

**Traditional Mentor Relationships in the Lives  
of Creative People: Toward an Aesthetic Understanding**

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# **Abstract**

Traditional mentor relationships were examined from the perspective of those who work in the creative arts, with a view to establishing the meaning of the relationship and its relevance to human development, psychological well-being, and self-actualisation. The study aimed to examine whether initial research findings in the area of traditional mentoring were transferable (Bennetts, 1994), and sought to produce insight into the metaphysics of the relationship.

The term 'mentor' is an honorary title bestowed by a learner. Such relationships form naturally, have a defined pattern and conditions, and promote personal development for both mentor and learner.

Thirty five individuals drawn from a variety of creative arts fields were interviewed using a qualitative hermeneutical and heuristic approach. Peak experience and performance are discussed and examined, together with creativity, mental health, and relationship issues. A practical and theoretical interpersonal course for adult learners and derived from initial mentor research, is described and evaluated.

Continuing mentor relationships are learner-centred, and are based on trust, respect, and a component encompassing many types of love. If the power within a mentor alliance is abused by the mentor, the mentoring aspect of the relationship ends, although any prior relationship may still continue.

Mentor relationships exhibit Rogers' core conditions for learning, and Rogers' conditions for creativity, and this finding both supports and enhances Bennetts' 1994 study. Mentors were shown to promote psychological well-being in childhood, adolescence and adulthood, and also support the self-image, self-esteem and self-worth of the artist.

The mentor relationship is described as an art-form, as the mentor utilises an aesthetic communication approach to the artist and the artist's work. Such a description enables the metaphysics of the traditional mentor relationship to be understood in depth.

The traditional mentor alliance is viewed as a valid and vital relationship for continuing education and learning.

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

'Odyssey - a series of wanderings, a long adventurous journey.' Concise Oxford Dictionary

'I know with certainty that a man's work is nothing but the long journey to recover, through the detours of art, the two or three simple and great images which first gained access to his heart.' Camus, The New York Times, January, 1960.

### The Mentor Concept

The best stories are those which remain meaningful to us in any century and any culture, as they contain it seems, essential truths. However when Homer related the epic poem of how King Odysseus left his son Telemakhos in the care of the wise and trusted Mentor, and set sail from Ithaka on the Aegean sea to fight the Trojan wars, he could not have known that the concept of that relationship would re-emerge in the 20th century as a model for personal and professional development.

Homer's story of 'The Odyssey' (Fitzgerald, 1988) is more than simply a poetic account in the oral tradition (Heaney, 1992) of a young man's search for his father, and his subsequent journey from and to his home island of Ithaka. It is a quest for self, in the company of another, the mentor. It is a metaphorical journey of courage, challenge, creativity and ultimate self-discovery. It is a story which transcends its own time and endures the ages to remain eternal. Schwartz and Williams (1995) view this in psychological terms, stating that the story of the mythic hero is about the psychological, social, moral and spiritual development of the individual. Consequently, they maintain, it is the job of the classical mentor to help the hero to expand his or her consciousness *'in order to avoid doom, and succeed in the quest'* (p.105).

In 'The Odyssey' Mentor gave guidance, encouragement and wise counsel to Telemakhos, but it is noticeable that in most instances when Telemakhos sought Mentor's counsel, the goddess Pallas Athene assumed the guise of Mentor, blending both masculine and feminine principles, human and superhuman qualities into one body, and providing Telemakhos with a relationship which encompassed the physical and the spiritual. The word mentor in this context was probably derived from the root words 'men' or 'mon' which mean 'remember', 'think' and 'counsel' (Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology). The mentor relationship is in essence a helping relationship, one which enables, rather than one which instructs.

The mentor concept is recognisable in many written and oral forms whenever an older and more experienced individual helps another person to move towards achieving full maturity and potential. Today the word mentor is often alluded to somewhat metaphorically, and may be used to encompass such concepts as that of teaching, patronage and sponsorship. It is also frequently used without clear definition, which may lead to difficulties in establishing in what context the author meant the word to be understood. Merriam as long ago as 1983 found that:

'...it became apparent that a precise definition of mentoring - at least one that all could agree upon - was not to be found. Its meaning appears to be defined by the scope of a research investigation or by the particular setting in which it occurs.' (Merriam, 1983, p. 2)

Although Homer is credited as being the first person to name the concept of a wise guide, there can be little doubt that there have been many instances throughout history where supportive and caring relationships such as this have flourished e.g. Goethe and Frau von Stein (Browning, 1990), or Feynman and Bethe (Gleick, 1992). A mentor then is one who enables another to think and make decisions, rather than one who thinks for another. Mentoring describes a broad process of human development, a relationship of one person with a more experienced person, and although the concept itself may be ancient, and the metaphor of the journey repeated again and again, each mentor alliance has its own freshness and range of possibilities; each time the story is new.

It could be argued that many other people enable the growth of our critical faculties throughout our lives, and that this is what good parents, good friends and good teachers do as a matter of course. That this may happen is not disputed, but that this is recognised for what it is by the recipient at the time, is a matter for conjecture and one which will be explored throughout this thesis.

Mentor and Athene shared one human body when Telemakhos needed help, but today there is a schism in mentoring, as although it exists in two main forms those forms do not share the same space. These branches of mentoring could broadly be described as formal and informal, in as much as the formal type of relationship exists by virtue of an engineered occurrence, and the informal arrangement exists by serendipity. Neither description does justice however to the difference in philosophies behind each, and throughout this document the formal approach will be referred to as formal mentoring whilst the informal approach will be referred to as traditional mentoring.

Although it is recognised that learning takes place for both parties within the relationship, and that each teaches the other, within this thesis the more inexperienced person will be referred to mainly as the learner or artist, and only as the mentee or protégé if quoting from another source.



## **Rationale for Research**

Initially the reason for my research into mentoring was that of my own professional and personal development. Since childhood I have been aware that there have been certain individuals who enabled me to learn and develop, and in whose company I felt confident and valued for who I was. Although both individuals were teachers in junior and secondary education, the learning which they imparted to me had nothing to do with examinations, but conveyed the excitement of words in a way with which I felt totally at ease. There was a certain sense of 'rightness' about their presence in my life.

Retrospectively within another relationship, I have become much more aware of the influence and value of those individuals in my early life, but at that time I was curious to consider just how these relationships functioned, and what made those people, long since dead, so special. Discussion with colleagues and friends confirmed that the presence of significant individuals was not confined to my limited personal experience, and highlighted that these relationships, although not exactly secret, were ones which had been rarely discussed with an outsider, but were spoken of somewhat shyly, suggesting a private and special alliance.

Such discussions interested and fascinated me. If others were having such natural and spontaneous relationships wherein the learning was of a lasting and valued type, then why were these not recognised as valid learning experiences by those who worked in educational fields in general, and continuing education fields in particular? More to the point, why was such learning not discussed more openly, what were the conditions under which it flourished, and what were the qualities, behaviours and skills of such special individuals? In short, was there a pattern to such experience, and if there was, what would it tell us?

In 1992 I undertook an M.Ed. in Continuing Education (Training and Development), at the University of Sheffield, and the opportunity to conduct some basic research into mentor relationships came at the end of the second year of studying for that degree. The areas of interest for the research study were to some extent defined by the nature and scope of the Master's degree itself. Training and Development however is a broad enough concept to encompass a reasonably wide field of study and the mentor relationship is one which for some time has been creating interest in those who work in the arena of personal and professional development. I had no clear vision of the research area at that time other than a curiosity to examine what happened psychologically within learning relationships that were successful. However what was clear in my mind was that such relationships were not confined to the official teaching arenas of classroom and college, but functioned anywhere.

Subsequent searches of relevant literature on 'significant others' and 'mentoring' highlighted that the relationships in which I was interested, suffered from a lack of definition and were mixed up with those describing role models and heroes. The phrase 'significant other' itself had taken on a new meaning in the light of the AIDS pandemic, and the majority of the literature was addressing mentoring as a new business tool, with the relationship itself being one of contrivance rather than one of natural occurrence.

Whilst much has been written about the more formalised mentoring relationships both in this country and elsewhere, there appeared to be very little research into those relationships which were of a serendipitous nature, despite the generally accepted view that such relationships, when they did happen, worked very well indeed. There was also little previous work which had addressed the interpersonal dynamics of mentoring from a perspective of the achievement of full potential for the one who was learning, and it was this that interested me the most at the time. Chapter Two describes that initial research project (Bennetts, 1994) in detail, together with the findings and recommendations made for those working in the areas of training and development.

The methodology employed in that first study took a humanistic stance and was concerned with the interpersonal dynamics of the relationship. It was based on person-centred counselling techniques which enabled interviewees to give detailed verbal accounts of their alliances. I had worked in the field of helping relationships for many years in the health service and had undertaken work which demanded a high level of interpersonal involvement both within, and external to, my own organisation. My background is described more fully in the Methodology section of this thesis in Chapter Four, and it is perhaps sufficient to state here that the skills required for such work included those of counselling, the analysis of human interactions, and in much of the work, a humanistic person-centred approach, which asserts that given the correct conditions, most individuals will grow towards achieving their full potential.

The in-depth interviews with those involved in the training and development of others were to prove not only useful in enabling the interviewees to relate their stories in as full a way as possible, but were invaluable in capturing the depth and intensity of the relationships under examination. The level of communication between myself and the interviewees became heightened by the emotional content of their disclosures, and this in itself led to individuals asking themselves to consider the meaning of these relationships in their lives, and why they had never discussed such issues before. The data was rich and varied, and informed my decision to continue this line of research with individuals who work in creative arts fields.

Although my initial cohort were highly articulate, there were some issues which bordered on the metaphysical, and these were difficult for participants to express clearly. Creative artists, e.g. dancers, musicians, ceramicists, sculptors, painters, and actors, work constantly with the expression of emotion, and such expression is both natural and desirable within themselves and their work. It seemed a logical extension that the new study should take place with such artists to establish to what extent their experiences of such relationships are similar to the trainers, but more importantly to establish the significance and meaning of such relationships in their lives, and to ask to what extent if any, do these relationships help with psychological well-being.

When the initial study was first undertaken I referred to the traditional mentor relationship as an 'informal' relationship, which was common terminology amongst those involved in formal or engineered mentor relationships. It became apparent however that the word 'informal' was understood by some people as indicating that such relationships were of less value than those which were based on regulation and rule, and that informal relationships were lacking in form and structure.

Since 1994 I have attempted to redress this inequality and have replaced the word 'informal' with that of 'traditional', indicating a relationship of quality and worth, and which reflects the value placed on these relationships by those who took part in the studies. The word 'traditional' will be used throughout this thesis, and the mentor concept and working definitions are described in Chapter Two, whilst Chapter Three will provide a systematic review of mentoring literature.

Throughout the thesis the first person will be used as a narrative device. This is in keeping with the philosophical stance of the research and is justified in detail in Chapter Four.

Chapter Five describes the research findings by allowing the voices of the participants to speak directly to the reader. The following two chapters examine these findings in the light of multi-disciplinary literature, whilst the final chapter presents a synthesis of the research and offers a new understanding of the mentor relationship in the life of the creative artist.

Between January 1996 and December 1997 the findings of my Master's study were incorporated into theoretical and practical programmes for teachers in Cornwall. These programmes and their outcomes are presented in detail in Appendix I. They attempt to show that the initial research base has practical validity; that the underlying concepts which were shown to exist within the mentor relationship can be replicated using an experiential model of learning; that such replication can produce the 'mentor effect'; and that this effect will itself lead to a desire to continue the process with others.

# Chapter Two

## Mentoring in Practice

'I will try to account for the degree of my aesthetic emotion. That, I conceive, is the function of the critic.' Clive Bell, 'Art', 1914

'Whatever is felt upon the page without being specifically named there - that, one might say, is created. It is the presence of the thing not named, of the overtone divined by the ear but not heard by it, the verbal mood, the emotional aura of the fact or the thing of the deed, that gives high quality to the novel or the drama, as well as to poetry itself.' Cather, 'The Novel Demeuble', 1922.

