the growing numbers of casual workers who constitute some 33 per cent of the workforce. In many cases, they too reflect the trend for people to adapt to the new workplace environment by making “lifestyle” choices.

Men taking time out to look after children and offering the partners the opportunity for career enhancement, mid-life people down-shifting to secure a higher quality of life, early retirement and multiple careers are all part of the new industrial landscape.

The process of motivating these new values drive employees to encourage maximum degrees of discretionary effort, moves reward and recognition systems into the strategic domain.

Employers too have new demands – often unarticulated. Previously it was expected that employees would be committed to follow management directions and do a good job. But employers want much more now. They want employees to be creative and innovative as well as productive.

These changes are not confined to intellectual or skilled elites either. Ordinary employees are becoming dissatisfied with their workplace conditions and asking for more. The not-for-profit sector, the fastest growing sector in the economy, is increasingly being staffed by refugees from the private sector who are prepared to sacrifice salaries and other external “benefits” for a more intrinsically rewarding workplace.

What distinguishes the new era of workplace benefits is that it is determined by the individual rather than the employer. Whether employers recognise it or not, job satisfaction has become integral to employee’s personal annual appraisal system.

This calls for a major overhaul of the present motivational and rewards systems. Employers who fail to do so will see talented employees becoming increasingly rare in their organisations.
CHAPTER 2
VALUES, PERCEPTIONS AND WORLDVIEWS

In seeking to learn from the writings of other researchers and practitioners in the field of personal and organisational values, I have read widely from an eclectic body of works. I began with a business and management focus, including the writings of organisational development researchers, organisational psychologists, sociologists, social ecologists, new science scientists and then moved on to a vast array of “pop psychology” authors, psychoanalysts and modern day lifestyle gurus. I had not originally set out to traverse such a wide terrain but I discovered that the current gaps in the organisational change and management literature necessitated me crossing disciplines in my attempt to hone a holistic understanding of how personal and organisational values interact and are, in turn, impacted upon by wider societal values. Ironically, it was by looking outside the management discipline and tuning into the value shifts that were taking place in the wider societal context that I caught my first glimpse of what was possible when our internal world is recognised and allowed to become part of the workplace conversation.

Personal & Workplace Values

The duality of working as a consultant in organisations while researching amongst them also shaped my choice of literature sources. I discovered that the time lag between academic research and its publication necessitated me turning to more immediate and contemporary, but perhaps less rigorous, researchers to augment my literature review. I found myself drawing heavily on the body of literature that is deemed “Management” or “Business Press”, as here I could find collaborative, although usually anecdotal evidence of the work-place phenomena I was experiencing. Ex-executives turned consultants or ex-consultants recruited into the academy in adjunct professor roles were largely the authors of this body of work. Their output is the lifeblood of the business schools’
curriculum from which the next generation of managers will graduate and, therefore, it seemed to me an important body of knowledge to be reviewed for insights into possible future developments. At the same time, the academy offered its own important tradition of scholarly work that illuminated my research and was essential in designing my research processes. Academic rigour (in the sense of building on the work of others and being peer reviewed) offers a richness and depth that is often missing in management best sellers. So I found myself dipping into both worlds, using one to inform, critique or highlight the other and, in so doing, hopefully forging a new perspective based on a coming together of the popular and the academic approaches to workplace dynamics as they are applied in this thesis.

In tracing the historical roots of the study of values in organisations, it can be seen that several schools of thought, each offering their own unique lens, have contributed to today's much richer and more dynamic picture of how people behave at work. Historically, early organisations were modelled on the designs of the army and the church (Hall: 1992). It was assumed that organisational leaders would determine what values were to be upheld and employees were expected to comply or leave. This gave rise to such popular mythology as "the IBM way of doing things".

The gradual emergence of an appreciation of the impact of personal values at work began with the work of the early motivation theorists. The work of two major theorists, Frederick Taylor (1911) and McGregor (1947) - each of whom put forward very different models of human nature and motivation - can be seen to have had the dominant impact on management and organisational practice throughout the twentieth century (Karpin, 1995) and continue to be influential today.

At one end of the spectrum Taylor, as the acknowledged father of "the Scientific Management Approach", maintained that the average employee essentially disliked work and needed external motivation to work towards organisational objectives. He claimed that employees prefer to avoid responsibility, are relatively unambitious and crave security above all else. Taylor was concerned to identify the optimum efficiency that could be gained by a rigorous division of labour. His world-view was that it was
possible to prescribe how both organisations and individuals could work most effectively. This perspective essentially ignored the subjective world of employees' needs and desires and instead assumed that economic motivations were paramount. He likened organisations to machines that could be made predictable by carefully controlling all inputs and outputs. This Scientific Management approach became the dominant organisational paradigm of the twentieth century and its legacy is evident in many organisations today, especially amongst older managers and company director groups.

The Karpin Report (1995), found that Taylor's model could still be readily observed within Australian organisations and was manifested by centralised planning of tasks that effectively boxed individuals into positions or spans of control and authority by job descriptions. These demarcations effectively prevent employees gaining a holistic understanding of how the organisation works as a system. The implicit assumption is that people don't need to know where they fit into the overall scheme of things and that companies can be run impersonally.

Kanter's (1989) research drew attention to the limitations of the mechanistic approach which, she claimed, tended to limit rather than mobilise the development of human capabilities by moulding human beings to fit the organisation rather than building the organisation around individual strengths and potential. Taylor's lack of respect for the inherent dignity of individuals can seem quite shocking by contemporary values and it is quite disturbing to know that his worldview lingers within modern organisational life (Karpin 1995). I suspect its continued popularity is probably due to the socialisation and internalisation of this worldview so that it now operates subconsciously in many workplaces. To effectively challenge such implicit assumptions, however, would seem to require a new body of research or a new way of thinking about how employees experience their workplaces that can both challenge Taylor's assumptions and throw some light on the organisational dynamics that determine whether a Theory X or Theory Y managerial perspective emerges. It is by presenting employees' subjective stories about the peculiar needs and desires that they bring into their places of work and how
they try to make *internal* meaning about the events that happen to them which in turn shapes their *external* responses that will be the original contribution of this thesis.

A critique of Taylor's work highlights how narrow his perspective was. His worldview assumed that employees were passive in their response to the organisational context thus eliminating any need to consider the role of the workplace context itself in shaping motivation and performance. Taylor's goal was to find ways to maximise organisational efficiency and it could be argued that in approaching his research from this perspective he put an instrumental rather than an intrinsic value on employees, and so their needs were marginalised and priority was awarded to the organisation's needs. Employees were seen to need managing much like the other inanimate organisational resources and it was assumed that they could be deliberately manipulated to maximise organisational goals. Unfortunately, it is a perspective that can still be found amongst many organisational leaders today.

In contrast to Taylorism, the humanist orientation championed by both Mayo (1933) and McGregor (1960) saw people as motivated by social as well as economic needs. In the Hawthorne studies, Mayo (1933) showed that the group played an important role in determining the attitudes and output of individual workers. These studies showed that performance levels were determined by how workers experienced or felt about their jobs, fellow workers and supervisors, rather than by external motivations. Mayo's pioneering research showed how the internal world of employees and their needs were also important in shaping overall organisational performance.

McGregor (1960) proposed that there were two sets of assumptions about people and these determined how managers treated people. He labelled these sets of assumptions as Theory X and Theory Y. Managers who subscribed to the values underpinning Taylor's model he labelled Theory X proponents. Theory Y proponents, such as Mayo (1933), in contrast challenged the mechanistic tradition and postulated that people were self-motivated without external control. Here, a very different set of underlying values saw individuals as capable of self-direction and motivation because of their desire to grow and develop from their workplace experiences. The idea that people could be motivated
by intrinsic rewards was also promoted by theorists including Herzberg (1959, 1974) whose early research highlighted the importance of intrinsic job satisfaction for employees. Likert (1961), in turn, maintained that higher-order needs, such as intrinsic satisfaction, are more prevalent in modern men and women. Beginning with Maslow (1970), then Hertzberg (1974), Mintzberg (1983) and Jacques (1989), it can be seen that ideas about individual growth or personal development present a picture of individuals involved in successive stages of physiological and psychological needs and desires, where their *internal* worlds play a major role in shaping their expectations of life. For these theorists, self-actualisation and the need to bring us closer to our ideal is the individual's primary motivating force. The greater the gap between our perception of ourselves and our ideal, the more uncomfortable we feel. Work is seen as an essential part of our identity and it is here we look for opportunities to develop towards our ideal.

A growing body of research - Havinghurst (1953), Kohlberg (1981), Erikson (1969), Rokeach (1973), Sheehy (1976) and Hall (1994) – increasingly indicates that different people hold different values and expectations that they seek to have satisfied from their life experiences, and that work now plays a major part in relation to those values and expectations. Schein's (1999) work presents a more complex model of individual development where many motives (which have varying degrees of impact at varying times and from situation to situation) come into play, so that organisations can respond with a variety of managerial strategies. Furthermore, according to Schein, not all values have to be satisfied by the work situation.

Piaget's (1965) and Erikson's (1963) empirical research on stages of social development heralded the invention of theoretical models of social behaviour based on changes in the way individuals perceived their situations, that is, their world view or personal values set. Kohlberg (1984) identified six successive stages of moral development while Maslow (1968), Hall (1973) and Rokeach (1973) indicated that some values could be seen as universal and that individuals could prioritise them. The work of these scholars builds an argument to show how values can have both a subjective and an objective dimension and that individuals in choosing their values choose how they experience
their worlds. Their research also highlighted how it was possible to define, standardise and measure personal values in specific contexts.

Rath, Harmin and Simon (1965) define personal values as those elements that show how a person has decided to live her or his life. Their work has contributed significantly to greater clarification of what exactly distinguishes personal values from organisational or societal values and they identify seven criteria that determine how individuals select certain values:

- Choosing freely - a value is seen to be the result of free choice
- Choosing from among alternatives - the value is chosen as one amongst alternatives
- Choosing after consideration of the consequences of alternatives
- Prizing and cherishing - the value is regarded as important by the individual
- Affirming - the individual is willing to publicly acknowledge the value
- Action upon choices - the value can be inferred from behaviour
- Repeating - a value is likely to reappear on different occasions in an individual's life

Rokeach (1973) argues that a value system is a system of beliefs that places priority status on prescribed modes of conduct along a continuum of relative importance. I have found this concept of priority ranking to be of particular importance in helping people understand how tensions arise between competing values and how people can give priority to different values depending on the context they find themselves in. Contemporary researchers such as McClelland (1961), Bennis (1978), Deal and Kennedy (1988) and Schein (1984) support the ideas of Argyris and Schon (1978) who maintain that not only do people have to live with conflicting values but that this very act can cause additional stress as it is in conflict with the individual's conscious reasoning processes. They see the individual's governing values shaping beliefs and being expressed in an action strategy. These beliefs are typically assumptions about the other person's motives that, in turn, are shaped by the individual's unique world-view; and this world-view brings with it a set of social rules governing how they should behave. These writers were implicitly recognising that we each have an internal and subjective world where we interpret and respond to situations depending on our value

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priorities. Drawing on the work of Argyris and Schon, Dick and Dalmau (1990) illustrate how personal values can determine how individuals shape their experience of others. These writers suggest that individuals ascribe a set of motives to others’ behaviour that then shapes their responses to them. While the idea of interiority shaping exteriority runs through the work of these theorists, I found information on how this actually happens to remain quite elusive.

The limitations of Theory Y proponents are that these researchers were mainly concerned with the managerial perspective of employees rather than employee perspectives of themselves or even of their managers. Their work also tends to compare the values and behaviours of one group against the other as opposed to focusing on individual experiences. As such, much of this research is presented from the perspective of the researcher’s external view of how and why people behave the way they do at work. Neither did these researchers pay much attention to how Theory X and Theory Y might relate to each other. If Theory X were already embedded in an organisation’s culture, what would it take to persuade managers to move to a Theory Y way of thinking?

The original contribution of this research is that it presents the complementary view – the internal story as told by the employees themselves. The focus of this research is this interpretive dynamic of experience that so often goes unrecognised in amalgamating employee experiences. While both Theory X and Theory Y tend to oversimplify management and employee responses, this thesis presents the messiness and complexity of organisational life that is never static, always being reinforced, challenged, changed and therefore co-designed at conscious and unconscious levels by employees, managers and consultants like myself.

Drawing on the work of several academics and social researchers in this area, Francis Kinsman (1991) draws attention to three psychological types to illustrate how it is quite possible for people to do the same things but for distinctly different reasons or values. Building on Maslow’s original research, he identifies three archetypal categories into which individuals within modern western societies can be identified:
SUSTENANCE DRIVEN - here the individual's primary personal value is the need for social and financial security. Core personal values are based around survival on a day-to-day basis, so priority is given to belonging to a supportive group of peers. For others in this group, further identified as the "belongers", the primary personal value is maintaining and protecting their current positions. Their personal values are around maintaining the status quo. I suspect that people operating out of these values would be more resistant to change because they are unaware of the way in which their world-view shapes their experience and how it keeps them behaving in the same way, rather than them seeking to challenge or change the existing situation.

OUTER DIRECTED - for this group personal values revolve around the need for esteem and status. How other people perceive them is more important to them than how they judge themselves. Their values are around appearance, being seen to do the right things and having the right lifestyle, attributes and acquisitions. This group was, I suspected, the workaholics and high achievers. Since I had been one myself, I could easily identify with many of these values and this experience of authenticity (with Kinsman’s archetypes) was one of the many joys I experienced through this research process as I discovered my path in life had been well trodden by others before me. In recognising myself in others, I am continually reminded of our inter-connectedness as human beings, as we journey on a shared path towards our social evolution as well as self-actualisation.

INNER DIRECTED - for this group the primary motivating personal value is self-actualisation. These people are looking for meaning within themselves. They place a greater value priority on internal satisfaction - on self-fulfillment and emotional and spiritual development, rather than on material achievement and external signs of success. Again, these were my aspirational values and I recognised these values as being typical of people whom I admired; people who seemed to rise above the many pettinesses of everyday life that grind other people down. I anticipated that, wherever I could find these people, be it in organisations where I worked or in advocacy groups outside of the workplace, they would share my advocacy for more humane organisations, and would be
my collaborators in challenging the status quo. They would be the modern progenitors of what Jung (1953) called "Individuation"; they would be the colleagues already looking to live their values and ethics in the workplace.

Kinsman maintains that representatives of all three types are to be found together in all organisations and that, because of their different personal values and subsequent needs, they will experience the same situation differently. Inner-directed people, for example, will be looking to have values around accomplishment and fulfillment satisfied, while the outer directed people will be looking to have values of achievement, advancement and high income met. Sustenance driven will want a quiet life at work, seek direction, and have a priority value around security.

I liked Kinsman's model because it reflected some of the complexity I had already experienced to typify different organisations where different people with very different needs can be seen to be doing the same things but from very different perspectives. Also, it allows for the co-existence of satisfied and unsatisfied members within the same organisation. Such a perspective highlights the fallacy of considering the external situation as representing the sum total of motivations and needs of all organisational members, rather than being a contested context that is the outcome of varied needs and responses and is open to change, depending on the stability of the perceptions and motivations of its members.

Contemporary business guru and author of many business texts, Charles Handy (1998), builds on the typologies developed by Kinsman (1991) and lends his business experience to support Kinsman's findings regarding the diversity of needs and wants being sought from modern workplace contexts. Both Handy and Kinsman predict a gradual shift from sustenance to outer-directed and from outer to inner-directed individuals in the twenty-first century and I intend to explore their predictions in my research.

Mapping values over a period of 25 years and in several countries, Brian Hall (1986) and his colleagues claimed they were able to identify 125 values that were, in different degrees, common to people from different national cultures and that such values
matched the socio-political realities of each culture. From these he identified seven different world-views to explain different priority value clusters or sets. Hall's substantial work (1973, 1980, 1986, 1992) builds on Kinsman, Maslow (1954) and Kohlberg’s (1981, 1984) research to suggest that individuals can act out of different values at different stages in their lives and can be seeking to have these met at different times in their places of work. Similar to Kinsman and Maslow, Hall's research identifies three different types of personal value sets that people can operate from. Where he differs from Kinsman and Maslow is that he gives greater emphasis to the role of situational context in activating or repressing these value sets, rather than by correlation to the stage of growth and development (Rokeach: 1973) that individuals pass through. Hall labelled his three values sets as “foundation”, “focus” and “vision” values:

**FOUNDATION VALUES** are laid down in childhood and adolescence; they usually remain subconscious in adulthood but can be activated and drawn upon when the individual is under stress. They include values around survival, security and belonging, and can be likened to Kinsman’s "sustenance driven" values model or, Maslow’s physiological and safety values.

**FOCUS VALUES** refer to the day-to-day values for most people and include values such as achievement, recognition, service and self-esteem. They can be likened to Kinsman’s outer directed individuals or Maslow’s self-esteem values.

**VISION VALUES** include those values that individuals see themselves moving or evolving towards and include values around justice, the innate dignity of the individual, intimacy, and spiritual growth. They can be compared to Kinsman’s inner-directed category or Maslow’s self-actualisation values.

In contrast to Maslow’s (1968), Rokeach’s (1973) and Kohlberg’s (1983) linear models of values development, Hall believes that individual development is dynamic and dependent on context. Individuals can progress from their focus to their vision values or they can regress from focus back to foundation values depending on the issues and situations they confront. Hall implies that, where people find themselves in situations
that do not facilitate them living their personal values, (that is, situations that do not allow them to live authentically), regression or "downshifting" to foundation values is a likely consequence. Such "downshifting" had been my personal experience in several organisations, and it had usually been the catalyst for me to seek a new job. I was curious to learn if this uncomfortable experience was fairly typical of others' and, if so, had they also adopted my response and voted with their feet.

I experienced Hall’s typology as profoundly liberating. Intuitively it felt right and resonated with my past experiences. By applying it to my past experiences as an employee within organisations, I became aware for the first time of just how I had become disempowered in certain situations because I had experienced them as unpredictable and unfair and they had activated my foundation values. Certainly I had regressed in these situations to the point where I no longer enjoyed the job and it was just a means to a pay packet until I could find a better position that better met my needs. I found it so liberating to realise that once I could identify the sort of contexts that played to my foundation values, I could seek to avoid them in the future. I could also use this newfound knowledge immediately to help friends and colleagues to recognise the same pitfalls and I was always gratified to discover that they too responded with the same ready identification of this pattern of experience in their own lives. In the same way, Hall’s typology enabled me to become aware that I had been living out my vision values when I was volunteering in the women’s movement and it was during these years that I had come nearest to my vision of helping to bring forth a new world order where females were given greater recognition and opportunities to develop their full potential. This period had been characterised by my high degree of discretionary effort (unpaid and volunteered inputs), as I felt intrinsically satisfied and fulfilled by my mission.

Hall’s work implicitly recognises the latent power of the workplace to shape individuals experiences as well as their responses and in so doing he extends the work of Mayo (1933), McGregor (1960) and Kinsman (1991) and overcomes the weakness in their research that arises out of their silence on the role of the workplace context itself in shaping the sort of people we become.
Overall the literature suggests that values clusters can be seen as part of a cycle of social development or evolution and that each value set shapes for individuals a distinctive world-view. These researchers share a central tenet that different world views arise from individuals' different value priorities and the potential exists for individuals to develop through successive stages of increasingly less ego-based values or to regress to more ego-centered values clusters depending on the situations they find themselves in.

While there is an impressive body of literature amongst business writers and scholars to suggest that Theory Y might be the logical management evolution from Theory X, most of the proponents of Theory Y, as referenced in this thesis, would agree that Theory X continues to be the dominant management paradigm today and there is a disconnect between what management theory now advocates (Theory Y) and how management is practiced in the workplace. One of the reasons for this disconnect, I suspect, is that Theory Y can only be truly operationalised in an organisational setting that consciously works with its context or workplace culture to hone a facilitating environment where managers are helped to become aware of their assumptions and their personal projections and how these shape the workplace context that emerges. They then need to be provided with opportunities to develop the appropriate intrapersonal skills to manage these biases.

I found my literature review frustrating in terms of the silence of these major writers on the very political and emotional nature of most workplace contexts, which are typically characterised by hierarchical management structures that effectively depersonalize the human interactions and encourage organisational members to interact in instrumental ways. Thus, the personal and interpersonal dimensions get stymied and suppressed by the organisational context. I wanted to explore this suppression and the potential its liberation held for workplace reform so that I could contribute new insights into the currently missing personal and subjective components of organisational life.

**Opportunities For Values Driven Change**

My personal experiences suggested that when individuals become more fully aware of how their personal values affect their interpretations and responses at work they have the
potential to rethink their assumptions and make informed choices about workplace contexts and relationships that will better suit their needs. This focus is a new space in the management literature that I would like to explore through this thesis research.

This space, which I refer to as “theory P”, is an area where I try to surface assumptions and ask new questions of what might be if we begin to see organisational members as fully active participants in the shaping of their workplace experiences. Such a focus finds its origins in the research of post-modernists and especially in the new sciences that promote a new understanding of the dynamism of values that can also be seen to be part of an emerging broader new worldview as expressed, for example, in the Gaia hypothesis. Its originator, James Lovelock (1979), suggested that there is an alternative perspective to the traditional view of looking at the world of nature as a primitive force to be subdued and conquered (in the same way as Theory X management philosophies reduced organisations and repressed the natural, personal values of their employees, seeing them as something that could be controlled). Instead the Gaia hypothesis sees the earth as a living organism actively engaged in creating the conditions that support life. Similarly, organisations can be seen as living and organic systems embedded within the wider ecosystem. Implicit in this new perspective is a set of values that sees life as dynamic and unpredictable because it is based on interdependent relationships and when the relationship changes so does everything else. The primacy given to relationships in this worldview challenges today’s current value set that gives priority to the rule of law over the unique and often conflicting needs of different individuals and societal groups. Such a worldview has the potential to bring forth a new story for our future social evolution as noted by Vaclav Havel:

"Gaia was part of a new science that offers moral guidance" (Elkington 1997:63)

An emerging corporate story driven by these new values was beginning to unfold in the 1990’s and it was presenting an alternative vision for communities inside and outside organisations that supporters could rally around and move towards. Although this vision was still very much driven from the margins, it was increasingly being advocated within the business literature by writers such as Wheatley (1992), De Geus (1997), Hawken
Hawken (1993:15) explicitly links the latest business sustainability movement to the emergence of a new business paradigm around a vision of a restorative rather than the traditionally exploitative economy:

The restorative economy comes down to this: We need to imagine a prosperous commercial culture that is so intelligently designed and constructed that it mimics nature at every step, a symbiosis of company and customer and ecology.

Wheatley (1992) shows how from Taylorism to the present day, science has been used to create rigid, controlling hierarchies that have kept employees disempowered and spawned generations of scientific managers who fail to understand the subjective nature of people and the organisations they co-create. She argues that the new sciences, such as the Gaia hypothesis, offer hope for a better future. Drawing on the new discoveries in quantum physics, chaos theory and biology, she argues that these discoveries provide equally powerful insights for transforming how we organise work. The new sciences offer new ways of understanding and redesigning organisations as living systems capable of responding to the needs of the people in them. Her research shows the primacy of relationships as the key determinant of what is observed and of how particles manifest themselves. She points out that:

These unseen connections between what were previously thought to be separate entities are the fundamental elements of all life, and can only be observed in relationship to something else. So, also, the success of organisations can only be defined, in reality, in terms of the health and viability of their internal and external relations. (Wheatley 1992: 34)

The work of analytical psychologists such as Murray Stein and John Hollwitz also lends support to this perspective. Stein and Hollwitz, in Psyche at Work (1992), claim that organisations are like mothers and that individuals project onto them both the positives and negatives of the mother archetype so that a well run, consciously managed organisation would prevent its members from being over-involved and dependent upon it and would seek to protect its members. They claim it is because of over-identification of employees with the organisation that organisations hold so much power and that, without an encounter with the unconscious, there is no opportunity for personal growth.
and individuation. My experience working at the top of large organisations suggests that many of the executives there openly admit that they live for their jobs. Consequently they have put the organisation’s needs before their family’s needs or even their own needs and have indeed become over-identified with their organisations, to a point where their whole sense of identity and self esteem comes from their position at work. Many executives have often confided in me that they dread their retirement, as they have no idea what to do with their time.

Stein and Hollwitz point out that it is the individual's unconscious that meets with the spirit of the organisation's unconscious and suggests that, through a conscious engagement with organisational life, one may find the opportunity to become twice born and the organisation may also grow and change. This, as will become evident later, was a principal finding of my own research as reflected in my personal journey towards self-actualisation.

The Elusiveness Of Authenticity

Chris Argyris (1985) and Donald Schon (1982) (Argyris and Schon, 1986; 1978; 1974) have made a lifetime study of the conscious and unconscious reasoning processes that inform individual behaviour choices in both groups and organisations. Continuing in the tradition of Freud and Jung, they believe that many of our behaviour choices remain outside of our conscious awareness, but that these choices are capable of being encouraged to come into the realm of consciousness and indeed must do so before significant and long term changes in behaviour patterns can occur. They refer to the values that individuals believe they reflect by their behaviour choices as "espoused theory". Those values that can be observed by the same individuals' actions (actual behaviour) they refer to as "theory in use".

Argyris sees the relationship between espoused theory and theory in use as those values we think we hold (espoused values) and those values reflected in our behaviour choices (values in use). Individual lack of awareness of any values gap - and reluctance by others who perceive such a gap to expose this to the person concerned - prevents us from
getting accurate feedback on our behaviour and also from learning of our values dissonance. Typically when feedback is given, the individual displays defensiveness and this can impede learning. I suspect this happens at the collective level also in organisations and I will be seeking to identify this phenomenon in the organisations where I research.

Argyris and Schon's concept of espoused theory and theory in use is similar to the work of Rulla et al. (1978) who talk of "an ideal self" and "an actual self", each composed of values and attitudes that can be dissonant with one another. This lack of congruity between what people say they value and how they actually behave often arises because of the unconscious governing theories, values or world-views underpinning how people choose to act and which rarely get surface and reviewed. Such governing theories might be "to maximise winning and minimise losing" or "to avoid conflict", "to be rational" or "to minimise expressing negative feelings":

A person's governing values are typically expressed in an action strategy, which has consequences. Most commonly, the beliefs are assumptions about the other person's motives: unchecked ascriptions of the governing values of her theory-in-use, and behind these lie some worldview which includes the complete set of social rules governing behaviour. (Rulla 1978:17)

In a similar train of thought, Schein (1985) talks of the implicit underlying assumptions or unquestioned beliefs that can arise as part of an organisation's culture and which then unconsciously govern how individuals act at work. He concentrates on implicit or unconscious values (what he calls "basic assumptions") because they tend to be taken for granted and to be treated as non-negotiable. He believes it is in this psychological process that culture has its ultimate power and so becomes change resistant. Research into personal values as unconscious values, but part of the sum total of all the values within an organisation, seems to offer the possibility of new insights into the complexity of organisational culture and how change happens.

Schein also points out that, when organisations are made aware of the dissonance between what they say they value (espoused values) and how they actually behave
(values in use), there are strong forces to prevent them moving on it and learning from it because the dissonance produces anxiety. Argyris and Schon (1986) refer to theories-in-use being those implicit assumptions that actually guide behaviour. Both basic assumptions and theories-in-use have in common the idea that individuals neither confront nor debate why they prefer to act or to value one way of behaving over another, and hence are extremely difficult to change. To learn something new requires a critical examination and temporary destabilisation of the culture because the status quo is being challenged:

*Such learning is intrinsically difficult because the re-examination of basic assumptions temporarily destabilises our cognitive and interpersonal world, releasing large quantities of basic anxiety.* (Schein, 1994:22)

One of the great benefits of studying values is that usually the same dynamics that hold for individuals (espoused values and values in use) can be found operating at the collective level within organisations. In helping organisations, then, to better understand how they live out their values, I will also be helping their members better understand how they, at the individual level, reflect the same dynamics. This ability to influence the micro and the macro is a rare privilege for a consultant. Too often consultants only get to conduct research that offers benefits for organisational leaders and there is little direct benefit to employees. I intend to seize this opportunity and make very explicit the links between understanding personal and collective values as they play out in the workplace context and as they affect the other areas of members’ lives.

Schein alludes to the political context of organisational life but does not explicitly point to its power to act as a significant barrier to authentic conversations around how things actually happen. Ironically, it is at this point of anxiety (when the organisational leaders are confronted with behaviour that is seen to be significantly out of step with the organisation’s stated values) that I usually enter an organisation as a potential change agent, because some outside catalyst has already caused a disturbance and released anxiety.
Schein's work highlights the importance of looking at values at the collective level, as represented by the organisational culture:

Culture as a set of basic assumptions defines for us what to pay attention to, what things mean, how to react emotionally to what is going on, and what actions to take in various kinds of situations. (Schein 1994:22)

Quinn (1980:35) defines culture as:

Simply put, culture is the set of values and assumptions that underlie the statement "This is how we do things around here".

While for Baum (1989:201):

A culture comprises values and norms that affect people because the accompanying actions make sense and feel right.

In focusing on organisational culture, these researchers have contributed significantly to our understanding of the internal context of organisational life and its external manifestation – the peculiar culture or organisational personality that emerges and that distinguishes one organisation from another.

As early as the 1950s, Peter Drucker had made a connection between values, employees' experience of those values, and the resultant organisational performance. It was not until the advent of another seminal business text, by Peters and Waterman (1982), that the idea grabbed the attention of business leaders. Their research argued that if management focused on the values being promoted and acted out in their organisations, such attentiveness could be turned into a competitive advantage and an important ingredient in corporate success. The research of Deal and Kennedy's (1988) and Collins and Porras (1994) supported the idea that success in a business environment can be linked to values congruence and they concluded that successful companies placed a great deal of emphasis on values congruency in the workplace:
The crucial variable is not the content of a company's ideology, but how deeply it believes its ideology and how consistently it lives, breathes, and expresses it in all that it does. Visionary companies do not ask, "What should we value?" They ask, "What do we actually value deep down to our toes?" (Colins & Porras 1994:8)

Organisational values are seen to be different to personal values in that they are identified by the organisation as critical attributes of its success formula and have been identified prior to the individual joining the organisation and continue to exist when individuals leave. Typically, top management with little input from employees, selects the values and they are broadcast in organisational printed materials. Where the organisation espouses one set of values but operates out of another, the individual members are impacted in several ways. When individuals initially seek to join an organisation, the values espoused by the enterprise may be one of the criteria used by them to decide whether it is the sort of organisation they wish to belong to. Organisational psychologists such as Haire (1991) and Steers and Porter (1995) use the concept of "the psychological contract" to encapsulate the idea that people make unwritten and unspoken 'deals' with their employers about what they expect to get from an organisation and how they expect the organisation to behave. They join the organisation with certain needs and desires as well as skills. People expect to experience a work environment that will meet their needs, that will allow them to use their abilities and enable them to seek to satisfy many of their personal as well as professional needs. Where the organisation is able to satisfy these needs, the individual becomes more committed to the organisation and their satisfaction levels rise. Where the organisation is unable to meet their needs there is less commitment and less personal satisfaction.

Mason Haire (1991) takes this idea one step further. He sees work situations as characterised by a calculus of values where individuals make decisions around how much personal satisfaction will be traded for how many units of performance. Haire claims that personal values are often expressed in the form of unspoken sets of expectations about what the individual expects to experience from the organisation:

A psychological contract is implicitly formed between individuals and the organisations to which they belong. This contract...deals with the
organisation's expectations of the individual...it also deals with the individual's expectations of the organisation and its contributions to meet these expectations. (1991: 180-82)

My workplace experience researching with employees their workplace experiences, had suggested that these expectations included having personal values satisfied in areas such as enjoying a stimulating work environment; belonging and feeling part of a team; having opportunities to learn new skills; having personal contributions recognised and; being appreciated by management. My own experience of my personal unspoken psychological contract with each of my ex-employers also informed the authenticity of this internal and unspoken frame of reference that employees take into their places of work.

According to Mason Haire, the key feature of the psychological contract is that it is always there, although it is usually unspoken. I suspect the organisation's ability to live its espoused values will also affect personal satisfaction levels. Haire believes it is the compensating variables within the psychological contract that determine the extent to which individuals will trade their needs or values for compensating factors. For example, individuals might agree to work extra hours beyond what is contracted because they feel they are being compensated in terms of recognition or economic rewards.

In a major cross-cultural field study which looked at personal value systems of over 2500 managers in five countries, George England (1966) concluded that managers' personal values influenced their organisations and that, simultaneously, their personal value systems were influenced by organisational life. He maintains that values are related to such practical and important concerns as decision-making, managerial success, managerial satisfaction and organisational context differences. England concluded that values were influential in two ways, behaviour channeling and perceptual screening:

- Behaviour channeling was reflected in an individual's choice of problem solving and decision making processes
- Perceptual screening worked to reinforce existing perceptions by ensuring that individuals selectively recorded what they saw so that it reinforced their existing viewpoints.
Dugger (1988) looked at how personal values can be manipulated within organisations and identified four techniques, which he described as contamination, subordination, emulation and mystification:

**CONTAMINATION:** the values of others can either alter or reinforce an individual's personal values.

**SUBORDINATION:** individuals are persuaded or coerced to place greater value on others’ values and needs than on their own. Executives, for example, may be persuaded to put the organisation’s needs first and subordinate other values around family responsibilities.

**EMULATION:** individuals seek to emulate the values that they associate with successful people with whom they wish to identify. This can cause them to conform to the values being promoted by those in power and denigrate those values associated with others seen to be less successful.

**MYSTIFICATION:** refers to the process of confusing different values through association. There is typically a repositioning of negative values, for example as demonstrated by the Wall Street movie character Gordon Gecko (greed is good). Mystification can become the new story for why valuing money and organisational success over social consequences can be superimposed on the traditional interpretation of what should be valued in life.

The concept of a psychological contract fits well with my research approach as it allows for the idea that individuals can make several contracts inside and outside work, so that work does not necessarily have to fulfill all personal values - some values can be met elsewhere. My own life had taught me the validity of this concept as for many years I had to have my personal values around meaningful relationships and social intimacy met in my personal, rather than my professional, life. The lack of female peers in many of the organisations where I worked, and the competitive nature of many of my male peers, precluded the development of close relationships at work.
The research of Nichols and Day (1982) and Posner (1986) also lend support to Hall's argument that the organisational context can encourage individuals to operate out of more sophisticated values than their personal value set. Their research found evidence that groups can have the capacity to make higher ethical decisions than the average capacity of the individual members of the group. Conversely, Insko and Shapler (1972) found that, because of the phenomenon of 'diffusion of responsibility', individuals could also regress in groups. They found that individuals take greater risks when members of a group because they do not see the consequences as their responsibility. As a result, unethical decisions are more likely to be made in a group setting. Again, I had been in several organisations where the phenomenon, commonly referred to as passing the buck, aptly described how employees abdicated any sense of accountability for seeing that a job was well done.

Hall showed how people's values could change over time as experiences changed their world-views. Essential to the development of a new world-view, was a recognition that individuals had to develop the skills to be able to reflect on how they shaped their own worldviews and how others could have legitimate alternative views. Hall's work also highlighted that, while recognition of the importance of values is essential to understanding behaviour, it is the individual's choice, from a selection of values, that determines whether or not such choices give rise to creative and positive growth experiences or destructive and stagnating forces. I could see how this had played out in my own life. Having become aware of my personal values and the priority I place on the value of "insight", I had the choice to sign up for yet another degree or rest on my existing qualifications. I chose to continue to invest in new learning and new skills as the path that was more congruent with my personal values profile. I have continued to find my formal learning challenging and rewarding and a facilitator of my ongoing personal development.

Hall's typology also appears to better accommodate the new values that were being documented as characterising upcoming generations. Contemporary research studies, for example Yankelovich (1981), indicate that the generation dubbed Generation X seems to have a greater awareness of their inner needs, as well as a desire to seek to
satisfy them in the present rather than defer them until they have first secured their security and material (external) needs. This is in contrast to my generation and my parents' generation, which subscribed to a philosophy of deferred gratification and put values around material security before seeking to meet values around enjoyment and fulfillment.

Both Hall (1986) and Senge (1990) agree that the values promoted and acted out in organisations can affect individual development. Hall maintains that the behaviour and underlying values that are regarded as acceptable and are rewarded can, at the extremes, push individual development in polar directions. Where the values promoted by the organisation's systems are seen to be threatening, they can encourage individuals to regress to their foundation values (sustenance) so that these become the dominant or priority values. Where the values promoted by the organisation facilitate a nurturing environment, individuals can begin to develop new social skills and to self-actualise and move towards being able to seek to live their vision values (inner directed). Throughout the 90's, a substantial body of research emerged within the domain of business ethics to verify how values shaped the social context of organisations, providing opportunities to either promote or inhibit personal growth (Trevino, 1986; Pearson, 1995; Weiss, 1994; and Carmichael, 1992).

Hampden-Turner (1990), together with Trompenaars (1994), researched the macro cultural influence on the range of values adopted by organisations and how these in turn impact on the values adopted by individuals in different countries. They drew attention to the impersonality of the western corporate values by comparing western organisational design to that of Asian businesses:

Asians do not usually think of the company as a soulless machine. They do not try to imitate science by being impersonal and detached. The organisation is created in the image of a family with elder and younger brothers, what the Japanese call sempai-gohai, and with top managers as parents. Promotion by age maintains the family metaphor. (Hampden-Turner, 1990:73)
They argue that corporate cultures are essentially part of the macro-culture, and their research supports the idea that the individual's struggle for fulfillment at work reflects much of the same struggle that can be found at a societal level and at a cross cultural level in its search for meaning. Looking at how culture shapes the individual's search for fulfillment would be a fascinating research area, but was beyond the scope of my research framework. However I see that dynamic as a fractal of this research and an important consideration in seeking to understand the macro contexts of organisational values dynamics.

At a cross cultural level, Asian cultural theorists refer to a fear of cultural anomie in describing their apprehension at the encroachment of western values and western culture, and its perceived swamping of Asian culture. They point to the tension that now exists between traditional Asian values and the newer values imported from the West. Huntington (1997), too, makes a plea for Westerners to develop a deeper understanding of the fundamental values underpinning other civilisations. His plea echoes Schein's idea of surfacing basic assumptions as a precursor to cross-cultural understanding. Similarly, the new shifts towards a revaluing of the personal and inner world, now being seen in western society, can also be found in similar trends emerging in Asian societies. Anna Quindlen (1993) speaks of this revaluing of the personal and inner world in suggesting:

> There is a yawning hole in the psyche of America...where our sense of common purpose...and a spiritual satisfaction should be...while the rights of the individual are precious, at some deep level individualism alone does not suffice. There has been a failure to even acknowledge the soul's existence. (New York Times 1993:Oct 23)

**Creating A Space To Regenerate**

Having reviewed the principal theories on values at the personal, organisational and societal levels, and some of the relationships between them as outlined by recent research, I found many useful tools and insights from the work of others. I could employ this research in my own exploration of the external and internal dynamics impacting employee experiences at work.
However, in the extensive literature review I had undertaken, I was disappointed at the absence of any discussion of the central organising force within modern business organisations. In my experience this consists of the pre-eminence, and even fixation, that is given to the collection and reporting of numbers (financial accountability and performance) and the ways in which this central activity drives the design of organisations and determines who gets listened to, rewarded and devalued. My own understanding, and my rich consultancy experience has highlighted how it has been the attention, focus and priority awarded to the financial story within organisations that has suppressed any recognition of the social needs and values that employees bring into their places of work. This singular focus directly impacts on how the social context of an organisation gets managed, valued or devalued. Without a recognition and debate about the preeminence of externalities and especially numbers, possible cultural change seems hobbled from the start.

As publicly listed organisations become even more fixated on shareholder returns (Korten, 1995; Karpin, 1995; Handy, 1996; and Elkington, 1998) and experience their share price rising and falling according to their quarterly financial reports, so, too, the shapes of organisational contexts continue to be re-engineered in response to analysts’ expectations. When organisations announce staff layoffs their share price goes up and when they announce major employee acquisitions their share price falls. This commercial focus echoes Taylor’s original approach that awarded priority to maximising organisational returns at the expense of employees needs. I suspect it is because of the unquestioned priority given to the financial story within organisations that the move to more inclusive and employee consultative management practices has been stymied, despite all the academic research to show its overall benefits.

It seemed, therefore, that for change to happen, the legitimacy of the primacy given to the economic story needed to be challenged. Since this story was well entrenched within the corporate world, new information, a new perspective or, at the minimum, new interpretations of how and why change was necessary would be required. Rather than seeing social and economic progress as dualities, this new story would have to weave
them together as interdependent threads. This would involve beginning on the inside from a new mental model of what is important. It would involve moving from a consciousness centred on externalities and measurable data to a consciousness centred on internalities, intrapersonal skills and the quality of interpersonal relating within organisations. A focus on values seemed to offer the potential for such a story. In this new space from which a "theory P" perspective emerges, a new awareness can be brought to the rich backdrop of concepts, theories and research from existing values researchers (Argyris and Schon, Mason Haire, Schein and Brian Hall). Existing theories can be reframed, research approached in new ways and new questions asked of the latent potential that exists within modern workplaces when the suppressed is allowed to become visible. From this space, management's role is redefined as one of assisting individuals – employees and also external stakeholders - to reconcile their personal values and needs with the organisation's needs, so that a mutually beneficial way of relating can emerge. From here, life is seen as a social construction that is co-designed by participants; that we are not separate from each other but interdependent and our internal worlds are as important as our external world. This perspective sees that most people experience their internal world as being as problematic as their external world because the relationship between them is both dynamic and profound.

My personal experience of first workplace disillusionment and then growth, facilitated by some of the ideas implicit in a "theory P" approach to personal motivation, has been one of personal liberation and so I have sought to use this approach and its concepts in my work as a change agent. This perspective begins from an acknowledgement that any group not consciously structured is unjustly structured, because we each have different needs and capacities. This initial recognition shapes the processes I adopt in working with people and their workplace contexts. At the macro level, the groups can mean the organisation and at the micro level, it can mean the employee-group and the unacknowledged power dynamics that must be skillfully managed to ensure all voices are heard.

Schein (1985) talks of the implicit underlying assumptions or unquestioned beliefs which can arise as part of an organisation's culture and which then unconsciously govern
how individuals act at work. This perspective recognises that it is often unconscious or unquestioned beliefs and values that give rise to much of the dysfunctionality and misunderstanding between individuals and within groups. I have used Schein’s concept as a core in my work as a change agent and in my field research. Intuitively, people seem to know what I’m talking about.

My workplace experience suggests that, in an organisational context, a new awareness of the dissonance between what organisations say they value and how they actually behave, provides an opportunity for management to redesign their systems (Lagan: 1996). This allows organisations to better meet members needs and for employees to make more informed choices about the sorts of organisational contexts that best suit them.

Throughout the 90’s, psychological testing for candidates became the regular practice in many organisations. This initiative was largely driven by the desire to maximize organisational performance by securing the best talent as measured by these tests. The unintended consequence, however, was that the process made many individuals more aware and conscious of their individuality and personal preferences, and that specific organisational contexts were more suitable than others to their psychological makeup. In particular, the Myers Briggs profiling system awakened a new generation of employees, including myself, to the uniqueness of their internal worlds. A realisation that compatibility between individual needs and organisational needs had to be explicitly worked upon, was beginning to emerge, even if management did not yet have the skills to respond appropriately.

My personal value system, as mapped by the Hall-Tonna (Collins and Chippendale: 1991) values inventory, was revealed to be around challenging the status quo and being part of and contributing to a movement promoting a new order within organisations. The Hall-Tonna inventory had mapped my priority values as insight, dignity and change while the Myers Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI) profiled my personality type as that of catalyst. Becoming aware of my personal values had both fostered a trust of myself and helped me shape my career choices in order to have greater values integrity. In Myers Briggs terms, catalysts are people who are not comfortable with the status quo and
typically play a role in questioning it and changing it. Becoming aware that this was my preferred operating style has enabled me to become more comfortable with my frequent career changes and with myself and to become more daring in my role as workplace change agent. I now accept that my role is to make people uncomfortable, to discuss the undiscussable and to challenge and advocate for situation improvements. Becoming more aware of my personal values and preferred operating styles has also nurtured a greater acceptance of the diversity of others.

I was beginning to understand what is meant by the old maxim that before we can trust others, we must trust ourselves; because it is only by knowing whom we are that we can risk showing that person to the world. I needed to evolve a method of research that incorporated an awareness of all of the above complex factors, including my dual role as researcher and change agent, but I also needed to share my ongoing research findings in the public arena to help garner wider support for change.