### Formal Mentoring

In order to understand the traditional and formal approaches it is best to consider firstly formal mentoring as it is implemented in organisational and institutional settings, since it is about this type of mentor relationship that most has been written.

Formal mentoring functions in many arenas including those of personal development, professional development, and the development of workplace skills. It is most often a paired relationship which is brought about by a third party, to improve and develop either an individual, or that individual's performance in the context of the role in which they function. As such it has for some years enjoyed popularity in America as an educational, training, and development tool and is now frequently employed in the United Kingdom and Europe to 'fast-track' new or younger members of an organisation to function at their optimal level. It is also popular in educational settings as a means of encouraging differently abled pupils to achieve targets, as a method of enabling staff to adjust to promotion, or to assist student teachers in their placements, and subsequent appraisals.

Clutterbuck (1995) suggests that there are four goals to be met in this type of mentoring, and these consist of:

**'Career management:** Taking a personal interest in the mentee's career progression; playing a hands-on role in creating career opportunities for them to move into new jobs or learning situations.

**Self-reliance:** Helping them to take responsibility for themselves, their careers and their own development.

**Support:** Providing a sympathetic ear or a shoulder to cry on; giving them encouragement and developing their confidence.

**Learning:** Helping them to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding; sharing experience.' (Clutterbuck, 1995, p.16)

He notes that within those four goals the emphasis will shift in accordance with the issue in question and the learner's progress, and that the roles most commonly played by mentors include:

- 'Coach:** Giving encouragement and feedback, helping someone acquire new skills and abilities.
- Counsellor:** Listening sympathetically and helping someone work out solutions to their problems.
- Networker:** Helping someone develop the connections they need to gain experience, get a job.
- Facilitator:** Opening doors and opportunities, helping to set and achieve goals.
- Critical Friend:** Telling someone the uncomfortable truths that only a true friend can.
- Sounding Board:** Giving someone the chance to try out ideas and approaches in a safe environment.
- Role Model:** Providing an example, from which someone else can learn.' (Clutterbuck. 1995. p. 16)

Formal mentoring then, entails a planned approach to a helping relationship and may include some formal induction of the mentor and the learner to the programme, although this is by no means always the case. The programme might have pre-agreed objectives and an overall aim, and the mentor is usually someone who might not necessarily be older than the one with whom they are paired, but is always more experienced. Such experience can be particularly useful in mentor initiatives which are designed to enable development within a professional body, and are for the sole benefit of the learner. It is also important in pure workplace mentoring, which is usually only applicable to the job held within the organisation, and is for the benefit of both the organisation and the learner.

Some organisations wish to extend links into the community to raise their profile and to act in the interests of a wider public. Gooderson and Locke (1996) list the benefits of one such mentor programme where students at a university assist pupils in primary, secondary and tertiary settings.

#### **'Benefits to mentors**

- \* improved communication and listening skills
- \* an opportunity to reflect on and discuss learning strategies and study skills
- \* increased self-esteem and confidence
- \* a chance to do something worthwhile in helping young people develop
- \* a better understanding of the education system

### **Benefits to mentees**

- \* increased self-confidence
- \* a chance to discover more about higher education and discuss career options
- \* an opportunity to take more responsibility for their own learning
- \* help in target setting at school
- \* contact with an adult other than a teacher for encouragement, support and advice

### **Benefits to the mentor's organisation**

- \* an increased profile in the community
- \* helps possible selection of pupils as potential students or employees
- \* chance of student/staff development
- \* enhances university employers reputation
- \* gives insight into changes in education'

(Gooderson and Locke, 1996, p. 68)

However such schemes which involve a considerable age or status difference are sometimes regarded as hierarchical and it has been considered that mentor initiatives derive most benefit from a mentor who is of the same age or status as the learner (Holbeche, 1995). This process is known as peer mentoring, and is a concept which is worthy of consideration in its own right. Peer mentoring schemes have found favour because of their non-hierarchical structure, and Kram and Isabella (1985) ask that such alternatives be considered as having distinct advantages over those schemes which rely on an age or status difference as the working dynamic. They have suggested that the lack of inherent hierarchy might help to reduce the risk of the misuse of power within the relationship, and might assist with communication, mutual support and collaboration. Holbeche (1995) recognises that peer mentors are unlikely to be able to assist with career opportunities and may even be rivals for the same opportunities, but suggests that peers are perhaps more able to help each other develop the skills of networking and business acumen.

Those who implement formal mentoring approaches always have an end result in mind and some programmes are time specific. This is seen as good organisational practice as the purpose of the relationship is to be instrumental in achieving that result, and is viewed by the organisation as unlikely to warrant any further input by the mentor when this objective has been met.

The mentor relationship in such instances is valued for what it can do not just for the individual learner, but for the organisation as a whole. Garvey (1995) has noted however that the culture of the organisation is vitally important in the success or failure of mentor initiatives which take place at work. He maintains that:

**'Mentoring is not about giving instruction and advice, which is the natural inclination of autocratic management. Mentoring requires a counselling, supporting, challenging and developmental approach. In an environment of command and control, this would not be the normal behaviour of senior management as it might well be regarded as 'soft' and 'a waste of time'. (Garvey, 1995, p. 118)**

Michael Zey (1984) has pointed out that the choice of a protégé can reflect on the career of the mentor, and his study of mentor relationships in organisational settings produced a list of attributes which highlight what mentors look for within business settings.

### **'What Mentors Look for in a Protégé**

- \*Intelligence**
- \*Ambition**
- \*Desire and ability to accept power and risk**
- \*Ability to perform the mentor's job**
- \*Loyalty**
- \*Similar perceptions of work and organisation**
- \*Organisational 'savvy'**
- \*Positive perception of the protégé by the organisation**
- \*Ability to establish alliances' (Zey, 1984, p. 182)**

Zey also identified some factors which he suggests should be kept in mind by a prospective protégé:

### **'Factors in Selecting a Mentor**

- \*Is the mentor good at what he does?**
- \*Is the mentor getting support?**
- \*How does the organisation judge the mentor?**
- \*Is the mentor a good motivator?**
- \*What are the protégé's needs and goals?**
- \*What are the needs and goals of the prospective mentor?**
- \*How powerful is the mentor?**
- \*Is the mentor secure in his own position?' (Zey, 1984, p. 167)**

Although Zey refers to the male pronoun this is perhaps because of the then very low profile of women in American business settings, and he is explicit that at the time of writing, there were only between 5 and 14 per cent of women at management level and therefore very few female mentors. McKeen and Burke (1989) conclude that the mentoring process for women could be even more critical for career success than for men, and called for improvements in the facilitation and effectiveness of mentoring programmes within business.

Because of the competence based aspect of workplace programmes it is necessary that mentors receive formal information as to what is expected of them, and formal instruction on the skills they will require to meet the expectations of learners and management.

Both parties should understand that for such a programme to work, a high level of commitment and energy will be necessary. Although competence is extremely important in the professional arena Nowlen proposes that:

'Of equal or even greater importance will be the identification of those variables that distinguish superior performing professionals from those who are merely adequate and from those who are inadequate. Assessment of those individuals then takes place with continuing education assisting the professional to move towards the exemplar's level of performance.'  
(Nowlen, 1990, p. 59)

Nowlen here draws the inference that competence is important for a quality approach, but that competence does not imply excellence. In doing so he also raises an important issue for workplace mentoring which is whether the role of mentor should be as exemplar in the field, or as assessor in the field? One formal mentor practice has recently been questioned by writers and researchers in the field, who have highlighted the increasing trend towards mentors being placed in the role of assessor.

Entwistle's (1995) survey amongst teachers and tutors showed that teachers did not wish to be placed in the role of assessors, and that this was '*a reflection of the current reluctance to incorporate assessment matters into mentor programmes.*' Even so she concludes that:

'The present reluctance to include assessment issues in mentor training programmes must be challenged; mentors need to be fully and properly trained for the assessment process.'  
(Entwistle, 1995, p. 54)

There is now mounting evidence to suggest that in some professions mentors are expected to have assessment as one of the major functions of their role. This has placed considerable strain on the mentor/learner relationship, which is deemed to be primarily one of friendship and trust (Clutterbuck 1985, Collin 1986a, Bennetts 1994). Gay and Stephenson (1996) have noted that the practice of mentoring is coming under increasing pressure and warn that:

'What we need to be constantly aware of however, is the ways in which a practice that had its origins in the developmental relationship of one individual with another is now being structured, directed and redefined to satisfy institutional as well as individual needs.'  
(Gay and Stephenson, 1996, p. 14)

The emergent model of mentoring in educational settings portrayed by Gay (1995) and Stephenson (1995b) reveals the dilemma of the mentor being required to act not only as support and confidante, but also as assessor and examiner.



It will be interesting to see how this requirement will be assimilated into the accepted concept of mentoring, which although somewhat nebulous at times, has always been viewed as a caring relationship, primarily concerned with the well-being of the learner. It is also interesting that this should occur at a time when the issue of power in formal mentor relationships remains high on the agenda of both researchers and practitioners.

The role of the mentor as assessor/supervisor is one which appears to be peculiar to the United Kingdom, and does not yet appear in literature elsewhere, but in this country is now seen in health, education and social service settings, and in National Vocational Qualifications at managerial level. Within the United Kingdom it is now clear that there is disagreement between those who study and practice mentoring, and who insist that the mentor role is one of benevolence whether formal or traditional, and those who are responsible for achieving targets and therefore see the relationship as a tool for success and a means to an end. It is therefore interesting that when the opinion of researchers and practitioners in the field of mentoring in general is one which is unequivocal in recommending that mentors should never line manage or assess learners, such advice is seemingly not carrying enough weight to inform practice, and that the mentor relationship process in some instances appears to be taking second place to mentoring as a means of achieving an end product.

Palmer (1994) introduced the concept of 'professional mentoring' to the arena of Continuous Professional Development, stating clearly that '*mentoring is CPD*'. Professional mentoring differs from workplace mentoring in as much as it is not aimed primarily at protégé promotion, but is about encouraging professionals to mentor others in the same professional field. Palmer says:

'Workplace mentors are in a position to 'pull strings' or at least 'oil the wheels', to help their protégés make the next step up the organisational ladder. Those mentors may feel they are expected to do so, or that their own status is lessened if they do not. Professional mentoring simply cannot compete with workplace mentoring in this respect, as the mentor has no influence with organisation decision makers. But it may well enable protégés to plan their careers more clearly, and so compete more effectively when the opportunity for promotion arises.' (Palmer, 1994, p. 2)

At the time that Palmer was writing, this was the then practice of the Institute of Personnel Management and was thought to be unique in its application of mentoring. Many Institutes practised CPD but functioned on the workplace mentoring model. What Palmer suggests however could well be beneficial to other professional bodies as it removes the power dynamic from the mentor relationship, in terms of organisational promises or threats. In more recent years the IPM has merged with the Institute of Training and Development to become the Institute of Personnel and Development.

It appears though that even within the IPD, there is some confusion in both the context in which mentoring is used, and its subsequent meaning. On one page of the Institute's policy on CPD (1996), mentoring is synonymous with coaching, and on another page with counselling. With such a blurred concept of mentoring it is hardly surprising that nobody seems really sure what is meant by mentoring in any given context, and this is not helpful to those who struggle to decide if what they are doing is simply supervision, or is really mentoring.

The concept which Palmer writes of is interesting, but it does raise some questions. If professions only recognise 'official' mentors who have some form of accreditation from colleges, or from their professional body, then what will be the fate of those who have had, or are having, excellent mentor relationships within the traditional, informal mode? Will their relationships be ignored, and the learning go unrecognised by the profession? How is it all going to work?

Who but the learner is qualified to put a value on such a personal experience?

With no agreed definition of what formal mentoring is, it is perhaps surprising that scholars are able to be specific as to what it is not. But this in itself is a step forward, and should be invaluable to those who design, validate, and implement training for 'mentor courses', many of which are now taking place in Higher Education as part of degree courses, or as stand alone certificated courses. Such courses offer training in many of the recognised and accepted mentor functions such as communicating and goal setting, but are increasingly including both supervisory skills and work assessment skills.

Another interesting issue is the effect of new technology on mentoring practice, and to what extent telementoring, where mentor and learner are linked only via telecommunication media, will play an increasing part in the learning process. Until recently there has always been an assumption, explicit or implicit, that whatever mode of mentoring was favoured, the relationship was one which involved face to face contact.

McBain and George (1995) suggest that the lack of definition regarding mentoring should not exclude such a concept which is able to offer much of what is explicit to mentoring such as help and development. They argue that mentoring in general and telementoring in particular, has real relevance and importance to Third World countries. Their list of strengths and weaknesses of telementoring shown here, is derived from the work of McConnell (1994) and Birchall and Houldsworth (1995).

### **'Strengths**

Absence of visual clues can remove some potential barriers e.g. gender, status, and permits concentration on key issues (less noise)

Encourages democratic and co-operative approach

Allows remote meetings and time and place independence

No loss of relationship between communications

Asynchronous communication encourages reflection allowing mentee and mentor to record, focus on, and to return to issues, and to spend more time on them

Good for communication of information and ideas, and developing an analytical and questioning approach. Mentee and mentor able to communicate whenever is convenient to them

Record of conversations

May suit those for whom face to face meetings produce anxiety

### **Weaknesses**

Absence of visual cues provides less information and feedback to the mentor, and it may be more difficult to develop openness and trust, and less easy for the mentor to see the context.

Less easy to control

Less personal than face to face meetings

Interactions must be frequent

Less 'sparking off' than face to face meetings

Less good for expression of emotions, and informal chat

Mentoring conversations may take longer to develop, as may the mentoring relationship itself

Requires additional competencies

May not suit those for whom the medium may produce anxiety, including for example concern over confidentiality.' (McBain and George, 1995, p.161)

Clearly the state of the art of formal mentoring in the United Kingdom is undergoing change, and it remains to be seen whether such change is sustainable or desirable in practice. It is also clear that the formal mentor approaches have considerable potential for success in the workplace (Zey, 1984, Clutterbuck 1985, Sweeney and Bloch 1994, Garvey 1995), when supported by senior management. What the most successful relationships appear to have in common is a good interpersonal relationship (Missirian, 1982, Kram, 1983, 1985), and it seems that within such a relationship both parties will naturally work out their own protocols for making that relationship work.

Gordon (1983) offers his definition of a mentor relationship as:

'...a one to one relationship that involves an exchange of beneficial intangibles which result in growth for the mentee and mentor.' (Gordon, 1983, p. 3)

Whilst the competence and skills factors of mentor relationships have been examined to the point of exhaustion and have added little insight into the essence of a successful mentor alliance, then perhaps it is exploration of the beneficial intangibles within the traditional mentor relationship which will provide some answers.

Karpiak recognises that for most people:

'Continuing education for self-knowledge and personal growth is qualitatively different from the more traditional maintenance-orientated continuing education. To begin with, it will likely occur not at social agencies nor at universities, but rather within the community itself.' (Karpiak, 1992, p. 56)

### **Traditional Mentor Relationships**

In recent surveys at the University of Nottingham, Blackwell and McLean (1996a) found that what was largely desired by both mentor and learner was:

'...an informal relationship in which the parties were free to choose and use their judgement about the appropriateness of different roles for them.' (Blackwell and McLean, 1996a, p. 26)

And they maintain that:

'...it cannot be assumed that formal schemes of mentoring are necessarily more effective or valued than informal ones.' (Blackwell and McLean, 1996a, p. 24)

Informal mentoring for Blackwell and McLean is what is termed here, traditional mentoring. They also state that such informal well-established relationships are in danger of being ignored in the dash to adopt '*a good thing*' in the name of quality assurance and consistency. Their findings have now led to the deconstruction of some of the more formal aspects of the existing mentor scheme presently in place at The University of Nottingham. This is being achieved by slimming down the rules, highlighting the importance of informality, and making the different models of mentoring explicit.

Traditional mentor relationships are those which happen naturally and spontaneously at any age or stage of development, either in academic, work or general social settings, and are not the product of formal mentor programmes (Bennetts, 1994). They engage both mentors and learners in an emotional subjective experience, and although they are not usually the end product of an engineered programme, such an alliance could develop if the relationship was one which worked well, that is if the interpersonal aspects had developed fully. Whilst traditional mentoring is widely recognised as being the preferred type of mentoring in as much as it is more effective (Lyons et al, 1990), it is also acknowledged as being not one which everyone can expect to have in their lives, nor one which is in the control of any but those involved. It is therefore less likely to appeal to organisations than the engineered formal approach, which exercises control, but gives people more chance to have a mentor.

The issue of formal versus traditional mentoring is widely debated, but is perhaps less problematic than it appears, as the formal approach emphasises the outcome above the relationship itself, whereas traditional mentor relationships are more to do with the process of the relationship, which is inseparable from the outcome. That is not to say that the traditional relationship has no outcome, but more that there is no emphasis on time limitations and therefore the relationship seems to progress at the pace required for each pair and each circumstance (Bennetts, 1994).

Previous research on mentor relationships (Bennetts, 1994) highlighted the significance of the other person in the development of full human potential, and used the following as its working definition:

'A mentor is that person who achieves a one-to-one developmental relationship with a learner, and one whom the learner identifies as having enabled personal growth to take place.' (Bennetts, 1994, p. 4)

However it became apparent throughout the research that such identification was one which for many people was not always obvious at the time, but happened as with Athene and Mentor, in the guise of teacher, parent or friend, and was recognised retrospectively and named as a mentor relationship some years after it originally began. The working definition has therefore been modified slightly to include this reflective stance and for the purposes of this thesis will be as follows:

'A mentor is that person who achieves a one-to-one developmental relationship with a learner, and one whom the learner *later* identifies as having enabled personal growth to take place.'

Traditional mentor relationships are therefore not as explicit as formal mentor relationships in as much as they are rarely referred to at the time as 'mentoring' by either party, and may only assume their full significance some years later. Missirian (1982) suggests considering the mentor function in the context of a continuum of helping relationships with Peer relationships at the lowest end of the continuum, followed by Coaching relationships somewhat higher, Sponsor relationships around the middle mark, and Mentor relationships at the highest point. She states:

'While a mentor can assume any one or all of the less powerful roles - sponsor, coach, even peer -the reverse is not true. Sponsors, coaches and peers, though developmentally significant, do not have the degree of influence mentors have upon their protégés.' (Missirian, 1982, p. 86)

Missirian also identifies three elements which she feels make up the true mentor relationship:

**'Power;** the mentor will have access to more power than a coach, sponsor or peer.

**Level of identification;** the degree with which the protégé identifies with the mentor in terms of personal and professional behaviour will be greater than with those of coach, sponsor or peer.

**Intensity of emotional involvement;** the psychological bonding, the linking of minds, the sharing of dreams, and the eventual sharing of unconditional love, occurs only in *true* mentoring relationships. It is significantly absent in sponsoring relationships.' (Missirian, 1983, p. 88)

Such intensity of emotional involvement is also absent in most formal mentor relationships (Zey, 1984), perhaps because the formality involved in an arranged partnership does not often allow a genuine relationship to flourish, but more probably due to the arrangement being viewed by everyone involved as one which is goal oriented, and a 'marriage of convenience'. In traditional, or what Missirian refers to as 'true' mentor relationships, this emotional involvement is common and becomes of great importance to both parties (Bennetts, 1994), perhaps due to the necessary 'chemistry' for the bonding involved in intimate partnerships existing from the outset. Missirian's study also showed that the word mentor was one which was applied retrospectively to the relationship, and it would seem that this too differentiates the traditional from the formal. Traditional mentors are named by the learner, unlike formal mentors who are named either by the organisation or by themselves.

In the former case the word mentor assumes an honorary status, given by the learner when the relationship is recognised for what it is, and in recognition of something which has happened, rather than in anticipation of what has not yet occurred.

Yet despite the differences in formal and traditional types of mentoring, it is accepted that when a formal relationship works well it does so because of the interpersonal aspects, the 'chemistry' being right, and if that is right then even the most ill-starred mentor partnerships, such as that described by Megginson (1995) of line manager and subordinate, will be successful (Bennetts, 1996a).

If then it is the interpersonal aspects of mentoring that are key to successful relationships, it is surprising that little empirical work has taken place in this area, and that the focus of writing has been mainly in the arena of training for mentor programmes, and the implementation of such programmes. Levinson (1976), Vaillant (1977), Missirian (1982), Kram (1983), and Kram and Isabella (1985) have all, during the last twenty years, opened up the debate on the importance of the psychology of mentoring, and although they are widely quoted, it would appear that their work has not informed the actual practice of formal mentoring to the extent to which it could have done.

It is the interpersonal and developmental aspects of the traditional mentor relationship in relation to creativity and well-being which will be investigated in this thesis; for if mentoring is to be properly appreciated and acknowledged in its real sense, then it is important to understand the make-up and value of this naturally occurring relationship as fully as possible.

This chapter will present an overview of my initial research into the traditional mentor relationship, as it is this study which forms the basis for the empirical work which follows.

### **Theoretical Value Base**

Although Chapter Four discusses in detail my philosophical underpinning, it is also important to provide the reader with insight into the value base of my work in general, and to acknowledge those who have been influential in my approach to both studies. The underlying value base of both pieces of work has been initially influenced by the work of three of the founders of humanistic psychology. These are Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, and Rollo May, whose beliefs in the potential of human beings to become more fully themselves have done much to shape a whole generation of psychologists, teachers and counsellors, and whose work is still strongly debated by scholars and practitioners alike.

Rogers termed the achievement of realising human potential as becoming 'fully-functioning', and held a life-long conviction that given the correct conditions the human organism would inevitably become more fully who or what it was meant to be. Although Rogers has been accused of naiveté for failing to address what others called the 'evil' nature in humans, it is clear from his early papers that he did not ignore the negative potential in humanity, but looked upon the fully-functioning person as one who was able to integrate all the human possibilities and still be a good person (Rogers, 1957a). He says:

'He discovers that he has other feelings with which these mingle and find a balance. He feels loving and tender, and considerate and co-operative, as well as hostile or lustful or angry. He feels interest and zest and curiosity, as well as laziness or apathy.

He feels courageous and venturesome, as well as fearful. His feelings, when he lives closely and acceptingly with their complexity, operate in a constructive harmony rather than sweeping him into some uncontrollably evil path.

...Fully to be one's own uniqueness as a human being, is not, in my experience, a process which would be labelled bad. More appropriate words might be that it is a positive, or a constructive, or a realistic, or a trustworthy process.' (Rogers, 1957a, p. 177)

Rogers' career as a psychologist was influenced by his, and his colleagues experiences with clients in therapeutic counselling situations, and in 1957 he proposed that certain conditions within the therapeutic relationship might be both necessary and sufficient to produce constructive personality change. The six conditions were these:

- '1) Two persons are in psychological contact
- 2) The first, who, we shall term the client, is in a state of incongruence, being vulnerable or anxious
- 3) The second person, whom we shall term the therapist, is congruent or integrated into the relationship
- 4) The therapist experiences unconditional positive regard for the client
- 5) The therapist experiences an empathic understanding of the client's internal frame of reference and endeavours to communicate this experience to the client
- 6) The communication to the client of the therapist's empathic understanding and unconditional positive regard is to a minimal degree achieved.