PUBLIC VOICE

Just as I had developed my own awareness of the need to have integrity with my values, I wanted to develop a public awareness of how organisational leaders too could hone integrity between their stated values and the values being sought by their employees. The following article was written with this goal in mind. By championing the employee rather than the management perspective, it was designed simply to maintain an alternative voice in the existing management conversation. It sought to surface the contradictions employees faced in their day-to-day work situations and was designed to raise management’s awareness of their duty of care and the responsibilities this brings for managing the corporate cultures that emerge under their supervision.
What you don’t know about yourself can hurt you

Published Update, Vol.6 Women & Management Inc. 1996

A new phenomenon is emerging within the realms of strategic corporate management. It is being driven by a desire to gain a competitive advantage in the private sector and to achieve organisational congruence in the non-profit sector. Both have within their sights the goal of leveraging off the “psychic energy” that characterises the most successful high performers around the world. This resource usually lies dormant within organisations, yet it can make relatively undifferentiated management styles achieve extraordinary results.

What is the source of this potential yet elusive force? It begins with a focus on holism and it strives to achieve what the Japanese call “wa” or harmony. It is the essence of organisations, the sum total of values and beliefs that exist in and that make up the unique personalities: it is their organisational culture.

Corporate culture is that silent and all pervasive force that irrevocably shapes each organisation’s way of doing business. It can influence employees to “go that extra mile” or quietly to subvert the organisation’s goals as retribution for its perceived dismal relationship with individual members. It will determine levels of motivation, commitment, job satisfaction, as well as an organisation’s ability to learn as a community. Yet an organisation’s culture often remains a stranger to those who would seek to shape it.

How many of today’s leaders can claim, hand on heart, that they know:

- What their organisations truly stand for, rather than what they say they stand for?
- How their people truly achieve their organisational tasks rather than how management would like to think they do?

- What exact lengths will managers go to get the business, despite the codes of conduct and codes of ethics that might well espouse another set of values?

In many cases, codes are unconsciously designed to make members feel good about themselves, rather than to serve as beacons in the gray murky waters of conflicting interests that beset most organisations today.

We have all long recognised that the psychological contract between employer and employee has changed. Although employers can no longer offer security and a career for life in exchange for large chunks of an individual’s time and a range of increasingly sophisticated skills, little real action has yet been taken to create enriched work environments where intrinsic job satisfaction might just offset market volatility.

Knowing your organisational culture, or more importantly, the values that go to make up this culture, is one way to ensure that management is able to walk the talk and enable people to enjoy congruence in their workplace experience. Only with such congruence can employees be assured that what they are led to expect is what they will get.

This does not mean that enlightened visionaries or even democratic managers must manage organisations only that managers cease to create or perpetuate those mixed messages that so often lead to cynicism and low productivity.

If we, as managers, are serious about eliminating internal politicking that is so often the by-product of unresolved resentment arising from unrealistic or unmet employee expectations, then we must seek to serve first those that we would lead. This means creating an environment where employees have some control over their daily workplace experiences because they
know what to expect and their experience is in line with those expectations.

What are some of the values that employees in Australian organisations are looking to have satisfied? Our experience shows that they are few and relatively simple. Predominantly there's a value around “belonging” which encompasses concepts of ownership and recognition. A value of “achievement” whether it's simply task completion or accomplishing work related goals. A value of “respect”, of a desire by employees to experience the respect of their peers and managers. And lastly, a value around “learning” or recognising the dignity of labour and the desire by the majority of employees to grow and develop from their workplace experiences.

The benefits of corporate congruence are many. Organisations characterised by relationships of integrity find little difficulty in achieving customer service cultures because their members are only too willing to treat others as they themselves are treated. Expensive corporate image campaigns become redundant as employees become the willing and enthusiastic messengers of the company’s vision. Such marketing leverage is visible in worldwide successful operation such as The BodyShop and Johnson & Johnson. These companies have made values their strategic domain.

Perhaps most important of all, by growing strong values-based cultures, leaders enable their followers to learn how to become comfortable with their ever-changing environments. Their employees know their core company values and this knowledge equips them with the internal radar they need to manage changing work conditions, increasing government regulations, new geographical frontiers, foreign cultural norms or technological innovations, all of which can present new ethical and commercial challenges on a daily basis.

Finding out who you are, is the first step in any meaningful organisational development programme.
CHAPTER 3
THE SELF-REFLECTIVE RESEARCHER

...without closing it off or closing off the self, amounts to forming or watching over the threshold of the world (Irigaray: 1993:141)

Research Approach

In researching the dialectic of personal and organisational values in the workplace, my research evolved on two fronts; the first, reflecting and making sense of my own personal experience of the phenomena; the second, drawing on secondary data arising from the field work I was witnessing and reporting upon during the research period. My research therefore evolved as an interactive exchange of personal reflections on my own experiences and field-research reflections on the day-to-day interactions of others as recorded by me as part of my professional role within the world of commercial organisations. This dual paradigm approach was necessitated because of the research design restrictions imposed by the organisations and also the academy’s protocols for research involving humans that effectively precluded me from using any field research as primary data. This meant that the only way I could break the public silence on the values tensions being experienced by employees was to highlight my personal experience of the phenomena and draw on my published accounts of the experiences of others to further illustrate my account.

Throughout the research period 1994 – 2000, I was employed as a full-time professional change agent working within Australian corporations. The published reports presented upon completion of each organisational intervention constitute the secondary data used in this thesis as well as data drawn from a wide range of published media articles (also based on experiences captured in these reports) and the business ethics text book, Lagan (2000), I authored during the research period. This secondary data is complemented by primary data which consists of my own documented experience of grappling with the
tensions between my personal values and those of the organisations within which I worked as well as between the varied organisations I work with in my role as a management consultant.

Mintzberg (1983) draws attention to the difficulties of studying the complexity of human experiences in the workplace through research methods that often more suit the researcher than the researched reality. Mintzberg’s observation belies the limitations faced by many researchers that force them to resort to specific research methodologies because their preferred ways of researching are not available to them. Such was my experience. The autocratic nature of organisational management is such that invariably it is only possible to consult with management and ask their permission to conduct research in their domain. Whereas I could openly seek and obtain their consent to draw upon the field research for my thesis, and such permission was readily granted on the condition that confidentiality was maintained, management saw it as its prerogative to decide such things for their employees. I was therefore precluded from seeking employees’ individual permissions. An action research qualitative methodology would have been my preferred approach however I was forced to adopt more traditional qualitative case study research methodologies to conform to the specific conditions imposed for collecting the data. The idea that employees participate in the co-design of a research intervention, such as advocated by the action research approach, was too alien to the “controlling” management paradigm in which these organisations operated. Therefore my field research proceeded using traditional qualitative case study research methodologies informed by an interpretive approach.

As an interpretive researcher my goal was primarily to generate rich insights. Qualitative research involves the use of qualitative data, such as case studies, interviews, documents and participant observation to understand and explain social phenomena and all of these processes were included in my research design. The philosophical base of interpretive research is hermeneutics and phenomenology (Boland, 1985). Interpretive studies attempt to understand phenomenology through the meanings that people assign to them – social phenomena - and interpretive methods of research focus on the complexity of human “sense making” as the situation emerges. Walsham (1995a) argues that there are four types of generalisations from interpretive case studies: the development of concepts, the generation of theory, the drawing of

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specific implications, and the contribution of rich insight. As well as rich insights, I was also interested in contributing to the development of new theories and critiquing existing theories in their role as a type of "lens" through which participants viewed and responded to their world. Above all, I hoped my research findings might contribute to the eventual development of new theories that would champion employees’ needs.

According to Higgs (1998) there are five major assumptions concerning the construction and nature of knowledge which underlie qualitative methods of research which also guided my research:

- there are multiple constructed realities because different people have different perceptions
- the process of inquiry changes both research and participant
- the research seeks a deep understanding of the particular
- it is more useful to understand events than establish cause and effect
- how research is conducted and interpreted is “value bound”.

As both the organisation’s leaders and I shared the same end goal of bringing about a situation improvement, I found I was given considerable freedom in choosing the processes I could employ in the field. This freedom enabled me to use new paradigm thinking and processes even though old paradigm management thinking had set the boundaries of the research methodology I could use.

The ethical guidelines for field research involve securing participants’ permission but, since management had excluded such consultation, I was unable to draw upon any original transcripts in writing-up this thesis. Instead, secondary data sources were used in my attempt to present an insiders’ view of organisational life and overcome the difficulties Jackall (1988) and others have identified in accessing commercial organisations for research. So here again in my role as research student I am coming from a space that is informed by the latest thinking in the academy but applying it within a traditional research approach in the hope that, when the old is interrelated with the new, a situation improvement of sorts can emerge that is better than existed before - a threshold vision of what’s possible when new perspectives are brought to bear on traditional ways of doing things and new information is exposed to critical debate.
I began my research just as I have lived most of my life - outwardly appearing to acquiesce to one set of values while shaping my actions according to a different set of internal values and drivers. While I experienced a degree of discomfort at what might appear as duplicity, I felt sufficiently confident in the research process I had chosen, that the research would have integrity and still allow me to explore the dimensions of organisational and personal values with participants, while being able to deliver the outcomes anticipated by the research sponsors. My real discomfort came from my inability to argue sufficiently for the value of my research in a language that would allow the sponsors to embrace a more inclusive research approach. What sustained me, and in this respect separated this mission from any I had undertaken in my professional career, was the strength of my conviction that the information that would be gained from accessing these organisations would contribute significantly to the body of academic knowledge necessary to convince organisational leaders to change their current ways of managing people.

My exploration had as its main goal to gain authentic insights, from actual workplaces, of how personal, organisational and societal values impact on each other. I went searching for answers to specific questions:

1. Were employees, like myself, aware of their personal values and looking to have these met in the workplace?

2. What was the nature, on the positive side, of the potential for co-creative development of both employees and organisations and, on the negative side, of any dissonance in the relationship between personal and work values?

3. How do value changes in the external environment affect organisational and personal values?

4. Will seeking to uncover and expose employee stories of their lived work experiences provide insights into why, at the rhetorical level organisations espouse Theory Y values while, their internal contexts continue to perpetuate Theory X dynamics?

5. What could the ethos or culture of organisations be if there was a closer alignment of personal and organisational values?

Although the last 15 years has seen the emergence of research specifically looking at the impact of "values" as a part of the study of organisational cultures, much of this falls into two categories. The first category has tended to deal with the macro level of
organisational life, often within the context of national societal cultures and the interrelationship between the two, (England 1966, 1972, Hofstede 1989, Trompenaars 1994). The second approach, pursued by scholars such as Argyris and Schon (1974, 1978), Schein (1980) and Bennis (1966), concentrates on exploring the micro or individual processes of meaning making. My research is located in this latter area of individual meaning making as it relates to the interactions between personal, organisational and societal values.

My approach to researching values is informed by the Rokeach definition of a value as:

An enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence. (Rokeach, 1973:5)

I liked Rokeach’s definition because it recognizes both the interpretative and comparative dimensions i.e. some values are given greater priority than others. My research was further informed by the work of Dr. Brian Hall at Santa Clara University, whose research into personal and organisational values over a 40-year period has underpinned much of my own work as a management consultant and whose methodology in values profiling had also been used to map my personal values profile.

My literature review suggested that workplaces were struggling to move from a McGregor’s Theory X orientation - where management takes an instrumental approach to people management and employees are manipulated in the same way as other organisational resources - to a Theory Y orientation - which seeks to place more intrinsic value on people and give greater recognition to their social needs. At the time of the research a Theory Y orientation was symbolized by the new “values-based management philosophies” being espoused in the organisations where I worked as well as in contemporary business texts. I was keen to explore how Theory X and Theory Y dynamics were played out in organisations today and what would be necessary to encourage more managers to adopt a Theory Y orientation.

Argyris had identified two theories of action to understand how people make knowledge. Model I (conflict model) is a defensive theory that limits feedback and so inhibits individual and organisational learning, while Model II is a normative theory
that promotes a spirit of open inquiry and seeks to promote learning and can be likened to Irigaray's (1984) idea of "staying out in the open", that is seen as being characteristic of the feminine way of being. By focusing on the values dimension, I hoped my research would also contribute to a greater understanding of how Model II type organisational learning contexts might be nurtured.

I had already undertaken a pilot study when engaged by a firm of chartered accountants to work with a group of their senior women who failed to make it to Partner level. Using Reason's (1994) co-operative inquiry methodology, as co-inquirers we discovered that the dominant values-in-use of the women in the research group did not accord with the dominant values of the "control group", a group of Partners who had consented to have their values "read". Whatever the implications for the firm the implications for the women in the group were that they had to find meaning beyond work or at least find a balance between their workplace identity and their social identity in order to avoid personal stress. At the same time, they also had to find some values synergy with the organisation's values in order to remain committed to its goals and deal with the lack of promotional opportunity occasioned by a values misalignment. It was this pilot study and my own experience of values incongruence that fueled my desire to explore the values of organisational life.

In my analysis of the published reports of my organisational interventions, I give particular and detailed attention to my work within three publicly listed companies, as being representative of the general trends in employee experiences within the twenty-three organisations I had worked within over the six-year research period. These three organisations were selected because they were broadly representative of the general social contexts of the majority of the organisations where I worked during this time. All three organisations also belong to a common industry sector. In choosing organisations from the same industry, I hoped to highlight the differences and similarities between the organisations, as reflected in their organisational culture, rather than those that might arise from differences in industry contexts. The interventions were conducted over periods of between 12 and 24 months and involved multiple interviews and workshops with organisational members. Each organisational intervention was characterised by a common methodology.
The Executive in all three had commissioned my intervention in response to an external event or perceived need. This external event, typically, had forced senior management to question their modus operandi and the organisational culture that supported it. To safeguard confidentiality, pseudonyms have been used and each pseudonym was chosen to reflect the character of the organisation as described by its members. Two of the three organisations have since ceased to exist, both having been subsumed into larger organisations within 12 months of the research being completed.

The first, Finance.Com was a significant (in relative size and market share) wholesale provider of stock broking and financial services. It enjoyed a high media profile and public reputation for being a "clever" organisation with a tough culture that drove its people hard in the pursuit of maximising shareholder profits. The catalyst for my intervention was adverse media publicity centering on accusations of systemic bullying of staff.

The second organisation, Solid Finance, was a retail financial organisation. It was more than ten years old and had built a public reputation based on conservative traditions and client service. At the time of the research it was actively seeking to take over another organisation and wanted to gain insights into its own culture to better accommodate the anticipated influx of new employees with potentially different cultural perspectives from future acquisitions.

The third organisation, Yuppie Finance, also a retail organisation, had a much younger workforce than either Finance.Com or Solid Finance. This organisation had made technological innovation its competitive advantage. It espoused an organisational culture characterised by initiative and innovation. They had recently been taken over by a hostile competitor and their new Executive had commissioned the research to identify synergies between the two organisational cultures.

**Encountering Resistance**

Although I had been commissioned by the CEOs of each organisation to research cultural norms, I quickly discovered that there was simply no way any of these chief executives were going to allow me to consult with their employees on the design of the
intended organisational intervention; neither were they interested in empowering individuals by the processes of co-design. Despite my appeals, I could not convince them as to the importance of understanding why people behaved the way they did and each made it clear to me that their priority was to find out how events happened so they could be fixed. For them, the purpose of the research was to meet the organisation's needs, as defined by their (the Executive) frame of reference, and their needs. From their perspective, the participants had no "rights" nor should they be given options about participation. And so, faced with the real danger of losing their permission to conduct the research at all, I adapted my research design to conform to these external - to the research - expectations so as not to alienate the research sponsors and risk being denied access to their workplace contexts. In the event, as the research evolved and particularly during the workshop phases, I was able to incorporate inclusive research processes that facilitated greater voluntary participation by participants despite management's dismissal of any need to do so. This was a fortuitous by-product and, although there was no intentional duplicity, it did teach me that the way in which the research proposition is presented could differ at different stages and to different audiences.

In the corporate world, the need for control (Kotter and Heskett: 1992) has been noted as the dominant mode of operation. Managers are typically very uncomfortable with embarking on initiatives where they cannot anticipate, predict or control the results. Drawing on the experience gained from several similar interventions amongst peer organisations, I sought to offset resistance by reassuring management that there was much to be gained from a richer undertaking of their organisational cultures. I would build a business case for the focus on values as a way of understanding culture. I posited that the research would potentially expose how the organisation's informal value system was sabotaging its overall business success. I would suggest that if management wanted to develop a high performance work culture, then the collective learning that would flow from the research was a good place to start in building a stronger culture based on shared understandings. I reasoned that such an opportunity was infrequent in organisational life despite the growing recognition of the importance of organisational culture to overall success, (Kotter and Heskett: 1992, Peters and Waterman: 1982, Deal and Kennedy: 1988, Senge: 1990). The ethics of research also dictated that I forewarn
them that the findings could be confronting and painful as organisational members
came to recognise that they did not always act with integrity with their stated values.

Being largely restricted to the use of secondary data in presenting others’ experiences
meant that my own personal experience became a source of primary data for inclusion
in this thesis. To do this, I locate myself within the postmodernist movement, which
includes scholars such as Foucault (1926 – 1984) and Derrida (1930 –1998) and which
acknowledges the importance of the researchers’ own experience and the validity of
drawing upon this experience in seeking to understand the world in which we find
ourselves. So Van Manen’s (1990:127) emphasis on the construction of a research text
as involving a dialectic process - "the dialectic of inside and outside, of embodiment
and disembodiment, of separation and reconciliation" - guides my personal story. I am
especially attracted to this phenomenological input, highlighting this inner and outer
dialectic in my own life, as it was the source of many of the frustrations I had
experienced and continue to experience with organisational life. It conflicts with my
internal view of myself. By starting from my own individual everyday experience and
traveling through this experience to the experiences of others, I hoped to arrive at a
richer understanding of the inter-relationship of personal and organisational values.
This phenomenological perspective recognises that we gain important insights into life's
events by studying how they occur in our own life. Experience is seen as the source of
knowing, and the basis of individual behaviour. For researchers like myself, it assists
us to better understand our personal perspectives so that we can remain watchful of the
integrity of our processes and ensure we do not project our story onto others.

The work of phenomenologists including Husserl (1962, 1977) and Heidegger (1962)
contributed to my research analysis by providing the lens through which I sought to
create a new space where the research findings could be reviewed and reframed to see if
reordering the constituent parts helped to better understand their relationship to each
other. Husserl advocated a return to observing people's experience of their everyday
world, while suspending any theoretical understanding and bias. He was at pains to
point out that the individual's consciousness is not passive. For him, the very essence of
consciousness is its intentionality, its directedness. It is this intentionality that causes
the individual to search for personal understanding of the surrounding world. And
perception, in phenomenological terms, is the basic mode of intentionality, so that we

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create our personal world as a perceived world. It is from this perspective that I seek to understand the dynamics between the existing management frames of reference in organisations today. Heidegger's (1962) work incorporated two key concepts:

- **Being in the world** - to understand people, we must understand their social context, since they exist in the world and to separate the person from their context is artificial, because the very essence of a person is its being in a world.

- **Being in the world with others** - recognising that individuals were also part of networks of interpersonal relationships, so that your experience of yourself or another person is also shaped by interpersonal relationship experiences. Reflective individuals are recognised as being both aware of themselves (reflective) and aware of their world, as well as being conscious of their awareness (self-reflective). (Heidegger: 1962, Husserl: 1977).

This perspective seemed ideal for reviewing my personal experience of personal and workplace values tensions. It seeks to explore how I make sense of the workplace context (being in the world) as it relates to my personal values and expectations and also how I experience others at work (being in the world with others). Further, it seeks to explore how the experience of others in turn further impacts on both personal and workplace values.

A phenomenologist believes that the quality of life improves when people become conscious of their values and act in accord with them - an active subject. Each person is seen as the only one who can live that particular life and an active, experiencing person is seen as the core of every human action. People's minds and bodies are recognised by the phenomenologist as always inter-related, so that at any given moment experience is both mental and physical. In looking at how meaning is constructed, Merleau-Ponty (1962) developed a phenomenological position that bridged the gap between idealism (knowledge comes from within the person) and empiricism (reality exists and is external to the individual’s interpretation). From this point of view meaning was envisaged as being created between the person and the world. He called this “co-constitution of meaning.” Meaning is created in the exchange, the dialectic, between self and other, rather than residing in one or the other; meaning occurs in between, co-created by the participants – another threshold of sorts.
Here in this thesis (as in my everyday professional work) I go from my personal values as "a being at home with itself" into the external world of organisational values, in order to assess the nature and effectiveness of the workplace context arising from the interaction of personal and organisational values. Always, in doing my research for this thesis, I am standing on the threshold between my own inner world and the world of workplaces I am examining. And it is the awareness, acceptance and challenge of that infusion of my inner personal life into my exteriority - using that fusion as a way of understanding both the world and self simultaneously, 'the inner enlightening the outer while the outer illuminates the inner' - that seems to me to be the hallmark of the feminist approach as I was able to live it out in this research despite the constraints within which I had to work.

Here, I am informed by my personal values, values formed from all my past experiences, in domestic places and in other workplaces (all inextricably interfused) and the workplace values, the values of the employees and the values of the organisations, are inevitably finding their way into me, causing me to question my way of being as I do theirs. This continuous movement between my interiority and exteriority is the core of my method of understanding here. That same movement is precisely what I am investigating - how employees bring their personal values into the organisational context and what happens then, in that threshold place, where personal and workplace values bump up against each other.

My own personal journey in values was at the core of this eagerness to see a more humane, inclusive and transcendental model of organisational life emerge. Born into a world of prejudice and virtual apartheid on two levels, both gender and religio-cultural, and socialised into a belief system that “feminine” values were not appropriate to the workplace, I had begun to explore the ‘who am I’ when I first enrolled to study social ecology at Masters level. I was instinctively drawn to the exploration of personal values as I studied feminist theory. This was driven more by a need to understand my own personality drivers than to understand feminism per se. The notion of the ‘inner ecology’ was not something I instinctively embraced. I had succeeded, after a fashion, in the corporate world by denying the feminine and adopting ostensibly male values. However, I was encouraged by my supervisors to explore other perspectives, other paradigms, and in particular feminist literature. Through this, I came to understand the
importance of context in shaping personal worldviews and to recognise what I had become through a complex confluence of social and workplace influences as well as what I brought to a social situation, whether in an organisation or outside of one. I began to see organisations as social organisms, capable of having a cultural life that sat separate from its purpose or at least co-existing with it. I began also to reflect on past experiences of workplace cultures that had unintentionally spawned adverse impacts on its overall performance as well as its members.

I came to see that I could be two people inside an organisation and, that the conflict between these two people could — and did — significantly shape my responses at work. While the majority of my experiences in organisations had been fulfilling, on at least two occasions I found myself in fundamental disagreement with the management ethos and in both cases chose to leave rather than work through the difficulties. When I started to work with Brian Hall’s (1973) research, I learned that it was the tension between my personal values and the values of the organisations I had rejected, which had led to the conflict. So, alongside my academic pursuit of understanding, I was also keen to learn more about how others experienced their workplace reality and whether personal values were a factor in shaping workplace culture and a determinant of how people performed.

To inhabit is the fundamental trait of man’s being - To perceive is the usual dimension of the feminine, of women, who, it seems, remain within perception, without closure, staying out in the open, always attuned to the outside, to the world. Senses always alert. To perceive, to remain within the perception of the world without closing it off or closing off the self, amounts to forming or watching over the threshold of the world. Changing in response to the era, to place, to time. (Irigaray: 1993:141)

Adopting a feminist perspective, I came to the research looking for an alternative way of looking at workplace dynamics arising from the interior feminine-personal-relational perspective - as an alternative to the current dominance of the externally oriented masculine-hierarchical-dissonance model. Irigaray suggests (1993:5) that, if we thought through the nature of the difference between the feminine and masculine "ways of being-in-the-world", we might observe in that difference the dimensions of the feminine mode of relating (possible in both men and women) as an alternative paradigm
for approaching the problems we experience in our contemporary world. As Vandana Shiva (1988:233) suggests:

Recovering the feminine principle as respect for life [life as relating] in nature and society appears to be the only way forward for men as well as for women. The metaphors and concepts of mind deprived of the feminine principle have been based on seeing nature and women as passive, and finally as dispensable. But this dominant mode of organising the world is today being challenged by the very voices it has silenced. These voices, muted through subjugation, are now quietly but firmly suggesting that the western male has produced only one culture, and that there are other ways of structuring the world.

What I am suggesting here is that, when I "think through" the feminine/masculine difference, I see in the feminine principle an alternative way of understanding the personal needs of workplace employees and providing alternative ways for personal-organisational relating in practice. It offers a redeeming manner of being in the workplace that tends to replace what was formerly a pattern of oppositional subjugation and dissonance with an openness that allows for the highest possible degree of mutually beneficial relating. It finds its origin in an ethic of care (Gilligan: 1982) as an alternative moral construct to the ethic of rights that is implicit in the current economic order (Rokeach: 1973). I was looking to see how this might emerge in today's workplaces and how it might shape a new way of relating. And Irigaray's suggestion of the potential implicit in implementing the feminine principle was of additional assistance to me in my study of the work-place, in that she follows it up with a discussion of the importance of the notion of "place" itself - and of ways in which woman is commonly regarded as place, "place-for":

As for woman she is place...I shall affirm that the masculine is attracted to the feminine as place. But what place does the masculine offer to attract the feminine? His soul? ... the masculine has to constitute itself as a vessel to receive and welcome. (Irigaray, 1993:39)

It is in taking up that notion of woman-as-place, woman being used as "place-for" - as a metaphor for workplace relations - that the usefulness of thinking through the issue of masculine/feminine difference becomes obvious.
Marx (1818–1833) analyzed in detail the repercussions (e.g. inevitable alienation) for workplace relations arising from the fact that the labour of the employee, and consequently the employee herself, is made into a "place-for" the profits of the organisation. So the feminine-masculine dialectic is seen to be an appropriate metaphor for how, when masculine oriented workplace values are dominant, the employee, as I had experienced, tends to be seen as a "place-for" (a means for) externals, the production of products and profit making, thus alienating all mutuality of benefit in the interaction of personal values with organisational values. In so far as, within the masculine perspective within our society, the maternal-feminine is seen as a place for the desires of man, at least to that extent, and probably more so, the employee is seen as a place to be used for the profits of the organisation - without there being offered reciprocally an equally responsive place within the organisation’s value system for enhancing the well-being (values integrity) of the employee.

What Irigaray suggests is that, in this situation, ethically, that is, for the sake of mutually beneficial relating, the masculine - that is, the organisation - needs to constitute itself also, as a "place-for". It needs to reverse to the position of being open as a vessel to receive and welcome, that which can potentially fulfill it - even more than it now imagines. And what place should it offer? It's soul. That is, the open revelation of its inner relations, a willingness to discuss openly ways of mutually beneficial relating. Which is precisely how it becomes that "being-at-home-with-itself" already discussed as a characteristic activity of the feminine-personal-relational way of approaching the workplace. The poet David Whyte (1994) claims that “soul” is a measure of our belonging in the world and when there is little sense of belonging, there is very little sense of soul. It is in relation to this suppression of employees’ opportunity to realise a sense of belonging at work, that the feminine perspective (a “being-at-home-with-itself”) can be seen to offer a potential antidote to Marx’s sense of workplace alienation by recognising employees needs to reconnect with their inner world and find a sense of soul at work. This seeking to better, through research and relational activity, the conditions of existence (in this case in the workplace), is what connects my personal fate with that of the other participants in each organisational intervention.
My experience of the field research was one of joy and frustration. Joy, in the sense that every day in the field seemed to bring fresh evidence of the absolute relevance of a focus on personal values if workplaces were to become more nurturing environments for their members. Frustration that I found so few organisational leaders interested in rethinking their current management approaches. This thesis, combining as it does my personal story with the stories told to me inside these organisations, seeks to be part of the attempt to introduce "sacred workplaces" Lincoln and Denzin (1994). I want to highlight how employees are not only "a place for" the desires of the organisation, a place for products and profits; but can also be seen as capable of engaging in reviewing organisational value priorities and workplace re-designs to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. I want my research to contribute to a body of knowledge that responds to employees' needs and recognises that they too have a role to play in knowledge creation at work and in the business media; that workplaces are living systems where the vitality of the organisation is a reflection of the vitality of its members.

To facilitate my personal, and growing professional, interest in this area, and to coincide with the beginning of my research, I accepted a new professional position where I could work full time in the organisational values area. My new position was that of business ethics consultant within the corporate sector. At the time business ethics was evolving to become a discipline to be applied to the study of organisational behaviour as described by Kaptein (1998:48):

*Organising ethics in a systematic way, puts at least three questions to us: What is the current situation, what is the desired situation, and how can the desired situation be achieved?*

I sought to use these questions (amounting to "forming or watching over the threshold of the world"), to mark the boundaries of my organisational research interventions during the research period.

By seizing the opportunity to locate myself within an organisation whose core activity focused on organisational values and ethics I found myself in what seemed the ideal position to honour a goal of social ecologists, that is to seek to ensure that research and praxis develop simultaneously. As I progressed and developed my professional competency, I came to realise that there is rarely such a phenomenon or person as a
change agent. It is not a competency which one acquires and then receives accreditation for. Rather, it involves becoming the agent of change and facilitating the creation of a new area of knowledge and expertise by finding ways of connecting knowledge with the issues people are grappling with at the time.

Social ecologists are essentially grappling with self in society and a key to self for me is personal values. The inter-disciplinary world of social ecology, where there is a commitment to situation improvement at both the personal and interpersonal levels, has characterised every organisational intervention in which I have been involved. Peter Reason (1994) and John Heron (1998) write about the return of spirituality to science to challenge us to think more deeply about how we use our research and, more broadly, our science inquiries, not only "to know, and understand", but also to grow spiritually - the "internal commitment". Peter Senge (1990) illustrates how evolved organisations not only honour the instrumental factor of work but also the sacredness of work. Sacred work and sacred workplaces are seen as social contexts where employees are valued for themselves - for their intrinsic value, not just for the instrumental purpose they serve. Other researchers, too, like Lincoln and Denzin (1994:583) point out that:

A sacred science would be respectful of our humanity. A sacred science would be supportive of our struggle for dignity. It would lead us to understand how we can throw off oppression and help others to do likewise.

Working as an employee within an organisation and being engaged in research on how employees experience workplaces, I am reminded of Freire's (1972) argument that our own liberation is intimately connected with the liberation of others. Writing in the media about organisational experiences provides me with an alternative avenue to assist others to recognise sources of workplace oppression and how lack of personal awareness keeps us all oppressed. At the personal level this role of chartist helps me to lower my frustration level at the slow pace of change and so I can feel better about myself as I reclaim some integrity with my core values by exposing in the public arena that which gets suppressed and hidden in workplaces where I intervene. I want to assist others to empower themselves just as others have helped me. In reviewing my writing outputs in the business press, I have gradually become aware that I write from the employee perspective despite being an executive manager myself. In reflecting on this,
I found I was writing from that wounded part of myself that so often had felt marginalised. In choosing to champion the marginalised, I was also seeking to reclaim past experiences to transform them into something more positive. Writing business articles and opinion columns became an effective way of raising my awareness of my tacit knowledge. It also made me aware that I write more from the heart when writing as an advocate, and more from my intellect when writing my industry reports as well as here in my thesis. I became aware that I marginalise and control the idealist within me and restrict my personal disclosures to specific outlets of expression. I am willing to champion the cause of others but still tend to draw back from exploring the scary territory of my own fears. Writing can therefore be seen as part of the experiential research-learning process:

*Writing is a kind of self-making or forming. To write is to measure the depth of things, as well to come to a sense of one's own depth. (Van Manen 1990:126-127)*

Wright (1998) discussing creativity and learning, quotes psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut (1984) who says that creativity defines a particular relationship between the self and the environment:

*The creative individual, whether in art or science is less psychologically separated from his surrounds than the non-creative one: the "I-you" barrier is not as clearly defined. (Kohut 1984:112-113)*

I like to think that my public voice – both writing and public speaking – facilitated richer reflections as suggested by Wright than did my field research and therefore enriched the secondary data that became the source material for this thesis. Here I could expose to critical public debate the issues I was uncovering in these organisations that were undiscussable in their home context. My multiple roles as researcher, advocate and active participant enabled me to consolidate and transform these experiences into an immediate output of advocacy within the business world and its media. For example, during the research period I authored over fifty articles, several interweaved throughout this thesis, in the “Australian Financial Review” the premier business media paper in the country. This paper typically allocated less than 10% of its coverage to the social context of business. Typically its coverage is devoted to marketplace behaviours - mergers, acquisitions, analyst reviews, industry research, stock and shares movements and executive promotions, transfers and departures. It
focuses on externalities at the expense of lived experiences and it extends the business paradigm of paying attention to the managerial perspective at the expense of the employee experience of workplaces. Into this world of exteriority, I managed to insert a regular column that gave voice to a concurrent story of organisational life that spoke to the interior worlds that co-existed with the external mechanisations being reported upon. It was as yet a tiny voice but by the end of the thesis research period it had been joined by a chorus of others who shared this new value system and sang up the limitations of the status quo system that denied the importance of employees’ perspectives and experiences. I like to think that these articles helped form part of the wedge that held the door open for the new business philosophies around sustainability and social accountability that were beginning to move into the mainstream by the close of the century.

Research Methods

The Academy’s requirement that the reporting of research involving human beings must secure the voluntary consent of the participants was unable to be met in my field research as management had made the decision to participate on behalf of its employees. This meant that for the purposes of this thesis I had to restrict my source material to the use of secondary data sources. These secondary data sources consisted of the consolidated consultant reports that were produced at the conclusion of each organisational intervention and the published papers and articles - over 50 published articles and a management-book - as well as the materials from public presentations (over 220) made during the research period that were also based on the experiences recorded in these organisations. I was especially frustrated at my inability to request individual permissions to use the field research as primary data in the three organisations featured in this thesis since I had sought and secured such permission from their organisational leaders. I had little doubt that participants too would have willingly provided their permission as they had overwhelmingly responded in positive ways to the opportunities provided by the research. It seemed yet another one of life’s ironies that a process designed to protect the welfare of participants was in fact working against the very situation improvement they desired by preventing their experiences being accessed by the academy. I wanted to find a way to meet the academy’s ethical requirements and at the same time honour the hopes and expectations of those who
shared their stories with me that the telling of their stories would help bring about the desired improvements. It seemed the best way forward was to incorporate as many of participant’s direct quotes into the published reports, articles, papers and public presentations that I was engaged in throughout the research period so that a public record of ongoing experiences was evolving in tandem with the research which could then be drawn upon as legitimate secondary data sources when I finally came to write up my thesis.

The core data on which this thesis draws upon therefore consisted of a critical review of this secondary data namely my published reports and articles of my experiences as a change agent in three specific organisations. I did not draw upon any original interview materials and in fact was precluded from doing this as I had moved jobs by the time I was writing up the research and no longer had access to original transcripts.

The research methods adopted within these three organisations were governed by an ethic of care and I was acutely aware that participants should not be treated as a means to an end but should be approached, respected and valued as human beings. As much as it was within my power to influence, I ensured the research methodology used afforded participants with opportunities to decide the extent of their individual involvement in the research. In conducting the interviews and facilitating the workshops I sought to structure data collection in a manner that protected individual’s privacy and safety from any sort of retaliation by other organisational members. Workshop participants were requested to observe “Chatham House” rules before workshops began. No one was ever pressed to participate or provide more information than they volunteered. In interviews participants were free to deviate from the inventory of questions and elaborate on any area of concern of their choosing. I also secured a commitment from management at the beginning of each intervention that I could share the research findings with all participants and have my conclusions verified by them before presenting my final report. In this way I sought to fulfill the ethical requirement that those who have participated in the research should get to see the results of that research. These reports did not feature any one to one interviews but focused on the general themes and patterns of responses that had emerged from the interview and workshop processes.
Each intervention had five distinctive components and was characterised by two successive stages:

- A degree of consultation with management in the design and scope of the research intervention to agree mutually satisfactory outcomes between researcher and sponsor
- Data collection: qualitative interviews with participants and a literature review
- Highly structured workshops with larger groups of representative employees
- Development of action plans by participants to address issues raised
- Formal report and presentation of the findings

In Stage 1 information was collected via one to one interviews, group interviews, participant observations, and a review of the organisation's business literature to identify the organisation's espoused values. In Stage 2, the data collected from Stage 1 was presented back to employee groups via multiple workshops. These were used to review and validate the initial research findings and to enable participants to work with the findings to identify personal strategies to address concerns. The information collected from this second stage was used to develop the final report for management.

Participants were selected to represent each level of the organisation as well as degrees of longevity of service. The personnel department within each organisation arranged who should attend and usually managers were requested to invite a representative selection of their people. If insufficient people were included using this process, the Human Resources Manager was then contacted to issue a more formal invitation to selected groups to ensure a representative sample of men and women and all managerial and non-managerial levels. In Finance.Com, 100 one to one interviews were conducted; in Solid Finance, 80 interviews; and in Yuppie Finance, 40 interviews took place.

These one-to-one interviews went for approximately one hour and were guided by a loosely formulated questionnaire. Follow-up workshops were used to validate and enrich the initial data collection. Each workshop consisted of approximately 20 participants representing cross sections of each organisation's workforce, and multiple workshops were held to reflect a proportional representation of the total organisation's population. Each workshop ran for approximately four hours and, in total, 100
workshops were conducted in Finance.Com, 10 in Solid Finance, and 10 in Yuppie Finance.

Both the interviews and workshops were designed and facilitated by myself. They took place during regular office hours at the organisation's premises. As can be seen from these demographics, I had been successful in securing a substantial investment of time from each of these organisations. This enabled me to create a considerable space in the day to day life of each to enable participants to engage with various research processes to develop rich pictures of their personal as well as collective lived experience of their workplace. Such rich and collective pictures would not have been possible had my research been restricted to personal interviews only. Typically, because of time and budgetary restraints, most of the social research conducted in commercial organisations is quantitative. Where qualitative research is undertaken it is usually limited to one-to-one interviews of a representative sample of employees. What was significantly different about this research was that there were two sequential stages of data collection, with the initial one-to-one interviews immediately followed up by lengthy workshop sessions drawing upon the feedback gained from the initial interviewees. Additional organisational members were invited to attend to enable collective engagement and provide opportunities to hone deeper understandings of personal and collective experiences. This iterative process was partly designed to ensure participants gained access to the research findings and also to model Argyris’ idea of a Model II spirit of open inquiry – even if it did take place within old paradigm research methodology.

Each intervention was designed to explore the existing values and the relationship between personal and workplace values. Specifically it was intended:

- To identify the workplace values that underpinned how employees went about their daily tasks - Note: As the essence of a company's philosophy for achieving success, in theory values can provide a sense of common direction for all employees and guidelines for their day-today behaviour.
- To explore the personal values members looked to have satisfied from their work experiences - Note: Personal values put the focus on the interiority as a perspective that allows for the continual adjustment of the individual to the external context in which they find themselves.
- To review the values-fit or values-gap between those values that the organisation officially identified as its values (recorded in corporate brochures and codes of
ethics and codes of conduct) and values that could be inferred through the observable behaviour of its employees - *Note: A distinction can be made between values-based enterprises being those organisations that act in accordance with their stated values, and values-driven organisations where the values are imposed by a ruling elite and are often more about rhetoric than a reflection of day to day behaviour.*

- To provide management with a report and recommendations for dealing with current organisational cultural issues - *Note: At the visible level, above the surface, culture represents the behaviour patterns or style of an organisation that new employees are automatically encouraged to follow by fellow employees. At the invisible level, below the surface, organisational culture consists of the values that are adhered to by organisational members and that tend to persist over time even when members leave and are replaced by others. Notions about what is and is not important can vary greatly and usually shape each organisation’s distinctive personality or way of doing things.*

- To explore organisational members’ processes of experiencing and interpersonal and intrapersonal relating, with particular regard to how the internal dimension informs external behaviour to see how open employees and organisations are to alternative ways of critiquing their experiences so they are provided with alternative choices for the future.

**Interview Procedure**

**Stage 1 - Designing Interviews & Processes**

In the one-to-one interviews confidentiality was guaranteed in an attempt to maximise trust with interviewees. Participants were encouraged to deviate from the questions if they wished and the questionnaire was continually fine-tuned as research cycles progressed to ensure sufficient time and engagement for participants. What seemed to work best was elaborated on and what didn't work was discarded. In the beginning, for example, I had sought to share some academic theory such as McGregor's (1969) notion of managers operating out of a world view of motivation as represented by Theory X and Theory Y. Early feedback suggested that some experienced this as too theoretical and academic. For others, it produced a purely negative reaction. The introduction of theoretical concepts that might be seen to threaten the running of the organisation caused some managers to call into question the validity of the research process to the day-to-day operation of the organisation. Since relevance was one of the criteria by which the research proposition had been evaluated, it was necessary from all points of view to discard this theoretical input. The continual design and re-design in response to participants’ feedback significantly improved the quality of the research methodology. Participants were also encouraged to qualify their perceptions with examples of behaviour (Emery: 1993) to "ground" their perceptions, and this enabled me to identify
the specific behaviours that underpinned perceptions. It also indicated general trends and patterns of experiences rather than beliefs and prejudices.

Because comments were recorded almost verbatim, I was able to maximise use of employee quotes in presenting the research findings and this became a major source of credibility in the Stage 2 workshops and in the final report to management. Despite using employees' quotes verbatim, their anonymity was secured because of the total numbers of participants involved and the high degree of repetition in the quotes selected for each report.

Early experience had taught me that often what individuals were prepared to discuss on a one to one basis would not be repeated in groups (workshops). To give public voice to individual concerns and gain collective recognition of the issues, general findings were grounded in multiple employee quotes and presented for collective review and validation in the workshops. In this way the research was designed to challenge the existing silences on sensitive issues - to discuss the undiscussable - and to articulate the situated meanings of the phenomenon by pointing to the trends and patterns of behaviour being promoted throughout the organisation. In addition by encouraging the use of metaphors I sought to assist participants to surface their implicit perceptions of the organisational context. For me, metaphor is an illuminating form of thresholding; it expresses an inner personal feeling in terms of an external physical image; it stands always as a transition between interiority and exteriority - as a way of revealing personal values in response to a meeting with some event or entity in the outer world. My experience is that employees spontaneously provide insights into how their organisations work when speaking in terms of images or metaphors, which they would be reluctant to offer using more conventional research techniques. These vivid images can pinpoint where blockages occur as well as heightening the most effective direction for meaningful change. In workshops, metaphors can raise personal and group consciousness of the implicit assumptions and differences of perspective that can exist within a group that typically go unacknowledged. This heightened sensitivity facilitates a deepened understanding of how each employee creates their own image of and response to their situation, and therefore, how they co-create their organisational experience. For instance, employees in one organisation that had been subject to massive downsizing provided images of the organisation they believed would emerge in
the future - extinct animals like a dodo or dinosaur. When asked why, one employee replied, "You can't have a dream when you're losing all your people." In that company, workers unwilling even to speculate about a possible future presented management with a compelling challenge to address fundamental issues of trust and leadership.

In my research process there is also an overlap between my use of metaphors to raise consciousness and the way metaphors stimulate my own awareness and provide a necessary defensive shield behind which I can openly question current managerial practices. Metaphors, I have found, can provide a mechanism for constructive criticism of the status quo without being seen as openly attacking and therefore becoming a potential enemy of the managerial class I seek to serve and change. This non-judgmental imagery seems to offset the usual defensive reactions that inhibit Argyris's notion of open inquiry and have proved so successful at facilitating both individual and collective learning that I have included a rather detailed account of my experiences in this area as captured in the published article with which this chapter concludes.

I reviewed how other researchers have framed their questions in this area (Denzin and Lincoln (1994)), and then designed my own questionnaire, focusing on both the content and the processes to be used. Questions were designed to be exploratory. They begin by being broad and general and then narrow to become more specific in order to slowly build trust between researcher and interviewee. The questionnaire was also designed to provide opportunities for participant learning by encouraging reflexivity, and allowing space for the use of several processes (metaphors and drawing pictures) to surface tacit assumptions. The choice of language was deliberate and was framed in terms of business jargon, so that participants could identify with the everyday language of the business world, rather than seeking to come to terms with the language of academia, as in disciplines such as psychology, sociology or social-ecology.

As I wished to stay as close as I could to employee's personal stories, I used "real time" recording to significantly reduce the incidence of subjective analysis or interpretation. Responses were recorded instantaneously using a laptop computer. Permission to use the laptop was sought at the beginning of each interview and was readily given. A few admitted that they would be reluctant to have their voices recorded but they did not
object to having their observations keyed in so long as their names were withheld. An ability to copy type meant that I could maintain eye contact throughout and minimise the potential for disruption. When necessary, however, by diverting my attention to the screen I could also ensure participants had time to think and privacy to collect their thoughts when struggling for responses.

For those employees who were still afraid to openly critique their organisations, despite promises of confidentiality, the use of metaphors was encouraged to help overcome fear and encourage participation. Participants were also invited to contact the researcher at any later stage if they wished to change or add anything to their comments. Several (all female) took up this option, explaining that they were too afraid to really speak their mind in a work situation because they were afraid someone would "get back at them".