No other conditions are necessary. If these six conditions exist and continue over a period of time, this is sufficient.' (Rogers, 1957b, in Kirschenbaum and Henderson eds., p. 221)

As Rogers (1961) developed his work in educational settings, his somewhat wordy proposition was eventually replaced by what are now referred to as the 'core conditions' for significant learning in both education and in counselling, namely that the facilitator fulfils these criteria:

That they are congruent i.e. that they are genuine, able to be themselves at all times

That they show 'unconditional positive regard' i.e. that they care for the individual

That they have 'empathy' with the individual i.e. that they have insight and understanding of the individual's world as the individual experiences it

That they are able to convey to the individual all of the above

And in 1967 he proposed albeit somewhat tentatively, a hypothesis of a general law of interpersonal relationships (Rogers, 1967). In it he stated that if it could be assumed that two people had a minimal willingness to be in contact, with a minimal willingness for both parties to communicate with the other over a period of time, then the following is hypothesised to be true:



'The greater the congruence of the experience, awareness and communication on the part of one individual, the more the ensuing relationship will involve: a tendency toward reciprocal communication with a quality of increasing congruence; a tendency toward more mutually accurate understanding of the communications; improved psychological adjustment and functioning in both parties; mutual satisfaction in the relationship.' (Rogers, 1967, p. 344)

To this he added one more aspect, which he again acknowledged was not only an issue for therapy, but also one which occurs in other relationships. This is the willingness to make an existential choice and take the risk of daring to communicate to the other the full feelings which are taking place at that time within the relationship. He maintains that it is this moment by moment choice whether or not to take this risk in interpersonal relationships which determines whether the relationship disintegrates, or becomes more therapeutic for both. This document is presented somewhat diffidently and does not appear to have been published at the time of conception, which from Rogers' use of references could be as early as 1959. It appears in a later publication of collected works (Rogers' 1967), together with Rogers' concerns for its adequacy and hopes for its use in research studies. As can be seen later in this chapter, the element of risk is suggested as being significant for mentor relationships from both my work (Bennetts, 1994) and others' research (Kalbfleisch and Davies, 1993).

It is interesting to note that Rogers' appeared to be equally diffident about one more characteristic of the interpersonal relationship, and that is the mystical, spiritual dimension of human experience. In 1986 he revealed:

'When I am at my best, as a group facilitator or a therapist, I discover another characteristic. I find that I am closest to my inner, intuitive self, when I am somehow in touch with the unknown in me, when perhaps I am in a slightly altered state of consciousness in the relationship, then whatever I do seems to be full of healing.

Then simply my *presence* is releasing and helpful...At those moments it seems that my inner spirit has reached out and touched the inner spirit of the other. Our relationship transcends itself and becomes part of something larger. Profound growth and healing and energy are present.' (Rogers, 1986, p. 198)

Thorne (1992) is certain that such disclosure would not have come easily to Rogers. He states that had Rogers lived longer, it is probable that Rogers would have conducted empirical work in this area, as he maintains that Rogers put the spiritual characteristic on a par with the core conditions of empathy, genuineness and acceptance.

I am inclined to surmise that Rogers had long since experienced this dimension, but refrained from revealing it because he feared academic ridicule. Thorne (1992, p. 41) notes that Rogers only arrived at theoretical formulations after long and repeated study and experience.

It would therefore be somewhat unusual for him to 'go public' on something so personal unless he had experienced it many times, and is perhaps indicative of how his early leanings toward becoming a Christian minister remained an influence throughout his life.

Maslow on the other hand was of atheistic persuasion despite having been born into a Jewish family. Lowry (1973) describes the young Maslow as having an intense disaffection for his '*superstitious and religious mother*' and '*the makings of a militant young atheist*' (p. 13). He was six years younger than Rogers and like Rogers was a child of his time, in as much as they were both aware of the limitations of a positivistic scientific, value-free approach to the human condition. Both paid the price for being forerunners in the field of moving the boundaries, by having themselves and their studies continually derided by the establishment as being non-scientific. It is now hard to credit that both of these important thinkers questioned whether or not they were 'real' psychologists as they did not fit the accepted models of practice.

Maslow's early work refers to self-actualisation as one of the five basic needs, namely; physiological; safety; love; esteem; and self-actualisation (Maslow, 1943). He proposed that these needs were arranged in a hierarchy of pre-potency, with the most pre-potent monopolising consciousness until satisfied, allowing the next 'need' to emerge. Self-actualisation was at the peak of his hierarchy of human needs and was to be a major part of his future studies. Maslow's honesty as he describes how his life's studies into self-actualisation began is reminiscent of today's qualitative researchers. He says:

'My investigations on self-actualisation were not planned to be research and did not start out as research. They started out as the effort of a young intellectual to try to understand two of his teachers whom he loved, adored, admired and who were very very wonderful. It was a kind of high I.Q. devotion. I could not be content simply to adore, but sought to understand why these people were so different from the run-of-the-mill people in the world.' (Maslow, 1971, p. 40)

Maslow worked from hunches, '*my smell tells me*', (p. 42) and was confident enough to admit this. He had a strong sense of humour '*What does one do when he self-actualises? Does he grit his teeth and squeeze?*' (p. 43), which he was not afraid to point at himself.

He was acutely aware of how difficult a concept self-actualisation was and that this made choosing self-actualised people for his studies even harder. His struggles to define self-actualisation in an understandable way were always clear in his writing, and some of his early notebooks simply mention GHB's (Good Human Beings, Maslow, 1945, in Lowry, 1973).

In fact his early studies relied much on first impressions; he simply picked out students he like the look of, checked their ratings in class, interviewed them for an hour, asked them to write him a memo of their recollection of the interview, and then administered a Rorschach test. This last strategy, whilst appearing the most 'scientific' of all, was in fact not much help to the young Maslow. In his notes he says:

'What's a good Rorschach (test result) anyway? Must study Rorschach (Test) in future. Don't know enough about it.' (Maslow, 1945, in Lowry, 1983, p. 81)

Maslow's bias toward the selection of candidates is also clearly expressed when he realised that he was selecting more females than males, and that they were all very pretty. Like Rogers, Maslow too confronted the issue of evil as inherent in human nature, and like Rogers, concluded that most of it '*was a product - of frustration, crippling, misery, etc.*' (Maslow, 1945, p. 90). Throughout 1946 his records describe his struggles with his attempts to read Rorschach test results with any accuracy, and his continued search to define the characteristics of self-actualised or Good Human Beings, as high achievement in school ratings seemed to bear no relationship to self-actualisation. Toward the end of 1949 he records that he is relying on instinct for choosing his subjects, and only using the Rorschach test to dismiss doubtful candidates.

For research students entering the qualitative arena, this notebook is a gem. For anyone wishing to understand what goes on behind the scenes of major research it is an honest, informative, and in my opinion more important document, than the finished research papers, simply because it highlights the difficulties for a conscientious researcher when working with human subjects in an age where only quantitative methodologies were accepted within psychology. However by the sixties Maslow was defining self-actualisation as:

"A state of being in which we are more truly ourselves, more perfectly actualise our potential, are closer to the core of our Being, and are more fully human.' (Maslow, 1968, p. 97)

He proposed that such experiences, which he called 'peak-experiences', were our psychologically healthiest moments, and although we may not live in a permanent state of self-actualisation, the self-actualising person is one who seems to enjoy such episodes more frequently and perfectly than the average person. Lowry (1973), notes that Maslow was strongly attracted to religion despite despising something about it (p. 69). He maintains that the parts of religion which Maslow thought were worth salvaging were the Jewish passion for ethics and utopianism, the passion for gnostic revelation, and the concept of salvation. He argues:

'Surely it requires no great leap of the imagination to see the parallel between Maslow's 'self-actualisation' and the concept of salvation as it appears in, say Christianity. Whatever else they may be, self-actualising persons are those who have been saved - if not by the grace of God, then at least by their own efforts and the grace of nature - from the damnation of being mere average human beings....The parallel between the self-actualising person and the Chassidic vision of the Yzaddick - the righteous perfected man - is also not difficult to see.' (Lowry, 1973, p. 70)

Certainly Maslow maintained a belief in the transcendent in life (Maslow, 1971) and indeed the self-actualising moment is one of pure transcendence. He says:

'Transcendence refers to the very highest and most inclusive of holistic levels of human consciousness, behaving and relating, as ends rather than means to oneself, to significant others, to human beings in general, to other species, to nature, and to the cosmos.' (Maslow, 1971, p. 269)

Self-actualisation, or as Rogers' termed it '*fully-functioning*', is a matter of degree, and not an all or nothing phenomenon. In later years Maslow (1973) simply defined self-actualising persons to be those who '*seem to be fulfilling themselves and to be doing the best that they are capable of doing*'. This definition has been adopted for the purposes of this study with the addition of the proviso '*at that moment in time, toward a vision of the future*'. Although the existential concepts of living in the present and being ultimately alone are helpful to the concepts of responsibility and identity, Maslow (1986, p. 15) maintains that the concept of an active future time, recognised in the present, is essential to self-actualisation, and that a lack of such would render self-actualisation meaningless.

It is interesting to note that Maslow seemed to find no apparent connection of I.Q. to those he considered to be self-actualising individuals. It is now timely to acknowledge another, and perhaps the most important influence in this new study, that of E. Paul Torrance whose career and personal lived philosophy on encouraging creative potential at all ages, has spanned more than half a century. By 1960 Torrance had already noted that the traditional ways of learning should be changed to include creative thinking, as he maintained that the creative child was discriminated against. He stated:

'I believe we also need to revise our traditional concepts of under and over-achievement, that highly creative children learn in quite different ways from children with high I.Q.'s but not high creativity, and that there are social pressures that interfere with the development of these abilities.' (Torrance, 1960, in Frasier, 1985, p. 26)

Torrance's studies (1961) found that children with low intelligence quotients scored just as highly for creative ability as those of high I.Q., with many children of low I.Q. exceeding those of high I.Q. Torrance's findings, like those of Maslow and Rogers, drew the ire of fellow psychologists.

However an article in a national magazine (Brossard and Vachon, 1961) hailing Torrance's work and criticising intelligence tests as measuring only a few abilities that favour convergent thinking and memory skill, created a paradigm shift (Millar, 1995) in the profession. This article aroused so much interest that the Bureau of Educational Research received over 2,000 letters in the following 18 months. Torrance continued to expound his views and the urgency of the case he argued. He states:

'I would like to press the point that whenever we fail to develop human potentialities, especially the exceptionally high ones, we are flirting with serious consequences.' (Torrance, 1963)

Many of the 2,000 letters sent to the Bureau were requesting permission to use his creativity tests, which are now the most widely used tests in the United States, and have been translated into more than 30 different languages, and been published in China, France and Italy (Millar, 1995, p. 74).

Maslow (1971) wrote that he was impressed by a table in one of Torrance's (1962) books which listed thirty or more characteristics which correlate with creativeness, and describes that when one of Maslow's students (Craig, 1966), compared Torrance's list with the one Maslow used to describe self-actualised persons, the results were interesting.

'The overlap was almost perfect. ...There was no single characteristic which went in the other, opposite direction, which makes, let's say arbitrarily, nearly forty characteristics or perhaps thirty-seven or thirty-eight which were the same as psychological health - which added up to a syndrome of psychological health or self-actualisation.' (Maslow, 1971, p. 70)

Actualisation of self therefore, is proposed to depend not on I.Q., but on the ability of individuals to engage in creative thinking and creative action. Rollo May, one of Rogers' contemporaries, is unequivocal in his belief that:

'The creative process must be explored, not as the product of sickness, but as representing the highest degree of emotional health, as the expression of normal people actualising themselves.' (May, 1975, p. 33)

He like Rogers, is also cognisant of the element of risk or courage necessary for meaningful intimacy, and notes that:

'Like a chemical mixture, if one of us is changed, both of us will be. Will we grow in self-actualisation, or will it destroy us?' (May, 1975, p.8)

Nevertheless he proposes that humans must have the courage to create, and highlights the paradox characteristic of courage, which is that it requires our full commitment along with the awareness that we may be wrong.

In his view, any absolute conviction would be at best dangerous and fanatic, blocking new truths to be learned.

Gerard Egan, Jesuit priest and Professor of Psychology and Organisational Studies at Loyola University, Chicago, has spent his life in the continuous research and practice of interpersonal psychology and has developed a skills based model of helping which builds on Rogers' client centredness and core conditions, and which is unique in its approach. Like Rogers, he is aware of the timeliness involved in client/counsellor relationships where the client realises that there is a problem and wants to do something to improve the situation. He maintains that one of the duties of the counsellor is to help the client move on, giving a sense of direction, without being directive.

This three stage model of counselling is known as 'The Skilled Helper', and despite Egan's diffidence about attaching his name to it, this is increasingly becoming known as Egan's model of change. His empirical research is a continual learning cycle, with each new insight becoming integrated within the model, and which has led to Egan adopting the Japanese attitude of continuous incremental improvement. Purists of the Rogerian stance have queried Egan's model as a mechanistic device. Egan denounces any mechanistic use as '*rigid*' (Egan, 1990, p. 54), and personal experience of both the man and the model leads me to conclude that what shines through is the humanity in the person, and the flexibility of the model, which is more challenging than the approach used by Rogers, and demands that the counsellor exercise more than intellect and creative facilitating skills; it demands a certain wisdom.

Egan's three stage model of change addresses in essence, the present scenario, the preferred scenario, and strategies for reaching the preferred state. He proposes that individuals can neither manage problems, nor develop opportunities, until they identify and understand those issues.

In Stage One of the model counsellors ask themselves two basic questions, 'What's going on here?', and 'What's really going on here?'. In other words they ask for clarification of individuals' perceived problems, and then by skilled questioning and intuition, enable individuals to perceive their situation from a new perspective, and help them to identify areas which are open to change.

Stage Two of his helping process is unique to his approach and deals specifically with the imaginal, addressing future possibilities in an 'anything goes' creative process. It is in essence, a more intellectual and rigorous way of working than Rogers' gentle style, but does not appear to be less successful, and is always in the service of the client.

The questions in this stage tend to excite, give permission to dream, and point in the direction of a possible future. 'How would it be if it were better? What would this problem situation look like if it were being managed? What would you be doing that you aren't doing now?'

Stage Three helps individuals to develop action strategies for determining how to reach their stated goals. Like the other two stages, counsellors focus on action, and in recognising that inertia and apathy are part of the human condition, and that plans are subject to entropy, work with individuals in helping them to understand that it is essential for them to act to achieve their aims. This stage also helps identify the support structures which individuals will require in order to keep going forward toward their goal.

The questions in Stage Three of the model are focussed on action, as Egan recognises that people tend to be put off a plan if they meet initial obstacles, and that 'forewarned is forearmed'. Therefore such examples as 'When will you do this? What will you do if that person isn't available at that time?', help individuals to meet some obstacles, and seek alternative solutions, within a supportive environment.

The unique Stage Two process of allowing the creative, dreaming side of the personality to emerge appears to unlock much unused potential, and creates a climate which enables psychological health to be visualised and moved toward. Egan himself appears to be well balanced in terms of academic scholarship and creativity, and acknowledges the adherence to principles and values inherent in psychologically healthy individuals, and the importance of addressing and integrating the 'shadow side' of our personae. His emphasis that self-knowledge is integral to relationships with others, owes as much to his theology as to his psychology:

'Experience can either be a teacher or a despot. The ability to befriend the shadow side of yourself, your clients, and the world without becoming its victim is not the fruit of raw experience. Experience needs to be wrestled with, reflected on, and learned from. Then it becomes your teacher and your friend.

Wrestling with yourself, your colleagues, your intimates, your demons, and your God will provide you both pain and comfort and will go far in helping the skilled helper in you become the wise helper.' (Egan, 1990, p. 409)

'*Helping*', he maintains, '*is based on scientific principles, but it remains an art*' (Egan, 1990, p. 305). Egan recognises the element of risk involved when allowing intuition into decision making, but believes it to be inescapable and capable of producing '*amazing creativity or disaster*' (Egan, 1993, p. 69).

Today his model is used extensively in counselling settings which have change as their aim, and is especially powerful in crisis counselling. It is the model used by 'Relate' throughout Britain, and has been adapted for use in organisational change and innovation (Egan 1985, 1988a, 1988b, 1990, 1993). This practical model of change, authenticity in interpersonal relating, and application of research to practice, is an integral part of my life, is a continual source of creativity, and has informed much of the practical programmes detailed in Appendix I.

These five psychologists and teachers have all displayed the courage of their convictions and all have risked being wrong. The implications of their work for my study are important, and despite my scepticism about the authenticity of the counselling alliance (Bennetts, 1994), their insights have influenced the way I think and work.

### **Background and Aim of the Original Study**

This section describes the method, findings and conclusions of research into traditional mentor relationships which was undertaken as part of an M.Ed. degree at the University of Sheffield in 1994. It does not include a justification of the method used, but as this early empirical research forms the basis for the Ph.D. study, it is necessary that a broad overview is presented to enable an understanding of how traditional mentor relationships appear to function in the lives of those involved in the training and development of others.

Much of the following is a compilation of papers that have been given on various aspects of the research at National, European and International Conferences in 1995, and 1996, and integrates findings with recommendations for practice (Bennetts, 1995a, 1996b 1996c). My area of interest in the traditional mentor relationship at that time was focussed on the relationship itself, and was concerned primarily with inquiring how such relationships came into existence, how they developed, and how they were maintained. It considered the style and qualities of the mentor, including the content of the learning and change which took place.

It also examined how the individuals involved conducted the relationship with reference to communication; addressed whether the values and philosophies of the mentor were reflected in the practice of the professional life of the adult educator in the present day; and queried the extent to which the mentor enabled the learner to achieve full human potential, as Maslow had equated self-actualisation with psychological health. To this end, the process of the mentor relationship was compared with the process of the counselling relationship.



If the traditional mentor relationship was effective, then it was important to understand as fully as possible how it functioned, as such understanding might identify scope for improvements in training for those who worked in the field of human development. The broad aim of the research was therefore to investigate the relationship between the mentor and the learner, with a view to identifying behaviours and attributes which are desirable in the mentor, and which might be replicable and applicable to trainers.

My intention was to examine the facets of successful mentor/learner relationships in order to isolate those factors which contribute to their success. I had hoped to provide useful data for those interested in the development of human potential, and who wished to implement formal mentor programmes into their organisations. If such relationships were occurring naturally, then I reasoned there might be a reproducible pattern in what were usually described as relationships without structure.

Levinson (1978) has written of this naturally developing alliance as one which facilitates individuation and supports 'the Dream' of what an individual may become. Previous literature also showed a conspicuous absence of information on the psychology of the mentor relationship in terms of self-actualisation, and even though Rawles (1981) had suggested a link, the literature lacked the necessary empirical evidence which might support or refute this hypothesis.

The method used was that of semi-structured audio taped interviews which were conducted in a person centred style. The cohort consisted of 24 adults (12 males and 12 females), whose professional remit to a greater or lesser extent, included the training of others. The participants were aged between 31 and 57 years old, and were drawn from a variety of organisations and institutes with differing cultures within Cornwall.

Whilst acknowledging that everyone is an individual with a unique history to relate, there were nonetheless certain areas of inquiry which needed to be addressed within the interviews. These were:

- \*the learning experiences of the individual
- \*the identification of the mentors
- \*the qualities of the mentors
- \*the style of the mentors
- \*the affective issues within the relationship
- \*the outcomes of the relationship
- \*the content of the learning messages
- \*the transmission of such messages
- \*the interviewees' approach with their own learners today

All of those interviewed were asked to reflect on what personal relationship had been most instrumental in helping them to achieve their full potential as individuals. They were then asked to describe these relationships in their entirety, and at a later stage in the interview were asked if they had ever acted in this role (as mentor) for anyone themselves. The relationship was therefore described twice by the same person, once from a learner's viewpoint, and once from a mentor's viewpoint.

The interviews produced a richness of information which was of both a personal and in many cases, a profound nature. Because of this the names and nature of participating organisations were deleted from the final manuscript, as Cornwall has a limited population and the anonymity of participants within specific professions could not otherwise be guaranteed.

The taped interviews were transcribed and a copy of the tape or the transcription was available to those interviewed for alteration, clarification or verification of issues, prior to analysis of the findings. It was interesting therefore that a study which involved twenty-four people, all of whom described at least one relationship, should produce a picture of a relationship with a defined structure, and pattern of initiation, development, and maintenance. The relationships which were described by the learners, pointed towards a process which was learner centred, and which therefore progressed at the rate dictated by the needs of the developing learner. Having said that, the initiation of the relationship fell into three categories and these were:

- \*mentor initiated (at any age)
- \*learner initiated (in teenage and later years)
- \*jointly initiated (usually in teenage years)

The mentor initiated relationships were identified as happening at any age and were characterised by the mentors displaying an accurate insight into the learners' behaviour and world, by direct experience from their own life. In effect, the mentors were seeing themselves in the learners, but at an earlier age in their own personal development.

This 'mirror' effect became a recurrent theme when those interviewed described their own rationale for choosing learners. Learner initiated relationships were identified initially in mid-teens and continued throughout the age range interviewed. They began as a result of the learner asking for help in some way, either by direct request, or by behaving in ways which drew attention to themselves. Sometimes this behaviour was anti-social and was interpreted by the learners themselves as a plea for acknowledgement.

Those relationships which were jointly initiated appeared to come about as a result of the two parties already being in contact, but realising that they had mutual interests, and seeing quite a different person from the one they thought they knew. These alliances began at any age and were initiated by personal disclosures on the part of the learner or mentor, which were then reciprocated. This aspect of disclosure was instrumental in moving the relationship, however initiated, into the developmental stage of the mentor alliance.

It has been theorised that it is the willingness to take risks with intimacy which is a major factor in assessing and forecasting protégé involvement in mentor relationships (Kalbfleisch and Davies, 1993). This element of risk-taking is linked directly to self-esteem, and all interviewees described how their self-esteem had been bolstered and nurtured when they were recognised as individuals of worth by their mentors. They also described their mentors as being persons who were comfortable with risk-taking, and from the behaviour patterns described it would appear that the mentors were governed by strong personal values and ethics which enabled them to take risks in the interests of the relationship.

No matter how the relationships were initiated, the conditions under which they flourished were the same as those in a successful counselling relationship, with the mentor displaying what have come to be known as *'the necessary and sufficient core conditions for learning'* (Rogers, 1957b, p. 96). Whilst it is conceivable that there could be times when a mentor relationship functioned without these core conditions being present, like Bozarth (1993) I am inclined to conclude that they are *'not necessarily necessary, but always sufficient'*. These conditions, combined with the time to be together in a way which was not inhibited or governed by external protocols, led to developmental and emotional growth for both parties.

The alliance had implications for the learner's future work, values, relationships, self-worth, and growth towards self-actualisation. From the mentor's point of view it was seen as the ultimate aim of his or her learning cycle, and provided the mentor with a *raison d'être*, a sense of achievement, and the feeling of 'handing on a torch.'

A high level of social interaction within the alliance was reported, and it became clear that much learning had taken place during outings such as theatre and gallery visits, and that this was not simply about factual learning, but provided the back-drop for displaying social behaviours, attitudes and philosophies. This did not ever appear to be contrived, and it was only on reflection that the learners were aware of how their mentors had enabled them to 'learn the ropes' of life on a very broad scale. These values and attitudes were now active in the lives of those interviewed, and it would be understandable to conclude that such relationships would only produce out-moded ideas.

However Buber (1958) contends that such learning produces values which are regenerated and renewed in the act of transmission. It should be noted here that the values which were passed on were done so by example or by reasoned debate, and involved no proselytising.

One theme which emerged quite early on in the interviews was the issue of power and trust. Although the mentor had significantly more knowledge and perceived power within the alliance, this was never abused. Equality of regard and respect were key to the developing bond, and were stated to be of prime importance in sustaining both continued learning, and the desire for the company of the other. The mutual regard shown by each party was instrumental in developing a mutually responsive collaborative relationship which fostered productive learning for both individuals, and increased self-esteem for the learner.

The mentor therefore was seen to be a powerful agent of change, and the traditional mentor relationship appeared to be a vehicle for transmitting personal codes and values to the learner. The mentor gained a sense of purpose and fulfilment, whilst the learner felt motivated and valued. Such findings have implications for those setting up formal mentor initiatives in that organisations need to ensure that there is no dissonance between the espoused values of the organisation and the personal values of those whom they encourage to become mentors, as it appears that it is personal values which will take precedence.

With regard to the developing bond, it was noted that although the behaviours, qualities and skills of both parties were easily identified, there were also non-verbal messages sent and received by either party which were less easily identifiable. These messages were often alluded to as feelings of affinity, attraction and specialness, combined with an experience which was described as magical or mystical. The relationship as well as the individuals involved, had a quality which appeared to be permeated by a gentle happiness and joy, and which was recognised by those individuals as extraordinary.