The ethics of interviewing were observed to ensure participants were not adversely affected by the experience. Participants were not pressed to answer questions they did not wish to. All interviews were structured to ensure they ended in a positive note by inviting participants to identify several features they particularly liked about their organisation.

**Introducing The Researcher**

As the researcher, I followed the same format for each interview to provide consistency and used the same inventory to guide questions and responses. The process used was as follows:

- Introduce self, briefly state qualifications and core philosophy and then introduce purpose of the research and this particular interview; the research focus being to map current values within the organisation in relation to the organisation’s stated values;
- Reassure participant that it is largely their perceptions that are being mapped and therefore there is no right or wrong answer;
- Reassure that no names are attached to transcripts and that these are not made available to management; rather results are collated into a consolidated report;
- Ask permission to type responses verbatim
**The Research Boundaries**

Questions incorporated into the questionnaire used to guide the interviews were designed to elicit information on the macro issues I was exploring as well as the specifics on how the dynamics were lived out in each organisation and were as follows:

- If I were to ask you to describe your organisation today as an animal, what animal would you choose? Given what you know about the wider environment and the pressures on organisations today, what sort of animal do you think it needs to become in the future if it is to continue to be successful?
- Could you identify the things you like most about your organisation today?
- Could you identify some of the things you like least?
- If I was to ask you to identify the dominant values that represent how things get done (guide day to day behaviour in the workplace), how might you describe them?
- Can you identify examples of workplace behaviour that would represent these values?
- Can you identify actions/policies that might seem to support (communicate) such values?
- What do you think is the best way to encourage the best performance from people?
- Can you identify some of the informal rules (unwritten but commonly understood and observed by most employees) about how things should be done?
- What types of behaviour gets rewarded within the organisation? (e.g. Results, processes, thinking, doing, networking)
- How would you best describe your organisation’s success formula (what makes it successful at what it does?)
- At what stage of development do you see the organisation (just beginning/ early/ mature/plateaued)?
- How might you describe the leadership style?
- Are you aware of different ways of doing things (cultures) within the organisation? Can you identify them?
- Why do you think people choose to work here?
- How do you advance (get power) within the organisation?
- How does change happen?
  - (Think of the last time there was a major problem and how it got resolved. How do you think problems usually get solved within your company?)
- What would the organisation look like if everything were working, as it should be?
- In your view, what is the greatest obstacle to changing how things are done today?
- Whose support would you need for change to take place in your sphere of influence?
• If there were three things that you could change that would improve your experience of the organisation or would improve its performance, what might they be?

• Is there any additional comments you would like to make or questions you would like to ask?

The difference between structured and unstructured interviewing is essentially that a structured interview aims to capture precise data of a codifiable nature and an unstructured interview attempts to understand the complex behaviour of participants without imposing categorisations that might limit the field of inquiry. In deciding to use an unstructured interview approach, I sought to build the participants' capacity to voice their own experiences, rather than be directed by questions that are based on my experience. And, although there were clear boundaries to the research questions - boundaries dictated by the research focus and the need to produce a management report - there was also freedom to explore issues within these. The research was able to endure as an exploration because there was no predetermination of how the report should be written, and each report was written differently from the preceding one as it built on the learnings gained from each successive intervention. A conversational interview method was adopted to gather lived experience material, with the goal of developing a rich picture of the participants' experience and perceptions. My previous experience has taught me that interviewees liked to go beyond the original 45 minutes negotiated with them for the interview. To accommodate this, I structured my interview schedule to allow for up to 90 minutes with each interviewee and left it to their own discretion to decide how much time they wanted. In this way I sought to encourage more voluntary participation and collaboration with the interviewees.

This rich interview material collected included stories, anecdotes, and experiences backed up by examples of supporting behaviour. These techniques and devices were designed to draw out the inner world of the participant as they responded to their external experiences. By including the participant’s interpretative process I hoped to avoid over-interpretation in the research analysis stage and offset possible unrecognised projections.
**Stage II Workshops For Reflexive Learning**

In the process of *data analysis*, interview transcripts were read several times. Using a highlighter, the material was chunked to identify repeating themes and to differentiate between the observations of the different strata of interviewees: non-managerial employees, middle managers, executive managers, and other emerging sub-groups. The goal was to honour diversity and develop a kaleidoscope of multiple voices for each organisation. Specific participants' quotes were chosen rather than individual observations, if they were seen to be representative of *repeating themes*. As Van Manen points out, it is often in retrospect that one comes to appreciate the value of a particular observation, because it can be seen to represent a collective experience that was not obvious at the time:

> Sometimes the best anecdotes are re-collected as one tries to make sense of things that somehow seem interesting now, in hindsight. (Van Manen 1990:71)

The varied stories gathered from individual interviewees were fed back to the same individuals but now in a group setting (workshop), to continue the exploration about the emerging record of experiences. My idea of reflexivity is that, as a consultant, researcher and observer, I am part of the setting, context and culture I am trying to understand and represent. I am a product of the corporate world in which I have located this research, having worked in it and been a part of it for some twenty years. So that research participants could better understand my values and perspective, I openly shared my work experiences both in the one to one interviews and in a more structured format at the beginning of each workshop.

The principles of professional facilitation I used in my everyday practice within organisations have much in common with phenomenological research methodology. Such principles essentially require suspending judgment and setting aside prejudice and assumptions and not taking an individualised position in relation to the information coming out of the process. This process was followed in each workshop as we worked with the Stage I feedback. Workshops were designed (Kolb 1984) to involve four stages:
Input Phase
This phase involved sharing the emerging body of research in management literature, linking values with high organisational performances and setting the context for my intervention. It was also designed to reassure participants that they were part of a long tradition of professional research in the workplace;

Activity Phase
In this phase experiential learning processes were used to help participants differentiate between the personal and collective values of the group. A follow up activity facilitated a group critique of the existing organisational values and the values that had emerged from Stage 1 interviews.

Processing Stage
Working in small groups, participants were given the opportunity to address the issues raised by the research and to come up with their suggestions for how emerging issues might be addressed or resolved;

Generalisation Phase
Back in the larger workshop group, the small group members were encouraged to share their recommendations with the larger group. This phase facilitated group learning and collective ownership of the key actions identified by members. It also provided a forum for discussion on how participants’ recommendations might be generalised throughout the organisation as part of a change program.

My understanding of the work of Peter Senge (1990) on how organisations learn also assisted me with the workshop design. Senge’s concept of organisational learning implicitly encompasses the idea that learning involves facilitating individual learning about personal values. This is seen as a necessary prerequisite in skill development for individuals who seek to be able to perceive and co-create their own experience of reality in the workplace. I attempted to implement Senge’s concept of "personal mastery" - the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal values and vision, while critically reviewing what we see as reality, through a process of becoming aware of values and how they shape perceptions of reality. I used his idea of "shared vision", as the process for engaging participants in the process of building new shared meanings around the desired organisational values. Miller sees this surfacing of existing values and critically reviewing them as providing the possibility for change to happen:

*The acceptance of new values has the power to create new cultures...If we are to create new cultures within our corporations, we must determine upon which values we build those cultures. (Miller 1992)*
I was also researching the interdependence between societal value shifts and how they shaped shifts in organisational values. As Senge (1990:7) points out:

*Business and other human endeavours are also systems. They too, are bound by invisible fabrics of interrelated action, which often take years to fully play out their effects on each other. Since we are part of that lacebark ourselves, it’s doubly hard to see the whole pattern of change.*

As, at one level, organisations are essentially a collection of people within them, working with values as the basis of my research also affects the wider world and the society where these employees reside. Progress or values shifts made within the workplace can be seen to also have a positive impact on the wider social context and reflect its developmental stages as individuals grapple with changing values, and confront their status quo. In designing these collective workplace-learning forums (workshops), I hoped to build a shared understanding and to create a context for change outside as well. In this way, I sought to affect societal change and be part of the emerging consciousness that places a value on our internal world as an important source of self-esteem and that provides an alternative route to contentment to that of consumerism with its focus on externalities.

Since I came to each workshop with knowledge of many participants' values and worldviews, I began each workshop with some disclosure about my own values as a way of building trust and empathy. To build a business context for the intervention, workshops would then begin by sharing the research of several major contemporary workplace studies, Kotter and Heskett (1992), Peters and Waterman (1982), Collins and Porras (1994), demonstrating the connection between a high performing workplace culture and how consistency between an organisation's espoused values and the values rewarded daily contributes to such a culture.

A process was then used to surface personal values to provide participants with an opportunity to experience the diversity of needs and perceptions that can exist amongst a group and within an organisation. The research findings from Stage I interviews were then introduced and contrasted with the expressed personal values and the espoused organisational values. After reviewing the findings, the large group was subdivided
into smaller groups to discuss and validate findings. This was designed to overcome the possibility of strong “opinion leaders” shaping the group’s response.

After validation, small groups engaged with the findings to envisage how change could be brought about and what the organisation might look like if it honoured its stated values (scenario planning had taught me that individuals can only move to a future they can imagine, so this process was designed to begin that journey). These smaller groups were requested to devise appropriate action plans which would then be incorporated into the final report to management.

The ethical issues involved in my research include respecting the innate dignity of all the individuals involved with the research and ensuring that they are not used as a means to an end but are seen as the core subject of respect. I sought to do this by ensuring that participants got to share in the research findings and got to learn about themselves in a holistic way. I was also concerned to maintain confidentiality and to protect the anonymity of participants and, in the reporting, this was done by the use of pseudonyms and by restricting employee quotes to collective concerns rather than highlighting individual observations. In addition, I had to seriously consider the “ethics of raising consciousness” – the concept that by making people aware of existing values dissonance which they had not been aware of previously I might surface a level of frustration with their work situation that previously did not exist. I sought to deal with this by sharing the latest research on how individuals can manage to have personal values met both inside and outside of their places of work so that participants could seek to have any unmet values at work met elsewhere. I remained ever vigilant that, as I entered into a research relationship with participants and asked them to share their stories with me, there was the potential to shape their ongoing stories and experiences, and this brought an ethical responsibility to minimise any harm.

**Reflecting Outwards**

I had experienced that changing my internal worldview preceded any change in the way I responded and behaved in my external environment. I wanted to find a way to extend the same opportunities to the people I worked with in organisations. Experiences in the
field showed me that promoting the use of metaphors was one of the most powerful and least threatening ways of raising employee consciousness. Employees’ choice of metaphor both surfaced and captured the implicit beliefs and assumptions that guided their images of their workplaces. I decided that if metaphors worked in the field they could also work in my advocacy work and so I began to write and incorporate metaphors into my speaking and writing activities and use them to raise public consciousness of what is implicit in workplaces.

My choice of metaphors was also considered. The existing workplace extended the masculine paradigm and revolved around warfare and sporting analogies. To distance employees from this frame of reference, I usually suggested that they describe their workplaces in terms of animal metaphors. While I was deliberately seeking to stretch employee imaginations beyond the current organisational mental models, I also chose animals for a particular reason.

Animals as living creatures (systems) seem to be a more authentic analogy with the “living systems lens” through which I was seeking to understand organisational life. In choosing animal metaphors I hoped to suggest that, the ways in which animals adapt, conform and sustain themselves, might also be used as a model for how organisations could respond to their evolving external environmental conditions. Animal metaphors might also be useful for organisations in exploring how they might seek to change the current way they do business in response to new times, even if they could not as yet imagine what such change might look like.

PUBLIC VOICE

The following article was designed to expose the world of internal meaning making that is ongoing in organisations. It has had several versions in print. This version was written in collaboration with two professional colleagues. It is designed to raise awareness of how employees can subjectively experience their organisational context in ways not intended by their leaders. By so doing, it exposes the diversity of experiences that can co-exist within organisations and how different interpretations of what is going on can shape different responses at work.
More than any of the other articles I had written during the research period, this article deliberately sought to draw attention to the dysfunctional social consequences of poorly designed management practices. Even though criticism of the status quo was veiled behind a rich selection of contemporary workplace metaphors, I was still apprehensive enough of a possible backlash to such adverse exposure of these internal organisational shortcomings that I formally requested that the article be printed under our individual by-lines. In this way it could not be linked back to the individual organisations where we worked. For me, this was a defensive strategy designed to protect both our employers and our individual abilities to continue to critique the world of work. An organisation is a much easier target if someone wants to stop an individual (as an organisational member) challenging the status quo than an individual. Organisations have much more to lose from upsetting business leaders. Such is the latent power of business to silence would-be dissenters.

It is these internal machinations of the world of big business, that typically do not get exposed but which can reap a significant price in terms of workplace unhappiness and stress that I then explore within three selected organisations in the following chapter. I was keen to learn if, by bringing a new world view into these places, a world view that saw mutually beneficial relating as a distinct possibility, new information and new possibilities might be surfaced that might help to realize such a vision.

**Animal Logic**

The informal metaphors used to describe the workplace can be very revealing. So throw away the textbooks and start listening to the hidden language of the office.

Published: *Australian Financial Review*  
June 2003

In terms of workplace culture organisations are as deep as the ocean and, like the ocean, much of what happens lies beneath the surface. Those who seek to change cultures have to find novel ways of surfacing existing barriers such as the mental models employees cling to and use to navigate their response to organisational life. Tuning into these existing employee metaphors can deliver sunken treasures that throw much needed light on the direction effective change initiatives must take.

Over the past 10 years we have mapped the organisational cultural footprint of over two dozen Australian organisations and have found that employees speak in a very different language to that of management. Furthermore their language suggests that they seek to understand how their organisations work as a whole rather than just their immediate workplace environment. This calls into question the conventional management belief that knowledge should be imparted on a need-to-know basis only but rather points up the enormous potential that exists when you tap into more of the whole person.
Metaphors and the stories behind them are not new. Specific images have been used for a long time by organisational consultants wishing to offer new ways of thinking and responding to the daily dynamics of organisational life. From the early Taylorist images of the organisation as a well-oiled machine to the more recent inclusive images of organisation as orchestras, managers have been invited to apply themselves to the task of managing a living system that is worth more than the sum of its individual members. However, these images are often imposed on the organisation by consultants or the management of the day. They are used as predictors of organisational direction rather than as tools to tap into the collective wisdom of employee experience.

Organisations are made up of people. They are a legal fiction but a living reality. Ask someone to describe their organisation and you will likely get trite or clichéd responses about what they might be expected to say; ask them to choose a metaphor that most closely resembles their personal experience of organisational life and you will almost certainly get a completely different story—vivid, imaginative, insightful and complex. Cognitive research indicates that most people think in pictures. Listening to the messages from this living system can provide a vital indicator of an organisation’s cultural temperature. Walk through the corridors of any organisation and you will soon pick up the tell-tale signs of well being or decay. Listen to what’s being talked about and you’ll gather enough informal data to point to how the culture is managed on a day-to-day basis. But informal processes can only provide instinctive pointers. Capturing culture through a more rigorous process such as ‘story workshops’ cuts through the fog of organisational complexity and provides more thorough and valuable insights into blockages to cultural change.

They discover the personal source of their frustrations at work by gaining insights into their projections and deepening their understanding of personal drivers for workplace success.

The past 10 years have seen a fundamental shift in the locus of control in organisations. Today this means involving employees in decision-making rather than telling them what decision has been made. It also means having to recognise that most of the organisational wisdom resides in the minds and hearts of those employees. Getting that information out to use in a meaningful way calls for new processes. The easiest way is to explore the language that employees themselves use in everyday conversation and harness this to build a thematic base for changing cultural perspectives. This “subterranean language” of colourful imagery surfaces sources of organisational tension and, unlike employee surveys, indicates how employees themselves see change unfolding and management’s role in that change, whether it be as barrier, enabler or orchestrator of the desired change. In so doing it unleashes a potent energy by facilitating collective learning around existing blockages, as well as providing vibrant new visions that employees can willingly move towards.

Animals are a popular choice of metaphor by employees in describing their personal experiences of the workplace. Images are varied and often display an awesome knowledge of zoology. Elephants are common, as are buffalos, whales, hippos and mammoths, representing large, cumbersome organisations. Sloths are similar while octopuses and snakes represent more complex cultures. Speedy animals such as gazelles, leopards, pumas and lions (male) generally signify smaller, leaner enterprises but the predatory nature of these animals is a common characteristic in describing internal as well as external orientations. Female lions often come up, signifying strength and aggression but also symbolising nurturing characteristics. Domestic animals such as dogs, cats and horses are used to describe ‘safe’ organisations but these can also represent...
‘soft’ values and an unwillingness to take ‘tough’ decisions. While chameleons are a popular choice to describe organisations where employees experience daily life as unpredictable, inconsistent and reactive characterised by frequent management changes, high staff turnover and a tendency to fav programs or quick fix solutions.

In one organisation, which had been subject to massive downsizing, employees provided images of the organisation they believed would emerge from the restructuring. The pre-occupation was with extinct animals like the dodo or dinosaur. When asked why, one employee replied: “You can’t have a dream when you’re losing all your people.” A company with employees unwilling even to speculate about a positive future presented management with a compelling mandate to address fundamental issues of trust and uncertainty. In another company, management thought that employees were not focusing sufficiently on customer service. The overwhelming metaphor in use was that of a huge elephant, cautious and awkward and slow to respond, suggesting that employees felt that there was little real imperative to change and reflecting a serious lack of urgency. Such compelling images are vital clues to the collective psyche of the employees who are being asked to adjust to a new reality. Only by grappling with these existing mental models can management seek to transform the organisation and only by surfacing the underlying images can employees begin the complex process of visioning a new future to move towards.

More broadly, employees have described their organisations as dogs chasing their tails; unwieldy elephants thrashing through disappearing jungles; extinct dinosaurs; guide dogs for the blind; and tired old sharks circling aimlessly. The need to surface and work with such guiding images, sometimes of defeat, stagnation and entropy, are a precursor to reconciliation and alignment with change initiatives. Unless this ‘distress’ can find an outlet it can ensure that the existing culture remains anchored in deep-seated images of failure that will continue to stymie even the most brilliant corporate strategy or newly recruited managerial talent. Critically, negative imagery is not confined to the lower reaches of organisations but is often typically characteristic of the “frozen middle-level” where most change programs flounder.

Of course, the language of metaphors also reflects healthy and high performing workplaces. In one engineering company, employees across the board saw their company as a powerful but disciplined bear - a massive, king-of-the-jungle animal and for the future they wanted to see the same animal but demonstrating a kinder nature. The result was a sharply focused impression of a workforce united in its image of the organisation as hard charging and high performing. And the message to management was, “the rules are clear, we’re on the right track, let’s stick to it.”

Hybrids can indicate an organisation in transition or an organisation characterised by fiefdoms where different groups experience the organisation differently because there is a lack of consistency in management styles.

What can we learn from this new language of imagery and desire? Firstly, the process allows for self-discovery as well as collective learning. Many or most employees are unaware of the organisational models that they carry in their heads and that effectively shape their day-to-day actions. Expressing themselves in metaphors allows them to bring these to conscious reality. For example, in one company which had several independent and competing divisions, one division saw itself as a mighty bear while another saw itself more as a solid workhorse that was strong, dependable and able to run fast if required, softer and friendlier than the first division. And yet another strategic business unit chose an army of ants and a beaver as their image; their success formula, was seen to be built on quiet confidence, cooperation and teamwork.
What they all had in common was a sense of moving forward.

The second major advantage of using metaphors is that surfacing this subconscious pictorial language enables the discussion of previous “undiscussables” in a non-threatening environment. Individuals are freed to experiment with new ideas and see things from different perspectives. From this out-of-the-box thinking, new ideas are born and self-awareness is an important by-product. Metaphors can provide the ideal vehicle to skill employees in critical thinking. By exposing existing tensions between their differing views of a situation; they are able to stand in someone else’s shoes freed from having to defend their role or position. A high performance culture is the Holy Grail of most managers. To aspire to what is possible, managers must be skilled in helping people make meaning so that employees can experience a synergy between their own needs and those of the organisation. Using employees’ metaphors assists in creating such synergy by validating employees’ perceptions. This was perfectly illustrated by the experience of a merchant bank, where the metaphors surfaced reflected the frustration felt by many senior managers at the political nature of the succession planning process, characterised by lack of clarity and transparency, arbitrary promotion and blatant favouritism. The metaphorical process helped flush out an otherwise “undiscussable” topic, the issue subsequently being addressed by formalising and documenting the succession process so that all managers could understand the rules.

A strong corporate vision seeks to unify employees around a compelling picture of the future. In our experience most vision statements are bland, generic checklists of key words designed to appeal to the heads (rather than hearts) of external stakeholders and, often as an afterthought, the employees. Typically, over-ambitious images and advertising hype are imposed upon the organisation and the employees’ aspirations made to fit this impossible dream. Ironically, employees’ pictures of the future are often of renewed growth, invigoration and commercial success; the exact images management is often struggling to project but the disconnect comes when the two images don’t match. The real challenge for management is to take advantage of this good intent and speak to employees in their language - of heartfelt pictures and images - to reach a shared goal.

How this positive energy can be released is exemplified by the experience of a large not-for-profit organisation run by a religious order, with schools, community centres and hospitals under their sponsorship. The compelling picture was one of an organisation that had lost sight of how it might live out its mission in an increasingly secularised society. It had lost its way and needed cultural renewal. Its renewed vision for the future crystallised when members pictured themselves as a heart pumping blood through arteries to different parts of the “body,” an image that sat well with their ecclesiastical calling. Articulating this metaphor clarified for them that their Order’s core mission was no longer one of managing the operational units themselves, but rather one of playing a supportive role, infusing those units - the body parts – with the will to incorporate spiritual concerns into the workplace.

The process of surfacing organisational culture through metaphors can be likened to diving for pearls: plunging into the hidden depths of employee understanding and surfacing mental models. A vision conveyed in the language of employees’ own metaphors has more potential for realisation than one based on wishful thinking. Consultants know too well that most employees have a pretty good idea of what needs to be done they just need to be asked. If employees identify new directions, they are talking about ways that will work for them and, assuming these directions are reasonable, they will work for the company too.

Great leaders through time have known that it is by giving voice to their peoples’
desires that they win commitment and loyalty. Napoleon once said, “There go my people. I must follow them, I am their leader.” Listening to the stories of your people and finding new ways to tap into the enormous reservoir of spiritual energy is surely the fastest way to gain a competitive advantage in the turbulent ocean of 21st-century enterprise.

Popular Metaphors & Familiar Stories

The Queen Mary – the organisation described as a large and powerful ship steaming along because of its past success but oblivious to the change around the corner and resistant to new ideas. This metaphor was traditionally characteristic of large monopolies such as utilities, as well as large engineering firms.

The Shark tank or snake pit – in these organisations the rules are unclear and subject to frequent change so that only the most politically astute survive. The metaphor typically describes a workplace where the duty of care goes unrecognised so that people are thrown in at the deep end to either sink or swim. It describes an organisational culture where individualism is seen as a strength and accountability to others is a weakness. Winning is valued above all else—traditionally found in financial, retail and consulting sectors.

The Octopus – here employees experience their organisation as having multiple centers of activity, characterised by multiple management styles with no clear vision about how all the parts fit together. Instead, the organisation comes to mean different things to different people and employees find chance plays a major influence in shaping their daily quality of life. We also call this the Silo mentality.

The Chameleon – here the ruling principles is “do as I say not as I do”. Management is experienced as being volatile and unpredictable and employees openly recognise the gap between the walk and the talk whereas management remains blindsided to it.

The Lollypop lady – used to describe organisations that bring in new management teams. Employees liken this to the lollypop lady because they watch as the latest new recruits pass through the organisation like children across a pedestrian crossing. Also known as the ‘revolving door’ syndrome. Employees in such organisations ‘opt out’ of the change process because they see it as the latest management fad and know it will pass. “Keep your head down’ is the enduring principle.

The Cowboy outfit – this is common in low tech, industries such as office equipment, technology products, financial products and low end industrial products. Characterised by a culture of “whatever it takes to get the deal done”. Sales champions are glorified, formal rules are abandoned, indiscretions are sanctioned, integrity is abandoned and support staff scatters like wildebeests before a pride of lions.

The Sheltered workshop – organisations where typically poor performance management applies. People are left to their own devices and generally make it up as they go along. No one gets fired and increasingly ingenious reasons are developed for keeping non-achievers. Re-designation to non-essential but imaginatively titled roles is favoured. Characterised by political machinations, missionary zeal and personality cults. Poor systems, inefficient processes and little upward communications. Accountability absent, except to some notion of the superordinate goal. Intellectual harassment common. Typically found in NGOs, not-for-profit organisations and some public sector organisations.

The Ostrich Farm – Secure, stagnant organisations such as research facilities, the few remaining old monopolies and some former public sector utilities. Little prospect of change, long term leadership, promotion
by ‘dead man’s shoes’. Attractive superannuation plan and non-financial incentives. Many long-term employees. High degree of technical skills, little need for productive output. Characterised by volume of reports and distance from discerning consumers. Also known as Parkinson’s Place, after C. Northcote Parkinson who developed Parkinson’s Law.
CHAPTER 4
MAKING VISIBLE THE INVISIBLE

How personal and organisational values play out at work

My professional role as a business ethicist and organisational change-agent has enabled me to work specifically with the social context of commercial organisations and during the research period I was privileged to undertake multiple organisational interventions that involved mapping each organisation’s culture. Typically after each of these interventions I would present a detailed written report to management and it is the experiences from three of these organisations as captured in these reports that I intend to draw upon to illustrate the dialectic of personal and organisational values in contemporary workplaces in Australia. From this rich source of secondary data, I have selected three specific organisations from the same industry because their differences can more clearly be seen to relate to their unique organisational culture rather than differences based on industry peculiarities. Each has been selected because it enables me to expose the dynamic interaction of personal and organisational values and how these shape and were shaped by their unique cultures. These cultures in turn are seen to be continually evolving in response to these human interactions. These three organisations have also been selected because their dynamics were fairly representative of the behaviours and attitudes that were found to characterise many of the other organisational interventions undertaken during this time. As much as possible I have tried to step back and allow the voices of the organisational members speak to the emotional and subjective nature of workplace experiences and how these typically get suppressed in an organisational focus that pays attention to externalities only. In the following chapter I then intend to articulate the situated meanings of the phenomenon being researched and, by engaging with the concepts and ideas of other researchers as previously outlined, I will elaborate on the research findings and demonstrate the originality of this thesis.
Finance.Com

Finance.Com, like many other organisations contemplating change, was a "hurting system." Adverse media publicity had suggested that the existing organisational culture effectively discriminated against certain groups. I was commissioned by the Executive Team to assist in identifying the organisation's culture, with specific emphasis on identifying interpersonal behaviours and any issues of concern these may give rise to. Specifically, I had been asked to identify the values that characterised how employees went about their daily routines. This process is generally referred to as a "values audit" or "ethics audit".

I was well aware that as I approached this intervention I had already formed some assumptions about the organisation from reading adverse media stories and also from my prior knowledge of this high profile organisation. It was renowned in business circles for its "macho" culture and arrogant executives who were openly referred to as "the would-be masters of the universe". To offset the possibility of personal projections, I purposely set about following in the footsteps of other social researchers and sought to develop personal relationships with several of the staff over the research period so I could have some sort of reality check between my external observations and insiders' perspectives.

Finance.Com had two major areas of business focus. Although both areas shared the same overall operating systems and a dominant workplace culture, it was widely recognised by employees that each had its own distinctive subculture (Schein: 1992, Kotter and Heskett: 1992). At the direction of management, the research was conducted sequentially in each business area to identify the significant differences between them. This meant that learning in the first area could be used to improve the overall design of the research process in the second area.

Altogether, out of a total of 1,600 staff, 110 employees were interviewed on a one to one basis. The composition of the sample number was chosen to reflect the various divisions within the organisation. Deal and Kennedy (1982); Limerick and Cunnington (1993) and Schein (1992) highlight the importance of senior managers in shaping an organisation's culture, and I was particularly keen to ensure that all of the senior team
were involved in the one to one research. Consequently 25 senior and middle managers, 40 middle to junior managers and 45 non-managerial employees comprised the research sample. Employees who did not participate in a personal interview were able to participate via the workshop program, so that everyone in the organisation had an opportunity to participate in some way, and did so, as evidenced by the number of employee registrations at the workshops.

**Employee stories**

Initially I was surprised to find the majority of non-managerial employees so open and willing to discuss their experiences with me. This was less so for senior managers than for all other staff. I became aware that I had assumed that many would be unaware of any dissonance between their personal values and those promoted by the organisation or of their rights to comment on the values they observed at work. Participants' perceptions and responses indicated, however, that most recognised and placed significant value on their individual right to be consulted. Many expressed spontaneous personal opinions about the obligations of management to promote organisational systems that were inclusive of both personal and workplace values.

I came to learn that this awareness of self and rights was largely driven by a widely shared frustration at being unable to be heard except when external consultants intervened and acted as intermediaries to send messages to management. Interviewees described their experience of the organisation's communication system as operating only one way, with directions and communications coming down from senior management and little feedback and input going back up by way of employees' experiences of what had worked or hadn't. The common perception of top down communications was pointed to as a symbol that the people at the bottom of the organisation were not intrinsically valued and seen only as functionaries for achieving the organisation's business goals. This was poignantly illustrated in some of their direct quotes:

> <<People issues are the main reason people leave.>>
> <<You are told to get on with the job and forget the people.>>
> <<He, who screams loudest, wins.>>
> <<Supervisors are too busy doing their own thing to help anyone.>>
<<There's no capacity for people to pause and reflect on how they can improve.>>
<<The pressure of work is seen to justify poor interpersonal skills.>>

*Finance.Com. Employees*

While some interviewees were initially hesitant in responding to the general questions, tacit knowledge (Argyris, Putnam and Smith, 1985) surfaced quickly. The extent and breadth of this, dwelling as it did so near the surface of employees' conscious awareness, became the richest source of insight for both participants and myself as co-inquirers.

Non-managerial staff and support staff identified their personal values to be around opportunities to derive intrinsic satisfaction from their work. This was explained in terms of being able to look forward to work each day and to feel good about the work they performed. They said they valued being treated respectfully by co-workers and being able to extend the same respect to others. They wanted to be able to feel confident that they could do the job and receive acknowledgement for their efforts. Recognition and opportunities to build their self-esteem were identified as common personal values that members of this group aspired to have met through their workplace experiences.

Many identified that they had originally looked for other personal values to be met in the workplace, including opportunities to self-develop and develop professionally. These responses indicated that these employees were aware that there were multiple benefits to be gained from the workplace and that money was not the only motivation. Money was often originally given as a motivation for their presence in the organisation but, as the participants became engaged with the research process, other motivations were disclosed and the relative importance placed on money diminished. Instead, participants talked about how they enjoyed their work because it met a host of their personal values and because it enabled them to feel content with themselves.

They described their work in terms of it being an essential part of their life identity and a necessary component in meeting their personal expectations. Non-managerial employees frequently referred to their experience of not being <<in control>> of their working routines. They said they found day-to-day life in Finance.Com unpredictable

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and often intimidating. This was attributed to the capriciousness of their managers who said they valued one type of behaviour but often acted and rewarded a different type. Peer behaviour could also be experienced as unpredictable and threatening. Many cited their inability to organise their workflow as the major source of personal stress and feelings of vulnerability in the workplace, which seemed to indicate that the ability to cope with their flow of work (value of workplace competency) was a widely held, unrecognised personal value.

It was this perceived lack of control that participants overwhelmingly identified as the major source of workplace stress. Many compared their experiences to that of being treated like children by management and, in pointing to the specific behaviours that gave rise to this experience, included the following examples:

"I'm not consulted about decisions that affect me."
"I'm rarely given all the necessary information. It is usually doled out on a need to know basis."
"None of us know the link between our personal performance appraisal and our salary review."
"Managers talk down to people."
"Bullying around here takes the form of being publicly ridiculed by colleagues or managers for making mistakes."
"Bullying means being sworn at."
"People are not valued because our managers don’t have the time to listen to our concerns and us."
"No one explains how my role fits in within the overall organisation."
"Managers simply tell us to do it and leave the thinking to them."
"People leave mainly because of poor management."
"Managers only socialise amongst themselves."
"Managers don’t manage by walking around instead they hide behind closed doors."
"Around here managers find it easier to be critical than to praise."

*Finance.Com employees*
Employees reacted variedly to their perceptions of a gap between the organisation's espoused values and its values in use. Some claimed to experience this dissonance as a source of dissatisfaction and frustration. They described their experience as one of "being cheated", because the organisation was seen to have promised one thing at the time of recruitment but had delivered a different workplace context. For a small minority, perceptions of the values dissonance mattered little and were dismissed as a phenomenon that was typical of business and "to be expected" as the following comment reflects:

<<I work here because it’s a job and its pays well but most of the people here you wouldn’t want to invite home. There’s definitely an in and an out crowd but us juniors don’t really matter, we are just gofers for the moneymakers. I don’t know if it would be any different anywhere else. All this talk about values is just talk, it’s the same story everywhere.>>

*Finance.Com Junior Female Employee*

Interviewee responses reflected little agreement as to how the organisation's values were being interpreted. This lack of formal agreement at the operational level meant that employees perceived that they could choose their own interpretation of the organisation’s values. Interviewees described how their personal values became their source of reference in determining the boundaries for interpersonal relationships, rather than any stated organisational values, and it was widely recognised that the quality of any interpersonal relationship was determined by an individual's choice rather than any espoused organisational value or guideline.

My first few days of interviewing staff were quite traumatic and I often wondered how I was going to ever be able to bring about a situation improvement given the current workplace dynamics. I was affronted by the stories employees were telling me of the covert bullying that appeared to be widespread and therefore allowed to take place. I felt I had to purposely seek to find the positive stories within Finance.Com or I was in danger of becoming overwhelmed by the pervasiveness of the dysfunctional behaviour I was recording. I was mostly astounded that seemingly ordinary people would allow themselves to remain in such a context or to stand by idly and observe others mistreating staff and feel unable to do anything about it. The depth of feeling exposed
to me during these interviews and the widespread feeling of powerlessness put my own situation into sharp relief. I reflected that, throughout my life, I had had the privilege of being able to choose my own reality. Rarely had I confronted situations where I was not in control and on those rare occasions I had the career and professional mobility to move on, to seize back control and find a new direction. I also realised that, far from inhibiting my capacity to shape my life, my upbringing had imbued in me a value set that said “carpe diem.” Goleman’s (1985) concept of the ‘adversity quotient’ had equipped me with both the will and the skill to take control of my life, in sharp contrast to most of the people I was listening to in this organisation.

Managerial Stories

In describing the organisation’s values, managers invariably identified general values that were being popularly espoused at the time in business literature. Although there were notable exceptions, on the whole:

- Most were unable to recall the organisation's stated values and struggled to identify any differences between their personal values and workplace values
- Many volunteered that they didn't think much about the subject of values and that they just assumed that the organisation's values were the same as their personal values
- The absence of clear succession paths and career guidance was experienced as a major source of frustration for middle managers

Many interviewees reported that they perceived this to lead to the extensive <<politicking>>, which they saw as being a dominant characteristic of the organisation. Only by <<playing the politics>> could they differentiate themselves and get ahead of the pack. This <<politicking>> related to several practices, including claiming credit for junior employees' ideas; withholding knowledge or information from peers and using it to advance one's own position within the organisation; being seen to work long hours and put the company's interests before personal life; seeking to sabotage other managers' work in various ways and <<brown nosing>> to managers in higher positions of power.

The perception that managers could engage in widely varying management styles so long as they got results was a widely held view. Its legitimacy was rarely challenged although disliked by some as disclosed by the following remark:
My personal values are very different from those of the organisation. There are a lot of pretentious egotistical human beings here strutted and posturing who lack any social skills at all. The rudeness of people to each other is appalling and goes completely unchecked. I don’t identify with very many of the other senior managers here and tend to do things differently. Because I joined the organisation 14 months ago I’m more aware than others at my level of just how much of a jungle it is in here. I only intend to stay around for a few years until I’ve made enough money to be able to do the things I really want to do. I’d like to be able to follow my real passion, which is about sailing, but you need quite a lot of money to be able to make sailing a lifetime pursuit.

Finance.Com Senior Male Manager

Interviewees pointed out that some managers were well recognised as poor people managers, others as autocrats or even despots, with a minority being perceived as good people managers. This diversity of management styles was tacitly accepted as the status quo and the general consensus was that any behaviour, within legal limits was tolerated (by senior management) as long as profits were achieved. Many managers claimed to experience the Executive Team as demonstrating group think. They saw this as a consequence of a lack of diversity within the group and its preference to recruit in its own likeness. Very little was understood about how it worked and, especially, about how it allocated the internal bonus system or how it recruited new members. Executive team members were seen to spawn individual fiefdoms within the organisation and this, in turn, was seen to give rise to much of the overt political nature of the organisation.

If I’m being totally candid, the organisation can be described as being a bit cannibalistic with some parts preying on other parts rather than keeping their eyes on the main game. Our executive can be a bit dysfunctional and are too busy minding their own turf issues. They generally look after their own interests first and the company comes second and this can lead to some very flaky business decisions. They don’t believe in nurturing in-house talent and can be a bit reactive and short sighted when making decisions especially when the heat is on, such as when the analysts give them a poor rating. They don’t handle diversity well and like people who are like themselves.
Whoever shouts the loudest wins and there isn’t any real strong policy on how we should manage people.>>

Finance.Com Male Middle Manager

Perceived executive team rivalry was replicated throughout the organisation so that loyalty to immediate supervisors and managers was crucial to personal organisational survival. Interviewees claimed that it was well known and accepted - but also one of the organisation’s “undiscussables” - that divisional managers could effectively shape the organisational culture within their own group (rather than conform to an organisational norm) so long as they delivered results and didn’t threaten the overall success of the organisation. Managers perceived that the behaviour consequently promoted was largely determined by the personal preferences (value systems) of these powerful individuals rather than any formal organisational value system. The consequence was that, at one extreme, managers were experienced as autocratic bullies and, at the other extreme a few employees enjoyed managerial mentoring, which in turn gave rise to opportunities to develop from their workplace experiences. In between, managers displayed varying degrees of either behaviour, depending on their personal dispositions, and consequently were perceived to impact either positively or negatively on employees' ability to enjoy their work situation. As an employee, the perception was that whichever type of manager you ended up with would determine the day-to-day quality of life. However, it was also seen that these divisional heads recruited in their own likeness, so chances were that employees would find themselves recruited into a group that had some synergy with personal behaviour preferences. It was generally observed that those who found otherwise had to conform to the group standards, transfer out of the group or, where that was not possible, leave the organisation.

“Fee earners” demonstrated a marked lack of interest in and recognition of their interdependence with other employees, especially with non-fee earners. Generally interdepartmental rivalry was perceived as the cultural norm. This lack of awareness of interdependency was greatest amongst the fee earners who also demonstrated the highest contempt for the contributions of other people.

My personal reaction to these stories was one of alarm and disconnection. This was a group of highly educated people, dressed to perfection, and presenting an outward
appearance of sophistication and professionalism and yet inwardly operating out of very basic values, what Kinsman (1991) had identified as “sustenance driven” and what Hall had referred to as “foundation values”. The literature review has shown that people operating at this level give priority to the need for social and financial security. The focus that many of these managers placed on career success, bonuses and financial packages seemed to support this. Many appeared to be totally oblivious to the notion that they were acting in unprofessional ways and seemed totally unaware of the impacts they were having on other people or on the organisational context being cultivated by their actions. Their sophisticated Armani suits masked an inner identity of selfish competitive rivalry and disinterest in others. It seemed that they were quite content to operate from a worldview, that had been referred to implicitly by many participants but was explicitly articulated in the following observation:

“<<There’s a different set of rules for business than elsewhere in life; you have to do whatever’s necessary to get the job done.>>

Finance.Com Manager”

Executive managers demonstrated the most defensiveness. Many participated guardedly with “clipped” answers, and would not elaborate willingly on their observations. Some wanted to know precisely why they were being interviewed and asked if there was some hidden agenda being pursued (this suspicious perspective was a common pattern of response amongst senior managers in many low trust organisations).

A few indicated that they were keen to dissociate themselves from the behaviour they saw as characterising the dominant way of doing business. Typically, they would seek to reassure me that they personally were not typical of the management and that they didn't personally subscribe to its values. Their only motivation, they claimed, for working within the organisation was the potential size of the incomes they could earn. Some claimed to have a personal plan in place to stay with the organisation only until they had acquired sufficient income to enable them to quit and begin their <<real lives>>, lived in accordance with what they really valued. Follow-up research after the interviews typically found that these senior managers were what were known within the organisation as <<lateral hires>>; they had not risen up through the ranks, but had been recruited in from other organisations at a senior level.
Still other senior executives sought to intimidate me in my role as researcher and to assert their organisational authority by questioning my professional qualifications for undertaking the research or by challenging the legitimacy of the questions. I experienced the CEO, in particular, to be evasive in answering questions around the softer "people" values. In contrast, he appeared much more confident and assertive in describing the values associated with the organisation's strategy and success formula.

Some senior managers sought to be reassured that what I was finding within their organisation reflected the same findings within other organisations. Still others displayed more concern with apparent conflict with internal politics and were concerned that their responses would remain confidential. These people were also keen to check how their responses rated against their peers, and appeared reassured at the similarities and perplexed at any differences. Most appeared least confident when discussing the "people" issues of the organisation. Many identified that the organisation's espoused values around <<people>> and how people should be treated was not their functional responsibility rather it belonged to the Human Resources department.

It appeared to me that these senior executives were finding the whole interview process quite confronting and were especially uncomfortable with my focus on the softer organisational values and asking about their perceptions of people issues. Ironically, at the conclusion of the interviews many of these same executives would spontaneously express their enjoyment of the process while noting their initial reservations. I suspected it may have been tempered with an experience of relief that the process of inquiry was over and they had managed to avoid open confrontation or feeling that they had compromised themselves in some way. Some claimed that the dialogue had provided them with a rare opportunity to talk about the human side of business and it had been an intellectually stimulating exercise. One vice-president offered that, in fifteen years of management within Finance.Com, it had been the first time he had been asked to reflect on his personal assumptions about employees' motivations, despite having been responsible for managing hundreds of employees over that time. Others would quiz me on my experiences of conducting such research with other organisations and ask how Finance.Com compared. A couple joked that they would love to have a
job like mine where <<real issues>> were discussed (a theme that recurred over the years of subsequent organisational interventions). It seemed to me that these executives were actually saying something else in this type of feedback. I got a strong impression that they were insinuating that the sort of job I did, and my focus on the internal world of people and how they made meaning, was something that they found fascinating but perhaps a luxury that they couldn’t afford; that perhaps it wasn’t really <<a proper job>> and I was somehow the exception or lucky to be able to be work in this area; that somehow their priorities precluded them from such reflections until consultants like me forced them to engage with their own internal world and reflect on how they also made meaning.

Emerging Themes

Values Awareness

Dialogue usually started slowly as individuals sought to identify the organisation's stated values. Most demonstrated a ready awareness that a gap existed between what the organisation promoted as its values and those values that actually characterised daily life. Interviewees confirmed that there had been no formal training program to introduce them to the organisation's stated values or how these values might be operationalised in their area. The majority attributed the values gap to the behaviours promoted by managers who were perceived to model a varied and different set of values than those espoused by the organisation. There was almost unanimous agreement that it was the behaviour modeled by immediate managers that was adopted and replicated by the employees reporting to them.

At a collective level, it was asserted that the organisation was seen to be more concerned with profits than people, and it was only when the success of the organisation was threatened (such as had given rise to the current research) that the people issues became a concern for top management. The most popular metaphor chosen to describe the organisation was:

<< It’s a jungle where only the fittest survive and thrive and where who ever screams loudest wins.>>
For some this was acceptable, but for the majority such values were perceived and experienced as unnecessarily unpleasant and the conduct it encouraged as an unacceptable way to behave.

I found it quite confronting at a personal level and, alarming as a would be change agent, that the majority of interviewees tried to distance themselves from the bullying behaviour while at the same time admitting that they felt powerless to do anything about it. I was personally affronted that so many well-educated people would put up with such a situation. I had hitherto associated personal emancipation with education and had not previously encountered well-educated people who seemed powerless to confront the reality of their very disempowering situations. My own social conditioning had equipped me with a world view that said if there’s a problem fix it. It seemed to me that it was perhaps more understandable that the less qualified administrative staff might not have the skills to confront such behaviours but most of the people I was interviewing were professionally qualified and yet they put up with situations they clearly found unacceptable. It even appeared that they colluded in their oppression by not discussing their concerns at a collective level (although willing to so on a one to one with an outside researcher).

Such collective apathy directly challenged my personal worldview that the contexts we find ourselves in are an outcome of our own co-creation. It meant that in designing the next stage of the intervention, the workshop program, I had to incorporate specific group processes to empower participants and counteract the current low trust levels that appeared to be spawning such a widespread abdication of personal accountability. It seemed that these people had regressed to their foundation values (Hall, 1986) in which personal survival issues take priority over more focus-type values of personal accountability and responsibility. Although Hall had argued that education was one of the principle influencers of worldviews it was clear that, of itself, education was no guarantee of personal emancipation and social context – in this case an oppressive organisational culture – had a potentially greater impact on levels of “personal mastery” (Senge 1990).