King (1979) proposes that gaze can transmit messages of high expectancy of behaviour, and can be self-fulfilling. He suggests that the ability to transmit and decode eye contact can serve as a potent catalyst for the enrichment of this effect. Burke (1984) supports this and states that self-disclosure by non-verbal expression will produce reciprocal self-disclosure by the other.

During the interview process, eye contact in the mentor relationship was deemed to be significant by many of the cohort, and it seems reasonable to suppose that such a close relationship might produce its own language and coding process without either individual consciously being aware of the fact.

Because these alliances were formed naturally, they had the benefit of developing at a pace which suited those involved. Although some relationships were curtailed by death, and one or two did not survive having distance introduced, the majority of pairs were still involved with each other. These relationships were well into the maintenance stage and some had lasted for over thirty years. This finding contradicts Levinson (1978) who found that friendship appeared to be absent in the lives of the men he studied, and that the mentor relationship, described as a '*significant love relationship*' (p.334) often ends acrimoniously. However there appeared to be no difference in the experience of either males or females involved in my study except for the slight hesitation of the part of one or two men when describing their emotional involvement with their mentor.

Obviously those involved in formal mentor programmes may be working to time limits for good organisational reasons, but findings from this study showed that whilst the initiation and development stages of the relationship might move quickly, much more learning took place in the maintenance state of the alliance, which was usually two or three years down the line.

Two issues for adjusting to change surfaced from the interviews; one was distance and the other was death. It appeared that if the relationship had progressed to the maintenance stage at the time of one party moving away, then the alliance could be kept vital by letters, telephone calls and visits. Those who had experienced the death of a mentor were visibly moved when describing that event, and many of those interviewed were in tears at this point. It was apparent that those who had this experience still felt the pain and loss very keenly, and that they still felt somehow 'connected' to that person by more than just memories. This aspect of the spiritual quality of the relationship proved to be one of the most interesting and puzzling aspects of the alliance, and one which has been followed up in the present study because of the reaction generated by this issue when presenting papers both in the United Kingdom and North America.

Without exception those in the study described the over-riding emotion within the relationship as one which ranged from deep affection, warmth and intimacy, to one of love. This was regardless of the gender of either mentor or learner, and was indicative of the depth of the affective side of the alliance. For some the word 'love' was used in an holistic way; for some it was used as part of their spiritual philosophy; but for others it was a mixture of both, plus a strong emotional attraction which led to being 'in love'. Some individuals handled that aspect of the relationship by remaining silent and never mentioning it to the other, whilst some made it explicit, and the relationship became sexual.

I should state that however it was handled, it was managed with integrity, and was based neither on power nor abuse of position. These relationships were consensual loving alliances which were of profound importance to both individuals. Any difficulty reported was about the management of this emotional aspect when attempting to integrate it into existing relationships. Torrance (1984) states that:

'Those who organise and foster mentor relationships should also recognise that the mentor relationship may in time become one of friendship, teacher, competitor, lover, or father figure. If the relationship is a deep and caring one (and this seems to be the major characteristic of a genuine mentor relationship), any of these relationships may evolve. However because of the caring nature, the outcomes are not likely to be harmful. However this may be a necessary risk.' (Torrance, 1984, p. 55)

It would be too simplistic to think that these were ordinary romances as they were described in the same way for both opposite and same-sex partners, regardless of their previously chosen sexuality. But if love were a key factor in keeping the relationships alive, was it the sole factor, and if so then the question 'do all love relationships produce personal growth?', had to be asked. The two other factors which appeared to be present in traditional mentoring are the deep mutual feeling of being understood, and the stated desire to learn specific skills from the other. Neither of these is always present in other love relationships.

Those implementing formal mentor programmes in organisations should help managers to be aware of the difference between formal and traditional mentoring. Managers need to recognise the potential of the traditional role, and understand that although the interpersonal dynamics of the relationship might lead to others becoming concerned about sexual harassment, a key finding showed the relationship *in this study*, to be non-abusive. When sexual relationships develop in formal mentor roles however, difficulties may remain for the learner in differentiating their mentor's personal power from their professional power. It would seem sensible therefore, to ensure that the formal mentor does not have line management responsibility for the learner, and is not able to withhold or bestow corporate favours.

Throughout the study it was made explicit by those interviewed that they were given equality of regard by their mentors, and that power games were never on the agenda of either party. This finding was in direct contrast to the findings of those researching in organisational settings (Halatin 1982, Auster 1984, Myers & Humphreys 1985) and indicates that power issues might only be a function of formalised instrumental relationships rather than those concerned with developing individuals for their own sake alone. Parkes (1991) offers the opinion that dependency is created in a relationship when the partner with less power contributes role reassurance and identity to a person who has greater power.

It would seem likely then, that dependence is created in organisational settings where the 'weaker' learner is dependent on the 'strong' mentor for organisational rewards. Parkes implies that organisational mentors are in turn dependent on their learners to provide them with a sense of identity. In the study described, the mentors were very sure of their own identity and did not require any ego bolstering by the learners, but were very much 'their own people'. The findings did show however that both mentors and learners appeared to demonstrate considerable attachment to each other irrespective of dependence. Bowlby (1960), drew a clear distinction between dependence and attachment, noting that attachment is a function in its own right, and stating that the urge to be close to people should be respected, valued, and nurtured as a strength, not seen as a weakness. Ainsworth (1991) argues that there is no evidence to show that men differ from women in becoming attached to the one who provides care. She maintains:

'There is however, one criterion of attachment that is not necessarily present in other affectional bonds. ...This is a seeking to obtain an experience of security and comfort in the relationship with the partner. If and when such security and comfort is available, the individual is able to move off from the secure base provided by the partner, with confidence to engage in other activities.' (Ainsworth, 1991. p. 38)

That part of the mentor's role is to give learners the confidence to engage in other activities had been made explicit by the learners. It would seem reasonable then, to suggest that traditional mentor/learner relationships are primarily ones of attachment and not dependence.

It has been suggested that during the mid-life transition, the need to pass on a legacy to future generations becomes of increasing concern to the individual (Levinson, 1978), and that after the age of fifty, individuals are happy to '*pass on the torch*' to others (Vaillant, 1977). Whilst many of those interviewed for this Master's study had younger mentors when they were children, all of their mentors in adulthood were over forty years old, with most over the age of fifty. It would seem therefore that becoming a traditional mentor might be seen as a rite of passage for many individuals.

Condensed lists of the behaviours, qualities and skills of both mentors and learners at each stage of the relationship can be seen in Appendix II, together with the list of mentor and learner characteristics, which give an insight into the rationale behind the behaviours.

With the exception of nurturing and counselling skills, none of the other skills mentioned in these lists are anything more than could be expected from any good teacher, and therefore it would seem reasonable to suppose that it should be possible to train individuals to become equally effective in terms of skills, when acting in mentor roles.

However to a great extent it might be that it is necessary to experience the traditional process at first hand, in order to have the understanding of why it not only works, but appears to be a self-perpetuating process. All bar the two youngest people interviewed, aged 31 and 34, had gone on to become mentors themselves. This finding has significance for organisations who should perhaps consider the value of the mature worker as a potential mentor when implementing formal initiatives, as it is important that mature workers are not discarded by senior management at what could be the most valuable period in their lives for transmitting their accumulated wisdom to others. Mentoring initiatives could also perhaps be incorporated into pre-retirement courses as being of importance to the organisation in question, and the psychological well-being of the one retiring.

It has been recognised that as well as a need to be loved and regarded positively by others, there is also a basic need to give love to others (Maslow, 1968). Brazier (1993) has suggested that a fully-functioning (or self-actualised) person is one who functions from a perspective of primary altruism, and queries whether it is self-regard or regard for others which is therapeutic and growth promoting. This is an interesting proposition and would bear out the symbiotic nature of the traditional relationship. Although all of those who took part in the study evidenced the importance of the mentor in their journey toward what they might become, they also made it clear that in becoming mentors themselves they felt even more complete. This leads me to suggest that the traditional mentor relationship plays a part in achieving self-actualisation, for not only the learner, but also the mentor, who has with the aid of the learner, come full circle.

There are obvious differences between a formal counselling relationship and a traditional mentor alliance. The initial difference is that clients who attend therapeutic counselling sessions are usually there because of unresolved concerns. It is a helping relationship, and clients might be nervous and defensive. However as it takes courage to seek such help, they might also be well-motivated or simply desperate. What they do not realise at this stage is their own potential, and in that respect they are similar to the learners. The sessions are time specific, and not usually more than an hour a week. Within such unlikely settings however, a relationship will grow which will enable the client to develop self-worth and insight, and which can be a powerful catalyst for change. The client will eventually internalise the power previously perceived to be in the counsellor's domain, and will leave the counselling setting with more confidence and skills for living as a more fully-functioning person.

Such a simplistic approach is of course rarely come by, but in an ideal relationship counsellors will, by virtue of their skills, their training, and their unique personality, have engaged in an alliance which will touch both parties deeply.



These relationships have at their centre those conditions discussed earlier, which Rogers identified as being 'core', and which he described as being necessary and sufficient for growth.

Shlien (1984) felt that in therapeutic relationships, it was the love and understanding which differentiated them from the love in ordinary relationships, where understanding might not be present. He proposed that in itself, love was not enough to produce change, but that when love was present, it was either the environment for, or the consequence of, understanding. It is this element of deep mutual understanding which, together with these core conditions, is present in the mentor relationship, and which together with love, was one of the three factors which helped to move the relationship into the area of personal development. The following excerpts from three of the transcripts describe this phenomenon.

'And from then on I knew that I would be able to write, and secondly I knew she would understand my writing...I felt understood and also, to use a modern word, empowered I think, and approved of. '

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'If you were with him on your own, he had the most extraordinary powers of understanding and listening; and you really felt you were with somebody who was interested in you and listened to what you were saying.'

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'There's an immense amount of human depth of feeling and contact that comes out of that, it's probably love - and it's inevitable that a relationship involves things like love and other emotional feelings. It's some dimension of love, and human love, and friendship, but in a different context; in the context of growth and development rather than in a relationship for the sake of a relationship.'

One of the aims of counselling is to place a more independent person back into the community. It is important that individuals see themselves as equal to the therapist well before therapy comes to an end. There is no place within counselling for the dinner invitations and theatre trips which foster the development of social skills within a wider community. However Burton (1977) suggests that when the work is finished there is a place for the mentor role to take precedence over the therapeutic role. He suggests that:

'Recognition of the mentoring factor as part of the total therapeutic relationship assists the therapist in comprehending all of the dynamic forces at work in the healing transformation and permits him to change his stance...We believe that most analytic therapists already make such adjustments intuitively but have not known how to define them conceptually.'

Following our evidence and that of Levinson, we may speculate that normal development - that is, fulfilment and individuation - cannot take place without a mentoring relationship of some kind, even if the patient had an adequate and satisfactory childhood.' (Burton, 1977, p. 122)

There is no evidence to show that within this country at least, therapists have implemented this suggestion, and as they are bound by certain codes of practice, the transition from counsellor to mentor would be fraught with difficulties. It is therefore unlikely that the therapists who will have worked hard to enable clients to perceive their potential, will ever experience the realisation of that potential within a mentor relationship. It appears that the very conditions which allow for growth in mentor relationships, are those conditions which would create boundary difficulties for counsellors.

It seems to be that it is at certain times of our lives that we are more open to change, and it is then that we actively seek those relationships which might assist in that change, such as that of mentor or counsellor. There are then similarities in the learner and the client where timing plays a crucial role in the willingness to accept the possibility and consequences of change. However it would be unfair to conclude that the mentor is 'better' than that of the counsellor, or that the counselling relationship is not as important. The two relationships are different, with one being open-ended, and one having considerable restrictions. However the facilitation which takes place in both appears to be the same, and provides the core conditions for learning. It would therefore, seem reasonable to suppose that both mentors and counsellors might share core abilities and qualities which are perhaps transferable.

Mentor relationships of the traditional type appeared in this study to function at a deeply meaningful level for both parties. They are long-lasting attachment relationships which have great importance and significance in the lives of the mentor and the learner, appear to act as a vehicle for the transmission of values and philosophies, and have an indefinable element of 'specialness'. The relationships have no written or verbal protocols, but are structured in that they appear to follow consistent patterns and exhibit consistent behaviours which must be assumed to be natural for these phenomena. Whilst protocols might legitimise and explain the dynamics of the relationship in the eyes of peers and colleagues, the introduction of such protocols would be counter-productive to these alliances and would destroy them.

The research findings showed that which is essential to the traditional mentor relationship appears to be its informality. Only six conventional mentor qualities could be identified within the list of mentor qualities, and these were that the mentor should be a skilled practitioner; be practical; be methodical; be a good manager; and have good communications skills and empathy.

Only the last two of these relate directly to interactions with others and can be taught on communication skills courses. There is therefore, little that the trainer can do to reproduce this alliance complete with its indefinable quality of 'specialness', as that which occurs naturally cannot be expected to flourish under artificial constraints. However I maintain that if the core conditions are achieved, and the relationship is allowed to develop naturally over a prolonged period of time, then the possibility of creating a traditional mentor relationship becomes increased.

The research described here was based upon a small number of individuals and is undeniably limited. However as well as raising the issue of transferability of findings, it also raised questions regarding the meaning and value of the relationship to both parties; the extent to which the relationships promote well-being; how such deep relationships become integrated into the lives of learners; and to what extent is the spiritual quality of the relationship important?

During the period of research it became apparent that the affective side of the relationship for those who had kept the alliance on a non-sexual basis, was being spoken about for the first time, and to an outsider. This is perhaps indicative of the depth of feeling each has for the other, and the reluctance to become vulnerable, or to lose the relationship by discussing this aspect. What was remarkable was how such relationships and emotions were able to be managed both in the initial phases of the alliance, and on a more long-term basis. Discussions with my supervisor during this period, led me to contact six members of the cohort, to ask why they had never discussed their feelings with their mentors or learners. This produced information which was fascinating but beyond the scope of the Master's research, as it led away from the area of training and development, and out toward human development.

It is recognised that there are many forms of interpersonal relationships in the life of the individual, and those within a mentor relationship could be forgiven for trying quite understandably to understand that relationship in terms of an existing relationship pattern, such as that of parent/child, or sexual partnership. However the difficulties that can be caused for the pair if they find that the mentor relationship does not fit into any culturally acceptable or pre-existing pattern should not be underestimated.

The important aspect of the spiritual aspect surfaced once more with the six individuals I spoke with. This, together with the issues of love and sexual attraction, was also being voiced by the participants for the first time, and was deserving of attention and sensitivity.

During the interviews and afterwards, participants maintained that the interview process and subsequent discussions had been helpful in validating both their relationships and their experiences. In particular they no longer felt alone, and now recognised that others too had shared such meaningful alliances. What was also interesting was that many people who did not take part in the study have since identified with the relationship and have contacted me to discuss such identification. This feedback lent weight to my decision to continue this line of research for a doctoral study.

In June 1995 'People Management', the journal of the Institute of Personnel and Development, published a personal account of one man's relationship with his mentor (Blunt, 1995). Blunt is the Programme Director of Arts Training at De Montfort University. This article was of interest because it was an unsolicited account of a mentor relationship of the traditional variety, which appeared to highlight the issues which my research had uncovered. A telephone call to Blunt confirmed both the importance of the spiritual aspect of the relationship for him, and his emotional state after the sudden death of his mentor. In deciding to write a follow-up article for this same journal (Bennetts 1995b) I contacted the commissioning editor who expressed great interest in the research and asked me to send the article for publication within a fortnight. Once written, this article was scrutinised by the same editor who contacted me to say that she was unhappy with the word 'spiritual' and queried whether it was the same as 'table-turning'. It was made clear to me after some communication, that if I did not remove the word then it would be removed by others.

Sensing that such censorship could easily change the meaning of the whole article I replaced it somewhat reluctantly with the word 'philosophical'. This was a difficult decision and did not sit easily with my findings, but I rationalised it as probably the only way in which the article would be published, and subsequently open up for debate the whole arena of traditional relationships. Although I had great reservations about compromising the work in any way, my instinct to change the wording in the service of publication proved to be wise, as I received a number of telephone calls from trainers and personnel officers thanking me for raising the affective issues of the relationship within the article.

Such reaction confirmed my resolution to discover more about this relatively unknown side of the mentor relationship and reinforced my decision that the new research should examine the relationships of those who work in the creative arts e.g. sculptors, painters, writers. These are individuals whose creative expression is reliant on the emotional aspects of their lives, and for whom the acknowledgement and translation of such feelings is not only desirable, but absolutely necessary.

I reasoned therefore that a study concentrating on this group might enable some light to be shed on whether mentor relationships are helpful to the creative process, and to the well-being of those whose work can be dependent on mood swings, or whether such close relationships are a distraction to those for whom solitude is a necessary pre-requisite of creativity. A decision was taken to continue the research with those individuals within society for whom emotional expression is the norm, rather than a rare occurrence.

The whole concept of reflective practice in continuing education is one which allows for time to pass before making an assessment of what the real value of the learning was and how that can now be applied to the setting in which the individual now lives and works (Schon, 1987). However much of today's continuous professional development seems to involve trying to place a value on immediate experience, and is often working on impressions which are still relatively recent.

Eliot (1963) describes the difference:

'It seems as one grows older,  
That the past has another pattern, and ceases to be a mere sequence -  
Or even development: the latter a partial fallacy  
Encouraged by superficial notions of evolution,  
Which becomes in the popular mind, a means of disowning the past.  
The moments of happiness - not the sense of well-being,  
Fruition, fulfilment security or affection,  
Or even a very good dinner, but the sudden illumination -  
**We had the experience but missed the meaning,**  
And approach to the meaning restores the experience  
In a different form, beyond any meaning  
We can assign to happiness. I have said before  
That the past experience revived in the meaning  
Is not the experience of one life only  
But of many generations - not forgetting  
Something that is probably quite ineffable.'  
(Eliot, T. S., 1963a, p. 208) (bold type not in original)

In their well meaning anxiety to urge professionals from many disciplines to record every waking detail of their lives on forms and disks, those involved in CPD assessment, with regard to formal mentor schemes, could well be encouraging individuals to '*have the experience but miss the meaning*'. Experience alone does not guarantee learning. In terms of traditional mentoring, the value of the learning which occurred is sometimes only appreciated years after the experience itself. However it is likely to be playing a continual role in the here and now life of the learner, both professionally and personally. How it will be possible to assess the value of the traditional mentor in terms of the current culture of CPD remains an unanswered question. This thesis is an account of how individuals have made meaning from experience by approaching the experience afresh through the process of reflection (see also Appendix I).

It is one interpretation of how the continuing education of the artist is influenced throughout life by the relationship of self and mentors. Daloz (1987) has remarked that the proper aim of education is to promote significant learning, and maintains that significant learning entails development. He says:

'Development means successively asking broader questions of the relationship between oneself and the world. This is as true for first graders as graduate students, for fledgling artists as graying accountants.' (Daloz, 1987, p.236)

This study will attempt to examine the lives and interpersonal relationships of artists with those who have been significant in their development and self-actualisation. It will focus on the creative process and psychological well-being, and inquire into the meaning and value of the significant other in the life of the artist. It will also attempt to show that all learning journeys must of necessity take us from the place where we are, in order to lead us ultimately back to our beginning, but with the benefit of clearer vision and insight into who we are.

## Chapter Three

### A Review of The Literature

'The greatest part of a writer's time is spent in reading, in order to write: a man will turn over half a library to make one book.' Johnson, 1775 'Life of Samuel Johnson', James Boswell, 1791.

'Thanks to art, instead of seeing one world, our own, we see it multiplied and as many original artists as there are, so many worlds are at our disposal.' Proust, 'Remembrance of Things Past: The Past Recaptured', 1927.

'No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation, is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists.' Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', 1919.

#### Results of Searches

Published documentation is usually held to carry more credibility than that work which has not been open to scrutiny by peers and practitioners. Such work however is often biased in favour of a particular disciplinary approach, or fashionable area of interest, in order to be accepted by editorial boards. There has been much interest in mentoring amongst doctoral students in North America, but what is less clear is why those studies which deal with the interpersonal aspects of mentoring, rather than the career functions of mentoring, have not produced more published research articles.

Certainly mentoring in America tends to be geared to formal educational or work-based initiatives, but those taking part in formalised modern mentor programmes frequently recognise later the importance of the interpersonal relationship as key to the success of such initiatives. However the interpersonal aspects of the relationships are perhaps seen as less important than the outcomes of the modern mentor programme to those who instigate such programmes.

It may be that students who study the interpersonal aspects of mentoring, acknowledge the inherent difficulties in persuading editors to accept their work for serious consideration, but apart from such speculation it should be noted that the bulk of published work is based on essays, opinions and syntheses of past research, with very few empirical studies being undertaken. On the other hand whilst the unpublished work has not been open to a wide audience, I would argue that it is nevertheless deeply researched empirical work which presumably has taken place over a number of years, and been seen by academics in a supervisory role.

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This being so I took the decision to include unpublished work as it appeared to be more scholarly and more relevant than much in the published arena, and enabled the review to achieve more balance. Because of the financial cost of obtaining complete copies of theses, I have limited my studies to abstracts only.

In the past it has been particularly difficult for researchers to obtain what could be classed as generic mentor documentation in view of the lack of definition, or competing definitions, of the term 'mentor' (Merriam, 1983, Nash and Treffinger 1986, Bennetts, 1994, Pleiss and Feldhusen, 1995). Where the concept 'mentor' has been defined, it has been defined diversely both in modern and traditional settings as; someone with experience and power in the organisation who promotes and coaches career development (Chao, Walz, Gardner, 1992, Phillips, 1977); as one who gives their blessing on the goals of their protégés (Bova 1981); as one who supports the dreams of the protégé (Levinson, 1976); as one who acts as an exemplar (Levinson, 1978); as one who teaches tacit and technical knowledge (Long & McGinnis 1985); or as one who instigates a change in the pattern of growth (Weiner, 1984).

Fagan and Walter (1982) are clear in pointing out that whilst mentoring cannot be forced or contrived, only experimentation will tell whether formal or traditional methods of mentoring are better for professional educational development. Recent studies at The University of Nottingham (Blackwell, 1996b), showed that staff perceived more benefit from unstructured traditional mentoring, whilst Lyons et al (1990) affirm the importance of including informal methods of learning in any evaluation of effectiveness.

Law's (1987) study concluded that as the role of mentor was quite often informal, then the organisation who valued it should:

'...identify, recognise, acknowledge and legitimise where it exists, and thereby create a climate for its existence, rather than constrain it by formal structures within the organisation.' (Law, 1987, p. 136)

Kram (1983) suggested that there is a clear divide between what she termed 'the career functions' and the 'psychosocial functions' of mentoring. The career functions of mentoring are those which focus on the skills required to do one's job, whereas the psychosocial functions refer to the interpersonal aspects of the relationship which enable the learner to gain self-esteem and a clear ego identity.

Kram also highlighted the issue of temporality within the alliance whatever its function, and proposed a developmental relationship which has '*four predictable, yet not entirely distinct, phases*' (p.614). These are:



<b>Initiation:</b>	the start of the relationship
<b>Cultivation:</b>	a time of maximising mentor functions
<b>Separation:</b>	a time of psychological or organisational change
<b>Redefinition:</b>	a time when the relationship evolves into a new form, or ends.

Missirian (1982) on the other hand describes only three recognisable phases of mentoring which are:

<b>Initiation:</b>	the behaviours of either party and subsequent emotional perceptions of their relationship.
<b>Development:</b>	an emotionally complex stage coupled with a period of growth for both parties.
<b>Termination</b>	a period of transition when functional aspects give way to more personal exchanges, and a peer-like alliance

Her study also produced an interesting set of elements which she found to be characteristic of the relationships under study as they occur within the three phases. Those three elements are **power, identification and emotional involvement**. In phase one the power element is seen in terms of the mentor providing the learner with opportunities for meaningful work. In phase two it is translated into a supportive relationship which enables the learner to develop self-esteem, and in phase three both the mentor and the learner share their combined abilities to enable the learner to realise her/his potential.