The research showed that there were two distinctly different collective experiences characterising the daily life inside the organisation. The employees who were referred
to as "fee earners" described distinctly different perceptions and experiences to those described by the "non-fee earners", the support and administrative staff, who made up the majority of employees in the organisation. Both groups however acknowledged that the existing organisational systems rewarded those who could thrive on individual effort in an extremely competitive and often combative workplace culture. Fee earners predominantly expressed satisfaction with the organisation, as it existed, while non-fee earners typically felt marginalised. The personal values that the fee earners claimed to seek within the workplace revolved around "achievement", "recognition", "independence", "individualism" and "resourcefulness" - and these were experienced as being largely met within the existing management framework and organisational culture.

A Values Hierarchy

The company's stated or espoused values included a mix of values around commercial practices such as "competition", "professionalism", "innovation", "flexibility", and values around how people should be treated such as "honesty" and "respect for people". Interviewees however expressed little doubt that a priority ranking existed amongst the values. It was perceived that priority was given to the commercial values that were generally referred to as the "hard" values while the "soft" values around people were treated with less importance. The latter were perceived to only come into consideration once the "hard values" had been met. The consistency with which interviewees were able to rank the values suggested that a high degree of consensus characterised the tacit knowledge in this area.

Support staff claimed that they tended to work more in teams than fee earners. They placed a priority on "soft" values such as "community", as manifested by interpersonal support, "being consulted", and "being able to participate in group decision making processes". This was in sharp contrast to the "hard" values of "individualism" and "competition" that were given priority by fee earners.

Finance.Com's executive liked to publicly describe the organisation as having "a flat management structure" and this was meant to be a public symbol of their entrepreneurial culture. My research, however, mapped a very different internal reality where employees experienced the organisation as very much that of a classical
hierarchical structure. Participants described how each organisational member's position in the hierarchy correlated with their degree of control over their workplace context, their access to resources and their span of control over other employees, their internal political power and their credibility. Almost everyone spoke with cynicism about the supposedly flat management structure but it seems that this collective recognition was somehow suppressed in the public arena and the executive remained oblivious to the ongoing internal cynicism created by such public assertions.

Not only was there a definite hierarchy of management, but inequalities were also institutionalised with the "fee earners" enjoying higher status and financial rewards than the support staff who were also referred to as "direct costs". This inequality was also widely recognised internally but unrecognised within a public perception of the organisation as being a progressive employer. Except for the fee earners, most of Finance.Com's employees experienced their organisational context as being threatening and non-inclusive and they pointed to the organisation's reward and recognition systems as being symbolic of this:

<<The bonus system is the only message system and it's designed to reward fee earners only.>>

Finance.Com Employee

The reward system only recognised and rewarded what business was written and this was the exclusive domain of the fee earners. The costs saved by the contribution of the non-fee earners went unrecognised and unrewarded. Support staff in the call centers, marketing, and human resources and other administrative staff frequently referred to their sense of exclusion from the bonus system and it was spoken of as the ultimate symbol of who and what was valued by the organisation.

The fact that the Senior Executive Team was composed exclusively of ex-fee earners was also widely recognised as symbolic of the non-inclusive management system:

<<You have to be a fee-earner to get into the Executive Group.>>

Finance.Com Employee
The absence of non-financial recognition criteria from the bonus system was perceived to spawn a first and second-class citizenry within the organisational community and it was further perceived that the fee earners contemptuously looked down on the support staff. Non-fee earners claimed that their function within the organisation was further marginalised by continually being described as "costs to the business" rather than being acknowledged as fellow contributors to the organisation's overall success.

The Organisational Culture

Research participants demonstrated strong awareness of a dominant organisational culture, rather than simply seeing their department or section as having its own way of doing things. Junior employees, as well as managers, were able to demonstrate a good grasp of the systemic way the organisation worked and the dominant values being promoted. In so doing they demonstrated their ability to perceive the whole system and structure as well as their own particular workplace context. Many pointed to the specific subcultures they could identify throughout the organisation and the different ways members of these subcultures behaved.

When questioned on perceptions of why subcultures existed, the most typical response was that the management style of each section leader determined how his/her section behaved. Even though subcultures were recognised, it was also widely acknowledged that there was a superordinate, dominant workplace culture for the organisation as a whole, and that it was this dominant culture that gave the organisation it’s individuality and made it different from other organisations. This particular culture was one of <<challenging the rules>> (by which they meant the traditional business formulas by which other financial services organisations operated), so that Finance.Com's business strategies, processes and products were widely recognised as pioneering. They were also innovators in incorporating the latest technologies to minimise human costs and to deliver services to the marketplace ahead of competitors. It was also accepted, in general, that success could be pursued in any way, as long as it was legal, and the end would justify the means. The values underpinning this company's business success formula – “innovation”, “individualism”, “achievement” and “ruthlessness” - were widely perceived as the defining values characterising its distinctive culture.
As researcher, it seemed to me a sad irony that here was an organisation that prided itself on its innovation and pioneering spirit yet it remained unaware of its essentially social context and how it is people who drive innovation and pioneer change not technology. This organisation did not value people intrinsically and it seemed more of a dinosaur when it came to management practices. It was frightening to witness how it could perceive itself as progressive in one area and be so totally out of touch with modern practices in other areas and remain totally oblivious to this anomaly.

Before entering Finance.Com I had largely thought that females were predominantly disenfranchised by the current management paradigm but, researching within this context, I quickly got to see and appreciate that males also get disenfranchised in an organisational context where transparency in management decisions is low and it is unsafe to raise issues of concern. This experience of mapping Finance.Com’s culture and other similar “hard nosed” workplace cultures helped hone my appreciation for the systemic way in which traditionally feminine values (Gilligan 1982) around caring and interpersonal relationships get silenced in contexts that place “bottom line” (financial) priority at the top of the management agenda. In some ways, I began to feel even sorrier for those males who had different value systems from the ruling elite and whom I now saw were also being systematically excluded and disenfranchised by this system. Throughout the research period I observed how many men appeared to think that they had even less options for finding more personally rewarding work than their female colleagues and were more prepared to put up with the flaws in the system. Those especially who did not have working wives and second incomes described how they had little choice but to <<hang in there>> because of their dependence on their income to fund their family’s lifestyle.

Although most interviewees were unclear about the stated organisational values and could not immediately recall them, they did find it much easier to cite the values they saw as characterising day-to-day behaviour. These, they claimed, were distinctly different from the values espoused by the organisation and the majority of employees treated the organisational stated values as <<motherhood>> or <<feel-good>> statements:
Every organisation says it has those values; they’re the sorts of platitudes that look good in the annual report or in the marketing brochure but have very little to do with how things actually get done in the trenches.>

Finance.Com Male Manager

There was tacit recognition that the stated values were designed to impress external stakeholders rather than to act as guiding values for decision-making inside the organisation.

Non-managerial employees experienced their managers as being driven by personal styles and idiosyncrasies. The perception that there was no common set of values shared by all managers and that the organisation was characterised by senior managerial fiefdoms was often pointed to as the major indicator that the organisation's espoused values were not lived. Instead, managers' personal behaviour codes were experienced as setting behaviour standards for direct reports because they had the power to reward those who followed their example and punish those who did not.

Interviewees' responses indicated that the IT staff had sought to develop a distinctive subculture and purposely sought to keep themselves geographically and emotionally isolated from the other organisational members. They displayed little personal identification with other groups and identified almost exclusively with their area of work as IT specialists. Many IT employees described how they purposely curtailed their interpersonal relationships to the IT area. They described their experience of the organisation as an "it", rather than as a community of people. When I pursued the issue, they too claimed to experience a dominant culture of non-inclusiveness because of the bonus system and because there were no IT people on the Executive Team. This became a symbolic message that IT people did not have executive career potential, and consequently they viewed their employment status with the organisation as transitory, and they were therefore uninterested in joining in activities that involved the rest of the organisational community.

Smaller subcultures also existed within Finance.Com because various workgroups within the organisation operated along distinctly different time-horizons, giving rise to different working practices and different supporting interpersonal relationships. This
meant that these groups also experienced the organisation differently to other sections. Participants' responses showed that the subgroups invariably identified more strongly with their subgroup members than with the organisation as a whole. Most interviewees demonstrated evidence that they were quite aware of the superordinate organisational culture and this was perceived to favour fee-earners.

One exception to the intactness of subculture behaviour was the subculture based on gender. There was a shared perception amongst the females that women within Finance.Com were less accepting of the preconditions for success. From senior managers, through middle managers down to junior and non-managerial staff, all claimed that there was a different set of rules (giving rise to a different set of experiences) for Finance.Com women than there was for Finance.Com men. Females were seen <<not to be able to make it>> in the Finance.Com environment and there was only one female Vice President in the bank. It was frequently pointed out to me that females did not make it past middle management level and that there was a marked exodus of female staff in the age group 30 – 35 years. This was an issue for the females but didn’t seem to concern senior management. The senior female managers claimed such differences arose because women were seen to act differently and were therefore treated differently. They pointed out that it was their experience that, as they rose through the organisational hierarchy, they found themselves either unprepared or unable to conform to the behaviour seen to be necessary for ongoing success within the organisation. They pointed to what was perceived as <<a cult of long hours>> necessitating that work took priority over personal life. The perpetual <<politicking>> and aggressive behaviour that was seen to be necessary to get ahead was especially disliked and less tolerated by these women, as reflected in one comment:

<<You can’t afford to make friends with the people you work with because you may have to stab them in the back or take credit for the work they’ve done. You have to be seen to be cleverer than them. To be seen as nice is a sign of weakness. You have to be prepared to give the job everything you’ve got. There’s no such thing as family commitments. The job must come first.>>

Finance.Com Female Manager
Listening to these females’ experiences I was reminded of the same personal frustrations that I had experienced at the time of my own disillusionment with the corporate system. I could empathise with their oppression and have sympathy with the difficulties they were experiencing because of my own personal experiences and I’m sure it did affect how I shaped my research findings. In joining a traditional male “bastion” as Marketing Manager of a consumer durable marketing company, I was exposed to a culture where traditional male values of “achievement”, “task orientation”, “short term outcomes” and “bottom-line focus” were rewarded at the expense of “intimacy”, “relationship” and “community”. In order to get ahead – to achieve promotion and recognition for my achievements according to the male paradigm – I adopted a values-set that reflected these values, while at the same time struggling to maintain my core values and protect the integrity of my personal values of intimacy, insight, personal loyalty and social integration. It was this feeling of disconnection that caused me to empathise with the female workshop participants. I wanted to alleviate their suffering and that feeling must have influenced my work. I wanted particularly to help them find more control of their own destiny.

In contrast to the perceptions of the senior male managers - who perceived that females did not make it into senior positions because they were not as "tough" as their male counterparts - the women saw their disproportionate drop-out rate as consequence of a female choice to leave the organisation rather than conform to its success formula based on values they found alienating.

The experiences of newer junior female staff were different again. These employees often found themselves the subject of covert sexual advances or they described themselves being treated as "runners" and "nursemaids" to rising managers. Others experienced the workplace as characterised by both positive and negative aspects. In their comments and attitudes they demonstrated a pragmatic orientation to the business world in general and what could be expected of it:

<<It’s the same everywhere; new recruits get all the shit jobs and have to put up with the biggest egos.>>

*Finance.Com Junior Female*
The research identified that only a minority of managers displayed overt bullying tactics. Whenever the issue arose within the workshop groups, personal reactions to the experience of witnessing such bullying behaviour were canvassed. Some responded that having to witness this type of behaviour caused them to experience discomfort and it lowered workplace morale and overall commitment to the organisation's goals because those witnessing such behaviour were made party to incidents such as racist and sexist abuse. Managers acknowledged that specific senior managers were poor role models for staff, but that their behaviour was tolerated because of their financial performance. Even though they personally found the behaviour objectionable, they said they were unwilling to say or do anything to challenge the offender and disliked themselves for not doing so:

<<The rule around here is that you mind your own business and don’t interfere in things that don’t directly affect you.>>

*Finance.Com Employee*

Interviewee responses showed that both the overt and covert bullying that occurred was perceived to lower overall satisfaction levels and employee commitment.

**Solid Finance**

The same research processes as used in Finance.Com were also applied within the other two organisations, Solid Finance and Yuppie Finance. Again my role was to research existing values and employee experiences. I found the cultural landscape of these two organisations to be different from each other as well as from that of Finance.Com. For consistency, the same research methodology, processes and workshop-design were followed. These interventions however were significantly smaller in scope than Finance.Com where I had undertaken over 100 workshops with 20 participants in each workshop and so in the last section of this chapter as I compare the three organisations with each other, it is Finance.Com that receives the most attention.

Solid Finance had recently failed in its publicised attempt to take over another organisation in its industry. However it had signaled to the financial markets that it intended to successfully take over a similar organisation in the near future. This
intention was seen as a defensive strategy to ensure that it, in turn, was not taken over by a hostile competitor. These external organisational initiatives were found to be adversely impacting on the organisation’s internal life. The research interviews captured employees' growing fears that Solid Finance was changing and becoming more like its industry peers as it moved away from its traditional orientation to a more aggressive and competitive orientation that included possible organisational takeovers in pursuit of business growth and anticipated organisational efficiencies.

The CEO and his Executive Team perceived that not everyone in the organisation was happy or capable of adapting to the anticipated takeover. I was invited in to map the existing culture and help prepare management for the imminent change. Management did not recognise any significant subcultures within the organisation to warrant staged reviews as had characterised Finance.Com, and consequently only one cycle of research involving all of the organisational members was commissioned. This organisation also differed significantly from Finance.Com in that it had a large part-time female workforce who worked “in the field” – outside of a central office structure - and in the call-centers and it also had a direct interface with the public through its retail branches. The research was conducted across multiple sites.

I approached Solid Finance with some eager anticipation, as this was the first organisation I had been invited into that had not found itself already “in trouble”, that is, with some sort of external catalyst forcing management to review the existing organisational culture. My physical experience of values audits is that they are emotionally draining because typically, executives have been forced to call me in and are not therefore already predisposed or psychologically prepared for change (usually they were unaware or did not care about the values being promoted which is why their incidents happened in the first place). I looked forward to being able to enjoy this assignment and anticipated that I wouldn’t be dealing with the usual disappointed, stressed and sometimes even traumatized individuals that I found in my other assignments.

Altogether some 80 personal interviews and several workshops were conducted so that employees who were unable to have a personal interview could attend a workshop. Unlike Finance.Com, however, not everyone in the organisation was given the
opportunity to participate. This was mainly due to the fact that a substantial percentage of staff were employed in a retail capacity and could not leave their posts and the organisation was unwilling to extend the research to field interviews or workshops whereas there had been no retail staff within Finance.Com.

I found that having a retail section meant that the organisation was less of a closed system as I had experienced within Finance.Com and here employees and managers alike spoke much more frequently about the links between the organisation and the wider community life outside the organisation. Although this intervention was also marked by a Stage I where the information was collected and a Stage II where it was fed back to employees for verification and awareness building and sharing, the findings from both stages have been combined in the write up as the numbers involved here were smaller than had been the case in Finance.Com.

Overall, as the researcher I experienced Solid Finance to have a predominately cohesive and nurturing culture, which I found, resonated with me and my own mental picture of what organisations should or could look like. I could identify with many of the workplace values being promoted there. I found I also got to work much closer with the CEO and his Executive Team and I got a much greater sense that the research findings would be used to shape future organisational policy. This may have made me less critical in my appraisal of some of its weakness, such as its leadership model for example. I found myself enjoying this interaction in contrast to my experiences with the Finance.Com executive, which I had found to be more of an endurance test because I had so little empathy with its management so that I constantly felt that I had to pit my wits against an entrenched authority that perpetuated values I found quite and abhorrent and which I wanted to challenge. In general I found that both head office and retail staff described their experience of the organisational culture as generally consistent with its stated values – although with notable differences as will be described below throughout all operations and that the dominant management style was characterised as being largely inclusive of staff needs.

**Employee Stories**
The organisation was widely perceived to be hierarchical, and staff experienced this predominantly as "friendly" hierarchical power. Managers were regarded as being
approachable and responsive to needs. However, when asked to explain how the management system worked on a day-to-day basis, interviewees were unable to answer the question and demonstrated little knowledge of how the senior management process worked:

<<I really only know my own area and my immediate boss and who he reports to.>>

Solid Finance Employee

They displayed little interest in understanding how the organisation worked in all its various departments. Employees described the organisation as being <<rules and procedures driven>>, and perceived this mode of operation to be designed to ensure employee conformity to a standard way of doing things. Management's values were perceived to be conservative, and the organisation was not experienced as innovative or "risk taking". Participants pointed out that a predisposition to follow the rules was reinforced by the behaviour modeled by managers, and the research found that there was a shared perception that managers would not back up employees if they sought to show initiative. The frustrations this gave rise to were reflected in some of these employee quotes:

<<We're all procedures bound - everything is done by the book. There's no give and take, and sometimes you need to make exceptions to keep customers.>>

<<People like to look busy doing things but rarely question what's the overall objective.>>

<<The rule here is to play safe and not take risks.>>

Solid Finance Employee

Compliance with the status quo was experienced as being further reinforced by the widely observed practice that:

<<You don't do anything that offends anyone. That makes it difficult to suggest better ways of doing things or even to point out when mistakes have been made.>>

Solid Finance Employee
Although I found the formal communication systems to be top down, interviewees claimed that they experienced the internal communication system to be effective, and that they could get the information they needed from management. One of the most tangible symbols of this "open communication" system was seen to be the CEO and his practice of frequently walking around the head office and personally visiting branches to solicit direct feedback from staff.

A degree of "values dissonance", however, was perceived to exist between the organisation's projected values and how the employees experienced it. In fact internal employees perceived that the values that were being promoted in the organisation’s advertising and marketing literature were the exact opposite of their experience of its internal reality. Solid Finance's advertising positioned the company as valuing "innovation", so that customers would always be up to date. Its employees saw this as impossible, because the organisation was essentially hierarchical and bureaucratic which effectively stifled all employee innovation. A <<can do>> attitude was another value trumpeted to external clients. Internal staff perceived this to be in complete contrast to the inflexibility they experienced within the organisation. Rigorous rules and procedures were seen to inhibit any initiative. Employees perceived these advertising messages as being designed for external audiences only, and didn't appear to be perplexed by the possibility of any values dissonance. Whereas, as an external researcher, I found this quite a schizophrenic, it did not appear contradictory to internal employees. They dismissed the projected external image as simply the needs of advertising, something devised to appeal to potential consumers and not designed to guide internal behaviour or to reflect current practices as explained by one employee:

<<It's what customers want to hear and is not meant for us.>>
Solid Finance Employee

Employees described their experience of their workplace in terms of feeling that they were part of a Solid Finance family and that the CEO was the father, reflected in the following employee's observation:

<<We're really like a family with our own way of doing things.>>
Solid Finance Employee
Despite the recognition of interdepartmental rivalries, managers were expected to and generally did, conform to the espoused values in their interpersonal relationships with non-managerial staff. There was a general consensus that the Solid Finance's lived values were around "people" and nurturing harmonious relationships with both employees and customers. This relationship focus was promoted simultaneously as part of the organisation's success strategy that was designed to achieve its commercial goal of winning new business, making profits and delivering shareholder returns. Although it was recognised that there were differences between sections this success strategy was perceived to be the norm, and the general consensus was that the organisation's espoused values and those that characterised daily behaviour were consistent.

Employees pointed to the longevity of their employment records as evidence of their employment satisfaction. They spoke in terms of the intrinsic satisfaction they got from their jobs and the people they worked alongside. Financial compensation was rarely identified as a motivating value for coming to work; rather the nature of the work or the social contexts of the organisation were given priority. Many expressed their appreciation of their ability to "enjoy" their work, and stated that they knew from friends who worked in other organisations that this was quite a rare phenomenon in the current business world and they were grateful that they had such an opportunity.

Employees almost unanimously agreed that the ability to enjoy their work and feel supported by colleagues meant that their personal values and needs were being satisfied, as explained by this employee:

"People work here because of the company's reputation as a fair employer. Family commitments are important and one of the main reasons why people come to work; that is to support their families. I only really earn enough to pay for the school fees so I have to enjoy coming to work, as it's not for the money. I come because of the sense of community with the other women. We all look out for each other. Most of us work part time like me and we support each other as best we can because we all know it can be a struggle some times. We like to see ourselves as a family with a strong connection to the local community. The rest talk about valuing the customer but we really do take genuine pride in helping to solve customers' problems. I'm comfortable with the
company’s values, they match my own – loyalty, family and community. I wouldn’t want to work anywhere else.>>

*Solid Finance - Female Employee*

In interviews and workshops the personal values identified included: <<belonging to a supportive community>>, <<being able to enjoy work and each other’s company>>, and <<having pride in the organisation because the local community recognised it as a good corporate citizen.>>

This ability to enjoy work and have flexibility was a priority value shared by many of the part-time employees and was given as their main motivation to go out to work. The organisation's values around the importance of people were perceived to be in harmony with personal values and this values-match enhanced employee workplace satisfaction. Participants demonstrated a strong sense of their personal values. It emerged in the workshops that one of the major motivating factors for working with Solid Finance was its recognition of family obligations and that it offered job flexibility that enabled employees to seek to balance their family and work commitments. The organisation was experienced as family-friendly in other ways too. Social functions were described as <<family affairs>> with staff encouraged to bring their family members to socialise with the families of colleagues. Many claimed to derive pride and satisfaction from the role their organisation was seen to play in the community - in particular how it demonstrated commitment to the local community. They pointed to this value around "community responsibility" and "community loyalty" as one of the key symbolic values that differentiated Solid Finance from other financial organisations. The level of managerial membership on local voluntary community boards and councils demonstrated this commitment as well as the organisation’s sponsorship of local sporting events.

I had anticipated that I would find Solid Finance to be significantly different to the other organisations where I had intervened in response to negative stimulus and these responses demonstrated this. For maybe the first time I was witnessing how an organisation’s chosen success formula – in this case, people, community focus and managerial benevolence – could positively shape the emergence of a harmonious organisational context and enhanced employee satisfaction. Instead of the distressed,
depressed and uncommunicative participants that I had encountered within Finance.Com, here employees appeared confident, relaxed and optimistic. For the majority here, Solid Finance was an ideal employer of choice.

As a social researcher, however, I was also conscious of the degree of comfort and alignment that I was experiencing with my own values and my own ‘world view’ about why organisations existed. During this research, I was working as a management consultant with a not-for-profit organisation that allowed me to choose my way of working to coincide with my values. My own workplace context allowed me to work as a “social crusader” and gave me the flexibility to move in and out of organisations with relative ease. Although some of my experiences were emotionally challenging, I knew that I could write the final management report and move on, always with the view that my role was to surface inconsistency and face management with its own dichotomies. Through dozens of workplace interventions of this kind, I found almost invariably that workplaces are de-humanising and emotionally sterile, which was at odds with my strong values around intimacy, loyalty, inclusiveness and the ethic of care. Solid Finance was, by contrast, a culture much more in harmony with my personal values-set and therefore to me much closer to a model of an ideal workplace culture than any other organisation in which I had worked. It also seemed to be characterised by a strong set of “feminine” values that might have explained the absence of issues around harassment and bullying which I had experienced as fairly typical elsewhere.

However, not all values were met. Some gave personal creativity as a personal value and it appeared to be valued because of its very absence and a perceived inability to have such a value met within the rules and procedures driven culture that characterised Finance.Com. It was also perceived that there was little opportunity to show individuality. Many identified a Solid Finance governing value dictating that <<people should be nice to each other>>, <<not voice concerns>>, and <<show loyalty to the organisation.>> In the Retail Section, commitment to the value of organisational loyalty was seen to be the implicit contract (psychological contract), and the basis for the widely held belief that colleagues <<will care for each other>> as members of the Solid Finance family. Where it was perceived that any tension existed between the values of the organisation and personal values, interviewees stated that they believed
they had a right to operate out of their personal values framework and that they would give this priority over the stated organisational values.

In workshops, participants typically spoke in terms of "we", in contrast to the "I" statements that characterised low trust organisations such as Finance.Com. In contrast, Solid Finance employees demonstrated empathy with each other's expectations of the organisation and their experiences of how the organisation's values were lived out on a daily basis. They talked openly of their initial experiences with the organisation and the ways in which managers and co-workers had gone out of their way to "induct" them into the organisation's way of doing things. A common story emerged that the typical introduction to the company for new recruits was that when the opportunity arose different individuals would quietly point out when something was not being done correctly and point to a distinctive Solid Finance "way of doing things" that everyone was encouraged to adhere to.

An active and comprehensive ongoing employee training program was both seen and experienced as reinforcing conformity and was the way in which the organisation ensured that everyone followed the same procedures. Participants pointed out that:

"Those who don't conform, leave."

Employees claimed that "personal dignity" was another value experienced as being a core value upheld in the organisation, although it was not articulated in any of its literature. This value was consistent with the research findings, which recorded a widespread belief that bullying would not be tolerated. In dealing with clients, the espoused value of "dignity" translated into friendly and effective service for clients. At employee level, it was operationalised by employees demonstrating respect to others and employees enjoying premium workplace HR benefits. On the whole, employees perceived the organisation to actively promote and reward positive interpersonal relationships, open recognition for individual employee contributions, and open communications between employees and their managers, especially regarding managerial decisions that would affect them. Employees, such as the following junior Solid Finance manager, often attributed their enjoyment of their work to these positive interpersonal relationships:
It's a good place to work. It's large enough to accommodate a variety of skills; you can be a lawyer, accountant, sales person or marketer. It's a safe organisation. You know it won't go under and it's got a great reputation. I like to belong to something of value; it makes me feel that much better about coming to work.

Employees were confident that they very clearly knew what was expected of them and how they should perform their tasks, and this enabled them to experience considerable control (despite the prescriptive procedures) over their own daily workflows. They pointed out that confidence in knowing what was expected of them encouraged them to be helpful and cheerful with customers and to promote the organisation's value around friendly customer service. Indications of such positive customer orientations were evident in a number of site visits also undertaken as part of this research and in the direct quotes from the employee interviews:

It's a great place to work. People really care about each other and people go out of their way to be friendly.

Reciprocal loyalty between employees and employer was perceived to be actively promoted and was demonstrated throughout the workshops and personal interviews. Although loyalty was a core value, the research found that it was also conditional. Both employees and managers described how they demonstrated their loyalty to the organisation in terms of speaking positively of the organisation to outsiders and seeking to apply their best efforts in achieving it's set goals. Many, however, also stated that this loyalty was contingent on the organisation also being loyal to them in terms of caring for them by providing them with opportunities for training, internal career paths, and security of employment.

The key criterion in measuring reciprocal loyalty was job security. The preponderance of the value of "loyalty" also had its shadow side, according to senior managers, and could translate into a subculture of complacency leading to under-performance in terms of employee output. In asking employees to describe how people were managed it was agreed that:
<<The informal rule here is to play safe and don't take risks.>>

The value of "service" was operationalised and experienced by employees in terms of how staff treated their customers and whether they were seen to demonstrate being <<friendly>> and <<egalitarian.>> For others, it was measured in terms of problem resolution and degree of customer satisfaction.

These observations emerged in the context of the perceived changes seen to be happening within the organisation as it sought to take-over another organisation. Non-managerial employees displayed resistance to such changes, and expressed their concern that the organisation might become more like other organisations that were perceived to be profit driven at the expense of people, client or community needs.

**Managerial stories**

Managers perceived the organisation's values to be largely consistent with how the organisation behaved, and they attributed this consistency to the highly centralised management systems that had been developed. These values were seen to be important in minimising organisational risks by shaping how employees behaved. Employees were largely perceived as incapable of self-direction and to need direction and consistency from management. There was tacit agreement that the manager's role was to direct the non-managerial staff and in return for their compliance, managers were expected to show courtesy and respect to their direct reports.

Most managerial recruitment came from within and this was perceived as symbolic of the organisation's loyalty to its people. Females were represented in the senior management ranks - although only a small percentage - and this was acknowledged to be a far better representation than any of the other financial houses and a symbol of Solid Finance's commitment to equality and equity for all its members regardless of gender. Similar to the experience of non-managerial staff, "relationships" were perceived to be critical to an individual manager's success. This operated at both micro and macro levels within the organisation. Several interviewees noted that relationships determined their ability to get the job done as well as the possibility of promotional opportunities; <<having the support of the right people>> could even outweigh technical competencies.
Some managers expressed a frustration at what were seen as Solid Finance’s old-fashioned and conservative ways:

<<Why do people work here? It’s an easy number. Weak individuals can hang around. Accountability is a rare word; you don’t have to think about much just do as you are told. Management of performance is something we need to pick up on. We don’t have to do performance appraisals for staff and, you can fudge the results on performance bonuses. There are places to hide and pockets of incompetence that makes patronage important. You have to play the politics well or you don’t get anything done. In one sense it’s a nightmare of an organisation because of the politics.>>

Solid Finance - Female Manager

Interviewees described the organisation as <<inwardly focused>> and <<folksy>>, and not as <<commercial and professional>> as its peers. The CEO’s reluctance to benchmark the organisation’s performance against its peers was seen to create and reinforce the organisation’s perceived insularity as well as reinforcing its sense of complacency. This lack of external benchmarking was perceived to impact negatively on managers, as their "market worth" could not appreciated, forcing them to depend on patronage to rise through the organisation’s ranks.

Both the relationships that managers were able to develop with senior managers, as well as performance in achieving the organisation's financial goals, were acknowledged as important in getting on within the organisation. Middle managers spoke of their experience of a bottleneck of talent at the middle management level resulting in perceptions of necessary politicking to get to the next level. They claimed that their major internal focus was on managing upwards rather than downwards, as they perceived the route to the top to be unclear and subjectively decided upon by the executive. For many it was perceived that promotions had to be negotiated individually and largely covertly.

<<We are a monoculture. No one dares question authority. To get ahead you must toe the party line and never rock the boat. You can never allow your managers to lose face. You can never go above your immediate manager even if you are deeply dissatisfied

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with them; the senior managers would regard a complaint as treachery. You can never say anything unless someone asks. You have to pander to people’s egos to get ahead. You could be a normal person and still upset the applecart; you must act in roles.

Solid Finance – Female Senior Manager

Information was seen as a source of power and to be used strategically in the management of careers within the organisation. This often meant that it was not to be shared with colleagues, but used to gain a competitive advantage over them to win the attention of the next level above and so advance personal career prospects.

Managers perceived that their personal values were largely met within the organisation. The political nature of the route through the hierarchy was regarded by most as a typical feature of all organisational life. Many commented that Solid Finance was less political than other organisations where they had worked because most of the jockeying for positions was done covertly. Open competition and aggression were perceived to be frowned upon and not the way of getting ahead. Managers talked of their personal values in terms of being able to perform their tasks and feel confident that they were doing a good job; being able to manipulate the organisation’s systems and get things done to their satisfaction.

It seemed to me that very similar political machinations to those I had mapped at middle manager level in Finance.Com were also being played out here in Solid Finance but in a very different way. Here, the politics were covert and conducted in a non-threatening way because of the governing value of “being nice” and the result was a much more harmonious workforce.

Amongst the Executive Team there were strong perceptions of rivalry between the CEO and the Chief Financial Officer. This was perceived to have split the Executive Team into two camps; one giving loyalty to the CEO and the other aligned with the Chief Financial Officer. These executive alignments were in turn seen to spawn two distinct fiefdoms cascading through the organisation. These fiefdoms were characterised by rivalry, poor transparency, and reluctance to share information between camps.
In one-on-one interviews, supporters of the Chief Financial Officer demonstrated more personal discomfort with the research process and did not elaborate on their responses as fully as their peers who supported the CEO. They expressed concern around the appropriateness of the current business strategy and doubts about the ongoing viability of the organisation's traditional success formula. In particular, they expressed doubts that a strategy based on employee and customer loyalty was sufficient to drive the high performance that was seen as necessary in the current marketplace. Many claimed they recognised that the organisation's stated values were around valuing people and that the organisation's systems were largely consistent with these. Their concern was whether these values were still appropriate in what they described as <<a high-tech age.>> The Internet was frequently pointed to as evidence that large staffs were no longer necessary and the CEO's reluctance to invest in Internet services was their evidence of his failure to move with the times. Some expressed a desire to embrace newer values around product rationalisation, different services, and a move towards more technological solutions and away from people intensive services.

By contrast, in the CEO camp there was a higher degree of satisfaction with the organisation's current value priorities. Executives in this camp spoke of the need to retain the organisation's <<human face>>, which was seen to derive from its excellent relationship with its staff and their union. There was much admiration expressed for the CEO and his perceived nurturing management style. In this camp, it was recognised that the Executive Team was divided, and that there was reluctance by everyone to discuss differences openly. The unwillingness to discuss the lack of shared vision for how the organisation would succeed was seen as another manifestation of the organisation's governing value of <<being nice.>>

**Emerging Themes**

*Values Awareness*

Solid Finance employees had little difficulty in describing their perceptions of the values characterising their organisation's culture, the personal values they looked to have satisfied within the workplace or their perceptions of the existing relationship between their personal and workplace value systems.
There was a shared perception that the organisation had strong espoused values around the importance of "soft values", particularly around interpersonal relationships, and that these values were used as a guide for how to behave, both within the organisation and externally, towards customers and local community members. Participants' response to the nature of my research was that it was neither unusual nor threatening, and was in keeping with the emphasis the organisation placed on people issues.

That the executive was not somewhat taken aback or reluctant to participate in my research was a "first" in my experience of organisational interventions and I found it wonderfully refreshing not to have to justify myself and my research focus. As with my research experience in many organisations, the interviews showed that Solid Finance employees had not attended any formal training programs on the organisation's stated values. No one had explained how the organisation's values were to be operationalised throughout the various sections of the organisation and neither were they (the organisation's values) part of employee performance indicators. Instead, it was assumed that new recruits would be inducted into the values by observing how others behaved. This absence of a formal training program to promote a collective understanding of the organisation's values was in sharp contrast to Solid Finance's preoccupation with ensuring its employees were well trained in the rest of its organisational systems and procedures. This discrepancy, however, was a common feature that I was to see time and time again in most large organisations and suggested that management did not perceive managing its "culture" as warranting the same rigorous training that was implemented to protect other assets such as intellectual property rights.

Employee interview and workshop feedback showed that most organisational members experienced Solid Finance as doing its very best to live up to its stated values around valuing the importance of people. Specific supporting values around the promotion of "honesty", "harmony", "employee training", "service", "loyalty", and "community partnerships" were identified as characteristic of the organisation's dominant culture.

**Subcultures**

Most members perceived two distinctive subcultures within Solid Finance. One was referred to as <<Head Office>> culture and the other as <<the Retail>> network way of
doing things. The latter consisted of those staff that directly interfaced with customers, while Head Office was essentially focused on administration and providing support to the retail staff. It was Head Office staff however that was perceived to be the favoured group - those who enjoyed the most power and status - and retail employees noted that there was only one member from the retail network amongst the Executive Team.

Members of the Head Office and the Retail Group displayed distinctly different perceptions of each other's values priorities and different interpretations of current behaviours. Retail staff spoke in terms of Head Office staff being unresponsive and unable to appreciate the distinct needs of the retail staff. Their attitude to field requests was experienced as unresponsive and insensitive to needs. They were generally perceived to place a lower priority on supporting field staff's needs than <<on getting their paperwork done.>> Several participants claimed that Head Office viewed them as interference to their daily work schedules. Some pointed out that the non-managerial staff, especially, refused to recognise their interdependence with the field staff or to give credit to the field staff's contribution to the organisation's overall success. When pursued, one retail staff manager explained:

<<Retail staff measure organisational success in terms of customer loyalty and retention and this is different success criteria to that used by Head Office who place greater value on margins and profits.>>

Others perceived Head Office as being too slow to approve the decisions made in the field, and this was taken as evidence that they had little confidence in the retail staff's ability to run their own departments.

In contrast Head Office staff perceived the field staff to be <<buck passers>> and <<reluctant to take responsibility for solving the customers' query themselves.>> For others still they were <<overly emotional and needed excessive management attention in order to feel part of the organisation.>> Their comments also showed that they measured success using different indicators to field staff and these revolved around profit margins, dollar value of client's accounts and financial analyst ratings.
There was an IT person amongst the Executive Team and staff responses showed that most perceived the IT people to be fully integrated with other staff and not to have created a distinctive subculture as at Finance.Com.

My exploration of Solid Finance demonstrated how a largely Theory Y management approach could spawn a workplace context that promoted positive interpersonal relationships where most employees experienced being valued and genuinely enjoyed their jobs and could claim that they had many of their personal needs met from their workplace experience. For many Solid Finance members’ personal identities were bound up with the company and there was a deep sense of pride in being able to belong to an organisation that was admired in the wider community also. This management orientation in turn also encouraged employees to give their commitment to the organisation and a predominantly beneficial way of interrelating characterised their workplace culture.

**Yuppie Finance**

Similar to Solid Finance, Yuppie Finance was a national financial organisation with a retail workforce. At the time of the research, it had just been taken over by a much larger financial institution. I was invited in by the CEO of the organisation doing the takeover to map its values and internal culture as a guide to dealing with the ongoing integration of the two organisations. This was a painful period of transition for the organisation and its members had a heightened sensitivity to the values being promoted by the takeover organisation and those that had characterised their previous worklife under a Yuppie Finance management team. There was only one cycle of research and this included multiple sites and Stage I interviews and Stage II workshops.

I entered the organisation a few days after its CEO had departed and worked with its members over the following months. In the initial interviews much of the interview time was used by interviewees to express their grief and their fears for their personal future and the future of the organisational entity, in the wake of what they had experienced as a predatory takeover. It was not until the workshop sessions that followed several weeks later, that I found employees less emotional and more objective in critiquing their past experiences of Yuppie Finance’s culture. The major concerns
being expressed were that the takeover organisation would subsume Yuppie Finance completely and that much of the latter’s history, of which participants claimed to be particularly proud of, would be lost. This fear had abated by the time of the workshops and participants were beginning to look to the future and what sort of new organisation might emerge.

Interviewees pointed to how the recently departed CEO had been universally admired and had been perceived as <<the glue>> that held the organisation together, and they were distressed at the suddenness of his departure. Many perceived that it was the CEO’s personal vision and style that had given Yuppie Finance its dynamism and success and it was anticipated that nothing would ever be the same again. Employees spoke candidly of their concern for their future and the perceived uncertainties they now associated with their workplace:

<<We are given no information and have to read the daily newspapers to find out what is happening. You never see any of the new management around here. No one knows who’s going and who’s staying. It’s a complete nightmare.>>

Yuppie Finance Employee

My response to the distress I was witnessing in this intervention necessitated that I assumed a de facto role of information provider in regards to the takeover organisation and what might be expected since I was the only one who was in regular contact with the new management and I was the only one who had the experience of having been through several other organisational mergers. This brought into sharp focus for me Reason’s (1994) concept of “critical subjectivity”, where the facilitator has a responsibility to the group to share his/her knowledge and in this sense I saw myself also as a co-inquirer as well as a researcher. I also found myself as a de facto workplace counselor. The first 15 – 20 minutes or so of each individual interview was typically spent just listening and affirming interviewee’s concerns. This was necessary simply because these people were in such distress and, in Hall’s (1986) terms, had “downshifted” to such an extent that it was necessary to help them get back into their “focus values” before they could talk to me about organisational culture at all. I found myself witnessing daily just how dramatically a workplace context could shape the
overall quality of people's lives and determine their responses to the situation they found themselves in.

The interviews showed how many recognised their personal inability to come to terms with the takeover and few could anticipate how things might change, and in the interviews presented no vision for the future. The majority could only point to a few perceived advantages from the new situation. Organisational members described with pride how, up until the takeover, the organisation had been seen as very successful in what was perceived to be the fiercely competitive, newly deregulated financial markets where small players like Yuppie Finance were potentially disadvantaged relative to the bigger players. In workshops the most popular metaphor used to describe the organisation was that of it being:

"A well-run ship where everyone knew what was expected of them and everyone was pulling in the same direction to ensure its overall success."

Yuppie Finance's organisational values were promoted informally via the reward and recognition systems. Again, as in the all the other organisations where I intervened, employees described how they had never attended a formal training programme on the organisation's values nor been informed in any way about how the values should be operationalised.

Interviewees described how Yuppie Finance was seen to have had a public as well as an internal reputation for being flexible and being able to embrace the changes in the marketplace and adapt and thrive in new situations. This flexibility was symbolised by the organisation's embrace of technology and competitive benchmarking with other industry peers and employees demonstrated great pride in pointing out that Yuppie Finance:

"(The organisation) had led the way and been the first bank to launch Internet banking even though it had a tenth of the resources of its competitors."

_Yuppie Finance Employee_

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Participants reported that they had experienced Yuppie Finance as having a fairly harmonious workforce prior to the takeover precisely because there were few rules and the rules that existed were very clear. In Head Office, the rule was to maximise opportunities to make profits for shareholders; and in the retail operations, the rule was to identify the profitable services and match these with customer demand. There was a general agreement on the organisation’s success formula as described in these repeating employee quotes:

<<A willingness to change and being prepared to innovate, has made us successful.>>
<<Chasing clever business rather than volume business.>>
<<A willingness to give things a go; we’re adept at change and welcome it as a challenge to perform better.>>
<<Customers buy from us because we are clever as well as friendly.>>
<<If you stick to the rules, you will irritate customers.>>
<<Being lean, mean and stingy.>>

_Yuppie Finance Employees_

**Employee Stories**

Interviewees indicated that under the recently departed CEO there had been high clarity around the stated organisational values and these, in turn, were perceived to have been fairly consistent with the way things happened in the workplace. When requested to articulate these values, they were identified as “innovation”, “hard work”, “professionalism”, “flat management structures” and “customer service”. The values were not formalised in any way, and there was no written values statement however employees perceived them to be embodied in the daily routine of the organisation and how it went about its business.

At the time of the interviews, employees were frustrated that they did not know <<what mattered anymore>> and were unsure of the newly amalgamated organisation's values. The majority suspected that the current values would be changed and supplanted by the values of the takeover organisation, which gave rise to concerns because these were perceived to be so different from those that had made Yuppie Finance successful. The theme emerging from several interviews was one of collective <<grief for a way of life that is passing>> as described by one participant.
The majority of participants were long-term employees and could differentiate between their personal values and those promoted by the organisation. Despite displaying distinctly different motivations and personal values around what they wanted from their workplace, employees in both head office and the retail operations claimed they experienced a close fit between their personal values and those promoted by Yuppie Finance. Personal values were identified as being able to “enjoy” their work, to enjoy “self direction” and “responsibility” for organising their workflow, to experience that they were being “successful” through their contributions, to be associated and publicly identified with a successful and publicly admired organisation, and being able to feel secure that they could meet their lifestyle commitments through their work efforts. Most interviewees expressed their commitment to the organisation and its way of doing things, and claimed they were happy to be publicly identified with it and to be known as a Yuppie Finance employee. They described their workplace experience in terms of feeling <<included>> and <<belonging there>> and <<enjoying>> being stimulated by their workplace experiences. Many expressed satisfaction with the values promoted by the organisation and perceived themselves as being committed to upholding them.

There was widespread recognition that the organisation was <<run lean>> and that cost-consciousness was a key value. It seemed everyone experienced that they were carrying significant workloads and working hard. Frustrations were perceived to arise because there was never enough time to do a good job. Most, however, referred to these workloads as the source of a challenge to be managed rather than expressing discontent or claiming that they were stressed by the experience. Many described the workplace climate as a <<can do culture>>, and this attitude was also reflected in the employee choice of metaphors used to describe the culture, including: <<The first one who sees the snake kills it>>; <<The buck stops with you>>; <<we’re a one-stop shop.>>

It was perceived that management’s expectation was that employees would be self-directed and capable of adding value at every link in the service chain. For example, it was pointed out that all employees were encouraged to put forward their ideas about ways to assist management to deliver profits and employees were expected to identify and weed out unprofitable products as well as unprofitable customers. Routine
flexibility was actively promoted because it enhanced employee's ability to anticipate and deliver whatever management and the customer wanted. An ability to be self-directed and to design their own workflows was also mentioned by many as indicators of employee autonomy and empowerment. Yuppie Finance employees perceived rules and procedures to be anathema to their chosen success formula and way of doing things. They invariably described their role as <<mini-entrepreneurs>>, showing initiative and adding value to the organisation's products and services at every point. It was perceived that there was only one hard and fast rule and that was that there had to be a profit incentive behind every new initiative.

As the researcher, I found Yuppie Finance’s employees to be very consistent in their perceptions of their organisation and almost to a person their engagement and commitment to the organisation was noticeable. This high degree of commitment was even more remarkable since these employees were also very aware that the organisation was <<shareholder focused first>> and that the people management philosophy was directed towards getting what was best for shareholders rather than employees. Despite this priority ranking, an organisational context had emerged where employees could experience that they were getting many of their needs met as well as helping management achieve its primary goal of shareholder profits.

Employees perceived themselves to be valued because of their instrumental value to the company, rather than because of their intrinsic worth. Many perceived that their contribution to achieving Yuppie Finance's goals was regarded as the most important criterion for success within the organisation and that you were <<only as good as your last job>> from a management perspective. Employees' lived experience was that they were under pressure to be seen to be performing on the job, and only by performing were they able to remain confident in their own abilities. They pointed to the fact that the organisational culture was one of low praise and recognition and that management promoted a commercial rather than a people-orientation. This was reinforced by the organisation's reward systems. As one employee explained:

<<You don't get promoted here for being a people person; results are what matter most.>>
Most employees displayed a pragmatic orientation to the world of work, accepting that business could put its own interests before people interests. Employees did not question their subordination to a hierarchical authority in the workplace and it was generally accepted that it was the CEO's right to mandate the behaviour and organisational values. Business needs were seen to be the priority values, and obligations to shareholders the key responsibility for all.

I was often struck by many of the similarities in the success formulas pursued by both Yuppie Finance and Finance.Com. Both shared organisational values around individualism, entrepeurism, self-reliance, shareholder priority and high performance and yet the contexts these had elicited were very different and employee interpretation and response to the contexts was also very different.

The people management policies pursued within Yuppie Finance however was different and all employees were treated respectfully in the pursuit of profits to such an extent that until the takeover most employees had been very content with their workplace context unlike the majority of employees within Finance.Com.

One of the governing values in Yuppie Finance was perceived to be that an employee's first loyalty was due and given to their immediate supervisor as described by one employee:

<<It is a non-negotiable that loyalty goes to your immediate boss.>>

Degrees of loyalty were awarded to others, also, but the immediate supervisor always took first priority. A loyalty to others was shaped by other non-specific factors including organisational positional power, some personal trait or a personal relationship to the person concerned. This was perceived to have negative consequences. Employees who didn't get on with their boss could find themselves stymied. Where bosses had made mistakes, direct reports might be told to cover up the mistake or even be blamed for the mistake and, because of the governing value of loyalty, the employee would be unable to expose the fact that it was their boss's decision and not theirs. These were seen as some of the ways in which managers could put their own interests before the interests of the organisation.
Employees recognised that Yuppie Finance had both an external (or public) image and an internal image, and that they were different. The differences between the two images lay in the values being emphasised and prioritised. Externally, via marketing literature and press releases, the organisation was portrayed as a slick, professional, entrepreneurial and a clever enterprise. Internally, it was <<clever but cold>> and many described it as <<professional and hard>> and generally non-nurturing of its members. Employees competed with each other for resources and recognition. The CEO was notorious for cutting costs anywhere he could and ensuring his managers followed his example. Employees pointed to the relatively few employee facilities made available as symbols of this cost cutting. They described how employee training programs and social functions were minimal and how they frequently found themselves having to justify why they needed certain stationery, upgrades of office furniture, travel and allowances and other support mechanisms that they believed would go unquestioned in other companies.

Interestingly, my observations of the interactions between employees in the workshops suggested that this coldness had not translated into the dysfunctional, intrapersonal relationships that characterised the internal life at Finance.Com.

In the retail operations, success was measured in terms of customer retention and satisfaction. The interviews showed that the majority of employees were severely traumatized by the takeover, especially by the immediate loss of key executives, and the ongoing loss of other key employees who were leaving because they did not want to be part of the newly merged entity:

<<We are all in a state of shock. It happened so quickly and we had to read about it in the papers before coming to work. It seems half of the senior team have already gone and the rest are behind closed doors. We haven’t a clue what’s happening and what it means for us. We’ll probably have termination notices in our next pay cheque.>>

_Yuppie Finance Female Teller_

It was widely anticipated that most of the job cuts would take place in their area of operation. Practically every employee demonstrated sensitivity to the possibility of
imminent changes and appeared unusually defensive and cautious about change. Their reaction contrasted sharply with what had been described by many as the organisation's ability to be flexible and manage change easily. A heightened sensitivity to perceived differences between the two organisation's values was displayed and a major concern revolved around the bureaucratic systems that were seen to characterise the latter's management style. Many attributed the perceived differences in management style as the reason why so many of Yuppies Finance's senior managers had fled the organisation immediately following its takeover. Retail staff especially displayed a rivalry with their counterparts in the takeover organisation. They maintained that the latter were not as good at their jobs as they were and yet they would probably retain their jobs, while Yuppies Finance would be the loser in the inevitable staff rationalisations. There was a general predisposition to negativity, and many perceived themselves to be the vanquished in a hostile takeover. This perception stood in sharp contrast to ongoing business press coverage, which portrayed the merger as a friendly take over and merger of two very similar organisations. The absence of clear communication about job rationalisation and retrenchments added to the uncertainty and was taken as a symbol of confirmation of staff's worst suspicions that the new management would not value them.

At the time of the interviews, some individuals claimed to be experiencing daily tensions between a personal value around honesty and loyalty to long term customers and what they perceived to be the goals of their new management and openly expressed their anger:

<<Some managers have no social skills; they are non-people - not a human being! The only thing that's valued is to achieve targets. They talk about customer and employee satisfaction but it doesn't count, it's all about dollars! The customer is not in the picture. We are bottom line and short term focused. It's wicked to just take money - it's an exploitation of human nature - it's unethical and cynical. I sense a spiraling downwards of values; no one tells us who "the market" is. Please explain! We're all about satisfying the market - where are they? We are afraid to ask these questions, we all mull along unhappy. Fear prevents anyone from saying anything.>>

Yuppies Finance - Female Employee
Staff concerns translated into telling customers that the new organisation was unable to deliver the services that they sought and that they should go elsewhere to get their needs met. Other experiences recounted included less noble practices such as accepting gifts from suppliers, a practice that had previously been against company rules. In the new post-takeover climate this was rationalised as being excusable, because they "deserved" such perks because of the ongoing insecurity at work or because they perceived that head office staff were being given large redundancy packages that were not available to them.

Many displayed characteristics described by Kubler-Ross (1972) as typical of the early stages in the grief cycle - shock, disbelief, anger, and denial. Personal insecurity was heightened because of ongoing rationalisation of staff and the loss of the company name as described one employee:

<<There's a lot of politics at the moment. There is poor internal communication and poor management of integration. We felt like we were being raped and pillaged in the first month but we have moved on from then. In a period of change there are some people doing their own thing, being political to set up their own area. I have eleven staff to look after, and I need to know more than them. We had to apply for our own jobs and some had interviews and others didn't. Several people were appointed who do not have the skills while others were made redundant who were qualified. It's this limbo-land that is making people very unhappy and frustrated.>>

_Yuppie Finance - Male Manager_

These employees perceived that they were no longer in control of their daily lives. This was made more poignant by the image and perceptions they had previously held of themselves as being a much cleverer organisation than that of their new employer and the take-over organisation was referred to as the "winners" and themselves as the "losers." The necessity for each employee to reapply for their existing job, and the significant time lags in having positions confirmed, served to heighten personal insecurity, and appeared to prevent many employees from beginning to think about their future or speculate on possible new roles. Rather, they appeared to be stuck in their thinking, taking their references from the past, and suffering insecurity and self-doubt as well as resentment towards their new employer. Several employees spoke of
their grief for the loss of their divisional managers who had either <<jumped ship>> or been made redundant. Their loss was perceived to add to the sense of dislocation described by many employees.

Managerial Stories

In discussing the organisational values, senior managers frequently began by espousing what were the organisational values in vogue at that time; values like honesty, responsibility, leadership, professionalism, innovation, people, and shareholder responsibility. These values were offered with little reflection, and many commented that Yuppie Finance's values were typical organisational values. When pursued on the organisational values that might distinguish Yuppie Finance from other organisations, interviewees became more reflective and deliberate in their responses. On reflection, they perceived that values around both performance and relationships could underpin the reward and power structures within the organisation and that was a sign of hope for one Yuppie Finance female manager who observed:

<<We are changing; we are in the middle of it so it is getting people to accept it. Most people resist change to some degree. You have to guide people through and you can’t just tell them. They have to believe that the changes are good for them too. It's been a bit of a Boys Club until now and it’s been hard to get into the circle. I think this will change given the restructure.>>

It was this aspect of the organisation – its inevitable cultural change - that occupied most of their time both during the interviews and during the subsequent group sessions.

Relationships defined in managerial terms, however, were typically very different from the interpersonal aspects of relationships that non-managerial employees valued. Here, what was valued was <<connections>>, and what was seen to be important was the individual's ability to introduce a manager to someone influential or sponsor a manager's issue at a higher level. There was a general perception that the higher one moved up the organisation the more personal relationships and networking became critical factors in determining success. A mentor was critical to provide the necessary procedural knowledge and insights on how to make it to the next level. Females were regarded as less adept at the politics necessary to ascend the hierarchy, and this was
why, to date, none had been able to break through the ranks of middle management to the executive level.

Middle managers, more than junior managers, voiced their concerns about the challenges of seeking to <<manage up>> to secure the recognition and patronage of members of the Executive Team. Their concerns revolved around understanding <<how the internal politics work>> when the rules weren't clear. Their major preoccupation was how to advance themselves, secure more status or enjoy more recognition for the contributions they were already making. This challenge was now made even more difficult because some of their mentors had departed with the takeover, and little was as yet known about the new Executive Team. Many of the middle and junior managers saw themselves as having to start all over again in seeking to identify what the new <<pecking order>> might be, and whom they needed to be aligned with to advance their position.

In response to questions about any perceived values match between personal and organisational values, most responded that they kept their personal values separate from their workplace values and, that while at work, what was regarded as being <<good for the business guided their decisions. On further probing from me, it was hypothesised that there probably was an overlap between the organisation's values and their personal values, and that this also accounted for their success within the organisation.

Emerging Themes

Values Awareness

The workshop sessions reflected the ongoing distress in which most employees found themselves. In the values clarification exercise, the recorded values in the second column (reflecting the needs around why employees continued to come to work) reflected the grief and frustration being experienced. Lack of information from the new management was identified as the most common and greatest source of frustration. Immediately following the takeover, the new management had announced to the marketplace that they would be rationalising both organisations' retail staff and that they expected to shed some 800 jobs. They had not, however, explained to employees how this was to be done and who would be affected, or how long the process of rationalisation would take. In the absence of this it was assumed that most of the
<<spill>> would come from Yuppie Finance staff. Participants pointed to their experience of how little time the new managers spent talking to them about their vision of what the new entity might look like. This lack of communication was seen as symbolic of managements' lack of concern for their new employees. In the absence of formal information, employees pointed out that:

<<The rumor and gossip mill fills the void left by management and in turn feeds people's paranoia about their job security>>

Given Yuppie Finance's immediate needs, in the workshops I did the best I could to also assist participants to cope with their distress by working with them to address their immediate insecurity fears. Once I had fed back the research findings and had them validated by participants, I would then introduce the concept of the "Grief Cycle" and ask participants to identify at what stage they thought they could locate themselves and what they would need to do to be able to move through their current stage. Most had little difficulty identifying with one of the various stages of grief, and the process was readily engaged in. Responses from participants included acknowledgements that it had been experienced as a helpful process. Feedback indicated that participants had found it useful to learn that there was a well-documented history of responses to such events and this had helped them become aware that they were not unique in their experiences and they could see themselves as less of a victim. Some claimed that the fact that there were identified stages beyond the stage where they had pinpointed themselves, gave them an insight into the future, so that they could begin to anticipate moving on. It was also claimed that the process would be useful to share at home with their families who were also suffering because of the takeover. Only one or two participants reacted negatively and dismissed the process as irrelevant to the current situation.

Ironically in reviewing the corporate literature of the takeover organisation, I mapped that many of the new organisation's values were similar to those of Yuppie Finance and I would often seek to console distressed employees with this information. I was particularly angry with the managements of both Yuppie Finance and the takeover organisation at what appeared to me as their abrogation of their duty of care to these employees by leaving them with an information void at this critical period. I had raised this with the project sponsors while I was still doing my report but they seemed
incapable of responding more quickly to this situation. Their lawyers had advised them to keep all communication to a minimum until final staff numbers had been approved and they knew who was going and who was staying. It seems that Theory X values, that saw people as resources to be managed in accordance with bottom line requirements, had surfaced again and were already shaping the agenda for the newly merged entity.

Subcultures

Yuppie Finance was perceived to have several distinct subcultures however the dominant culture was perceived to be that of Head Office. Within Head Office, however, there were distinctive differences in perceptions and experiences between managerial and non-managerial staff. Perceptions and experiences out in the field and amongst the retail staff were different again.

In the retail operations, commitment to fellow employees and excellent customer service were the priority values. Employees were concerned to be supportive of each other in response to what was often perceived as Head Office staff’s insensitivity to their distinctive needs. Frequent tensions arose because of retail staff’s frustration at Head Office’s propensity to launch untested technologies into the field to be perfected on site. It was perceived that this common practice added to field staff’s workloads and also impacted negatively on their ability to service clients efficiently. Other tensions arose because of different operating values and priorities in relation to what was most important on a day-to-day basis.

I had set out to explore the latent power of the individual’s internal world at work and how it seeks to make sense of its organisational context and my whole experience with Yuppie Finance demonstrated just how crucial such an awareness of employees’ internal world and emotional needs was. Under their previous CEO, consistency between expectations and how things happened daily had enabled employees to give their full attention to getting on with their jobs and derive personal satisfaction. This consistency and predictability was suddenly wrenched from them by the takeover and the imposition of a new management team who had taken a Theory X approach to management and ignored their employees’ need to have the new rules spelt out clearly. In this void, employee’s unmet personal needs and values bubbled to the surface and
spilled over into the daily workplace context in the form of employee distress, heightened insecurity, rumour and gossiping, low performance on the job, overt politicking and a simmering resentment towards the new management.

**Collective Learning In The Workplace**

I had conducted over 100 workshops in Finance.Com but less than half a dozen in each of the other two organisations. The workshops were critical for me as the researcher because I had been able to design them in a way that was not as constrained by the traditional way in which I had been forced to collect Stage I data. Here I could seek to implement many of the principles of action research and co-operative inquiry and use processes that were designed to empower participants by providing opportunities to make personal meaning around organisational events that seemed to be beyond participant’s control. The workshop processes were also designed to provide participants with more opportunities for voluntary participation than were possible in Stage I.

In these sessions I caught glimpses of how a more inclusive management orientation (inclusive of people’s personal needs and values) could unleash creative energies and provide stepping-stones to positive organisational transformations.

These sessions proved to be perhaps the richest sources of learning for both the participants and myself and so I have therefore separated the workshop stage from the organisational overviews. I also present a consolidated account of this process using the experiences of Finance.Com as the main illustration of the phenomenon being researched. Finance.Com’s experience emerged as the richest story simply because I had so much data to draw upon because of the sheer number (100) of workshops conducted. Where appropriate however I present contrasting information from both Solid Finance and Yuppie Finance experiences.

As outlined previously, workshops were designed around four distinctive stages (Kolb: 1984) - an input stage where the research was critically reviewed, an activity stage where participants made sense of the information being provided, a processing stage
where collective understanding was facilitated, and a generalisation phase where action plans were developed to address the issues raised.

The structure of the workshops was designed to help participants learn about themselves and how they impacted on each other. The workshop room was arranged so that there were no desks or tables and participants were invited to sit in a large circle directly facing each other. From their comments and body language I could see that Finance.com participants found the physical layout of the room itself confronting. Many commented that it was the first time they had been invited to sit in a circle and face each other. I had the strong impression that it was not a welcomed new experience and they would have preferred the comfort of a desk to sit behind. In contrast the room layout was not an issue for either Solid Finance or Yuppie Finance employees.

The format seemed to take the participants on a conceptual roller-coaster ride. It began with their individual insights into their own values and how they reflected or differed from those of their colleagues. I then introduced the concept of the "psychological contract" (Haire 1991), so that each participant had a framework within which to understand their unique experience of the organisation, arising as did from the interaction of their personal values with the organisation's values (Hall 1986). The values recorded in the one to one interviews were then presented on overheads. In Finance.com and Yuppie Finance these values invariably contrasted with the personal values identified in the opening icebreaker process and the values being espoused publicly by the organisation in its documents.

Personal values were surfaced as the group worked in dyads and took turns in identifying the reasons why each person had joined the organisation and the reasons why they continued to work there. In reporting back to the group, members introduced their partner and recounted their reasons for originally joining their organisation as well as the reasons why they still continued to work there. This process provided an important platform for creating emotional bonds between participants as well as a rudimentary lesson in active listening. The process of inviting participants to speak on behalf of someone else rather than self-disclose created a ‘safe’ environment for participants to discuss aspects of their personality or personal drivers that, typically, people are hesitant to disclose when speaking on behalf of themselves. For many (in
my experience, practically all participants), this was the first time that they had been
given permission to speak in a trusting environment and to express an opinion in a non-
prejudicial way. Having worked thus with over 30 organisations, mostly large-sized,
my experience is that levels of trust are greater the more "emancipated" the
organisation, and therefore the consultant can work with larger groups. Where trust is
low, dyads are necessary to overcome distrust.

In processing the output of the dyads, employees introduced their partner, gave a short
summary of job role and department (and any other personal details that they wished to
share), and recalled the reasons their partner had given for joining the organisation and
the reasons why they continued to work there. As facilitator, in public view, I recorded
their comments in two columns on a white board with one side listing reasons for
joining, and the other reasons for staying. This whiteboard record became a vital public
record for participants of the "psychological contract" and the unspoken personal values
that employees had initially looked to have satisfied when they were recruited into the
organisation. Time and time again in the workshops participants referred to this process
as creating a new awareness of the personal and organisational consequences of having
different values recorded in the two columns.

**Enriching Collective Awareness Of Existing Values Gaps**

From previous organisational interventions and group processes I was aware that group
dynamics could mean that familiarity and affinity take a long time to establish. In
designing the process for Finance.Com, I was aware that these were potentially very
low-trust groups and I would have to work quickly to get the group to a stage of
collective engagement given the time constraints - 4 hours per workshop. The design
seemed to work for most participants as not one of the 100-odd workshops failed to
follow the stages of activities and I was always delighted by the enthusiasm with which
most participants engaged with the process.

The "contract" negotiated with participants was that, as we went through the exploration
of the "reasons for joining/coming to work", I would make the links to participants'
personal value sets and how these in turn reflected other research findings. In this way
participants would learn about their personal values as well as the organisation’s values
and this would help them better manage the relationship between the two, as well as
providing insights into personal drivers that might help them in their social context. Each time I conducted these sessions I was overwhelmed by the insights people had and the connections drawn to other aspects of their life outside the workplace. This was observed through the excitement generated and participant feedback during and after such sessions. As a consequence of the positive response, I incorporated this personal values clarification process into every other "values audit" that I have conducted since. I also came to see it as part of my "ethical contract" to help participants learn about themselves. My hope was that the personal insights and learning would afford participants more control in their daily lives by helping them make more informed choices and recognise opportunities to seek to have their values met outside of their workplaces if it was not possible to have them met inside. This intention was made explicit in my introductory remarks to each workshop group as part of the context setting.

Once everyone had given their reasons and reviewed all inputs (captured on the whiteboard), I would then suggest that the group might like to think of the reasons given as "needs" or "values" that individuals were looking to have met at work, and I further suggested that whether these were or were not met might shape their workplace experience.

The reasons or needs recorded during these sessions invariably included such values as opportunities for career development, learning and personal development opportunities, affiliation with success via opportunities to work with what was regarded as a publicly successful organisation, travel opportunities, opportunities to work with the latest technologies or latest knowledge, opportunities to experience regular social contact, and to be actively included and recognised as part of the process of building a successful business. More basic needs and personal values were also recorded, such as opportunities to earn money to pay for lifestyles choices - school fees, prestigious suburb locations, car leases, etc.

Commonly, there was a nervous chuckle amongst administrative or support staff when the subject of money was raised; for many, it is taken as a "given". Often there was a degree of bravado when this value was acknowledged. However, it did not come up as often as most people assumed it would, and its relatively low appearance always gave
rise to excited discussion. In values research, the value of "money" is distinguished from the value of "accessing a lifestyle". In the discussions following the sharing, participants who gave "money" as a value were encouraged to discuss what they did with the money, in a non-intrusive way. Once they began to explore the motivation, or associated need (mostly to provide for family, education, holidays), many of those who gave money as a value would acknowledge that money of itself was not in fact the primary need. It did not come as too much of a surprise to me that money was given as a major motivating factor amongst Finance.Com’s fee earners, and some, quite brazenly, gave “money, money and money” as their three reasons for joining and staying with the organisation.

As each member took their turn to speak, differences as well as similarities evolved, and a substantial list of needs emerged. As a facilitator, I could sense participants' growing awe at some people’s ability to identify or "give voice" to more personal needs such as <<wanting to belong to a community of people with similar interests>>, <<desiring opportunities to contribute to something greater than they could achieve alone>>, << having opportunities to enhance social status and self esteem.>> I found that these discussions appeared to ground participants in their individuality, while at the same time enabling them to see that many of their colleagues also shared the same needs and personal values as themselves.

Not one individual in any of the 100 groups ever said anyone was ridiculous for wanting to have a certain need met. Individuals would seek to associate with others' expressed needs by disclosing that, although they hadn't personally thought of a certain need, they recognised it as one of their needs once someone else had articulated it. I witnessed a unity of focus, an externalisation of interest, an interest in gaining understanding. At no stage did participants question the validity of the process or its purpose or role in an organisational context; instead they entered into the process willingly, mostly enthusiastically, and with a great sense of commitment to exploring common interests. As the process evolved there was increasing curiosity and inquiry and the body language suggested that members were intrigued. As the facilitator, I was struck by participants' eagerness for answers to the fundamental questions about, "who am I", and not in a narrow organisational sense. In this expression of enthusiasm and
active participation I felt as close as I could get to participants being willing collaborators in the research.

Where differences existed between the two columns of emerging values, participants were quick to comment. Recognising the dissonance between expectations and experience seemed to provide insights for some and there were spontaneous comments as to why they might be unhappy in their current work situation. I would suggest that one of the benefits of coming to recognise personal values is that it provides the opportunity to seek to have these needs met elsewhere in one's life. If the workplace was unable to accommodate personal values, there were still opportunities to have these needs met outside work. Citing other research, (Hall: 1986, 1973; Collins and Chippendale: 1991), I would identify the benefits of a better understanding of values for participants such as helping to keep personal stress levels down by enabling people to see that they did not need to have all their values met from their work context but could finding missing satisfaction elsewhere in their lives.

Females in particular were quick to acknowledge how the process enabled them to gain insights into their situations and I came to anticipate that those workshops that had more females in them would flow much more smoothly because the females responded quicker and more positively to the underlying messages that the research findings were unfolding. Often they approached me after the sessions to ask for advice on what they could do to achieve a better fit between their personal and the current workplace values. Others sought advice on how they might seek to have the values that they could not get met through work, met elsewhere.

In workshop sessions I would seek to show participants how others had sought to balance their personal values with their workplace situations, by drawing on examples of my previous experiences in other organisations. A popular anecdote was the experience I had gained working with female executives in a large professional firm and I was keen to give voice to this in each workshop so that Finance.Com females' experiences could also be highlighted. My research had found "sharing" and "social intimacy" to be core values for these female executives. This meant that they liked to be able to discuss workplace issues with colleagues, to have open friendships with peers, and generally to feel supported by work colleagues. The culture of their
organisation, however, was that the "need to discuss an issue" was seen as a weakness and an indication that individuals were not coping with their jobs and couldn't make decisions. "Social intimacy" and "openness" were also seen as naive. The informal organisational rule was to guard individual privacy so as not to become vulnerable to the politics of other members. To offset the stress that could have arisen in their lives because they were unable to have these personal values met at work, these women had sought to become active members of professional women's organisations outside of the workplace. It was through these external contexts and activities that they sought to live their personal values around sharing and social intimacy. Similarly, I would suggest to each workshop group that if their experience of their workplace was that it was full of unpredictability and change (as many had described their experience in both Finance.Com and Yuppie Finance), then stress arising from unmet values around security might be balanced by seeking stability in their non-work life. As a group, we would then take other acknowledged unmet values and seek to identify ways in which they too might be met outside the workplace.

**Discussing the Undiscussable**

After the group process, the consolidated research findings were presented on overheads. Major findings were supported with several anonymous employees' quotes. Some of these were quite confronting, and many participants squirmed in their seats as I began breaking taboos and "discussing the undiscussable" (Argyris and Schon: 1978) of how people were adversely impacting on each other. As researcher and consultant I often felt the pressure of being the holder and storyteller of so much negativity especially in Finance.Com. To collect it and sort it into themes was both depressing and confronting as it kept drawing me into an emotional plane as I empathised with the pain and suffering of the wounded while trying to mould their stories into a workable argument for why change was necessary. I also knew that publicly exposing the participants' stories would cause pain to both the bullied and bullies, as their juxtaposition with others' personal stories amplified these experiences. I hoped that it was these authentic observations and their personal quotes that would overcome the previously documented apathy and I therefore saw it as necessary to include this rich and confronting material if I was to gain ownership of change by all involved. I was ever watchful of the possibility of a group turning on me and disavowing the research findings or calling for the research to be abandoned. This did not eventuate but I felt
the possibility was ever-present and could never really separate my role as facilitator to become a true co-enquirer with the other participants. My challenge to “tell it as it was” in the workshops and in the final report without alienating the sponsors of the research was a tightrope that was walked daily in Finance.Com and many other organisations where I sought to unearth the internal contradictions of organisational life.

In the workshops I kept a steady pace, which was helped by the fact that it was a structured presentation, which was designed to move the group through the research findings and to close on a positive note by sharing participants' suggestions for what the organisation could look like if everything were working well.

I could see that both the group and myself experienced the presentation of the personal quotes as the most painful part of the workshop session. This is where we all squirmed on our seats; me because I had to discuss the undiscussable; the participants because they had to confront the experienced reality of organisational life that rarely gets discussed in a public arena and can only be alluded to in private or when confidentiality is guaranteed. The direct but anonymous quotes poignantly captured employees' distress at work and, as the overheads went up, the group collectively could witness the pain and suffering of others' in such quotes as:

<<New employees are thrown in at the deep end and either sink or swim.>>
<<If you've got a problem with the way things are done, you leave.>>
<<Our code of conduct is signed by all and understood by none.>>
<<It's often a case of shoot the messenger.>>
<<The bonus system is the only message system.>>
<<People issues are sacrificed in order to get the job done.>>

*Finance.Com members*

Van Manen (1990:120-21) points out that:

*Anecdotes may be encountered as concrete demonstrations of wisdom, sensitive insight, and proverbial truth... that... simultaneously pulls us in but then prompts us to reflect.*
The use of quotes seemed to work most effectively in showcasing this otherwise "undiscussable issue", of human suffering. As researcher, I was able to stand outside the context and let employees' own experiences tell the story. This experience seems to also reflect that of Van Manen's research methodology, when he says:

*If the description is phenomenologically powerful, then it acquires a certain transparency, so to speak; it permits us to "see" the deeper significance, or meaning structures, of the lived experience it describes.*  
*(Van Manen 1990:120-121)*

One anecdote especially elicited a strong reaction from all the groups as it spoke to the frustrations of the most vulnerable - the new recruits' – and their stories of how unfriendly they had experienced the organisation and the human obstructions put in the way of their gaining the necessary knowledge to know what was expected of them. I had gleaned insights into their experiences by talking to a long-term staff member who explained to me that the reason why people took little interest in new recruits was because:

<<The informal rule is that you don't waste time speaking to new people for at least three weeks so that you can be sure that they are not just temporary staff; that you simply never speak to people in the lifts because you just don't know how long they will be around.>>

*Finance.Com Male Middle Manager*

By exposing the undiscussability of such practices I was hoping to pave the way for change by addressing the stages that *precede* change and which are often not made visible – stage one being a new awareness of the issues; stage two being new skills by participants and stage three being a desire to change behaviour – all three stages being necessary precursors to real and lasting change.

One of the implicit assumptions identified was that women were assumed to be less <<aggressive>> than their male counterparts. This was frequently cited as the explanation for their under-representation at senior management level. Because females were seriously outnumbered in the organisation I typically found that workshops were predominantly male and many of them would now blink in
astonishment that such a taboo was being publicly aired while the few females present generally nodded their heads in agreement. There were particularly pregnant silences as the other taboos were exposed - such as not interfering in another manager's business, even when they were acknowledged to be bullying their people.

The exposure of implicit assumptions signaled the lowest point in the group's energy levels, and was characterised by what I observed to be painful silences by the offenders, and the offended, as each recognised an implicit or explicit role in the situation. This was particularly the case where racism was observed and ignored because of the governing value that <<you don't get involved in issues that don't concern you directly.>>

The group's psychic energy would move back up as research highlighted what participants had said they liked about the organisation and why they continued to work there as well as what they would like to see happening in the future. In one or two sessions, those managers who were affronted by the public presentation of the research findings - in particular the way it exposed specific managerial practices - attempted to challenge both the process and the findings. I deflected their attempts to devalue the research by using the voices of the employees (via the direct quotes) to support the research findings and these, coupled with the silence of the rest of the group, worked to marginalise such attacks. Here I was seeing a replication of the culture of denial that permeated the organisation; the vocal speaking out, attempting to justify unconscionable acts; the majority remaining silent and not speaking out in defense of the abused.

In Yuppie Finance this opening stage of the workshop, instead of being witness to individual sufferings, surfaced instead a collective sense of pain and dislocation. Here employee quotes spoke to a distress that was reflected in many individuals' comments and spoke to a collective experience of sadness, frustration, anger and fear as members struggled to come to terms with the sudden demise of their old organisation while experiencing heightening personal insecurities because of job uncertainty.

In Solid Finance the experience was different again, and here there was much overlap in the content of employee's quotes. They told the story of an organisation that was
experienced in a largely consistent and predominantly positive way by its members. What was very different about these workshops as compared to either Finance.Com or Yuppie Finance was the sense of ownership participants demonstrated for the organisational context. These participants were well aware that how they treated each other and in turn how they treated their customers played a major role in shaping their organisational culture and its reputation as a <<people friendly>> workplace.

**Co-designing The Future**

After my structured presentation, the workshop participants were given copies of the overheads to take into the breakout rooms to work with them and inform their suggestions for systemic ways in which the issues raised could be tackled. No one found this a difficult task, and many had immediate ideas about how to go about addressing the issues. I was often struck by the eagerness of employees to have a say in how change might happen and suspect such eagerness arises out of their ongoing frustration at the lack of consultation in the design of their day-to-day workplace contexts. I also sought to extend this consultation process by including the participant’s action plans in my formal report to management. Back in plenary session, Finance.Com participants often demonstrated creative and elaborate initiatives and were keen to present their ideas, as evidenced by each small group’s demand for equal presentation time. The similarities in their recommendations seemed to indicate the existence of tacit models, not just regarding the status quo, but also how change might also happen within the organisation.

This exercise proved to be more difficult for Yuppie Finance employees and their lack of job security seemed to keep them more firmly anchored into a backward looking orientation and it was not until I had introduced them to Bridge’s model of change that they were willing to begin to contemplate what the future might hold for them.

For Solid Finance employees it was a case of more of the same and many of these participants were reluctant to imagine any radical changes for their organisation in the future.

These sessions were brought to a close by drawing attention to the original personal values disclosure icebreaker exercise and the frequency with which values around
interpersonal relationships had been cited as being important. I would then make the observation that many of these needs were not the domain of management but of the participants themselves and were a function of how they treated each other. I would then suggest that, rather than seeing it as the responsibility of management, one empowering way of looking at the documented unmet needs was for each individual to accept their responsibility to help each other to get personal needs met, particularly in their sphere of influence. I would invite all present to canvas how they could make a difference in helping others to get their needs met, and so the session closed with a discussion of what individuals could do differently in the future and how they might move to a more mutually beneficial way of relating to each other.

My exploration of Finance.Com had surfaced and highlighted for me many of the dysfunctional behaviours that are spawned by a Theory X management approach and which I had found repeated in various degrees of negativity in many of the other organisations where I intervened. Finance.Com was the classic values-driven management organisation – an organisation that put forward an external appearance of responsiveness to the times (i.e. management espoused Theory Y philosophies) and had its value statements trumpeted in its marketing literature. At the same time, internally, it operationalised and rewarded a very different set of values that were largely undiscussed because of their undiscussability (being so far from what would ordinarily be expected as the norm for professional behaviour).

I had set out to explore why the seemingly popular new management philosophies based on Theory Y perspectives had not translated into significant organisational change and Finance.Com provided such insights. These employees’ experiences suggested that Theory Y value-based management philosophies were being tacked onto an entrenched Theory X perspective that was deeply suppressed and undiscussed but lay at the core of the organisational psyche, inhibiting any real change. New employees were inducted into this value set by the behaviours they observed and experienced as being rewarded. Equally confronting, however, was that this Theory X context was found to be the ideal context for certain members of the organisation. Here in Finance.Com the fee earners were mostly very happy with their situation, it was experienced as <<an employer of choice>> and these employees had little interest in changing the status quo. In many other Theory X organisations where I have worked I
have come across similarly contented groups. Typically, these people are found at the higher echelons of these organisations which might also explain why change becomes so difficult to achieve as essentially those who are making the rules can be seen to be perpetuating systems that reflect their personal values as much as being driven by any organisational needs. This interdependence between the emancipated personal values of organisational leaders and the sorts of entities they spawn is also suppressed in a business literature and business school conversation that denies the impact of personal values in shaping and perpetuating specific contexts.

It was not the purpose of this research to critically analyse the differences between the three organisations but to surface and explore some of the values being experienced by their members and to observe, where it existed, contrasts between the cultural personalities of the organisations. However, I was of course struck by how these three organisations from the same industry had spawned three totally different cultures and had also achieved business success by taking different routes. At one level, it seemed that their success formulas were poles apart but worked nevertheless. This seemed to be at variance to the accepted management doctrine that Theory Y, with its increasing focus on people (in an increasing service focused world), would provide organisations with a competitive edge. Yet here were three organisations that constructed their success platforms from woods of different hues leading to external appearances of success for each while internally their people could feel anything but successful.

What became clear to me through the research was that members in all three organisations did place importance on having their values met through alignment with the organisation’s values. Nowhere was this more evident that in Yuppie Finance, where people were generally quite satisfied with the core values, even though for many people in other industries they would have seemed hard. What I saw was a culture based around knowing what the future held and that people were prepared to compromise their own notional “soft” values, accept hierarchies, and tolerate autocracy, in exchange for identification of and with the success formula. Similar to Solid Finance employees, their personal identities were bound up with the company’s and there had been a deep sense of pride in being part of it and its market success. When their image of external success was threatened they had turned inwards to their personal values to try and rebuild their self-images. In Solid Finance, people were largely satisfied that
their personal values were aligned with the company’s and they expressed an expectation that the company would, indeed, meet their values through the conduct of its business. The research found that few of Finance.Com’s members were cognisant of the fact that personal values were in operation in the workplace or that they could have an expectation of having some of their personal values aligned with those of the organisation’s.

I had experienced these organisations on many levels – intellectual, psychological, emotional and physical – and I wanted to capture this systemic experience by drawing upon metaphors that told their story while removing the need for objective analysis or subjective criticism. The use of metaphors had worked well for my workshop participants and enriched their understanding of how they were experiencing their contexts so I include the exercise here as a way of surfacing and making more explicit my personal experiences with these interventions.

So, what animals would characterise these three organisations? The first I see as a grizzly brown bear; a loner living in a harsh, forbidding environment, hunting for food, surviving, suspicious of all others and a predator on weaker species.

The second I see as a two-headed llama; soft, affectionate with one head content to stay in the warm, sunny, secure pastures while the other is determined to take the rugged mountain path, knowing it to be a difficult terrain but convinced that beyond the mountain are even greener pastures.

The third I see as a female gorilla; large, nurturing, mature, wiser than most in the group, intent on providing succor to her young, but knowing that the hunters will come, waiting in anxious anticipation, accepting a future that is alien and uncertain.
CHAPTER 5
THE DYNAMIC TENSION BETWEEN INTERIORITY AND EXTERIORITY

No man is an island...We are all part of the continent...When the bell tolls for you, it tolls also for me (Donne)

Here in this chapter, I now seek to make explicit the phenomenon observed in relation to the research questions I had set out to explore. In addition to the stories drawn from the three organisations reviewed in this thesis, I also draw on employee quotes from some of the other organisational interventions conducted during the research period where these serve to elaborate on the themes arising out of this thesis research.

I had wanted to choose a research approach that overcame the traditional duality between researcher and participant. Particularly I had wanted to give recognition to the interpretative world of participants. However, the political nature of commercial organisations excluded a co-design approach and, to enable access to be gained to these autocratically guarded workspaces, the outward appearance of a duality between research and participants was maintained. Inwardly, however my frustrations at management’s insensitivity to employees’ needs led me to search for alternative ways in which participants could be empowered. Whereas my formal reports of each organisational intervention, which form part of the secondary data for this thesis, were similarly restricted in the ways in which I could speak to the situations I had found, my advocacy role enabled me to write and make public the much richer and more complex world of multiple meaning-making that organisational members were found to be continually engaged in. These published articles became both a public record of contemporary workplace dynamics as well as a secondary data source for the research observations elaborated upon here.

This disconnection between what I desired of the situation (in this case a research design that recognised participant’s rights to be consulted and have their internal world acknowledged) and how it was presented (external image of focus on externalities and maintenance of duality between researcher and participants) mirrored the same
disconnection between the external and internal realities that I found in various degrees in each organisation. I uncovered a workplace context where members’ subjective experiences were shaping their responses to their external situations in unacknowledged and undiscussed ways – in Finance. Com back office staff experienced being devalued by the bonus system and by the way in which fee-earners treated them and they responded accordingly; Solid Finance’s retail staff experienced being unheard and devalued by head office and responded accordingly; and Yuppie Finance members experienced abandonment because the new management were not physically visible to them and formal communications were scant. Theory Y values, in this thesis symbolised by the latest management philosophy of “management by values”, was camouflaging an operating management paradigm that found its origins in Theory X assumptions and associated values. This meant that employee’s internal world of interpretation went unrecognised, their needs either ignored or little understood and their emotional wellbeing subjugated to the organisation’s needs.

I found having to operate in the same way as was being promoted by the paradigm I was trying to undermine a continually disconcerting experience. By the end of the research period, I had moved to a new role as a facilitator of adult learning rather than my former diagnostic role. I hoped that specialising in adult learning within the workplace context, where employees were given workplace opportunities to learn how personal and organisational values impact on each other, would be a more personally rewarding and a potentially more successful approach to change. In this new role I could also seek to present myself in a more authentic way. My change in professional roles however also presented me with fresh opportunities to learn just how change-resistant the system can be. No sooner had I accepted a position with one of the world’s top four consulting firms (in order to locate myself firmly in “the big end of town”) than my new fledgling self-image of authenticity was challenged.

A weekend newspaper had featured a profile of my work in its “What’s new in workplaces” section and the very next day a major client of the firm rang the chairman to complain about my outspokenness. I found myself caught between two worlds again – the world of the new organisation where I had located myself and my internal world that wanted to be true to a different set of values. My phenomenological account of this incident, presented in the following pages, reflects the turmoil I experienced as I
juggled the tensions inherent in these dual roles. My research had shown me that such an experience was probably fairly representative of the internal struggles many employees find themselves in as they seek to remain true to their own personal values while externally appearing to conform to the dictates of their situation. I’ve included this personal reflection as it captures some of the personal anguish and human cost that so often accompanies a values clash as these get written in people’s lives. Another of the opinion pieces I had published around the same time then follows this phenomenological reflection. It is also included here because it highlights how I had to adopt a very different style of writing when speaking to these tensions in the public arena. Hopefully this juxtaposition of the two reflections demonstrates how the richer picture of real life tensions and issues get marginalised in a language that deliberately suppresses the emotional dimension.

This particular opinion piece speaks to the range of dualities told to me and personally observed during my many organisational interventions. These could not be raised with the reigning power elites, nor included in my reports, simply because the idea of suggesting that organisational leaders had a responsibility for the emotional well-being of their employees was not in their frame of reference and would have been dismissed as irrelevant to business. And, if I am being fully honest, I too would probably have lost professional credibility and been similarly dismissed as irrelevant had I pushed for this to be part of the rationale for the research. It was only here in the public media arena and through these opinion pieces and public presentations that I could risk presenting a more authentic voice and highlight the systemic causes of employees’ distress. It was here that I could draw attention to the hypocrisy of managers who presented themselves as representing one set of values while acting out a very different set behind their closed doors. I could do this because no names were divulged and so no direct criticisms made of any one organisational leader. It was a fine line I still trod between raising the issues and avoiding alienation of the reader (essentially these same organisational leaders who were perpetuating the paradigm) but it was a duality in which I had been well schooled.

The contrasting styles of the articles demonstrates how the unseen in workplace dynamics can also remain unheard because it is too confronting, too emotionally overladen, too subjective and altogether too powerful in its exposure of the human
suffering that transpires daily in workplace spaces designed to marginalise our innate emotional and social needs. The difficulty in surfacing an authentic public picture of what is going on continues to act as a barrier to progress.
A CLASH OF VALUES

This was written to help capture my experience and reaction to a Sydney Morning Herald profile of my work.

It’s Friday afternoon and almost time to go home. I pick up the phone and again feel that familiar drop in my stomach as the journalist requests an interview for Saturday morning. Yes, she’s already read the profile; the paper’s PR department had faxed it and, yes, she’d fax a copy (of the article when finished) to me. Would 9.30 am suit? What number should she ring me on?

Have I gone too far this time? Have I stepped over the edge between being controversial and being dangerous? Will I come across as some opinionated left-winger who doesn’t belong in the big end of town? Will anyone like it? The fax machine extrudes paper as my breathing quickens.

So much copy! The photo is gigantic. God I hope it doesn’t read too controversially.

I didn’t say that! The journalist has taken liberties with the opening paragraph. The style of writing is intrusive, the copy jarring. I can’t remember any of this. How did the journalist get my C.V.? Why would she want to include it?

I don’t like it. It’s not the me I know. It makes me sound condescending and judgmental. I’m vulnerable. What will others think? God it’s awful. Could it have been any worse? The firm will be furious, what do I do now? Who do I have to warn? Is it as bad as I think?

Brian’s not there. Who else can I ring? I need another perspective. Brett’s in his office. He’s pretty conservative.

My panic abates. Brett’s telling me it’s not that bad. It’s not good but it’s not that bad but I’d better forewarn the boss.

I resend the faxed article and head for home.

There’s that flutter again. I panic as I see they’ve used a miniature photo of me on the paper’s front-page banner. I furtively glance around the newsagency to see if anyone recognises me. It all seems normal. What about the cashier? Surely they will make the connection? No, no one’s noticed.

Outside I quickly open the paper to see if anything’s changed. No, there it is just as I read yesterday only now it doesn’t seem quite so large surrounded by all the other stories. Its not that awful, some people might find it interesting.

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Monday. Back at work, and I’ve almost made it to lunchtime before my boss appears. It’s worse than I anticipated. The national chairman has called my chairman who in turn has called my boss to demand an explanation for how such a thing “got through the system”. Who gave their approval?

It seems one of the firm’s clients has taken personal offence to the contents and rung the national chairman to complain. They both sit on a Board together and the National chairman is demanding an explanation.

There’s that familiar drop in my stomach as I take my seat in the NSW chairman’s office. He’s explaining how the article is just not the company’s way of doing things. He wants to get the facts. Did I say what the paper said I’d said? Now he wants to know who recruited me into the firm; how long have I been with them? I clench my hands as I feel my anger rising. I’m not their possession; they don’t own me. I consciously breathe more deeply, reminding myself that I can breath through anything as I mentally detach from the situation. I’m observing the chairman and I banter about what’s to be done and then I’m back in the lift descending to my office.

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I’m drafting and redrafting the required letter of apology. My anger is directed at the client and his abuse of power. How to say sorry without saying sorry? There, it’s done. It meets the requirements without
surrendering to the enemy. I'll live to fight another day.

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How dare he be upset? It's bad enough having my current employer breathing down my neck without my ex-boss also adding to the heat. What a nerve! He was the one who asked me to do the interview in the first place. He knows better than anyone that you can't control what the presses write.

My friend on the other end of the phone assures me she's cut him off at the pass. She's made it very clear to him that her concern is not that I have mentioned her firm but that the portrayal of me was not accurate and she was more upset for me than at me.

I simmer with anger at the hypocrisy of it all. No one's denying the truth in anything I've said, they're just upset that I've said it.

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That old industry maxim of any publicity being good publicity is true! A couple of new clients read the story and liked it and have given me new assignments. The new business means the heat's been taken off but I'm no longer happy working with the firm. I've made a mistake. I don't want to be told whom I can talk to and whom I can't. I've come too far to go back to being acquiescent. Where can I go next? Who needs the services of an outspoken social ecologist?

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There's that old familiar drop. The journalist wants me to participate in a one-hour profile on myself for ABC radio. Apparently, many people have commented on the profile in the paper and have liked what I had to say about the harshness of corporate life. They want to hear more.

I demur. My confidence has been shaken. How will the firm react to this? What if I say something that further upsets them? The producer plays a trump card. "So few women agree to do this. We get far more knock-backs from women than from men. They're more afraid of being outspoken". He had me. I'd been hoist on my own petard. I agree. I'll cope with the flak. My husband will still love me even if it all comes crashing down around me. I'm the lucky one who gets to have a voice. I'll speak for the voiceless in the conversation. I'll panic later.
Can organisations choose to grow people?
Published: *Australian Financial Review*,
Jan 29 1999

When a top tier legal firm recently took quarter page advertisements in the mainstream media to show their lawyers as bungee jumpers, volunteer workers and busy mums, and a business magazine ran a series of recruitment ads “looking for people with attitude” these would-be employers were appealing to the personal values of potential employees – that other half of life that up until now has been effectively silenced in the corporate world. They were also officially giving permission to a new generation to bring their personal values into the workplace.

The emergence of a genre of “lifestyle ads” signals that the implicit psychological contract that accompanies any official employment contract is being re-engineered and redefined just as the workplace itself has been.

This psychological contract is made up of the assumptions around the non-monetary benefits that each party will deliver to the other as part of the unspoken terms of engagement. More and more of these intangibles are being made explicit as part of the negotiation process and employees, particularly in the upper ranks, are critically appraising job opportunities on the principle of “life fit” rather than status and remuneration alone.

With the radical shift in the nature of work and organisational life since the late 1980’s traditional employment assumptions have been severely challenged with security of tenure being irreversibly uncoupled from employee loyalty and workplace performance. It seems at last that some new incentives are being built back into the diminished psychological contract to win back employee commitment, loyalty and performance and perhaps to assist employers to differentiate themselves in the pursuit of the most talented recruits.

This re-engineering of the psychological contract involves attempting to build a new realm of shared employer-employee interests resting on appeals to personal values and lifestyle choices. Promises such as “work/life balance opportunities”, “family-friendly employer” and “continuous learning environments” are the new benefits being offered in place of job security, formal career paths and even top dollar salaries.

If this emerging corporate concern for employee’s personal needs is not to be seen as the latest in window-dressing from the spin doctors of marketing and advertising then the challenge for leaders is to refrain from creating the illusion of a values-driven organisation and instead build the real thing.

The sort of organisation that “delivers on the promise” is an organisation that firstly invests in its existing employees and builds robust organisational reward and recognition systems to engender a spirit of co-operative enterprise to bring about the necessary in-house transformation.

There’s a strong business case to justify why change can only begin here. It seems pointless to seek to attract the best if once inside the organisation performance is stymied because the organisational culture ignores personal potential and inhibits high performance. Working on the internal culture to become the employer of choice is the only way to keep talented people.

At the external level, the old work-place cultures that eulogized business as warfare need to be purposefully dismantled in response to a growing global recognition of the interdependence of business success, employee satisfaction and societal welfare. Only sustainable business practices are capable of underpinning sustainable community life both inside and outside the corporation. It’s a naïve assumption to think that it is possible to have a healthy corporation composed of unhealthy employees, or that it doesn’t in turn shape the psyche of the wider society which is essentially composed of those same individuals. Neither can you enjoy a positive corporate reputation when you do not have the support and commitment of employees.
Today's business paradigm has abandoned the simplicity of competing and moved to a principle of connectivity. A growing body of research shows that connecting with employees inside the organisation as well as pertinent stakeholders outside the organisation delivers high performing organisational cultures that in turn deliver added shareholder value.

To create the ideal organisational context, where employees can reach for their potential, involves management rethinking and redefining its "duty of care" to include a philosophy of helping employees to help themselves as the sustainable way forward. This new "duty of care" involves recognition of the higher-order as well as the functional needs of employees. It represents a move away from seeing employees as mature resources to seeing them as under-developed human potential that can be enveloped, nurtured and harnessed to realise the full potential of the individual as well as the collective that is the organisation.

One of the great unmet needs that employees share with the rest of society is a need for "insight". We are in the throes of a collective crisis where the rules of life are simply no longer understood. This "meaning crisis" no longer waits for midlife to steal upon us. A new and chaotic world-order where there are no predetermined places, means that from the moment we leave the shelter of the home we are forced to chart and navigate our lives and to be prepared for anything but a smooth sail.

Since organisations are today's major institutions, our unofficial "second family", they present the best opportunity to learn who we are as individuals. For most of us, our sense of identity and self-worth is bound up with our work. In a world of uncertain and unpredictable employment we need help to balance our needs for a sense of worth and positive identity so that they are not totally dependent on the jobs we can or cannot get. We need to be able to value fulfilling our personal needs as well as workplace achievements. Since we spend more time at work than in any other sphere of life, it is here that we need to have our needs recognised, harmonised, and where possible met either in the workplace or through some workplace opportunities. The growing number of organisations offering employees opportunities to "volunteer" in their local communities or on behalf of national charities can be seen as an indicator of a new corporate awareness of the need to facilitate the development of a wider range of life skills than would be available within the work sphere alone. Pioneer organisations such as the BodyShop have long recognised that opportunities to learn leadership skills are more freely available in the not for profit sector; that by releasing their employees to work in this area they are providing them with opportunities for personal growth over and above what they could offer them as employers.

We need to know what makes each of us respond to the beat of different drums and want those around us to help in this search. What stymies us at the individual level – emotional underdevelopment, frustration and projection - is what goes on at the collective level in our places of work. An organisation comprised of individuals out of touch and unaware of their inner life and how it shapes work attitudes, is an organisation that is similarly unaware and oblivious to the forces that shape its destiny. These blocks to performance effectively stifle organisational development and prevent corporations moving to high performance, condemning them and the people in them to live lives of unfulfilled goals and promises. Personal growth is synonymous with organisational growth.

One of the easiest ways for managers to facilitate personal growth is to see their organisations as living ecosystems, living environments where autonomous individuals can take root and blossom into complex participative systems that enable each to transcend their own limitations and to act in unison to achieve more than any one can alone. Since nature has predetermined that adults, given the appropriate environment, will continue to grow and develop until they die, the social ecology of such places enables each to continue to develop because work experiences are conducive to personal growth. There is no reason why every
workplace should not be characterised by ongoing psychological and social growth as the environmental indicators of thriving organisational life.

Only with the assistance of the business world can we develop the skills to better balance the demands of work with the equally important demands of life and living. The artificial barrier that once quarantined one from the other has disintegrated as the demands of work continue to encroach on our personal domain. Family friendly organisations such as the AMP, Blackmores and the NRMA give due recognition to this reality by making corporate functions inclusive of all family members. To thrive in this fluid world of work we need more such organisations that are willing to welcome-in the whole person and not just the skill set they bring to the enterprise.

Recognising the whole individual, honouring their personal as well as professional needs, is a giant leap forward. Leaders in the new century can begin to develop a new organisational model based on the self-organising principle, with employees using their increased self-knowledge to codesign work environments that work for them. Instead of control hierarchies based on some mechanical model of organisational life, we can set free the unlimited resources of individuals who believe they can make a difference. Such were the experiences of Ricardo Semler CEO of the world famous Semco Corporation and Richard Branson of Virgin airways. Both invited employees to codesign workplaces that would enable them to thrive and their business flourished as well. Such audacity takes vision and courage and deserves the applause it brings.

After all, we live in a society not an economy. To sense the connection between sustainable business practices and sustainable people management is an idea whose time has well and truly come.

Instead of apparent chaos and breakdowns of our social order, we are on the verge of breakthroughs to new ways of being in both work and home spheres. All it takes is a new vision of organisations as living systems where wholeness, integration, growth and maturity are natural cycles to be valued because the employee, the enterprise and the wider society are interdependent and shape each other's progress.

Rather than waiting for a midlife crisis, choosing the right employer could become the catalyst for personal growth and a sustainable lifestyle.
The more I researched the more evidence emerged of a grassroots groundswell of needs and expectations around a desire to have work integrated with personal values. It seemed that the average employee was aching to have their internal world recognised and addressed. It was a movement I could intuitively identify with because I had felt a similar longing. My experience had demonstrated the benefits of seeking a greater alignment between personal and workplace values and I was determined to assist others to have their needs heard.

It seemed that most employees were experiencing a shared sense of disconnection between their needs and how their external workplaces were designed. I had discovered how most employees enthusiastically engaged in my interviews because they had a shared expectation that they had a right to be heard and were frustrated that this was not happening. The potential waste of human talent as well as the unnecessary human distress that was the by-product of such misaligned workplace contexts was depressing and daunting; daunting because of the ubiquity of this suppression of essential human needs. I came to accept that one of the greatest “mystifications” (Dugger 1988) being perpetrated in modern workplaces was the idea that organisations were being driven by the pursuit of efficiencies when in fact they were being driven by the unacknowledged and often unconsciousness motivations of their members as they jostled with each other to have their needs met. This research suggests that organisations are more often driven out of individuals’ political agendas who keep the focus on externalities and manipulate these and the people around them to achieve their personal as much as the organisation’s goals.

I became more aware of how the “power over” politics of organisational life can be seen as an extension of the same “power over” dynamics that characterized early family and school life. Here too, like many others (Belenky et al 1986), I had found myself confined in contexts that promoted positional power and external authority at the expense of interiority, inclusiveness and consultative inter-relating. To avoid being overwhelmed (because the issues were so common and widespread) I constantly had to reassure myself of my own, and the success of others, who had turned inwards and begun their search for values integrity between their inner and outer lives; how my own
journey had now culminated in my being located here in the right place at the right time i.e. within the corporate world at the same time as it was being externally challenged to adopt a different set of values. Fate had equipped and positioned me to help others and in so doing I could further liberate myself.

My research had been designed to explore whether the new soft values (Steward, 1996) being espoused by Theory Y and much of contemporary management literature, would provide new opportunities to employees to have their needs and values recognised and enable workplaces to move from a Theory X to a Theory Y set of values. The experiences documented in the research, however told a very different story. Instead of a more people-centered and sympathetic approach to individual needs, as had been the implicit promise of a Theory Y management approach, participants stories highlighted how Theory Y values were being experienced as little other than a new management rhetoric and how the underlying mindset at the top of these organisations had changed very little:

<<There's a large gap between the walk and the talk. Management can mouth the words but can't walk the talk.>>

_F:Com Back Office_

The result was that for most employees, Theory Y values were being experienced as part of a management strategy to make the external image of the organisation more acceptable in the public arena and little thought had been given to how it might transform internal management practices. Instead of it improving employees' experiences at work, the ways in which Theory Y were being implemented was fueling their cynicism and distrust. This was an unintended consequence of a management rhetoric that paid lip service to a set of values that was sympathetic to employees needs but which was then discounted by how management behaved. The result was that employee expectations were raised that they might be heard and they experienced further disempowerment when this did not eventuate.
For a long time I was quite incensed at the arrogance of this generation of managers who seemed to think that they could say one thing but do another or who could delude themselves into thinking that they were behaving in accordance with their stated values when others could clearly see they were not. I often had to struggle to ensure this anger was tempered in my reports so as not to be considered anti-management. Gradually I found it easier to understand how such disconnections could emerge as I began to more fully appreciate just how top-down most corporate communications were and just how little feedback from below actually gets to those at the top of organisations. This lack of feedback was further exaggerated by the relative isolation of each organisational community from what is going on in their external environments (for example very few organisational leaders read any newspapers except for the Financial Review which focuses on business issues only). The result is that many organisations find themselves operating very often as perfect “closed systems” with all the weaknesses that that entails. Coming to this realisation made me less cynical of management’s perceived hypocrisy and my reports gradually became less of a tortured process as I sought to get my message across without feeling I had to apportion blame.

**Expectation And Commitment**

My research had set out to explore whether employees, like myself, were aware of their personal values and looking to have these met at work. The workshop whiteboard icebreaker exercises in each organisation had surfaced information on employees’ needs (arising out of their internal world and value priorities) and these pointed to a conscious, and maybe sometimes, subconscious awareness of personal values; “subconscious” in the sense that participants had to be prompted to become more explicitly aware of their internal value drivers. This icebreaker process had enabled participants to gain insights into their own unique expectations as well as observe their differences from each other. In so doing it had facilitated a new awareness of how different individuals looked to the organisation to provide them with different opportunities as testified in the following Solid Finance managerial quotes:
"I've never thought much about this before and wasn't really conscious of my expectations."

"It's quite amazing to see the similarities in what we are looking for from our work. Usually when someone asks you why you work here you glibly answer it's for the money, so it's great to see the honesty in the room today because we all know it's about more than the money."

"The first column of values can really be seen as a wish list, it's the second column that tells it as it is."

The values revealed in the first column describing the reasons employees had first joined the organisation invariably revolved around values which included <<personal development>>, <<consultation>>, <<recognition>>, <<respect>>, <<community>>, <<learning>>, <<achievement>> and <<service>>. Values that were quite consistent with a Theory Y paradigm and similar to the values that other field researchers Herzberg (1974), Vroom (1970), Yankelovich (1981), Kinsman (1991), Colins & Chippendale (1995) have documented as representing the needs and desires that employees bring into work. These findings lend weight to Mason Haire’s (1991) concept of a psychological contract that often remains unspoken but is highly active in shaping employee response to their workplace contexts. Haire points out that where the organisation is able to satisfy personal values, the individual becomes more committed to the organisation and their satisfaction levels rise. Where the organisation is unable to meet their needs there is less commitment and less personal satisfaction. My personal experiences of non-inclusion and marginalisation in my early corporate career had highlighted for me how certain aspects of my unspoken psychological contract had included opportunities to grow and develop on the job that were being thwarted in workplace contexts that favoured males over females. Within these organisations, employees testified to similar divergent experiences and a similar diminishing of their commitment as indicated by these observations:
<<It’s a job. You get paid. If you had a choice you wouldn’t be here. I have no loyalty to the organisation, I’m here for the money and hopefully I won’t have to stay too long.>>

*Finance.Com Manager*

<<I’ve come to work because I don’t want to let the team down. If I don’t show up for my shift they have to do my work as well as their own. Management doesn’t care about us; they’re out to get what they can for themselves.>>

*Yuppie Finance Employee*

<<You’re really only as good as your last job. The organisation takes what it can get from you and when you can give no more it spits you out.>>

*Yuppie Finance Employee*

The research found that personal values became much more of a consideration for employees when they found themselves unhappy at work as was the experience of many Yuppie Finance employees as well as the back office employees in Finance.Com.

Such findings highlight the limitations of the major management theories because they tend to gloss over the political nature of workplace contexts. Their focus is on a causal connection between external motivation and behaviour at the expense of the interpretative and subjective experiences of the organisational context that characterises employee responses. This thesis found that, at the level of tacit knowledge, the concept of the psychological contract resonates with most employees’ experience. Introducing this concept proved to be an enabling process permitting participants to gain insights into their motivations and assumptions. As well as the spontaneous comments made during the workshops, written feedback sheets, collected after each workshop session, showed that the majority had been intrigued with the concept and could intuitively identify with it. Most wanted to learn more and typical comments such as, <<I've never thought about why I liked some jobs and not others>> and <<I'll be able to use this with
my son to help him understand why he doesn't like his job>> indicated that the process had facilitated learning by providing opportunities to gain insights into current and past experiences. Such workplace learning points to the transformation potential that lies in a formal recognition of employees' internal worlds and their need to make sense of how it fits with their external world. Additional comments such as, <<I can use this with my wife to see what she expects from our marriage>>, also seemed to indicate that the participants valued the exercise for what they had learnt about themselves and for its potential in helping them understand other life situations. These experiences suggest that there are unrecognised workplace opportunities to assist employees to gain insights and life skills in managing the dynamics between personal and workplace needs via structured learning opportunities at work.

The frustrations expressed by those who did not get their needs met indicated that employees were well aware of the connection between their workplace experiences and their overall sense of well being. Whether it was the back office staff in Finance.Com, the retail staff in Solid Finance or Yuppie Finance employees, each group spoke to their frustrations at not being authentically recognised so that their needs went unaddressed. Whether all parties acknowledged it or not, organisational members were engaged in two-way relationships that were often experienced quite differently by participants. Absence of any explicit discussion on the nature and impacts of these ongoing inter-relationships covertly worked to thwart the organisation's stated goal of building a high performance culture.

For Steward (1996) "hard" values relate explicitly to the business factors (profitability, productivity, efficiency, profits) while "soft" values relate to the human side of the organisation and include respect, consultation, honesty and similar values guiding interpersonal relationships. Employee stories indicated that soft values were given priority by employees while senior management frequently discounted these and employees were well aware of management's preference for hard values. It is this dissonance between employees and management's value priorities that perpetuates the employee/management divide:
Not all values are the same; some are more important than others. You have to be seen to get results before you can expect to be respected. The team has to make a profit before it can be included in the reward systems.>>

Yuppie Finance manager

Ironically, the greatest consistency in employee perceptions of their organisation’s lived values, was the consensus that executive managers demonstrated a priority around hard values.

The research found that personal values tended to operate at a tacit level but became more explicit where employees found themselves unhappy at work. A correlation was found in the synergy between organisational and personal values and position on the managerial hierarchy. In all three organisations, senior and executive managers displayed the least awareness of tensions between personal and workplace values or the organisation’s espoused values and its values in use. This was not always the case and the lateral hires within both Finance.Com and Yuppie Finance admitted to a values gap however, they did not expose this. A similar correlation emerged between employee unhappiness and hierarchical status so that those closer to the bottom were more likely to find themselves unhappy and to experience organisational life as unpredictable because the organisation did not conform to its espoused values. Perceptions of this organisational dissonance in turn heightened awareness of a perceived dissonance with personal values also. In Finance.Com and Yuppie Finance for example, there were many discontented back office people who were already looking for alternative work at the time of my interviews. In some instances, though, personal values were also found to operate at a conscious level and had already influenced the choice of employer. Such was the case in Solid Finance where many of its members described how they had deliberately sought to work there because of the perceived match between it and their personal values. This values match continued to be influential in their commitment to the organisation.
The overwhelming experience witnessed in the majority of the organisations with which I worked was that employees experienced themselves as being *unheard* in their places of work because personal values and needs were ignored as reflected in these quotes from two of my other organisational interventions:

<<Employee opinion surveys are like corporate wallpaper; management simply says it’s heard it all before and there’s nothing new and nothing changes.>>

*EU- Male Manager*

<<Consultants like you come in every year or two, we all diligently point out what’s wrong and what can be done to fix it and that’s the last we hear. The report gets filed in the too hard basket and nothing changes. We then get a new management team, they rearrange the chairs and the whole process starts again. Instead of change, another report is commissioned and we wait around but know that nothing will really change.>>

*MN- Employee*

The priority value most employees placed on wanting to be heard, through ongoing consultation in decisions that affect them, suggests that today’s employees now have an expectation that they have a right to be consulted and in its absence experience marginalisation. This expectation was demonstrated time and time again as employees engaged with my interview process and willingly elaborated on their frustrations while lamenting that such interviews were their only opportunity to have their say and, even then, it was only safe to do so anonymously.

*One of the original insights of this research is the revelation of the unintended consequences of the new rhetoric of management by values.* This research found that what is important in winning employee commitment to this new philosophy is not so much the set of values chosen as the degree of behaviour congruency members experience. Yuppie Finance employees for example were highly committed to their organisation pre-takeover, even though they recognised that it was <<a mean and hard place to work>> and one where shareholder needs were given top priority.
Nevertheless, these employees said that the rules were clear and that the organisation’s systems supported these value priorities and that had enabled employees to get on with their jobs in the ways they thought best. In contrast, employees who found that their organisations did not live up to their stated values invariably, described this experience in terms of being <<duped>>, <<misled>> or <<cheated.>> These situations, this research suggests, spawn organisational cultures that are not conducive to employee commitment or collective growth as was demonstrated by the polarisation between front office and back office Finance.Com staff. The unintended consequence of this was that the organisation also cheated itself of the full potential contributions of all its members. The dynamic nature of organisational life as a human system, means that the micro is actively shaping the macro in an unending interconnectedness. The interdependence between personal and collective growth highlights the importance of adopting a mutually beneficial orientation to employee and organisational development.

The Conscious And The Unconscious

I had designed each organisational intervention to surface how organisational members experienced their workplaces and what was uniquely important to them. Employee stories provided rich insights into the complexities of organisational dynamics at the micro level where it seems there are no two stories that are exactly the same, no two people who experience the organisation in identical ways and, where there exists another world of personal interpretations and projections that coexists with the externalities of organisational life. This interpretative dimension was manifested in the range of metaphors chosen by members that spoke to how they were making sense of their context. The differences in the metaphors chosen by Finance.Com employees, where front office staff invariably described the organisation as a king of the jungle type animal - <<a lion>>, <<cheetah>> or <<sleek puma>> - while back office staff choose predatory type animals such as - <<sharks>>, <<snakes>>, <<preying mantis who ate their young>> - highlights how organisational contexts are not experienced as neutral and play a role in shaping employee experiences. Employees within the same
organisation could experience the organisation to be “an employer of choice” while others would describe their experience as one of oppression and disempowerment. Such was the polarisation in the stories told to me in Finance.Com where “fee earners” were ardent advocates of a system that worked well for them and was recorded in their stories:

<<Best place I’ve ever worked; you’re allowed to get on with it and (are) generously rewarded for doing a good job.>>

While at the same time, back office staff told different stories of disenfranchisement and unhappiness with the status quo:

<<Very few people from the back office seem to have made much headway. The goal posts keep changing and management selectively releases information rigging the rewards system to suit themselves.>>

It is such co-existing stories, typical of organisational life, that are too often neutered in a management literature that promotes generalities and remains uncomfortable with exposing the often chaotic and messiness of everyday organisational life. This research makes explicit the distinctly different patterns of behaviour that differentiates one organisation from the other as well as the different patterns of behaviour within each organisation which better tell the story of how members experience the complexity of what consultants neatly refer to as “organisational culture”.

I found it humbling to witness the fragility of adults in the workplace; how most of us yearn for a sense of self-validation and how this tends to go unmet; how our personal stories are typically silenced until sought out by external consultants in pursuit of some management objective. I came to realise that it was quite an amazing feat that organisations ever actually get anything done when there are so many multiple agendas and interpretations shaping how members act. My consultancy experience suggests that
the reasons why organisations actually get things done (the external manifestation of success) as opposed to working well (its internal well being) is because the majority of members take personal pride in doing a good job despite the politics that so often get in their way of doing their best. Even the stories of the senior managers in Solid Finance captured this internal/external dynamic:

<<We don’t put the really tough questions on the table; it comes back to the old turfdom syndrome.>>

<<It’s seen as a sign of weakness if you need to solicit help for the issues arising in your department.>>

<<We allow people to play in the gray zone; it’s not clear what’s acceptable and what’s not...there’s a toleration of things that shouldn’t be...some policies in force for some and not for others.>>

<<The organisation is one that feels it has to look after its own...you can get too caught up in that and you can lose sight of what’s right and what’s wrong. You can have a situation where loyalty to others is elevated over ethics fostering an environment of covering up.>>

I gained powerful insights into why formal policies and procedures are so necessary in large organisations. It is these that impose the existing order on what is otherwise an elusive shared understanding of how things get done as illustrated by the 20 different interpretations one organisation’s members awarded to their organisation’s stated value of “caring for our people”:

1. <<Employees' personal information is kept confidential.>>

2. <<Managers and employees respect each other and do not allow personal prejudices to interfere with how they treat each other.>>

3. <<Managers show impartiality to staff.>>

4. <<People issues are dealt with promptly.>>

5. <<People issues are dealt with sensitively and fairly.>>
6. <<Managers act in the best interests of their staff.>>
7. <<Managers try to empathise with staff and their feelings.>>
8. <<Managerial communication with staff is open and honest.>>
9. <<Managers respect staff as individuals.>>
10. <<Managers make time available to help staff when they have issues.>>
11. <<Managers value the people needs of the organisation as much as the bottom line.>>
12. <<Managers are concerned to ensure there is high morale.>>
13. <<Managers act on feedback from staff.>>
14. <<Management recognises the needs of family-work-life balance.>>
15. <<Management pays above market rates.>>
16. <<Management promotes internal staff development.>>
17. <<Management tries to avoid redundancies.>>
18. <<Employees help each other out.>>
19. <<People are concerned for others beyond their department.>>
20. <<Social celebrations such as birthdays, wedding and births are celebrated during company time and at company expense.>>

It is debatable if those who identified “caring” as a corporate value intended these interpretations. By failing to recognise that employees, as meaning-making human beings, interpret the value within their own frame of reference and therefore hold the organisation to account for operationalising their interpretation rather than management’s, the espoused values had unintentionally created opportunities for enhanced employee cynicism.

The diversity of interpretations was deeply daunting for myself as someone charged with bringing about a collective situational improvement. It seemed there wasn’t any shared understanding to begin from. I came to accept that, for me, “success” in terms of organisational improvement and “making a difference” had to be contentment with surfacing the issues, heightening awareness and facilitating employees skill development in critical thinking as a prelude to change.
The potential for utter disillusionment and cynicism haunted me for several years because the same pattern of win/lose dynamics, the same unmet needs, the same gaps between the rhetoric and the practice, the same inhumanity being practised in the name of commercial competition was observed as the dominant pattern linking each of my interventions together. What kept me going was my steadfast belief that making the implicit explicit, and raising consciousness, were necessary prerequisites for any situation improvement. I came to suspect that Theory Y never really got institutionalised into workplaces because there had been no explicit recognition of how workplace contexts get mediated within employees' internal frames of reference. Consequently employee perspectives became subjugated to Theory X dynamics.

Murphy (1995) claims that the improvement process can only be made better when we have a clear idea of what we are aiming for. He claims that, as consultants or researchers, if we wish to improve the effectiveness of any group we must either choose a theoretical position and apply it, or make explicit the ideas of the work group unit or organisation, and mould them into a usable model. My organisational interventions were designed with this latter objective in mind as this appeared to be a critical missing dimension from a Theory Y perspective. My goal was to help all organisational members become aware of their theories in use so that they had the option to choose to move towards designing new mental constructs and corresponding new behaviours.

One of the significant outcomes of this research was the revelation of how the workplace, like individual human beings (and, after all, the workplace is essentially a collective of human beings) has both a conscious and unconscious life. There are observable external workplace values that appear as a manifestation to the world of how each specific workplace operates. But, seething beneath the surface, there are also, those "other" values that for one reason or another have been deferred or repressed to make way for external values. These values inform and shape the ongoing formal and informal learning that occurs. This research posits that the crucial reality of the workplace is the combination of both these public and suppressed values, the prevailing
tension between them and how these are mediated in employees' internal worlds to shape ongoing experiences.

Recognising Differences

The wide variety of different perceptions recorded on the one hand, seems to lend support to Wheatley's (1995) conclusion that in looking for a way of developing a common understanding of the expressed value, there is no other option:

"but to take an interpretive approach and subject each value to definition by example." (Wheatley 1995: 75)

However, in working with employees I have found that it is possible to allow them to choose their own interpretations so long as it accords with the broad, underpinning principal. So, for example, “respect for the innate dignity of people” is the principle that underpins the stated value of “people”. So long as the chosen interpretation does not challenge the underlying principle that people should be valued for and in themselves - rather than be seen as a means to an end - the value can then be lived out in many different ways. This research found that helping employees to make the link between underlying principles and the possibility of a variety of expression for each value, builds a bridge of common understanding between the internal/personal world of the employee and the organisational/collective interpretation of values and makes values integrity an achievable goal.

Most of the literature on corporate culture tends to focus on the behaviours that employees have in common, pointing to shared rituals and patterns of behaviour that transcend individuals and form the basis of a collective culture manifested in operationalised workplace values. But this research also unveils the differences that coexist within these collective patterns of behaviour. The chaotic and complex nature of organisational life was demonstrated by the differing employee perceptions of the organisation's integrity as seen through the prism of their personal values. It is
suggested that, in looking for what members have in common, the differences have been marginalised and so an appreciation of the complexity of corporate culture and workplace values is made more elusive for scholars. *This research revealed the diversity of experiences that make up the complexity of organisational life and find their origin in each individual's interpretive process.*

Personal values were seen to shape external actions, and differences in personal values gave rise to organisational silos and differing managerial styles, which made for unpredictable workplace behaviour patterns. The research found evidence of all three value driven archetypes as described by Kinsman (1991) and Hall (1986) coexisting within each organisation so that organisational life could be seen as a socially constructed process involving all its members:

- sustenance driven (Hall's foundation values), as in non-managerial employees looking to each other for support in a work place experienced as threatening and unpredictable;

- outer directed (Hall's focus values) as in managers who looked to emulate their bosses and gain their patronage in their jostle for status;

- inner directed (Hall's vision values) as in employees who struggled against perceived tensions between their personal values and those promoted at work

*The research provides new insights into employee motivation.* Employees stories spoke to the resilience of human nature and highlighted how those employees disappointed in their employer expectations compensated themselves by seeking to live up to a set of personal values around being loyal to their colleagues and finding rewards in the intrinsic nature of doing good work. In Yuppie Finance, employees who no longer expressed satisfaction with their employer continued to turn up for work because they did not want to let their colleagues down; in Finance.Com the IT employees got their emotional support by identifying with each other and not the organisation. Satisfaction and pride was also found in the nature of the work and being able to do the job to
personal levels of satisfaction rather than for management recognition or monetary gains. Such disclosures call into question one of management's current "theories-in-use" – i.e., that people are mainly motivated by money. By contrast, the research found intrinsic satisfaction and affirming interpersonal relationships were primary motivators and sources of satisfaction. Despite decades of research since Herzberg et al. (1959), this thesis suggests that current management understanding of employee motivation has changed little and continues (mistakenly or conveniently) to give priority to external inducements. This would seem to indicate that a useful strategy to win employees' commitment would be to appeal to their sense of responsibility to each other as well as to the intrinsic reward of doing a job well.

Stories told suggest that individuals have a personal value system that they bring into their places of work. For some it is conscious and recognised, for others it is not, but for the majority it shapes personal experience and behaviour. Many members demonstrated a keenness to be assisted to make the links between personal and workplace values, and saw such links as adding to their levels of workplace satisfaction by helping them to resolve perceived conflicts. Currently, the need for this type of learning is unrecognized and these findings suggest that it is only by explicitly recognising the importance of personal values that management will be persuaded to invest in providing such learning opportunities. By failing to recognise personal values and then, in addition, failing to work with these in relation to stated organisational values, workplaces seem doomed to continue to silence the personal dimension, to relegate it to the level of the unconscious, to repress the fact that, in an essential sense, organisations are composed of interdependent people relating to each other in positive and negatives ways. The experiences recorded here suggest that failure to recognise personal values perpetuates yet another widely held assumption that work and personal life can be segregated.
Badaracco (1992:64-70) claims that the organisational context:

Exerts enormous cumulative pressures on employees and managers and because of this influence, people are able to believe they are behaving responsibly when in fact they are behaving in unacceptable ways.

Certainly such schizophrenic behaviour was witnessed at all levels in these organisations. In the workshops, for example, participants would often discover how they personally were adversely impacting on others despite demonstrating little awareness of this in their one to one interviews. Instead they mostly blamed the existence of poor behaviour on “others” or projected it onto management. Similarly, employees typically held their managers to account to live the organisation’s values while they themselves operated out of an assumption that they had a right to live their personal values at work. Time and time again, I enquired of groups if anyone knew when the organisation’s values took priority over personal values and no one was ever able to explain. This research suggests that employee self-concepts and how they react to their external context can be experienced as being disconnected rather than interdependent. I suspect that this assumption, that personal values take priority, creates the greatest disconnection in the workplace because it calls into question the essential legitimacy of organisational (shared) values and perpetuates the experience of “power-over” dynamics.

Velasquez’s (1983:17) research led him to conclude that it was because individuals did not see any connection between their personal values and how they choose to act at work that they could behave in contrary ways:

Unethical behaviour in business is more often than not a systematic matter. To a large degree it is the behaviour of generally decent people who normally would not think of doing anything illegal or immoral. But they get backed into something unethical by the systems and practices of their own firms and industries. Unethical behaviour in business generally arises when business firms fail to pay explicit attention to the ethical risks that are created by their own systems and practices.
The jockeying for positions within the corporate hierarchy, as witnessed in Finance.Com and Yuppie Finance, lends support to Velasquez's findings that the specific organisational context shapes personal behaviour. This research found that most employees struggle to understand themselves while at the same time trying to understand how to make sense of their corporate values at the operational level. For most, organisational values are largely experienced as abstract and intangible. No time was invested in assisting employees to make meaning and, instead, it was generally assumed that employees were like blank sheets of paper on which the Executive Team could write whatever script they wanted and mandate employees to comply. Perhaps it is no wonder that in this vacuum of understanding, managerial behaviour was held as the universal symbol for organisational integrity and, sadly, this was often found wanting.

This research also indicates that employees already have tacit personal values in operation. The pre-eminence of personal values was most vividly manifested in the way employees chose to respond to each other. The research suggests that it was because employees so often acted out of personal values, not the stated organisational values, that so much diversity exists in the quality of interpersonal relationships within organisations. This was highlighted within Finance.Com where members were able to choose from a myriad of ways of behaving dictated only by "one's own level of embarrassment" as pointed out by one manager.

Experiences from these organisations suggest that assisting employees to become aware of their tacit personal values is the first step in helping to reconcile personal and organisational values and enabling new and shared meanings to be nurtured. The workshop sessions pointed to the essentially existentialist nature of employees and their freedom to create their own experiences. In the absence of such learning opportunities employees ascribe a wide variety of meanings that can vary from one context to another. This diversity reflects the same diversity that is found outside organisational life as individuals choose to live in diverse ways.
While the organisation's values may be the key determinant in shaping managerial experiences and values, for non-managerial employees, personal values can be more important and determine the levels of commitment they will give. An understanding of personal values and their impact is therefore critical to the understanding of the dynamics that make up organisational culture, especially as it relates to the negotiation of shared meanings and resistance to organisational change. Organisational consultants like myself are well aware of how change initiatives are deliberately stymied as part of employees' response to having change imposed upon them. This research suggests that a greater recognition of personal needs might be one way of dissolving such blockages.

I had set out to explore how personal values interact with organisational values and the nature of that interaction. The research findings suggest that personal values are important; that individuals do seek to have them met at work and that differences in personal values give rise to differences in behaviour. Where members experience that they cannot get their values met, the result is a diminishing of their commitment and motivation at work and for many, it becomes a source of unhappiness and distress. Although employees were generally aware of their personal values, these were predominantly ignored or suppressed by the existing organisational culture.

**The Repressed And The Unintentional**

An important aspect of my research had been to explore whether uncovering employee stories of their lived experiences would provide insights into why Theory X dynamics continue to dominate modern organisations. My research found that the workplace values that get operationalised are shaped by a dynamic interdependence between espoused organisational values and members' personal values.

It was Peters and Waterman's (1982) research that first alerted a whole generation of managers to the enhanced organisational performance potential if management paid
sufficient attention to the values being promoted there. These researchers built a case to show that those organisations, which sought to balance economic priorities with employee needs, outperformed and outlived those that focused on economic priorities only. Unfortunately, the authors did not shed any light on how management might seek to hone a new balance between social and economic priorities. This research suggests that managements have typically imposed an espoused set of values that incorporate external social aspirations without attempting to change their existing, internal way of doing things. This has resulted in significant unintended consequences in terms of increased employee cynicism and alienation. Such cynicism has emerged because employees hear management talk about a values-based philosophy but experience it as unoperationalised. Instead, daily experiences demonstrate that management has little genuine commitment to the espoused values. In each of the these three organisations, there was no shared understanding of how the organisation’s espoused values might be operationalised and employees were left to interpret the values within their own frame of reference. For those who are genuinely concerned to build high performance cultures, where employees and the organisation share opportunities to reach their potential, this research provides valuable insights on the practicalities involved, beginning with the outstanding need to provide training sessions in which shared understandings can be nurtured.

This research challenges Shapiro’s (1995:41) idea:

In most corporate cultures people learn to repeat the corporate dogma while following the real rules, and seldom consciously recognise any gap between the two.

Instead, it is suggested that the majority of employees (managerial and non-managerial) are at least tacitly aware that their organisations espouse one set of values while acting out of another, epitomized in the ubiquitous feedback statement:

<<There’s a huge gap between the talk and the walk and everybody knows it.>>
During Finance.Com interviews, executives had typically presented themselves, as being concerned for people while the employee feedback was that their day-to-day behaviour indicated otherwise. Such varying interpretations suggest that these managers were blind to their actual managerial styles or that there was a significant difference between espoused personal values and their values in use. Such stories suggest that corporate value statements can mask to the external world, the divergent (with societal values) values being operationalised within organisations. Although only a few senior managers would openly admit that they had the freedom to set their own behaviour standards - as was pointed out in Finance.Com - a tacit understanding existed that no one would interfere so long as results were achieved. The phenomenon of fiefdoms, spawned from such managerial power, is another "undiscussable" in contemporary management literature and yet a feature of almost every organisation. My experience suggests that few managers are aware or have been trained in their “duty of care”, even though this is what their functional role is essentially about. This further illustrates the gap between organisational rhetoric around “valuing people” and the skills and attributes for which managers are chosen as highlighted by one employee’s observation:

"If you can’t do your job, chances here are that you will get promoted as that’s the main way people problems get solved; you just pass the problem up the line until it becomes someone else’s problem."

Typically, all three organisations promoted members into managerial status because of their ability to enhance profits, their political acumen or their unmanageability, rather than for their demonstrated people skills. These unacknowledged ways of behaving speak to the ongoing marginalisation of human needs at the expense of externalities. This research shows how these organisational power dynamics created "vicious circles", (Hampden-Turner, 1990), within Finance.Com and Yuppie Finance, where junior managers resorted to political tactics to gain influence and garner favour with senior managers. In so doing, managers disempowered themselves as well as further entrenching the fickleness of the organisation's formal promotional systems. Such
dynamics lend further weight to Hampden-Turner's findings on how the organisational context disempowers its members:

"Managers' sense of organisational contingency, of authoritative capriciousness, and of the lack of firm connections between work and reward lead many to doubt whatever abilities they may actually have. (Hampden-Turner 1990:79)"

While some senior managers and executives were aware of diverse management styles, they were allowed to remain unaware that their own behaviour was incongruent with the organisation's espoused values or even their own personal espoused values. For those who were aware that their behaviour was inconsistent, concerns were neutralised by a governing value that justified such dissonance as the only way it could be in business:

<<There's a different set of rules for business.>>

Such managers were found to have effectively disassociated themselves from any accountability for their behaviour. So, for example the IT people in Finance.Com, would blame the organisation for orchestrating the values gap and dissociate themselves by claiming that they had no personal identification with the organisation and didn't engage with it beyond what was necessary.

I found these responses the most chilling. Here were highly educated people, mostly at the top of their professions, who in their pursuit of economic goals were quite prepared to suppress their personal accountability for the perpetuation of a system whose values were known to be out of step with what would be deemed acceptable in other societal contexts. It didn't surprise me to learn that most of these organisations had short life spans and typically died prematurely (DeGues 1997) as they were essentially "closed systems" where entropy seemed inevitable. The human suffering that continued in the mean time, however, was something I needed to discuss - if not directly then indirectly - through my advocacy work.
Jackall (1988:21) exposes the politics of organisational life when he says:

One thinks of the presidents of operating companies or divisions as barons, then the CEO of the corporation is the King. Presidents of individual operating companies or of divisions carry similar, though correspondingly reduced, influence within their own baronies.

Shapiro, too, echoes Jackall’s research in saying:

More generally, each major division is widely thought to reflect the personality of its leader - one hard-driving, intense, and openly competitive, one cool, precise, urbane, and proper, and one gregarious, talkative, and self-promotional. (Shapiro 1995:23)

It was frightening to witness how widespread and unchallenged was the organisational mindset of managerial prerogative. Here was a definite Theory X worldview that constituted a major block to any move towards Theory Y type values. Such implicit assumptions or "worldviews" were rarely critically challenged as part of the corporate move to management by values and therefore stymied the uptake of a philosophy that essentially seeks to empower employees. Business leaders’ tolerance of managerial fiefdoms was a source of particular cynicism for many employees as it daily challenged the commonly espoused values around "valuing and empowering employees" and "respecting people". A managerial disposition towards ignoring the complexity of organisational culture, or failing to seek to understand its dynamics until a crisis, occurred further inhibited opportunities for learning.

A focus on externalities was also promoted by most organisations’ reward and recognition systems (monetary only). These were designed to appeal to instrumental values only. This context created another primary inhibiting loop to learning and change by institutionalising a priority focus on hard values. Apathy operated as a secondary inhibiting loop. Employees resigned themselves to not having their personal values met and remaining silent on the perceived hypocrisy between the stated values and what was rewarded.
Nadler and Tushingham (1997) refer to a departure or shift in the underlying values as a "frame-bending change or a reorientation." While according to Goleman (1985:209)

Frames define the social order. They will tell us what is going on, when to do what, and to whom. They direct our attention toward the action in the frame, and away from what is available to awareness but irrelevant...

This research suggests that individuals must change as a precursor to any successful collective transformation. The inclusion of a discourse on the impact of personal values however is generally outside the frame that characterises life within commercial organisations and that is why we need a new frame informed by a "theory I" perspective.

The typical employee response to management's perceived failure to <<walk its talk>> was resentment. In Yuppie Finance, this resentment gave rise to employee behaviour that actively sought to sabotage the organisation's success. Such sabotage took the form of employees choosing to <<work to rule>>, <<seeking to avoid doing anything>>, <<badmouthing the organisation>> to consultants, friends and colleagues; withholding pertinent information; using the company equipment for personal use; and doing personal tasks in work time. This behaviour echoed similar reactions documented by other researchers (ICAC: 1998). By contrast, in those organisations where employees experienced a closer values alignment such as in Solid Finance, "discretionary effort" was common, and employees were prepared to do their best by the organisation. These same employees also said they experienced less tension between their personal and workplace values.

These findings demonstrate how the emergence of values and behaviours that Argyris and Schon (1978) describe as congruent with Model 1 organisational systems of limited learning occurs (here employees dealing with difficult or threatening issues create primary inhibiting loops and remain unaware of their responsibility for these conditions). In these organisations the primary inhibiting loop was the implicit belief that a different set of values to those that guided relationships in the personal domain
could characterise organisational life. This resulted in widespread non-recognition of member's interiority and led to a secondary inhibiting loop where the organisation remained unaware of the need to invest time in negotiating shared interpretations of the organisation’s values.

Organisational values were governed by their own peculiar relationship rules. The implicit assumption that business needs took priority over individual needs was a governing value within Finance.Com. It operated to a lesser extent in Solid Finance and Yuppie Finance where certain "mediating values" around behaving professionally in the pursuit of success or "avoiding conflict" qualified how people behaved. In general, however, most managers demonstrated that they shared a tacit agreement that corporate objectives around short-term financial returns came before employee needs. This translates into a values priority ranking by management that is rarely mentioned in the values literature, and which favours hard values. The research found that symbolically, organisational members experienced this in the way that social symbols such as training budgets and recreational events were the first to be cut in times of economic downturn.

The research suggests that, in the absence of training on how the values should be interpreted and operationalised, members will act out of their personal preconceptions or "world views". In the three organisations reviewed, this created workplace contexts where there was the potential for multiple interpretations and widespread, and perhaps avoidable, cynicism. This in turn activated another inhibiting loop, where employees assumed they had a right to live out of their personal values which further limited the capacity for a shared understanding of how the organisation's values might be lived.

Argyris and Schon (1974, 1978) point out that these primary inhibiting loops lead to secondary inhibiting loops such as win-lose group dynamics, conformity, polarisation between groups, and organisational games of deception. How this happens was demonstrated where initially employees claimed that they only came to work for "money", yet they later demonstrated how they had joined looking to have several needs met; or when managers justified not taking action against bullies by saying that it was
beyond their control, while also admitting that their lack of action made them dislike themselves and the organisation.

Another inhibiting loop, highlighted by the experiences of Solid Finance's employees, was the widespread belief that "doing" was more valuable than "thinking". Employees experienced this management priority value as pressure to look busy or receive negative feedback such as that recalled by one employee whose manager had exclaimed: "If you can take time out to think, then you can't have much work on." Another governing value in these organisations was the assumption that it was "managers" who had the answers. This created an inhibiting learning loop where employees remained unconsulted. This was despite practically every senior manager admitting that the current challenges facing workplaces were unlike any that had gone before (discontinuous change). Nevertheless, they continued to act out of a tacit assumption that it was their role to have the "answers". It was ironic that workshop participants ably demonstrated that they had the knowledge and ability to design strategies to address existing organisational issues.

The emancipatory learning processes designed for the workshops reminded me of my experience in professional counselling sessions. As participants developed insights into their own behaviours and sought to develop alternative perspectives, they began a process of becoming whole again by reconciling personal with workplace values. In so doing they released creative energies and demonstrated a potential for transformative rather than oppositional change.

The research found that many employees acted out of an implicit assumption that it was management's responsibility to model the stated values while there was no indication that managers shared this assumption. This dynamic lends support to existing research (NSW, ICAC: 1998, Jansen: 1978) showing that employees see managerial behaviour as one of the main message systems of what is valued by an organisation. Employees were found to experience organisational "values congruence" in terms of managerial commitment rather than their own. This dynamic shows how it is that managers most
profundely model the "accepted" behaviours in organisations that shape the culture that emerges (Ferrell and Fraedrich, 1997, Hampden-Turner, 1990). Employees' abdication of accountability demonstrated how employees experience disempowerment at work and typically there existed a shared perception that they had to comply with the organisation's stated values rather than draw attention to perceived dissonance. This source of employee frustration points to a little explored phenomenon in the existing literature on those variables that shape employee commitment. This in turn has important implications for where organisational change programs need to begin if they seek to be effective.

Seeking to extend values accountability from managers to all employees may be a strong leverage point for grass roots change in the short term, and systemic change in the long term. If employees can come to see how their own role (and how they treat each other) also contributes to the existing collective cynicism, frustration and blockages to change, then systemic change might be more easily tackled. Getting individuals to question the status quo and accept their role in changing it, if only in their circle of influence, becomes a real possibility. The failure to acknowledge values inconsistency at both the personal and organisational levels can also be seen as a new set of "undiscussables" that needs further research. While my interventions created awareness, it would have taken some time to see if my intervention managed to bring about macro cultural change. This was often beyond the time frame of the research. Instead, this research demonstrates just how slow, difficult and erratic organisational change can be. This has much to do with the volatility at the top of these large organisations where the average life span of a CEO was around 3 – 4 years and with each new CEO appointment a new managerial regime was imposed which began a new cycle of value priorities. Change was therefore restricted to surface activities and external changes and there was little internal change, in terms of new ways of thinking and behaving.

There is an interesting debate in the literature around the need for transformative leadership before participatory research can be undertaken. Torbert (1991) argues that
transformational leadership and the skilled exercise of the power of balance is essential for the development of social systems towards greater justice and effectiveness. They assume that a practice that emphasises participation demands an understanding of enlightened leadership. This experience suggests that such a prerequisite is not necessary, as it does not take into account the other forces making organisations address change, such as major value shifts in society and external pressures for organisations to become more inclusive.

The business ethics literature (Ferrell and Fraedrich: 1997) suggests that companies need to develop value statements that are capable of providing a framework for decision-making and this research highlights why such frameworks are necessary, as in their absence employees acted out of their personal frameworks.

I had set out to explore how and what values get operationalised at work. The findings suggest that the values that characterise how things get done on a day-to-day basis are the byproduct of the existing tensions between personal and organisational values. In addition, the research also found that employees are well aware that their organisations can espouse one set of values while acting out of another but they do not expose the perceived hypocrisy.

**Silence & Resentment**

I also set out to explore the positive and negative impacts of any perceived values gaps. Varying perceptions of values integrity were recorded. In general, executives were less likely to perceive values dissonance. Typically they had selected the organisation's espoused values and so had more "ownership" from the start. Dissonance for employees was experienced in terms of the incongruent behaviour that did not support the espoused values and which flourished unchecked. Where members perceived a values gap, they were unable or reluctant to expose it because of perceived or assumed management defensiveness around such exposure. This created the organisational phenomenon first identified by Argyris (1990) as "the undiscussability of the
undiscussed”. For example, such undiscussables surfaced in both the one to one interviews and in the workshops in Finance.Com, as both employees and managers tried to disassociate themselves from bullying behaviour but refrained from openly challenging it. Schien’s (1999) idea that organisations, even when they are aware of dissonance, find it difficult to move because it produces anxiety was demonstrated in such reluctance. So too, the same unwillingness was demonstrated in the general reluctance of those in power to implement consultants’ recommendations. Instead, my experience suggests the general trend is for incremental change or at worst, abdication by the commissioning of yet another report in preference to taking action.

My literature review found evidence to suggest that the business press tends to trivialise the human consequences of values gaps and remains silent on the resulting employee stress and unhappiness. Instead, as Shapiro (1995) explains, such dissonance is to be viewed as part of the “game”:

> The same kind of internal games exist in modern organisations around the globe. Typically, the first rule of the internal game is to say that you follow the rules as espoused. And, typically, the second rule is to disregard all those espoused rules that don’t match up with the way the game is really played. (Shapiro 1995: 56)

The fact that the rules are written by some while others find themselves “prisoners” because they think they cannot get a job elsewhere; that many people simply don’t know the rules of this “game” and experience the situation as unsafe and stressful (as highlighted in Yuppies Finance), are masked by the imposition of a metaphor that is associated with safety and fun. Indeed, the widespread use of the game metaphor demonstrated how values can be manipulated within organisations, as first identified by the research of Dugger (1988) who found that “mystification” was one of the techniques used to confuse different values through association so that a new story can be imposed upon an otherwise unacceptable or undiscussable story of what is taking place.

The metaphor of the “game” implies that the internal life of employees and the internal costs are not factors of significance in reviewing organisational dynamics. For Shapiro
(1995) internalities are restricted to references around "the internal game" (informal culture), which Shapiro sees as the set of implicit, unwritten rules about how to survive and excel within the organisation. It is with such comments that the inequalities of the "game" are glossed over and the human consequences of workplace dissonance, as witnessed by this research, in terms of personal stress, frustration and disappointment, are marginalised. It might even be argued that by referring to the inhouse politics as the “internal game” rather than acknowledging employees’ internal worlds, Shapiro effectively co-opts the language and fills the space that belongs to the interpretative paradigm of organisational life.

In exploring their experiences, participants found Argyris and Schon's (1974, 1978) concepts of "espoused values" and "values in use" easy to relate to and work with. For many, these concepts appeared to legitimise their experience of values dissonance and provided a language with which they could name and discuss their issues and liberate their internal frustrations. It was not just the values gap that members found frustrating, but also the organisation's failure to take a wholistic approach and recognise their personal needs. *This research suggests that organisations, managed by positionally powerful individuals not aware of their inner lives and their interplay with the outer world (in this case the world of work), spawn organisational cultures that are similarly unaware and unconscious of the full range of human needs of their members.* Certainly this could be seen to be the case among the executives of both Finance.Com and the new management team in Yuppie Finance.

According to Argyris and Schon, theories of action describe deliberate actions and have a cognitive basis that reflects norms, strategies and assumptions or models of the world. Argyris and Schon posit that perhaps organisations also have “theories of action” that inform their actions, “espoused theories” that they broadcast, and “theories in use” which may be inferred from their directly observable behaviour. In these three organisations there was evidence of such theories in operation. “Theories in use” could be discerned in the different management models selected by each organisation and reflected in their dominant management style. In Finance.Com, for example, the
success theory *in use* was that an aggressively competitive internal environment was appropriate; in Solid Finance it was that a paternalistic orientation towards staff was appropriate; and in Yuppie Finance it was that employees were capable of self-direction and management should adopt a "hands-off" management style. Surfacing such organisational theories holds potential for more successful organisational change strategies. For employees, making such theories explicit will enable them to make more "informed choices" about the types of organisations that best suit their needs. For management, as the trend in organisational mergers continues, it will assist them to better design and manage the integration of different cultures and move them closer to their goal of improved performance.

Argyris's idea of "governing values" could also be seen operating in these organisations in the unquestioned rules and boundaries within which members operated. At their broadest these governing values represented values that members sought to operationalise. For Yuppie Finance, it was an emphasis on "being professional" rather than "nurturing", as was promoted in Solid Finance. In Solid Finance, it was to "be nice" rather than have open conflict as was promoted in Finance.Com. And, in Finance.Com, it was to rely on individual effort rather than the team work as was promoted in Yuppie Finance. At a broader level, it operated in each organisation through their reward and recognition systems. In Finance.Com this effectively promoted behaviour that minimised expressing negative feelings by suppressing feedback loops (spawning downward communications only) and by amplifying the winners while marginalising the losers by denying their different needs or even visibility. These unfortunates were relegated to back office tasks or the proverbial "research desk" before being finally eliminated from the system.

Both Hall (1981) and Senge (1990) agree that the values promoted and acted at work can affect individual development and this research shows how this happens. Non-managerial employees in Yuppie Finance demonstrated their preferences to give their commitment to colleagues rather than the organisation, because they experienced their managers as unpredictable and inconsistent with stated values. Middle managers were
observed to have adopted political strategies to win mentors, because they believed this was the only way they could advance. Executive managers created fiefdoms because they believed they had the right to do so. All three examples demonstrate how the interpretative paradigm (worldviews) shapes personal value preferences, which in turn shape organisational culture.

Argyris and Schon (1978) point out that much organisational theory in use remains tacit because its incongruity with espoused theory is undiscussable. They claim that it is the tacitness of the theory in use that accounts for organisational identity and continuity. In the field research, the use of employee quotes was designed to challenge such tacitness and confront organisational members with their shared reality. In this way how the informal organisational culture shaped personal experiences was poignantly captured. Argyris and Schon claim that breaking this silence on incongruity can be seen as organisational learning. Learning can be seen in this context to consist of a restructuring of the current organisational theory of action and the development of a new language (psychological contract; espoused values and values in use; grief cycle, business ethics) to break current silences. It is suggested that providing employees with new concepts and a language to discuss personal experiences, facilitates sense making and, offers new possibilities for individual and collective learning. These research findings throw some light onto the dynamism and resulting complexity of the management of organisational culture as identified by Kotter and Heskett:

_Culture has been trivialized because so many have written about "managing culture", "managing myths" or "creating meaning" without serious attention to just how difficult it is to manipulate these complex social processes._ (Kotter and Heskett 1992:83)

Much of this “complexity” finds its origin in the widespread failure to recognise the importance of the interpretative paradigm as a major “sense-making” activity happening in organisational life. Employees' stories demonstrated how they experienced organisational culture as an interpretative world of "negotiated meanings" which were verified, challenged or reaffirmed by ongoing events. Members, as well as outside
consultants like myself, experienced the organisational culture in terms of its symbols, its reward and recognition systems, its mode of dress, and its public reputation - even its choice of decor, as much as in terms of its people.

Badaracco (1992:64-70) claims that the organisational context:

...exerts enormous cumulative pressures on employees and managers and because of this influence, people are able to believe they are behaving responsibly when in fact they are behaving in unacceptable ways.

And the research findings presented in this thesis illustrates how this dynamic was played out in Finance.Com and to a lesser extent in each of the two other organisations.

I had wanted to explore just how organisational values impacted on workplace interpersonal behaviour because I had found that much of the research literature tended to treat personal and organisational values as independent of each other. The originality of this research lies in its insights into the variety of ways in which each set of values informs the other and, in turn, shapes employee experience of the emergent workplace values they live with every day. My literature review had found that organisations could encourage individuals to behave differently when they are members of a group than they would as individuals and I had wanted to explore how this happened. These research findings lend support to Hall’s (1986) assertion that organisational life is largely orchestrated to act out of a Stage Three worldview that sees the world as an externality to be managed and manipulated. This is how employees’ values get subsumed beneath a management paradigm that focuses on externalities. The work of Kohlberg and other researchers, also suggested the same win/lose organisational dynamics at this level of development and highlight how organisations have failed to progress to higher order values. Trevino (1986) and Pearson (1995) suggest that at Stage Three Moral Development, it is immediate managers who are considered to be the authority on what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The experiences of employees in Yuppie Finance and Solid Finance, where <<you never bypass your
and that they more than anyone else held the key to career progress, lends weight to such findings. It shows how employees find themselves constrained by their workplaces from accessing personal values that may be of a higher order than those promoted by immediate managers.

Such enduring conformity calls in to question Handy and Maslow’s idea that we will in time progress to higher order values. This research suggests that the constraining forces of this major institution (business) in modern life actively stymie social evolution. Similarly, Kinsman’s (1991) idea that you will get people operating out of all three value levels within the one organisation, is called into question as both my personal experience and the employee stories told to me. Even as a consultant, I found the context of Finance.Com to be intolerable and could never imagine, myself, or anyone else with a similar values set, accepting any position within that organisation. Its values were so widely divergent from my own - to be associated with it would have simply been too confronting to my internalized image of who I am. Similarly, others told stories of how they were prepared to search for organisations where they would not experience conflicts with their values rather than put up with the status quo. Instead, this research lends weight to Hall’s (1996) argument that where people find themselves in contexts that do not enable them to live authentically, then regression or “downshifting” to lower order values is likely. Yuppie Finance employees demonstrated this “downshift” from the focus values that had been dominant under their previous CEO to foundation values where issues of security and survival dominated in the post takeover period. So too, in Finance.Com, downshifting was reflected in the icebreaker exercise as employees described how they had adjusted their initial psychological contracts downwards and now simply came to work for <<the money>> or because <<they didn’t want to let their team down.>>

These stories demonstrate how Hall’s (1973) concept of worldviews and Haire’s concept of the psychological contracts can be important in skilling individuals to recognize their different priority values. Hall’s research stressed how life skill development was essential to the development of a new worldview. In the workshops,
critical thinking skills were promoted as participants worked with metaphors and the research findings to become more aware of interpretations and projections and how these arise. Such skill development, and the resulting surfacing of new awareness, suggests that it is the lack of opportunities to develop these life skills at work that might explain why organisations continue to operate out of an unsophisticated world view.

The field research presents a workplace world characterised by a pervasive emphasis on the externality of organisational life – quarterly reports, business plans, hierarchical charts, annual reports, production schedules, office politics – that both contrasts and is in tension with the personal values people profess to care about. Such a values gap has become the elephant in modern workplaces – the phenomenon which we all seem to know is there, yet is so big, most are afraid or do not feel they have the right to talk about it. Business leaders do not mention the subject; little appears in the media, civic leaders are mostly silent and employees only feel empowered to admit it when external consultants can guarantee their anonymity.

The research findings also point the way to how more sustaining workplaces can be nurtured. For those who seek this, the research suggests a process that begins with a recognition of the variety of needs being sought. This diversity must be surfaced and then used to co-design change strategies so that participants’ unspoken needs do not become unanticipated stumbling blocks to the desired change. The workshop processes enabled each group to learn together (collectively) about the variety of needs being sought from work. Participants’ responses provided insights into their emotional needs, as well as cues for myself as facilitator in how to work alongside each group. Where participants gave priority to intrinsic needs, by identifying values such as "creativity" and "innovation" as the needs/values initially sought, I could conclude that I was working with a relatively emotionally mature group that had moved beyond foundation values (Hall: 1992) or "survival" and "belonging needs" (Maslow: 1970). I would respond to their perceived needs accordingly by matching the sophistication of my input to the perceived level of maturity of the group. Similarly, over time, I learnt that the degree of dissonance between the columns (why did you join the organisation / why do
you come to work here today) was a good indication of the level of morale within the group. The greater the dissonance between the columns, the greater the group discontentment with their workplace context and I could respond accordingly.

These experiences suggest that there is an outstanding need for business critiques to move from the compartmentalisation of corporate and personal values to recognise their interdependence as dynamic forces shaping workplace cultures. The literature review suggests that to date few organisations have sought to assist employees to reconcile perceived tensions between the organisation's espoused values and the values being operationalised and such findings call into question the relative simplicity of Hampden Turner's (1990) observations when he states:

> Organisational culture resembles a hologram in the sense that information is distributed throughout the pattern, and any piece of any pattern contains within it a microcosm of the whole. Hence a skilful and kind encounter between the airline stewardess and a frightened passenger is a microcosm of how that stewardess has herself been treated, which, in turn, is part of a more general attitude towards empowering cabin crews to serve customers better. (Hampden-Turner 1990: 15)

Rather, this research suggests that employees don't behave in predictable ways, so that they often experience inter-personal behaviour as unpredictable. For some, behaviour is more obviously driven by their personal values but for others it is also determined and shaped by the contexts in which they find themselves and what is seen to be an “acceptable” way of behaving. Thus, the majority of Solid Finance employees treated each other with respect while the majority of Finance.Com employees distrusted each other because they experienced overall interpersonal relating to be unpredictable. Employees in both Solid Finance and Yuppie Finance were also well aware that there were distinctly different ways of behaving between head office and retail staff. Even within these two groups, different ways of behaving were attributed to personal preferences that impacted on whether employees experienced their organisational context as inclusive or not.
Hampden-Turner (1990:11) describes organisational culture as follows:

The culture of an organisation defines appropriate behaviour, bonds and motivates individuals, and asserts solutions where there is ambiguity. It governs the way a company processes information, its internal relations and its values.

In this research, organisational culture was experienced as a set of "unspoken rules" symbolically modeled by managers' attitudes and actions. There existed a great deal of ambiguity in how members should relate to each other and this contrasted sharply with the very clear rules and systems that existed to support commercial transactions. Where the existing culture was perceived to impact negatively, they responded in terms of increased discontent, cynicism, personal insecurity and lowered organisational commitment. These interdependencies, the external with the subjective, the interpersonal with the interpersonal, make culture a difficult system to live in and to manage or even, as shown here, to portray in the richness it deserves.

**Language, Learning And Change**

I had set out to explore how employees' personal values played out in their places of work and I discovered that they were influencing employees' responses and future expectations.

Bandler and Grinder (1975) note that each of us has an inner representational system of what the world is about arising out of all the data we receive through the five senses, and that it is this created representation that determines our perceptions and experience. I had therefore been concerned to record the symbolic language being used in each organisational context, with the understanding that this choice of language also reflected members' experiences. Freire (1978) argues that internal images prefigure all of our external actions and perceived realities, so to change the internal image requires changing our external language, as language and consciousness are connected and language mediates the internal images into an external form. While the literature (Argyris, 1990; Bennis, 1979; Brookfield, 1987) indicates that there is a growing
awareness of the need to negotiate reality between individuals and to seek to develop *shared understanding and therefore language as a basis for positive interpersonal relationships*, there is very little information on the processes that might help facilitate this. This research suggests *how* the use of metaphors is a more accessible language for employees in surfacing their concerns than everyday organisational language. The fieldwork feedback demonstrated how participants found metaphors an effective and safe way to raise systematic concerns. Management feedback suggested that they too were most intrigued at the metaphors’ way of presenting compelling pictures of an otherwise hidden world of employee meaning-making. Jones points to the important role metaphors can play in bringing about new ways of thinking that this research supports:

*We cannot change frames, scripts and schemas without addressing the metaphors from which they are derived; otherwise the changes will not "make sense" nor constitute a coherent reality. (Jones 1991:164)*

This research period suggests that, in contrast to the new metaphors being used in management texts, the language pervading these organisations revolved around a mechanistic view of life (De Geus 1997, Wheatly 1992). Employees described their organisations in terms of being <<well-oiled machines>> where members would seek to <<climb the greasy pole>> or, sometimes in jungle metaphors where, “he who roars loudest wins” and where<< if you pay peanuts, you get monkeys.>> From this internal frame of reference, managers compared their companies to <<lions out on the hunt>>; <<snake pits>> or <<bull and bear markets.>> At their most benign, members might choose sporting metaphors where competition meant <<the best player going into bat>> while the rest of the organisation’s members decided whether they would choose <<to be team or non-team players>>, but that all that would be required was to <<give it your best shot>>, and <<sink the ball.>> Unquestioned and unexamined, the reigning language also acted as a series of inhibiting loops to new ways of thinking.

Tapping into their own inner world of meaning-making enabled participants to hone a deeper understanding of differences and how they needed to be negotiated to develop
shared understandings. As each group explained the experiences that had given rise to their choice of metaphor, the process of active listening facilitated a collective clarification process and awareness building that paved the way for engaging in new ways of thinking. I was hopeful that this in turn would lead to more beneficial interpersonal relating. Left unacknowledged and undiscussed, these assumptions and mental models have the potential to thwart intended change initiatives. Hopefully, "emancipatory processes" as described here will meet the challenges outlined by Shapiro:

Having uncovered the real rules of the internal game, one can then move to alter those rules that stand in the way of needed changes. Without such changes, on the other hand, managers may find themselves talking about driving the culture when in fact it's the game that is driving the culture - and driving the managers themselves. (Shapiro 1996: 63)

In Finance.Com and Yuppie Finance, as middle managers jockeyed for fewer positions they came to doubt their own ability to get to the next level without the necessary patronage of someone higher in the hierarchy. This finding suggests that the common experience of these managers is that it is the culture that is driving them.

The research also showed how individual learning was not the same as organisational learning. In responding to the interview findings, employees showed that they were able to develop action plans for the future for themselves, but that they were less confident that the collective learning would be utilised and that management would act upon the research findings. Many suspected that the findings would become yet another unactioned consultant's report to stand as a testimony to how employee continued to be unheard.

My response to this sort of employee cynicism changed considerably over the years. At first, I inwardly dismissed this cynicism as being the byproduct of employee perceived helplessness or apathy. As the years progressed however, I came to share their cynicism as I witnessed how often change initiatives were being introduced and how so very little changed. This personal mind shift meant that I had to reframe how I saw change
happening. And, in the later half of the research period, I began to give more emphasis to encouraging micro change at the individual level rather than place faith in management-led changes. I didn't want to let management shirk its responsibilities either and my reports were designed to highlight the weaknesses of the current management systems. In the field, however, I wanted to lower employee expectations of change to a more realisable level and to encourage everyone to become more proactive in small ways. Dualities again.

Working collectively in the workshop sessions enabled me to move beyond my initial fears about whether I could make any worthwhile contribution. I experienced these sessions as the richest. The experiential processes surfaced the latent power within members waiting to be harnessed in the co-design of more mutually beneficial contexts. This was captured in the many action plans devised by the participants. Although these action plans were then incorporated into my final report to management, I was never really confident that they would be acted upon. I felt I could really only be confident in measuring my success in terms of micro changes – individual awareness, individual learning and skill development, and hopefully, enhanced abilities to make new choices. I could learn from the interactions between participants and watch their energy flow around each issue. In working with these shared energies, something new was created that wouldn't have been possible without our initial sharing of personal stories, assumptions and projections. Participants were able to discern critical themes linking their diverse stories and transcending their individuality and bringing them together. This recognition of individual interiority, that so rarely gets acknowledged, seemed to build a bridge of interdependence that had not been there before. So too, the process of listening and validating personal interpretations contributed to the shaping of specific strategies designed to bring about change at the collective level. In this way, the intervention informed the emergent workplace context and demonstrated how inclusive organisational cultures can be nurtured while highlighting the current absence of such deliberate culture building activities.

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These processes reminded me of the mutually beneficial way of relating that is enshrined in Nutrimetics and similar direct-selling organisations’ way of doing business. In this industry, it is made clear from the start how each person’s success is ultimately built upon and interdependent with the success of the person below them. This bonds people together and encourages them to seek to interrelate in positive ways. Here (direct selling industry), the relationship between individual and collective success is highly visible and discussed frequently. This contrasts to the prevailing silence characteristic of the win/lose environments experienced by this researcher. The suppression of any recognition of our essential interdependence is yet another example of how the human dimension gets marginalised at work. I was therefore enormously gratified to witness how many participants embraced the opportunity to participate in the co-design of change strategies they thought might work given their “inside knowledge”, both organisational and personal, of how change happens.

It was inspiring to observe how the call of the future could be more important than the woundedness of the past. I had glimpses of the sort of profound transformations that are possible within organisations when members can be skilled and encouraged to design workplaces that will work for them. The invisible collective intelligence that is submerged in organisations fixated on externalities - and typically drawn upon only by external consultants - was a poignant testimony to the potential of the unacknowledged collective life lying dormant but waiting to be harnessed to help heal itself. The process of participants working together on an agreed shared problem also facilitated relationship building. Watching organisational members exit from the workshop, I was often gratified to see participants chatting in animated groups in contrast to the introverted ways in which many had entered the session. Based on such micro changes this research posits that, in order to create more caring workplace contexts, organisational members need opportunities to go inside first; to connect with their personal world and then go outside to connect in more authentic ways with each other by being better prepared and skilled to understand the uniqueness of the other.
My research highlighted how members understand organisations by their experiences of it, rather than via any theoretical model or company value statement. The research found that it was frequently each individual's unique experience that became his or her basis for feeling "unheard" at work. Members' lack of opportunities to make meaning out of their ongoing activities at work mirrored my own experience. Listening to each other's stories increased our collective insight into the complexity of what is unspoken in organisational life. These stories demonstrated how the internal rules of organisational life are rarely explicit; almost everything is implicit. Despite much of the current rhetoric around "flattening the organisational hierarchy" or "inclusive management styles" this research lends support to Dugger's (1988) concept of "mystification", where attempts are made to confuse different values through association to give the illusion of inclusive management styles while participants experience the managerial hierarchy remaining intact. This can be seen as yet another way in which the actual rules of business co-opt the language of the desired situation.

This research highlights the importance of entering participants' fields of perception to gain an appreciation of their frame of reference and enhance the possibility of understanding their lived experience. In listening to participants' stories, as a researcher, I too experienced them differently and often my initial assumptions based on physical appearance only were later challenged by the interview findings. Their experiences suggest that organisational members are in a continuous process of being and becoming and they seek to make sense of organisational initiatives that affect them. From the existential perspective, within a phenomenological frame of reference, organisational members are seen as conscious, choosing beings, characterized by an inherent will to personal understanding and self-realisation. As Buber says (1958: 63):

The person becomes conscious of himself as sharing in being, as co-existing, and thus as being.

This research suggests that organisational experience emanates from members' search for shared personal understanding within the workplace context, which is the intentionality of consciousness that Husserl described. I would like to think that the
processes that characterised this research went some way to facilitate Crotty’s
description of Heidegger’s concept of hermeneutical phenomenology as a circular
movement:

In our quest for Being, we begin with and from a pre-understanding of
Being. The task is to unfold this rudimentary understanding and render
explicitly and thematically what is at first implicit and unthematised. This
explication leads us first to a grasping of "existentials" - structures of
being that make human existence and behaviour possible - and on to a
grasping of Being itself. This more enlightened understanding of Being
then returns to enrich our existence in the world. (Crotty 1998: 97)

And this research has highlighted that what is missing for employees has to do with
Heidegger’s concept of “existentials”—a shared need to have our interpretative realms
recognised, our interdependencies with each other honoured and our search for a higher
purpose at work recognised. Developing this richer picture of a shared search with
others to live more authentically, enriched my own life and provided the encouragement
to continue in my role of change agent within these large dysfunctional organisations
rather than despairing at the enormity of the task.

I found myself being constantly challenged to remain alert and ever watchful of the
sensitivities, vulnerabilities, personal projections and ethical obligations involved in
moving between the realm of personal experience and collective reflection. This
explicit linking of people’s internal world with their choice of behaviour in their
external context, seemed a pivotal process in facilitating a richer understanding of the
interdependent dynamics at play. On the one to two occasions when disgruntled
managers would openly attack my findings, I would refer back to the quotes to remind
them that these were not my findings and that I was only presenting the experiences of
others. The immediacy and emotionality of the stories then worked their powerful
persuasion and dissention was dissipated.

A major challenge was to design processes that neutralised the power differentials
between organisational members while at the same time engaging both the powerful and
the powerless in a process designed to bring about a situation improvement. This sort of change essentially meant that the powerful had to give us some of their power. Mostly, I attempted to do this by seeking to introduce a new story around the responsibility of all members to put the organisation’s needs before their own and linking a high performance culture to greater values alignment. The widespread implicit assumption that <<profits and principles don’t go hand in hand>> was so entrenched that even when I presented it as a major undiscussable of modern workplaces, managers wouldn’t respond or even debate the issue – it was simply “a given”. For these recalcitrants, appeals to other pressures such as reputation and risk exposure, seemed necessary to encourage them to think about change. I hated having to always seek to “build the business case” for change rather than just appeal to people’s sense of human decency around how people ought to be treated. Such was the disconnect however that was entrenched in many workplaces, that I could be only be confident in securing change if it could be seen to be linked to an immediate business benefit.

I knew I wasn’t always successful and worried that I might become part of the problem by providing management with a smokescreen that they were concerned for change when really they were not. To offset this, I tried to ensure that each organisational intervention did deliver some tangible benefits to participants in terms of new skills and awareness. In this way, I sought to ensure that participants did receive some benefits from the intervention.

I had set out to explore how organisations impacted on their members and my research found that this was a dynamic process where individual members are continually engaged in attempting to know the organisation and to know themselves in the context of the organisation. This phenomenon was especially observed in Yuppie Finance, as the employees sought to grapple with the expectations of their new employer. I suspect that this is an area quite underdeveloped in both business and academic literature, and it warrants further research. In the almost 130 workshops that underpinned the secondary data used for this research, employees invariably identified major workplace motivations in terms of intrinsic satisfaction variables. They placed value on
behaviours that demonstrated <<commitment to colleagues>>, <<opportunities to make a difference>>, <<opportunities to learn and be part of a group that was admired>> and <<opportunities to feel good about themselves>>. Employee responses suggest that the majority of employees, like myself, look to work to satisfy their needs for intrinsic job satisfaction and that their work satisfies a host of values rather than being "a means" to a pay packet. For many, existing organisational monetary reward systems are experienced as incapable of meeting personal values and intrinsic needs.

Within the different categories of responses, one overall ethos or sense of continuous oppositional struggle, emerged, which in itself constitutes a summary dominating manifest theme. On the surface, there is obviously an achieved holding and continuance of "power-over" some by others, even while there is latent beneath that a sense of "power-within", as the potential of what might be (as captured in employees action plans.)

The period, in which this research was conducted, 1994 - 2000, witnessed increasing moves by Australia's largest organisations to develop formalised corporate value statements. This was largely driven by a desire to build the high performance organisations, which management books held out as the promise of such initiatives. This research suggests that this "instrumental" orientation to workplace change is more in keeping with a Theory X management model, with employees seen as resources to be harnessed to the organisation's goals, than a recognition that employees seek intrinsic workplace satisfaction as implied in a Theory Y orientation. Ironically critical to the new success formula of management by values was the idea of winning employee commitment to the organisation's values. However, the experiences described here, which in turn are representative of many other interventions, suggest that "management by values" initiatives fail to win employee commitment because they do not recognize the need to build a bridge between the organisation's needs and members' needs.

The interview responses surfaced a distinctive pattern in the subjective needs and experiences being sought by members. These revolved around three core needs - the
search for opportunities to develop self-esteem, the desire to hone a new set of skills from work experiences, and opportunities for self-validation:

**Self-esteem**

This value was perceived to be met or unmet depending on the presence or absence of opportunities for performance feedback; to experience appreciation for personal contributions; the existence or absence of opportunities to *enjoy* positive social contact and be of service to others.

**Self-development**

This value was perceived to be met or unmet depending on opportunities to learn new skills from workplace opportunities. Employees identified opportunities for personal development as a major reason for choosing to join an organisation and it continued to determine levels of workplace satisfaction.

**Expression of individuality**

This was described in terms of being able to contribute personal ideas on how tasks might be undertaken.

These experiences suggest that much of the current literature (Colins and Chippendale: 1991, 1994, Senge: 1990, Handy: 1989, 1994, De Geus: 1997) underestimates the implications and challenges of a move to values-based management philosophies, which fundamentally challenges the existing Theory X organisational paradigm (Karpin 1995). In particular, much of the management literature fails to expose and deal with the political nature of organisational life, which is located in Theory X type values, and this effectively inhibits moves towards Theory Y responses because the underlying values have not been changed. Instead, the business press presents a move to a values based management philosophy as something that can be grafted onto the existing management paradigm that continues to spawn Theory X based cultures. *This research suggests that a necessary prerequisite to change involves a major overhaul of the unexamined personal values driving relationships within organisations. Without this, Theory X dynamics will continue to thwart the move to new ways of behaving.* Specifically, there is an outstanding need for leaders to make *explicit* the new accountabilities for all members, especially managers, to adopt behaviours that support the stated values. What is needed is a new consciousness, "theory I", which explicitly
recognizes that people bring personal values to work that can support or hinder workplace reform.

Whether it was workplace discontent that heightened members' consciousness of a personal values disconnect or, whether it was an awareness of organisational values inconsistency that caused the discontent, needs further exploration. Given that the majority of managers were less likely to express discontent with the status quo, the possibility exists that one price of career advancement is to subsume personal values within those of the organisation. Such values congruence may be the result of a successful socialisation process, managers' blind obedience to the organisation, or, it could be that there was a values match there in the first place, which helps some individuals to thrive within these political contexts while others flounder.

The implicit promise in a move to values based management practices is that it is responsive to changing societal values and will therefore energise and motivate employees. This research suggests that such inspiration was not achieved because of management's instrumental orientation and instead vicious circles emerged where collective commitment was inhibited. Employees made meaning in their individual ways and these fuelled cynicism about the organisation's perceived lack of integrity.

The research pointed to a predominant Theory X management paradigm where human emancipation was made subservient to economic development. At the same time the workshops pointed to a little-recognised organisational learning opportunity that arises out of new recognition of interiority and that is three-fold:

1. To assist employees to become aware of personal values so that new opportunities are created to choose organisational cultures that best suit their needs and to reconcile personal and organisational values by becoming aware that unmet personal values can be satisfied in other areas of life (i.e. Life/work balance)

2. To skill employees in critical thinking so they can hone intrapersonal and interpersonal skills and, improve their experience and performance (new awareness of the possibility for mutually beneficial inter-relating)
3. To acknowledge the priorities that exist between the organisation’s stated values so that the rules of organisational life become clearer and employees can feel safer because they know the rules (what is truly valued)

Listening to participants tell their stories, I witnessed the same frustrations, desires and search for meaning as I had experienced as an employee within similar organisational contexts. Our shared desire to grow and develop from our workplace experiences and, the innate personal vulnerability this creates in workplaces blind to personal needs, was yet more confirmation of Heidegger’s idea of the “existentials” that define our common identity.

This research helped me move closer to my ideal goal of closing the gap between the professional and the personal me. Just as in the early days of volunteering in the feminist movement, I found myself increasingly seeking out and being sought out by people who shared my values and wanted to challenge and change the status quo. As I increasingly felt more fulfilled and happy with myself, I experienced the boundaries between work and home further dissolving. Even my husband became interested in values and workplace reform. Today we find ourselves working together in designing and implementing organisational change programs. My work had enabled me to live my personal values around service to others. I believe this has helped me in progressing from Hall’s (1973) Stage Four world view, where search for meaning dominates, towards a Stage Five worldview, where changing the system in the service of others, becomes a major concern.

While my external advocacy role enabled me to openly challenge the status quo, it was more difficult to ensure I could do the same thing inside the organisations where the dominant characteristic of organisational change is that it happens very slowly. There is no sudden moment of enlightenment or “quick fix”; it takes many initiatives and the support of many diverse individuals and external events to make substantial change possible. In coming to realise this, I gradually became more content with restricting my role to one of catalyst – surfacing the undiscussables and helping people make meaning around the suppressed inter-personal dynamics of organisational life. I took comfort in
the belief that once collective consciousness has been raised it can’t be withdrawn so there is less chance of a return to a world where personal needs are denied. In this way the emerging workplace context can be positively impacted upon.

While my research interventions did not see major organisational transformations, I was privileged to be part of the new movement nurturing a grass-roots consciousness that personal values have legitimacy because we are meaning-seeking human beings and not just organisational resources. Although my interventions had the potential to challenge the existing managerial mental models, I saw their primary value in terms of the reflective processes they facilitated for members and the opportunities afforded for greater awareness of how individuals interacted with their workplace context. Before I entered these organisations, there was a high level of “undiscussables”, things that were only said behind closed doors and in one to one confidences. By the time I had left, these taboos were in the public domain and there was a new language around what had previously been suppressed. Even though there was certainly resistance to the insights being presented, I noticed with satisfaction that organisational members had incorporated the new concepts such as “values gaps”, “psychological contracts” and “personal and workplace values” into day-to-day discussions.

I sought to amplify this consciousness by making it more visible in the media. I wanted to help the business community make the links between the emerging new values around the importance of relationships and its challenges to the existing business paradigm so that change might happen faster. In many ways my view from the threshold gave me early insights into what would eventually become macro trends. I used these early insights to help establish the legitimacy of the emerging values by presenting them as “calls to action” to those who sought to see themselves as organisational leaders.

I had gone into these organisations to explore the relationship between personal and workplace values. Their day-to-day life patterns highlighted the pivotal role played by our internal world where most of us make meaning about external events as they impact
on us. Neither Theories X or Y, seemed to accommodate this rich complexity of subjective meaning. It seemed like they too had been caught in the same predicament as the organisations where this research was conducted. By focusing on the externalities, these theories had paid more attention to the manager’s role in determining employee satisfaction and motivations at the expense of how individuals themselves made meaning.

This research points to the need for a new perspective on the how of employee-meaning making at work; a new perspective that seeks to encompass the interdependence of internal motivations and external stimuli. It points to an outstanding need to encourage a new recognition of the complexity of needs being sought from modern workplaces; how a new vision based on mutually rewarding interrelating at work is an ideal goal to meet these needs.

The final chapter of this thesis elaborates more fully on the “theory I” perspective that arose out of this research and which offers a new way of thinking about human behaviour in the workplace.
CHAPTER 6
TOWARDS A WHOLISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF EMPLOYEES' WORKPLACE NEEDS

At times the man, shuddering at the alienation between the I and the world, comes to reflect that something is to be done... The sphere above the threshold, the superliminal, is the division between on the one hand what of spirit has already entered the world and can be perceived in it by means of our senses, and on the other hand what of spirit has not yet entered the world but is ready to do so, and becomes present to us. (Buber, 1958: 127)

My experiences working in the three organisations had shown me that my own sense of personal disconnection, between the person I wanted to be and the person I was being forced to act at work, was a story that echoed with the experiences of others. One of the most interesting workplace dynamics observed in this research arose from the overwhelming focus that was given to externalities at the expense of internalities so that what emerged was a dominant workplace "impersonality" that was in fact underlined by the undeniable presence of the latent (often unconscious) personal values being suppressed. In my own case, a looming mid-life crisis had provided my catalyst for my search for a greater alignment between what I wanted from work and what was being offered. Here, in this chapter, I seek to elaborate on what the research found might be seen as a collective catalyst, or a "strange attractor" arising from a new grassroots search for greater alignment between personal and work values found to be operating below the surface of these organisations.

But first, however, I need to elaborate more fully on "theory I", the fledging theory that this thesis introduces for consideration as a more people-sensitive approach towards understanding and responding to organisational members' needs. Here, in this chapter, I seek to put forward some tentative principles which have emerged so far for a "theory I" way of seeing. These of course need the input of other scholars and practitioners before any claim to a challenging new theory of workplace dynamics can be made. It is
elaborated upon here so that others may better understand the thought processes that underpin "theory I" thinking to date. The discussion should provide some signposts to those many others concerned, either personally or professionally, to be part of the movement that seeks to bring forth more inclusive workplace cultures where employees can bring more of themselves to work and enjoy opportunities for personal as well as professional growth.

**Beginning From Interiority**

This theory might more appropriately be described as a different way of thinking. It recognises that individuals first need to go inside and have opportunities to make meaning of their situations within their personal frame of reference. It therefore begins from the interpretative dimension where individuals are seen to make meaning and to hone their unique set of value priorities that then shape how they experience their external world – a new inside-out way of thinking.

In the space of "theory I", my goal is to accentuate the personal so that the name itself becomes both the symbol and reminder that human experience begins with interiority. That it is as individuals that we know and create this inner space alone. Here, the focus is on the family of relationships between the "I's" (including interiority, interpretative, intrapersonal, intimate, individualised, interdependent and interpersonal ), and how each dynamic has the potential to shape the other in unpredictable ways. *It is this recognition of the relationship of each to the other, rather than any predictive ability, which then becomes important to us as researchers and would be change agents.* From this space, it seems that without recognition of interiority, organisations appear doomed to be blindsided to employees' needs. Just as Simone de Beauvoir argued that a limitation of philosophy was that it had historically constructed women as "other" in relation to men, this perspective suggests that much operationalised management theory constructs the employee as "other" in relation to itself. This creates an inhibiting loop to mutually beneficial relating in the workplace. It is suggested that if management, instead, could
begin from a "worldview" that sees interdependence between organisations and organisational members’ needs, then a new basis for a more positive way of relating can be sought. It is suggested that, for those who wish to get the best from their employees’ efforts, surfacing their internal needs as a precursor to nurturing more positive relationships at work, is a new approach to workplace development that is worth exploring.

I therefore seek to link “theory I” with McGregor’s X-Y school of thought. To highlight how these two theories have helped spawn the workplace contexts, as represented by this research, where there is a mixture of both X and Y philosophies in operation resulting in increased employee cynicism, because employees desire more of a Theory Y management approach but experience their managers giving preference to a Theory X way of behaving. It is suggested that a new approach, such as “theory I”, would help managers to better support employees’ inherent socio-psychological needs and perhaps also improve organisational performance. While Theories X and Y were mainly focused on employee motivation from the manager and organisation’s perspective, “theory I” begins from each individual’s interpretive paradigm. It sees individuals making sense of their world and responding to their organisational context through a unique filter of values and assumptions that have been shaped in their non-work life and which they bring with them into the organisation. Because of these pre-existing values and needs, the workplace context is then experienced as problematic and influential in the ongoing shaping of personal and professional development. Furthermore, because the workplace context is typically a group setting, personal interpretations are also impacted upon by how other members of the group interpret and respond to the organisational situation. This group diversity in itself can create large amounts of situation unpredictability as was experienced by both Finance.Com and Yuppie Finance members. Whereas Theories X and Y tended to categorise individuals into one type or another - either being unmotivated or self-motivated towards work - “theory I” suggests that there are myriad ways of responding, because individuals are unpredictable, and that these different responses can coexist within the one organisational context at certain times.
Whereas the Theory Y school of thought, as supported by the Humanist School and proponents such as Senge (1990), Peters and Waterman (1982) and Drucker (1993), would readily agree that community-building was an essential ingredient of a harmonious workplace, they do not appear to stress the inherent obstacles to such community forming – the suppression of the personal and subjective; the unintended interpersonal impacts of poorly implemented fad philosophies such as management by values and the different levels of personal emancipation and social development of the people who lead organisations. It was the unpredictability and randomness of these relationships as they impacted upon each other that first led me to the study of chaos theory as a way of discerning what was going on. Why had theory Y been so successful at the level of management rhetoric but had failed to be widely operationalised in workplaces?

Seeing The Interactivity Of Chaos And Order

One of the central tenets of chaos theory is that order can lead to chaos, but even within chaos there is order. I found in chaos theory language, a way of describing how sudden changes in management philosophies and underpinning worldviews might occur. The term “attractors” is used to describe the forces that shape our model of reality and in a complex system (such as our mind) we can experience many ordinary attractors. We can be attracted to safety and comfort, intimacy and belonging, service and self-actualisation, etc. It can be seen that the work of both the early development psychologists (Piaget 1965, Kohlberg 1984), as well as the later values researchers (Maslow 1970, Kinsman 1991, Gilligan 1982, Hall 1973, Habermas 1992), built their theories of human motivation and behaviour by identifying different value attractors that influence individuals at different stages in their life. As the attractors change we progress or regress into different stages of development. Sometimes ordinary attractors act together in what is termed a “strange attractor”, and when a strange attractor is operating there can be no certainty as to which path the object (in this case the person)
being attracted, will follow. The same process that applies to the individual’s meaning making process also applies to the group or organisation. These forces were observed in operation in these organisations as the tensions between the personal values being sought by employees met with the values being promoted by Theory X-Y perspectives. This thesis suggests that Theory X operates within the workplace context today as a strange attractor so that more enlightened management theories including Theory Y get sucked into Theory X’s influences or else become a bifurcation of Theory X rather than supplanting it with a new worldview about employees’ needs and motivations.

It is suggested that Theory X finds its origins in the stories managers tell themselves about people’s motivations, and suggests that Theory X has been so effectively enculturated into modern workplaces that it now resides at the unconscious level where it thrives undiscussed and unchallenged. Experiences recorded in this research suggest that it is this aspect of the internal world of organisations, the unacknowledged worldview on which they are built and perpetuated, that makes a Theory X frame of reference so change resistance. These findings suggest that Theory Y philosophies have been tacked onto already embedded Theory X organisational mental models inhibiting a more widespread commitment to Theory Y values. The result, as evidenced in Solid Finance, has been that Theory Y remains a discretionary philosophy whose uptake is left to the discretion of individuals and their level of interpersonal skills.

Now, in the new space where “theory P” is being germinated, an attempts is made to address the shortcomings of Theory Y so that its implicit values around employee well being can be made explicit, especially in relation to how employees make meaning at work. From here, it is suggested that workplace opportunities can be constructed to provide opportunities for organisational members to go inwards (reflect), and become aware of their assumptions and priority values in order that they can become conscious of their own internal contradictions (in terms of what they say they value and how they behave). Opportunities can also be extended to employees to hone specific intrapersonal skills in critical thinking and active listening, as demonstrated here in this research, to skill people to be able to engage in more positive inter-relating in the future.
By recognising that individuals' internal world impacts their workplace motivation, commitment and experience, and plays a critical role in the effectiveness of organisational change programs, it becomes possible to see how individual and organisational growth potentials are interdependent and mutually beneficial and is necessary for the well being of both. Unlike Theories X and Y, "theory I" extends its focus to include how employees perceive management, as well as how managers perceive employees. This extended perspective suggests that managers wishing to motivate employees need to recognise that they are in a two-way relationship. Each party impacts and responds to the other so that the relationship encompasses both differences and complementarity and has latent potential for beneficial or adversarial outcomes. Instead of management and employees being viewed as separated by some notional divide, they are in fact seen in a relationship of "dynamic tension" arising from the needs and expectations of the other.

The creation of formalised learning opportunities in the workplace, as took place in this research, provides new insights into the unpredictability of employee motivations and the need to hone richer understandings of human nature based on values diversity. In providing such opportunities, organisational members can become aware of how they unconsciously (but with the potential to consciously) co-design their workplaces. In this newfound awareness lies a potential source of organisational transformation where the traditional management-employee divide can be dissolved as it becomes more visible that it is in everyone's best interests to work collaboratively.

This new recognition of the interpretative dimension also provides opportunities for all members to reinterpret their situation and work consciously to develop more congruity with personal as well as organisationally stated values. But beyond that, individuals are empowered to think critically about their choices of workplaces and can consciously seek to align their personal values with organisations that match these. These new learning opportunities will enable discerning individuals to further empower themselves by recognising that organisational contexts have the potential to disempower or empower them and to choose employers accordingly. Many Solid Finance employees
purposely sought such a values match, and the research found them to be the most contented because they experienced a high degree of values congruency between personal and workplace values. In contrast, many females as well as some males within Finance.Com, disclosed on a one to one basis how much they disliked the organisation because of its operational values, which they saw as being different from their personal values. Many admitted that they thought it was impossible for them to get their personal values met there and they were already seeking to find more suitable workplaces in a search for more meaning and satisfaction from their work life. It is the priority given to the absolute necessity of going inwards as a precursor to voluntary change (and hence possible beneficial relating) that makes a “theory I” perspective sympathetic to the needs of the times in which we now find ourselves - where the “search for meaning at work” has become part of the societal backdrop against which organisations operate and are being evaluated.

A “theory I” perspective therefore embraces Van Manen's emphasis on the construction of knowledge as involving a dialectic process - "the dialectic of inside and outside, of embodiment and disembodiment, of separation and reconciliation" - and this research highlights how this is played out at the micro level of organisational life:

_We come to know what we know in this dialectic process of constructing a text (a body of knowledge) and thus learn what we are capable of saying (our knowing body). It is the dialectic of inside and outside, of embodiment and disembodiment, of separation and reconciliation._ (Van Manen: 1990:127)

**Looking Beyond Externalities**

Again, with reference to Chaos Theory, throughout the research period I found myself dwelling in _phase space_, as these large organisations were being asked to respond to a new set of values from both their external contexts and their employees’ unspoken psychological contracts (personal values). I found myself witness to the emergence of a
new possibility that they would become poised to pass from one phase to another and, my role as researcher then became, as Buber says, “to reflect that something is to be done” (Buber 1958:127). As a social ecologist, I see that which is to be done as an integral and essential part of my research process, and so my final goals were to make public my findings and use them to advocate for organisational change. Within the organisation this meant presenting a report and change recommendations to management, which related not only to how things were, but, also, to what might be. To discuss the potential, or "what of spirit has already entered the world and can be perceived in it by means of our senses" (as presented in the last chapter), but also, "what of spirit has not yet entered the world but is ready to do so, and becomes present to us" - the latent unconscious potential of the organisations and its employees, in relation to the world in which we exist. Externally, it meant incorporating the research findings into my advocacy work in the media and in my public speaking program designed for wider influence. Buber sees this function as akin to that of the psychotherapist, for it involves the double action of healing-learning or, in other words, a healing through a process of learning about how I am really in the world. I see this as an essential part of my role as social ecologist consultant-researcher (called in to heal a "hurting" or "wounded" organisation and employees). Like the psychotherapist, I assist my clients to learn how to integrate, as a positive potential asset, that which has been repressed, ignored, pushed out of sight, to the point where its loss is already disturbing, a cause for concern.

This is not always a straightforward process and I learnt through trial and error just how important data presentation could be in shaping management's response to it. Depending on how my reports were presented, management could be stimulated to embrace change or be overwhelmed and paralyzed by it. In my early reports I had tended to champion the employees' position to such an extent that I overlooked, or did not look for, the positives from management. More explicitly I did not recognise employees' dysfunctional behaviour, for example, in their abdication of responsibility to management for living the stated values. I learnt that presenting a more positive report that played to the current strengths of management in some way as well as pointing to
the current weaknesses, was a far better strategy in winning support to implement any of the research recommendations and moves towards change.

My research indicated that, that which was most needed, yet also most repressed in one way or another, was the spirit of *mutually beneficial relating* or "what of spirit has not yet entered the world". By failing to recognise how we each make meaning and interpret our situations, we inhibit our ability to empathise with each other's unique needs and move towards a mutual understanding of the other. That which had been most disturbingly forgotten, swept under the carpet, not wanted to be seen, yet was still always waiting there to become present, was the trace of that other, or the possibility of happiness, learning and innovation inherent in unleashing a process of continuous adjustment to open, personal, positive internal and external relating.

Martin Buber makes a distinction between the "I-It" relation and the "I-Thou" relation. The research found that the external espoused values being promoted in these organisations were typically examples of "I-It" relating, that is, a relating as if to exteriority, to the objective in preference to the subjective - a dismissal of, sometimes even an active suppression or at the minimum, a chosen blindness to, the personal. This approach can, in fact, be generally identified with the traditional masculine mode of operating in the workplace. It needs to be stressed however, that it is what it is - an expression of masculine style "power-over", because of its activity of continually repressing the *latent potential* for personal relating also inherent in existing workplace values. That potential, arising out of our humanness and the shared personal values we take into the workplace, is mainly dormant but straining for the opportunity to manifest itself as a spirit of learning and personal "I-Thou" inter-relatedness, was the origin of the personal stories that were told in the research process. And, in fact, this was perhaps the most critical finding of this research - the phenomenon that the majority of organisational members experience their workplaces in terms of “I-thou” relating, using their personal values to take up positions around the organisational values.
The original contribution in my thesis research is in my exposition of how members at the micro level are experiencing organisations and how this contrasts with these organisation's public presentations of themselves. The research sheds light on particular characteristics of the dissonance between espoused values and values in use. It illuminates how particular workplace dynamics spawn a set of organisational values that triumph over personal values; the peculiar attributes of the always diverse yet most often alienating values that dominate workplace contexts and the outstanding need for a new recognition of employees' needs for formal opportunities to construct meaning prior to any desired cultural change. Those revealed features have to do with a consciousness and priority valuing of exteriority, and are the specific outcomes of the traditional masculine emphasis in organisations on externals.

Perhaps this research however makes an even more significant contribution in its identification and recognition of the importance of the specific potential, latent in those organisations, "what of spirit has not yet entered the world but is ready to do so, and becomes present to us". And this spirit has to do with what the feminine emphasis on interiority and the personal-relational tends to accentuate, the potential for organisational well-being and harmony rather than competition and politics; for collective learning and innovation rather than a haunting search for meaning; a latent ability for employees to work alongside management in codesigning workplace systems rather that the subjugation of employee welfare to management prerogative. And then beneficial relating within the organisation can also be seen as a way of simultaneously raising consciousness of the importance of the organisation's external relating with the wider world, a congruency in its internal values enabling an enhanced understanding of how to respond, evolve and continue to learn through achieving an harmonious congruency in its external relations with the wider world of evolving societal values.

What was made manifest in my research is that these specific organisations (for example, the emergent workplace values which dominated) have become what they are because of the activity undertaken in repressing that which those who were dominant, did not want to see or be seen. Thus, the overt was defined by the nature of its relations
with the covert. So that which is hidden is equally as much a part of the reality of what workplace values really are as that which is more obvious, and is continually shaping the external context through the responses of individuals. As was suggested in the last chapter, that which was most repressed in the three organisations concerned, was the personal values of the employees. And those values commonly centered on the employees' need for self-development - which they also saw as leading to increased self-esteem and greater opportunities for self-expression. So that which I first wish (in Jungian terms) to make conscious here is the potential for self development, for both employees and organisations, implicit in the process of organisational learning, as it can be practised within organisations conscious of the world in which they exist. It is a resource that was calling out for implementation in all three organisations as a way of healing, and yet it was stymied by the unacknowledged political context of organisational life.

The illusion that relational values need to be repressed or are somehow mutually exclusive of "hard" values such as profits, management by objectives and other externalities, is symbolic of the current unawareness of the potential of mutually beneficial relating. The new societal values (Handy 1994, 1996, 1998, Elkington 1987, 1998, Wheatley 1992, Senge 1990) give priority to an ethic of care and focus on the primacy of relatedness and interconnectedness. Neglect of those values, the very things these managers were most neglecting and appeared blind to, was what was keeping them from being empathic and responsive to their changing external environments.

Thus, secondly, what I saw most needing to be made luminous, brought to the consciousness, particularly of business leaders, was the values of the society (societies) within which their organisation existed, and the relevance of those values for the well-being of their organisation as for their own well-being. Life is the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations, but such an adjustment already presupposes understanding and practising of those relations, both internal and external. The strongest theme to emerge from this research was the need for the business
community to acquire a shared understanding of, and mutual response to, personal, organisational and societal values - as a means of safeguarding and enhancing their reciprocal self-development. The best way of achieving this would seem to be the practice of an organisational learning that recognises the values dimension and strives to remain connected to evolving societal values thus enabling interdependence to be recognised and the disconnections, as highlighted by this research, minimised.

Honouring Interdependencies

Where there is no sharing there is no reality. The more direct the contact with the Thou the fuller is the sharing. The I is real in virtue of its sharing in reality. The fuller it’s sharing the more real it becomes...

The person becomes conscious of himself as sharing in being, as co-existing, and thus as being. (Buber, 1958: 11)

The potential for real organisational learning emanating out of the workshop sessions, especially in relation to the need for members to acquire a shared understanding of their interactive values, lend weight to Hampden-Turner’s concept of organisational learning and highlights the potential for learning that lies dormant today:

Organisations may be said to learn, or mislearn, when their members jointly share a task system and evaluate their own performance. Members will typically share some theory of action, establish roles and share an image or map of how the organisation functions. This is its culture. Any modifications made to these theories, maps and images, through studying the experiences of their use is organisational learning. (Hampden-Turner 1994:249)

My experience in feeding back the research to managers and employees shows that organisations can learn as collections of people, not just as individuals, for example, by looking at how inhibiting learning loops develop and the implicit assumptions that are perpetuated as a consequence of these. This research found that one of the most pervasive inhibiting loops, is the assumption that profits and principles are
incompatible. Surfacing this assumption, as occurred in Finance.Com. enables it to be challenged by another body of research that called its validity into question. In so doing, it undermines the strength of this belief system. Change initiatives that fail to recognize the dynamics of personal values, as they cling to and perpetuate or challenge and abandon such assumptions, almost certainly fail in their goals. Similar to Hall’s (1973,1980,1986) research, this research shows that individuals, denied the opportunities to develop shared values, act out of their own values, which creates situations where differences are accentuated and opportunities for reflection and collective sense-making, missed. It is these assumptions – these initial stumbling blocks to learning, therefore, that seemed to need surfacing in order to challenge current thinking prior to challenging current behaviour.

Both my personal and workplace experiences suggest that there is definitely, always latent beneath the surface of operating workplace values, a potential for harmony between personal and organisational values. Gaining insights into personal motivations in a professionally facilitated safe and non-judgmental environment, can empower participants in many ways and help them to make more informed choices for how they will behave in the future.

The research found organisations, like their members, operating in worlds that were constantly changing. Contemporary researchers like Handy (1989, 1996) refer to this as a world of "discontinuous change", while Argyris and Schon describe such organisations as "predictably unstable". This research suggests that such instability also finds its origin within the organisational context because management fails to spend time promoting a shared understanding of the desired organisational behaviours to underpin stated values, leaving employees to define that meaning individually. The multiple interpretations resulting, in turn, adversely impacted employees' day-to-day experiences and had negative consequences for the organisation in terms of increased cynicism and lowered commitment.
Business writers (Drucker, 1989, Handy, 1994) have been predicting that organisations will increasingly be forced to move from directive management styles towards promoting concepts of employee "intrinsic motivation" to achieve the organisation's goals. For such a move to happen, however, this research suggests there would have to be a new found recognition of the personal values that underpin each individual’s notion of “intrinsic satisfaction” and to achieve this, a new perspective such as “theory I” might be necessary. A “theory I” perspective would also pre-prepare management in how to assist their employees through the complicated stages involved in major change programs. By drawing on a “theory I” perspective to apply Bridges’s (1995) model of change, and then working alongside participants to identify their different needs in each phase of the change, this research demonstrated how employees can be assisted to move through change phases, and how their overall experience of major change was rendered less stressful. This research suggests that, in times of major upheavals such as takeovers, there is a need to develop a model of change that recognises the internal needs of employees, to assist them to accept change.

The workshop sessions, designed from a “theory I” space, demonstrated how organisational members can be encouraged to commit to a more feminine oriented mode of workplace learning, that can facilitate concurrent personal and organisational learning. The research found that once an understanding of the dynamic interplay of personal and workplace values has been achieved, it is then possible to work with employees to identify ways in which genuine commitment can be nurtured. The experiential learning processes demonstrated that this type of relational learning works at both individual and collective levels, and that opportunities to engage in the heart-led processes of sharing experiences, rather than in "head-stuff" of externalities, may be a powerful way forward for organisational learning initiatives.

The more I worked with different organisations the more I came to see their similarities to human personalities - so much was happening on the inside to shape behaviour. It seemed that without a “theory I” perspective only half the story was being told. That to develop a more wholistic understanding of employees’ needs at work, more attention
had to be given to the interpretative dimension than was being given today. I came to appreciate that it takes a considerable investment of time in listening to the wide variety of employees' stories to build a rich and dynamic picture of any one organisational context, and its cultural way of behaving. I came to understand the term "the organisation" as the collective entity of all the individual values and interpretations, as well as, the collective dynamics that characterise how things get done. Without something like a “theory P” perspective it is difficult to recognise the internal realities that co-exist with the collective externalities. This often means that this multiple way of relating is left to stalk and shape the organisational behaviour and culture that emerges in unacknowledged and therefore unmanaged ways.

In many ways the articles authored during this research period, as well as those included in this thesis, always tell the same story but change the emphasis to suit the different contexts of the time. They have evolved in sophistication as the business world’s capacity to hear the message has evolved over time. The story can be seen as a continuation of my early personal story of the marginalisation I had been born into in Northern Ireland and which followed me into corporate life. It is a story of our internal worlds and our need to have these recognised. It tells the story of our innate individual calling to make sense of our world, to be able to have our values met so that we can find our space in the world where we can seek to become what it is possible for us to become. This thesis highlights how it is a story that resonates with the experiences of many in the workplace. These articles still play an important role in my advocacy work as I continue to seek to insert a new perspective into a narrowly defined management model that marginalises organisational members’ needs to feel good about themselves and the places where they work.
Changing In Response To Changing Values

Work is a search for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash. In short, for a sort of life, rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying. (Terkel 1974:1)

My research also sought to explore how values external to the organisation, societal values, might impact upon it. In the later years of this research, I found myself in the midst of a values bifurcation as organisations sought to respond to external demands for a new set of organisational accountabilities around their environmental and then social impacts.

Argyris (1985) points out that often the deep defensive organisational structures that maintain existing social action and relationships only become evident when existing social arrangements are threatened. This phenomenon had been borne out by my experience. As the years went by, I found I was being invited into organisations no longer because of their own dysfunctional internal dynamics, but because of a backlash by the general public to the existing organisational paradigm that condoned a different set of values inside organisations than those that operated in wider society.

Burke (1985) points to the importance of understanding the wider context in which organisations are located when he says:

All communities in all places at all times manifest their own view of reality in what they do. The entire culture reflects the contemporary model of reality. We are what we know. And when the body of knowledge changes, so do we. (Burke: 1985:13)

This research found evidence of Burke’s prediction and I witnessed how changes in the values subscribed to by society then began to act as an external pressure on organisational leaders to also change their way of behaving. A number of seminal publications during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (Carson: 1962, Nader: 1965, Bateson:
1972, Lovelock; 1979, Schumacher; 1973; Bookchin: 1980,1982) had begun to popularise a new set of civil societal values around corporate, social and environmental responsibilities. These writer-advocates had raised popular consciousness of the full range of organisational impacts and, in so doing, honed a new set of public expectations for how business might change to be more in tune with societal values.

Rachel Carson's (1962) account of the impact of the chemical industry's pollution has been credited with sparking the "environmental revolution" (Elkington: 1997), and igniting a public environmental consciousness that challenged the traditional governing values of business. The emergence of erratic weather patterns and a new found public awareness of "Global Warming" as a by-product of the economic marketplace that did not appear on the balance sheet, enabled the environmental movement to mobilise mass support against "business as usual". Increasing coverage in newspapers and radio talkback programs reflected growing public sympathies to environmental protection lobbyists and new opinion leaders who were demanding that organisations become more accountable and responsive to society. Business leaders were being asked to recognise their interdependency with the rest of society and hone a new set of values accordingly. As one leading advocate wrote:

What started out as a scattered patchwork of protest groups, and then grew into the most powerful social movement of the second half of the 20th century, now looks set to shape key elements of the markets and industries of the 21st century (Elkington 1997: 4).

The emerging societal values challenged the entrenched Friedman (1970) business philosophies on shareholder primacy. These two opposing philosophies, the latter promoting the sovereignty of shareholders and the former the importance of protecting all stakeholder interests, dominated the rest of the twentieth century. Stakeholder philosophy emphasised an ethic of care and purported that business and society were bound by a reciprocal "social contract", so that business was expected to value and be accountable to the interests of all those affected by its decisions and actions.
The extensive macro field research conducted in several countries by Hampden-Turner (1990) and Fons Tropenaars (1994), presented a convincing body of academic research to show that the social context of business shaped the expectations and behaviour of its managers, and that these contexts varied immensely around the world. Their research showed that national cultures promoted different social structures based on different values and interpersonal relationships. These variations gave rise to distinct corporate cultures and corporate relationships both within the organisation and in its relationships with external stakeholders. Above all, their research highlighted that there was no one way of doing business, and that organisational design, and the relationships it spawned, were *socially* determined rather than being prescribed by "the invisible hand" (Adam Smith: 1776) of the marketplace. It could be argued that the general public had become conscientised (Freire: 1972) to the idea that the economic market was a social invention designed by society rather than some self-regulating mechanism as had been argued from Adam Smith's era (Smith: 1776).

I was delighted to find that the growing distrust of business was forcing organisational leaders to rethink their traditional success formulas as they sought to discover how they had become so disconnected from societal values. It seemed like a strange attractor was developing in the external environments of these organisations that was forcing them to change their underlying mental models around what business should value and how they should behave.

Stakeholder philosophies gave way to newer values concerning concepts of corporate citizenship, which at its core, promoted new values around the rights of multiple stakeholders - employees, local communities, the employees in their third world supply chains - to have their interests considered and protected. The governing values, which stressed exclusive responsibility to shareholders, had been irreversibly changed. The essence of corporate citizenship was seen to be congruity between those values being promoted by the corporation and those held to be important by the host society. In moving to embrace philosophies of corporate citizenship, it could be argued, organisations were being forced to accept that they were in a relationship with the rest
of society, and that they were being asked to share societal values and move to a more mutually beneficial way of relating.

In response to these new public demands, many of the world's largest corporations voluntarily began to publicly pledge to observe new values that embraced new notions of social and environmental accountabilities. These in turn became codified into new industry wide value statements and principles, such as those embodied in the CAUX Principles developed by the Caux Roundtable, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Business Charter for Sustainable Development, and the CERES Principles.

Such was the success of the environmental protection movement, and its ability to capture the public’s imagination and support, that in many ways it seemed to have subsumed the social accountability agenda, so that corporations throughout the 1990s could be seen to be becoming much more environmentally friendly while continuing to lag behind in their accountabilities for the well-being of their employees. It seemed, yet again, that the business world was in danger of co-opting a new language while retaining its old mindset. I found myself witnessing how the values mystification phenomenon, where organisations adopt the terminology but continue much as before, could effectively allow the organisations’ new found environmental accountability to cloak its continued denial of its social impacts on employees. It seemed a “theory I” perspective was still needed if management was to be motivated to adopt a new way of relating internally.

The late 1990s also saw the emergence of new research beginning to build the business case for why companies should invest in their employees, and how companies who did so performed better in the marketplace. Research by Campling and Gollan (1999) highlighted the link between employee participation programs, greater employee motivation and improved organisational performance. The work of Geert Hofstede (1989:37) showed the importance of “communitarian values”, the belief in the need to serve the group and to derive satisfaction from such efforts, and how it related positively to economic progress:
Employee enthusiasm for dedicating their lives to anonymous lenders of money is somewhat muted, whereas it is possible to derive a genuine pride from the fact that your air bags stop several hundred children a year from being hurled against windshields.

The internal world as well as the implicit value of work was beginning to be talked about, and how these related to the emergence of positive interpersonal relationships in the workplace as well as between the organisation and its external stakeholders (Elkington: 1998). This interdependency of relationships had been witnessed within Solid Finance as employees spoke of their pride in being able to have their values met at work, as well as deriving satisfaction from Solid Finance's reputation for being a good corporate citizen in their local community.

Opinion leaders in society, including Fukuyama (1995:5), were also advocating that new values, and a new recognition of employees' personal needs, should be recognised by business:

And while people work in organisations to satisfy their individual needs, the workplace also draws people out of their private life and connects them to a wider social world. That connectedness is not just a means to the end of earning a paycheck but an important end of human life itself.

(Emphasis mine)

Technology too, was playing its part in facilitating the emergence of a new collective consciousness around more inclusive values. In particular, the power and impact of a 'free' public information service, the Internet, facilitated increasing consumer knowledge, sensitivity and ability to take action from the mid 1990s onwards. As a new connectedness emerged amongst change advocates, and technology increased corporate visibility, additional pressure was placed on business to move to respond to society's new expectations. Carroll (1989) identified four main drivers of corporate citizenship behaviour that appealed to different managerial values:

- Market expectations arising from economic concerns.
• Society's expectations and responses to social pressures.
• Ethical expectations, acting with a moral conscience, and showing moral leadership for other stakeholders' rights.
• Philanthropic expectations and a regard for community responsibility as disinterested largess and benevolence.

While macro research was finding that corporations were responding and seeking change as a result of social pressures, civil society was advocating citizenship out of a new set of values that were still not being recognised.

Industry research in 1995, sponsored by the British Royal Society of Arts (RSA), noted that there was a changing expectation by the community and the "reasonable person" within it, of appropriate business behaviour. Its major finding was that a new concept of business having to earn its "social licence to operate", would be the key to future organisational success. The changes being demanded by this newly evolving "social contract" between business and its external environment, was hotly contested by corporations throughout the rest of the 1990s as they sought to maintain society's confidence in being able to self-regulate.

Fukuyama (1989) insisted that there was a need, at the macro level, for a new set of values to emerge within the western world to match the new social and political context it found itself in after the collapse of communism. In a follow-up study (1995) he called for a new stage of social evolution based on mutual trust, and argued that it was time to move beyond individualism to celebrate sharing, interdependencies (that is, to recognise the ethical imperative of interdependency) and our need to trust each other so we might evolve socially. This thesis research highlights how organisations, as the major institutions in society today, can play a role in helping their members to increase their personal understanding of themselves. It shows how each member differs and yet has many of the same needs as others, and that we all share an essential interdependency binding our welfare together. If it can do this, then it can play a major role in nurturing trust.
David Korten (2000) continued Fukuyama's theme, and suggested that it was now time that, as a society, we took responsibility for attuning ourselves to a deeper understanding of life, and set a conscious course towards a sustainable future. Australian scholars such as Dexter Dunphy (2000) agreed, claiming that the new movement in business to embrace the philosophy of sustainability could be compared to a new social and economic paradigm:

*Sustainability is more a symbol than a scientific concept. Like an icon or a flag, it is a focus for a cluster of related values, aspirations and knowledge in the making. It is the rallying point for an emergent ideology and a new social movement.* (Dunphy 2000: 251)

The philosophy of business sustainability was also extended to include efforts to balance personal and workplace values. The emergence of "Generation X" and its successor the new "Get-a-life generation" (Elkington 1998:65) demanded additional corporate reform and accountability for impacts on employees' emotional lives. In the economically developed countries, the emergence of these new values meant that by the close of the 90's, the boundaries between business, government, and the non-profit sector were shifting.

This research marks the birth of a new set of governing values which, my world view leads me to believe, may well provide the social context for the next stage in our social evolution. The new values being expressed by BHP's Managing Director, as the leader of Australia's largest and oldest mining corporation, captured the new orientation of business to society:

*From a business perspective sustainable development is now a mainstream issue for any company that believes it has a future in the 21st century. Sound environmental and community performance is part of doing good business. A sustainable approach to development goes well beyond the economic wealth that development can bring, to include social and environmental dimensions in the short, medium and long term. Maintaining an open dialogue with all our stakeholders is important in making progress towards this goal.* (Corporate Citizen: 2001 pp2-3)
Welcoming A New Ethic

These new corporate values have been informed and shaped by new societal values and expectations. Researchers such as Limerick and Cunningham (1993) focus on yet another new expectation of modern corporations, and that is that they will play a role in helping employees create understanding from their workplace experiences. They claim that it is only by acknowledging the importance of personal life, as well as work life, that organisations will be able to attract the best people, and be sustainable in the long term. My own research findings support the position that, if life is recognised as the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations, then organisations will continue to sustain their existence only if they, on the one hand, encourage the development of the internal personal life of employees in relation to organisational values. And, on the other hand, pursue their own activities in a way that is in harmony with the values of the wider, external world around them.

To the masculine ethos that accepts that dissonance is how things are, the solution in times of crisis is to have recourse to justice and rights by way of a palliative solution. But Jung reminds us that we do not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious. The feminine approach, as an alternative, tends to be preventive, emancipatory and enhancing. Its ethic is based, as Jung suggests, on a process of healing through making luminous the potential for the development of all concerned in that, which is hidden simmering unheard, as the major cause of the crisis. It is an ethic of care practised as a continuous response to the values of the other - meeting the unmet needs of the other as a way of enhancing both her own and the potential of others as inevitably bound up together in our inescapable interconnectedness.

And so, my research suggests that “theory I” must also seek to challenge the dominant value set promoting an ethic of rights on which most modern institutions, including
business, are built - that, which prioritises the masculine values of objectivity, externality, impartiality and justice, and perpetuates fragmentation and Theory X type values. By beginning from a new interpretation of what is fair, a "theory I" perspective evolves from an ethic of care and sees the feminine values of interiority, relationships, empathy and caring as more conducive to human needs, and more appropriate for organisations wishing to remain responsive to changing societal values. An ethic of care would recognise that individuals have different needs, and that the system itself must be redesigned if it is found to be disenfranchising members. If business leaders can come to see the benefits of moving to an ethic of care inside their organisations, this, in turn, will help them to understand and be more responsive to the external pressures on them. The global street protests of the 1990s against the ultimate symbol of big business, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), an organisation that places a premium value on concepts such as profit and loss, but not on human rights, child labour or environmental issues, can be better understood as the focus of civil society’s backlash when it is seen to represent a values clash. The WTO, as an organisation, was seen to be seeking to impose the same rules for all, and so was out of step with the new social values that placed a value priority on varied human and environmental needs over and above economic requirements. Protestors argued that the human costs of imposing the same economic constraints on all countries would, for example, preclude thousands of poor Africans from accessing medicine because they were unable to pay for patented Aids drugs. The driving ethic of care demanded that the system itself be changed and that an ethic of care was more appropriate in framing future multilateral agreements.

Such a set of values can be seen to be part of a broader worldview as expressed, for example, in the Gaia hypothesis. A new corporate story, driven by new values can therefore be seen to be unfolding. It is actively being promoted within the business literature, by writers such as Wheatley (1992), DeGeus (1997), Hawken (1993), Handy (1996), and specifically links the business sustainability movement to the rise of the ethic of care culminating in a new vision of the emergence of a restorative economy, so that business too, comes full circle in recognising how it can heal itself.
Wheatley (1992) argues that the new sciences such as the Gaia hypothesis, offers hope for a better future, and a new way of understanding and redesigning organisations as living systems, capable of responding to the needs of the people in them. Her research shows the primacy of relationships as the key determinant of what is observed, and of how particles manifest themselves so that the success of organisations can only be defined, in reality, in terms of the health and viability of its relationships.

Following in Wheatley's footsteps, it might be argued, since we are all essentially interdependent with each other, that our social evolution has been retarded by our lack of recognition of these interdependencies. Given that corporations are arguably now the largest and most powerful institutions in the Western World, and given that they are moving to a new set of values that recognise interdependencies with the rest of society, then perhaps the important question being played out presently, is whether the new values around sustainability will create the conditions necessary for the next leap in our social evolution as interdependent, rather than independent life forms? This is perhaps why micro research, such as was conducted in this thesis, is important as it provides rich insights into how organisations are being experienced and what needs to change if we are to enhance these experiences.

Wheatley draws on Rupert Sheldrake's (1981) discoveries in "morphogenic fields", which describe species memory as contained in invisible structures that help shape behaviour. She shows how many scientists now work with this concept of "fields" that structure space or behaviour. The major societal value shifts, heralded by feminism and the environmental movement, I suspect, can also be understood as field force phenomena. Wheatley's work suggests that perhaps it is now time to persuade organisational leaders that they too see their organisation's vision and values as their field force and seek to actively tune it to higher order values to retain their own vitality.

New developments in chemistry too, have pointed to the possibility of renewed life growing out of apparent chaos. Prigogine's (1985) "dissipative structures" in chemistry showed that disorder - the dissonance arising between personal values and
organisational values, could be the source of a new kind of order. He found that such
dissipative activity could play a constructive role in the creation of new structures. It
didn't lead to the demise of a system; rather it was part of the process by which the
system let go of its present form so that it could re-emerge in a form better suited to the
demands of the present environment. The chaos that today is seen to be a hallmark of
modern work life (Handy 1998), can also be seen in this light as providing the
opportunity for rebirth to a higher form of organisational life, with new values
emerging, even encouraged by deliberate strategies of organisational learning, as the
harbingers of a new leap in social progress. This period of turbulence then can also be
seen as giving rise to new insights about what is important in the workplace - refocusing
management's attention on the primacy of the interpersonal relating that is nurtured
under their stewardship rather than elevating efficiencies and financial performance as
their key raison d'être.

The notion of autopoiesis, (Maturana and Varela: 1980), another concept from the
world of the new sciences, can also be applied to the understanding of the newly
emerging consciousness in the corporate world, as elaborated on in this thesis.
Autopoiesis recognises that each organisational structure has a unique identity, a clear
boundary, yet it is merged with its environment. At any point in its evolution, the
structure - both the individual member and the organisation, is both a separate agent
and, at the same time, its' history is tied to the history of the larger environment and to
other autopoietic structures. As Wheatley (1992: 18) says:

The characteristic of living systems is to continuously renew themselves
and to regulate this process in such a way that the integrity of their
structure is maintained.

This works at the level of the individual within the corporation (personal values of
employees, continuously renewing themselves in relation to organisational values) so
that a sense of personal integrity (the integrity of their structure) is maintained. It also
works at the level of the organisation as it adjust itself and its relationship to the rest of
society: And so “theory I” also seeks to embrace a new governing theory (Argyris &
Schon 1978) of mutually beneficial relating as the basic cell for healthy living and sustainable systems - the individual’s self concepts, the relationship between the individual and the organisation, and the relationship between the organisation and society.

Wheatley points out that it is the relationship between the person and the organisation, as well as the organisation and society that is what’s important, and that it will always be different, evoking different potentialities, depending upon the context at the time. She argues that the organisation, at both the collective and the individual levels, can develop a clear sense of identity based on interdependency, so that when the environment demands a new response, there is a reference point for change. One isn’t a subject and the other an object, rather the indivisibility between self and others is recognised. This new perspective, “theory I”, seeks to facilitate such a recognition, and that is why it is important for today’s workplaces where, as the research uncovered, there is a lack of connection within individuals, between organisational members and in relation to wider societal value shifts.

The writing of evolutionary psychologists reflects similar ideas. They also argue that all people are alike underneath. In reviewing why humans have not evolved further from the advent of the agricultural period, one of their suggestions is that there has been no consistent new environmental pressure on people that required further evolution. Evolutionary psychologists argue that although the world has changed, human beings have not. They identify emotions as the first screen of all information received. And until the late 90s, and the advent of new values around sustainability, it could be seen that the business world was one where its members were often trained to dispense with emotions in favour of rational analysis (Theory X in Karpin: 1995). In marginalising our emotions, perhaps we handicapped our learning and evolutionary development, and perhaps reclaiming this territory will help us to learn and evolve.
The Rise Of The Personal

My workplace experiences in the field, as well as my personal life experience, suggest that changes in the collective psyche can be seen as bringing forth new values that, in turn, are shaping new expectations of organisations. This new groundswell is driving the philosophy of sustainability, both inside and outside the corporate arena. Within this new paradigm, there is a sense of a profound and comprehensive realignment of cultural priorities, human perceptions and goals as summarized by Elkington when he says:

Perhaps, what we are seeing is the emergence of new age capitalism appropriate to a new millennium, in which the boundary between corporate and human values is beginning to dissolve. (Elkington: 1987)

Such a fundamental shift in organisations is predicted by DeGeus (1997:236) as follows:

A living company will have members, both people and institutions, who subscribe to a set of common values and who believe that the goals of the company allow them and help them to achieve their own individual goals. Both the company and its members have basic driving forces: they want to survive and, once the conditions for survival exist, they want to attain and expand their potential. The underlying contract between the company and its members (both individuals and other institutions) is that the members will be helped to reach their potential.

Work is increasingly being seen not just as something we do but also as an essential part of our pilgrimage to hone our self-identity and find our rightful place within the wider universe. The new business philosophy of sustainability can be seen as the maturation and integration of three major movements. Each has helped to usher in fundamentally new values challenging the dominance of the business paradigm - feminism, environmentalism and the collective search for shared meaning as represented, in part, by the birth of the "Get a life" generation. Proponents of this view, myself included, point to the modern workplace and claim that, as employment expectations have
changed, work has come to have the meaning Jung assigned to it more than forty years ago. Work in the sense of a career is Psyche’s invitation to transform, to find fulfillment and to individuate. They claim organisational development is a process which parallels the personal in the collective (as in the role of the unconscious personal values in relation to the conscious workplace values), and seeks to help the transformation of a particular collective, the organisation - transformed into a "field" of interior personal interconnectedness. Or, in the words of Rumi:

Work is not what people think it is. It is not just something which, when it is operating, you can see from outside. (Shah, 1970:109 - 110)

Again, if we accept that organisations are collections of people, and can create a social structure by dint of the accumulated experiences and actions of the people who have gone before, then it is natural to think of the interdependence between individual growth and collective organisational development. DeGues, too, points to the importance of recognising interiority as essential to transformation. He claims that the essence of learning is the ability to manage change by changing yourself, and he points to Piaget’s (1965) labeling of this form of change as "learning through accommodation". Its essence is to change one’s internal structure to remain in harmony with a changed environment.

As this thesis comes to a close, at the macro level, it seems that my research and I were part of a much larger groundswell of grass roots consciousness of our interdependencies with our natural environment and each other. This new awareness, in turn, has sensitised our collective antenna to the existence of our internal world and our internal search for meaning - always seeking to reconcile our self-image with our external reality so that we can continue to grow and develop. Our search for meaning has dramatically shifted onto the workplace, as this is where most of us will spend the majority of our lives, so that the nature of our work experiences now more than ever shape the person we become. This research traces the rise of this grassroots consciousness that personal values are important and can determine whether we experience ourselves as authentic and living with integrity, or whether we experience
ourselves as inauthentic and diminished by our workplace contexts. This new consciousness transcends the organisation’s boundaries and relates to changing societal values and is therefore part of a much larger movement struggling to bring forth a new world order where it is no longer acceptable to corral life into work and personal spheres.

I had come full circle.

Honouring Threshold Potential

My own experience had shown me how my personal values went unrecognised and unmet in the places where I worked. This had caused me to turn inwards in a personal search for meaning. I then came across a worldwide study by the Compass Group (Chapter 1) that suggested that many other employees were also experiencing an increasing gap between their personal and their workplace values that was causing them similar distress. I decided to explore the nature of employee workplace experiences to deepen my understanding of how personal and organisational values interact. My thesis began therefore as a journey of exploration into the dynamics of the relationship between personal and organisational values within the wider context of today’s continuously changing world. I sought not to find answers, but to gain insights into organisational members’ expectation and responses to the values being promoted by the other - the individual, the organisation and society - and how they specifically interacted within the workplace space.

To this end, I situated myself within three specific organisations where I could witness and interact with the values dynamics that existed there.
Diagram 1 maps the beginning of my journey as I sought to explore these dynamics—the organisation and the wider world being seen as the environment of the individual; the organisation’s environment being both the individuals that constitute it and the wider world in which it is situated.

My research exploration has now led me to a deeper understanding of how individuals experience and respond to their organisational contexts, and how organisations in turn are impacted upon and respond to their external societal context. This research has highlighted how each of these entities are engaged in two way relationships with each other, and between each other, and because so much of this is happening at the interpretative and expectation levels, it is not explicitly acknowledged. In fact my research found that what is characteristic of each of the workplace contexts studied was the host of assumptions that existed there. Workplace contexts, for example, were found to be governed by a general assumption that members understand what is meant by organisational values, whereas the research found that there is instead a myriad of interpretations in operation. There is a general assumption that organisational members know how to operationalise the organisation’s espoused values, whereas the research found that this is the exact opposite of their experience. There is a general assumption that all organisational values are equal. Employees, however, typically experience that there exists a definite priority awarded by management to “hard” values while employees themselves give priority to “soft” values. There is a general assumption that
employees’ personal values do not exist or do not matter, and organisations can mandate commitment to the organisation’s stated values. The research found that employees very definitely bring personal values into their places of work and many continue to operate out of these while at work, which shapes their experience there. At the leadership level, the research suggests, there exists an implicit assumption that organisational success depends on commitment to a different set of values than those being promoted in the external societal context. The research showed that this is increasingly no longer the case, and organisations are now being forced, and are responding, to rethink and revise the values that underpin their traditional success formulas. Their ability to respond to both the needs of their members and to external stakeholder needs, however, continues to be handicapped by the priority focus placed on externalities at the expense of including and responding to the interpretative dimension, and how people make meaning out of their experiences. The research found, for example, that for many employees even being given permission to think about how their personal and workplace values impact upon each other is a rare phenomenon. However, when it is extended, it can bring people closer to an ideal of mutually beneficial relating as both parties develop a better understanding of how to respond to the other.

Using the metaphor of the threshold, as employed by the scientists of Complexity Theory, to portray the point of transition (phase space) in the change of state of an entity from one form to another in the process of relating in a specific environment, I situated myself between the inner world (personal values of self, organisation, world) and the outer world of each of those entities – always in contact with each other, always inevitably (ideally, willingly) in transition between one set of values and another. The dynamics of the relationship between personal and organisational values within the wider context in which individuals also work is now seen in the light of entities (self, organisation, world) inevitably changing, and needing to accommodate being changed by each other – in their endeavour to preserve their own being (valued way of existing). Each is always in a threshold place, each way of being always being necessarily in transition between an inner world of own values and an outer world of others’ values.
Diagram 2, the workplace context, became the phase space I set out to explore. The workplace can be defined as being what is produced value-wise from the coming together of the relating between these parties. As the Chaos scientists would say, “The third colour always inserts itself”. This research found that the relating between employees and their workplace context, the phase space where both impact upon each other, tended to produce a transition in values where many employees experienced their personal values being subsumed by the values being operationalised in these workplace contexts, so that a gap emerged between their expectations for self in relation to work and how they actually experienced it. For many these gaps created a phase state where there was a disintegration of self-identity and a loss of meaning as individuals experienced a pressure to conform to a set of values not of their choosing.
What complicates even further the relationship of workplace values, as the resultant product of organisational and personal values, is the intrusion of another competing third party, the manager. So the hierarchical activity of management completes, even as it complicates, the geometry of today’s workplace as threshold.

Diagram 3 The Hierarchy of Management

The resulting dissonance experienced by employees because management was seen to behave and reward behaviours that did not support the stated organisational values, worked to further undermine employee confidence in their personal ability to understand what was expected of them at work. Diagram 3 highlights how the values of the employee, for example, now need to relate to not only what is sensed directly as the values of the organisation, but also those values as they are filtered through and added or detracted from by the interpretations of the values by managers – thus allowing for all kinds of confusion, dissonance, contradictions, and even obfuscation.

While this dissertation delineates and analyses a present, already established geometry of values, there also arises the question of how necessarily fixed that geometry is. How open is it to transformation – when viewed from an alternative perspective or when
subjected to a re-shuffling of its constituent elements? For me, inevitably flowing out
of a description of the nature of the dynamics of the relationship between personal and
organisational values as observed in present workplace values was a consideration of
why the ethical ideal of the highest possible degree of mutually beneficial relating is so
seldom found, and how it might be implemented, in the context of our present world.
This was the twofold question that constantly dogged me while working within these
organisations, and which I sought to explore through my research.

My experiences suggest that once the interpretative realm is recognised, the existing
geometry tends to dissolve the blocking function of a workplace established by a
masculine focus on exteriority. The addition of the personal, feminine perspective, with
its giving of priority to coming from a being at home with an interiority, with its
preference for the relational, opens up an interval of multiple non-hierarchical “in-
betweeness” – as a threshold workplace, a theatre pulsing with the energy of
continuously changing workplaces. The diagram below illustrates how the addition of
the feminine dimension dissolved the interfering block of management hierarchy with
its attendant inflexibility and dissonance.

![Diagram](image-url)
The emphasis is now on the multiple inter-relating of each party, each employee being continuously empowered through simultaneous inter-connections with a personalised inner world, the external world, the organisation, and other employees.

My view from the threshold left me standing between, and watching over the internal (personal) and the external (organisational stated values) as they jostled against each other. So I observed the jumble of contradictory behaviours this gave rise to - where the empowered and the disempowered, the enlightened and the recalcitrants, the bullies and the wounded found themselves working side by side in organisations that worked for some but not others. My research testifies to the complexity of organisational life and to the current day to day inhumanity of many organisational members towards each other because of their denial of interiority and its emotional space. On the positive side, the research found evidence of a new archetype trying to break through. A new found recognition that people are looking for a sense of meaning and self-worth from their work, that civil society expects business to share its values and that this search for meaning arising from our internal world is part of the human universe that calls us to develop and self-actuate.

My experience suggests that once we recognise that we are in two-way relationships with others, and we consciously experience this relationship at the emotional level as well as the external level, then we can begin to realise how we are all part of the universe’s intricate design. Then our work-life can take on meaning in a way that can help us extend and energise ourselves, rather than be a daily grind that saps our energies. Once we recognise that we each have an internal world that seeks to be recognised we can become whole again. These findings suggest that we need a new perspective, such as suggested by “theory P”, that can help us recognise the importance of our interpretative dimensions and our personal values as its manifestation. With this recognition, we can then begin to develop richer understandings of how our internal world shapes our interpersonal relationships, both in the workplace, and between the workplace, and the wider societies where we live.
Such complexity reminded me of the opening scene of *A Tale of Two Cities*, it was the best of times and the worst of times. I had been part of an unfolding drama that holds the potential for significant human evolution, if these major organisations in modern society can come to see their interests bound irrevocably with our human progress.

Reflecting on my own life, I can see that my frequent career changes have been motivated by an irresistible call to live more authentically, and dismantle the man-made barriers between my internal and external worlds. That this search has been my personal "strange attractor" that gives order to my life and energises my work as part of the global movement ushering in a new wholistic consciousness in modern workplaces. The new insights provided by this research seek to extend the same workplace opportunities to others - to reconcile their inner and outer worlds and move towards greater self-actualisation and the fulfillment of their destinies.

I had found a strange attractor at work in modern workplaces consisting of this grassroots awareness of the "disconnection" between what we want from work, and how workplaces are currently designed. The result is that for many, as with my own experience, the workplace is lived as alienating, and triggers experiences of loss-of-meaning which precipitates, just as it had for myself, a search for greater personal and work values alignment as part of our shared search for meaning.

The personal values that employees bring into their places of work, and which find their origin in the changing societal values, are today amassing as a possible new point of bifurcation. The ultimate outcome of this bifurcation will likely depend on whether we can get a comprehensive recognition of the interpretative paradigm and the extent to which we are able to construct organisations to match our personal values. This is why we need a new perspective such as "theory I" - so that we can finally surface, and hopefully jettison, Theory X from the workplace so that it no longer impedes our progress to new ways of thinking and relating.
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