Identification with the mentor in phase one is similar to that of children identifying with significant other individuals. This involves the mentor being seen as a powerful god-like figure. In phase two this becomes translated into a time of self-assertion for the learner, who in numerous incidents, spars with the mentor. This is seen as healthy and predictable. Eventually in phase three the learner takes on and internalises the mentor's best and worst behaviours, which then become part of the learner's own make-up.

The build-up of emotional intensity is a gradual process. In phase one the learner experiences respect, admiration and gratitude, for and to the mentor. With the increase in interactions, this develops in phase two into an affectionate mutual respect and admiration. Finally in phase three Missirian notes that:

'...mentor and protégé reach an exquisite level of understanding which enables them to love one another unconditionally. They achieve the emotional maturity to accept one another as they really are: professionally distinguished, perhaps; but less than perfect human beings.' (p.90)

Phillips-Jones (1982) developmental model of the mentor relationship proposes a five stage alliance as a development of her earlier six stage model which encompassed such concepts as Initiation, Sparkle, Development, Disillusionment, Parting and Transformation (Phillips 1977).

These five stages are:

<b>Initiation:</b>	the preparatory behaviour of both.
<b>Mutual Admiration</b>	fear of rejection by both as each tries to impress the other.
<b>Development</b>	trust becomes established and a mutual relationship is formed.
<b>Parting</b>	the relationship alters with the independence of the protégé.
<b>Transformation</b>	the relationship ends for one or both, or most commonly there is a lasting friendship.

Barnett (1984) proposed that there are three major events in the development, growth, and eventual culmination of the mentor relationship. These are:

**The relinquishing of self** - the mentor's letting go of all he has become and is becoming to rediscover life anew in the mentored.

**The realising of dreams** - the dreams of the mentored, and

**The redefining of boundaries** - giving up the role of the 'good enough' parent - setting the mentored free to set, redefine and extend his own boundaries on a cycle throughout life.' (Barnett, 1984, p. 15, bold type not in original).

Barnett later departs from her use of the male pronoun when describing how the redefining of boundaries might affect a woman:

'Thus the re-defining of boundaries for a woman ready to be 'her own person' may mean not only updating the relationship with a mentor professionally, but also redefining or breaking of limits set in an extended sexual relationship.' (p.17)

No further explanation is given for this statement, nor does she discuss how this sexual dynamic might be altered by having a female mentor with a male learner, or indeed a same-sex relationship. But perhaps the most interesting thesis in terms of my research area, was one to which I gained access via Professor Torrance's cardboard box, and which postulates a seven stage process (Gordon, 1983):

<b>Beginning -</b>	meeting
<b>The Gesture Stage -</b>	offer of help
<b>The Acceptance Stage -</b>	trust in mentor is increased

<b>The Investment Stage -</b>	mutual trust/sharing/risk-taking
<b>The Upheaval Stage -</b>	learners had developed new skills and viewed themselves and their mentors differently
<b>The Separation Stage -</b>	a major event enforced a change
<b>The Redefinition Stage -</b>	a new form of relationship, a peer relationship

Gordon's Ph.D. thesis is of such relevance to the basic underpinning of my doctoral study that it warrants closer investigation at this point. Like myself, Gordon wished to formulate a conceptual framework for understanding the basic nature of the interpersonal aspects of the mentor relationship. His study took a grounded theory methodology, his cohort of 20 were picked by purposive sampling from a mental health setting, and he encouraged free and spontaneous discourse with regard to the dynamics of the relationship. His interviews were tailored to suit the appropriate needs of individuals and the need for a good rapport between himself and his participants. This rapport was necessary for the disclosure of the otherwise hidden details of the relationships. His findings proved remarkably similar to my own initial study. Gordon discusses at length the attraction between the mentor and learner, and notes (p.115) that there was same-sex attraction as well as opposite sex attraction. He remarks that whilst one participant felt that this attraction set up a tension which distanced them, rather than bringing them closer together (p.78), most learners desired an even greater level of intimacy and depth of communication.

He proposes that the difficulty lay, not in the recognition of the attraction, but in the avoidance of discussion of the issue and notes that 88% of the learners had not discussed this aspect of the relationship with their mentor, whilst 12% had. This discussion had been initiated by the learner. Perhaps this is indicative of the caution shown by mentors in respecting the element of power within the relationship, although more mundane reasons may be simply that the mentors were either unaware of the attraction, or feared rejection.

Roger's core conditions for learning were identified (p.119) as being key to the relationship, and Gordon describes (p. 23) how jealous and destructive others who were external to the relationship could be. Love (p.63) appeared to be a key emotion within the relationship, with the recognition that such relationships could happen at any time and at any place, but were always mutually exclusive. As well as the previously mentioned stages of the relationship, Gordon concludes that the relationship is one which provides opportunity for many functions, and requires a mentor who is willing to don many roles. He proposes a need for two-way trust, similarities in outlook, appropriate timing, and a willingness to give time and energy to the alliance.

These, combined with encouragement, acceptance, support, positive reinforcement, permission to experiment, and challenges, appeared to be major elements in the interpersonal relationship.

Despite Gordon's own misgiving (p.94) that his findings might be somewhat skewed because his cohort were all from mental health settings, these findings are so similar to my own from a variety of settings, that they are suggestive of generalisability in terms of a conceptual framework for interpersonal mentor relationships. Therefore after reading this thesis I was pleased that I had not discovered it prior to my own study, as the two research documents are able to stand alone.

My own work (Bennetts, 1994) has identified a three stage relationship which highlights the behaviours of mentors and learners at each stage, but is not necessarily held to be always such a clear-cut linear process, as much seems to depend on temporality, and the age and emotional development of each party at the time of the initial meeting. The following is a brief summary of the stages:

<b>Initiation</b>	A time of choice, appreciation, acknowledgement and establishment of a relationship
<b>Development</b>	A time of working, caring, enjoying and risking within the relationship
<b>Maintenance</b>	A time of challenge, mutual protection, provision, loving and sharing

The qualities underpinning the stages are those of **Respect, Trust and Equality of Regard.**

It can be seen quite clearly that all of these proposed models and stages have much in common and could be applicable in either traditional or modern mentor programmes. Phillips-Jones, Missirian, and Kram's studies were undertaken with those who work in organisational settings, with the Kram study focussing on current relationships, and the others focussing on retrospective relationships. Gordon's study, and my own, were of relationships both past and present.

It should also be understood that within relationships between human beings there can be no prescriptive model, and that all proposed stages should be seen as mere guides to assist in interpreting and validating the experiences of those involved in mentor relationships.

## Self-esteem and Self-actualisation

Within the literature there appears to be almost universal acceptance that the mentor process improves self-esteem for the learner (Auster 1984, Baum 1992, Chao 1992, Haensley 1993, Pleiss 1995, Gay 1995, Stephenson and Sampson 1995, Stephenson 1996, Pazzaglini 1976, Schwartz 1995). A few writers have also identified self-esteem as being of relevance to the mentor (Hunt 1983, Newby & Hyde 1992, Garvey 1995), with George (1981) noting that a condescending mentor may even destroy self-esteem, thus suggesting that it is what happens between the two parties, the interpersonal, which is the ultimate arbiter of positive or negative outcomes, and that improved self-esteem is therefore not guaranteed merely by the presence of the relationship itself, but is dependent on attitude and behaviour.

'Without a mentor', notes Collin (1986a), '*people have to take what they need for their self-awareness, self-confidence and self-esteem from wherever they can*'. Carter and Lewis (1994) suggest that attitudes and behaviour are skills related, and they provide an overview of the enabling mentor:

'These helpers (mentors) had been good listeners, listening attentively and asking the sort of questions that helped the speaker clarify his/her own thoughts. They avoided authoritarian language, treated people as equal and encouraged people to think and act for themselves. (Carter and Lewis, 1994, p. 5)

They tolerated failure if the reasons for failure were good. In addition these people were not just good role models in their interpersonal skills, but in terms of their personal effectiveness in time management, personal organisation, and professional competence.

They could cope with ambiguity and were confident enough in their own position to relinquish control where appropriate, ensuring visible and practical support.' (Carter and Lewis, 1994, p. 5)

By contrast the literature on self-actualisation as a by product of self-esteem gained from the mentor relationship is almost non-existent. Weber (1980, p.20) discusses the shaping and actualisation of the learner's 'dream', and remarks:

"Mentoring is challenging and rewarding, but also exhausting and time-consuming. Among its many rewards, the most satisfying are two fold: to participate in another's growth - the creation and actualisation of his potential - and to witness one's own growth through helping another.' (p.24)

Kram (1983, p.617) notes that the learner has '*the opportunity to experience confirmation and support for whom s/he is becoming*', and Runions (1980, p.155) points out that the process of motivation in learning could be accentuated by mentoring which encouraged '*self-actualised success*'.

However only Rawles (1980) doctoral study of American scientists proposed a direct link between mentoring and self-actualisation. I have examined this study in earlier work (Bennetts, 1994) but at that time did not have access to the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI, Shostrom 1966) which Rawles used as her test instrument. Despite the fact that the test is designed to study self-actualisation from a scientific rather than a phenomenological stance, I have, in keeping with Maslow's own stance, and with the stance of this thesis, decided to relate this test to the concepts and phenomena which it measures, rather than the measurements themselves.

Maslow himself was familiar with the POI and confirmed that '*self-actualisation is what the test tests*' ( Maslow 1971, p. 28). Shostrom (1966, p.4) notes that the POI is designed for use in many settings and that it may be interpreted by using the concepts individually or collectively, providing both a measure of mental health for the clinician, and a positive heuristic device for discussion in the educational, business, industrial or counselling arena. The POI takes into account 15 items as they relate to the self-actualised individual. Briefly these are:

<b>Time ratio</b>	the degree to which one is oriented in the 'present'. That is, one who is able to relate the past and future together in a meaningful continuity. One who is not tied to regrets and guilts of the past, and whose aspirations relate meaningfully to present goals.
<b>Support Ratio</b>	the degree to which one is 'inner directed' or 'other directed'. That is, the extent to which the individual is motivated by self or others. The self-actualised person is one who has a ratio of 3:1 in favour of autonomy and freedom.
<b>Self-Actualising Value</b>	the extent to which the individual lives by the values of self-actualised individuals.
<b>Existentiality</b>	the extent to which one is flexible in applying such values to one's life.

<b>Feeling Reactivity</b>	the extent to which one is responsive to one's own feelings and needs.
<b>Spontaneity</b>	the extent to which one feels free to be oneself.
<b>Self-Regard</b>	the extent to which one has self-worth and strengths
<b>Self-Acceptance</b>	the extent to which one is able to accept one's weaknesses or deficiencies.
<b>Self- Perception</b>	this is a paired interpretation of self-regard and self-acceptance, and reflects the individual's general self-perception.
<b>Nature of Man (Constructive)</b>	the extent to which one sees the nature of humans in terms of the good/evil, masculine/feminine, selfish/unselfish, spirituality/sensuality dichotomies.
<b>Synergy</b>	the extent to which one is able to transcend these dichotomies and see the opposites of life as meaningfully related.
<b>Awareness</b>	this is a paired interpretation of the two previous concepts and denotes the extent to which the nature of humans, and the ability to relate all objects of life meaningfully are integrated, and to what extent the individual is generally aware.
<b>Acceptance of Aggression</b>	the extent to which one can accept anger within one's self as natural.

**Capacity for Intimate Contact** the extent to which one is able to develop contactful intimate relationships with other humans, free of obligations and expectations.

**Interpersonal Sensitivity** the extent to which one is sensitive to the need within human relationships for assertion and aggression, and warmth and love.

Individuals undergoing the POI are asked to complete 150 double choice value and behaviour judgements which are scored twice, firstly for inner directed support and time competence, and secondly for the concepts which are important elements of self-actualising.

Rawles' (1980) study was designed to investigate whether American scientists who had mentors were more self-actualised than those who did not. Her sample included 567 scientists from anthropology (146), physics (142), psychology (118) and biology (160). 301 of the cohort were women and 266 were men, with an age range of between 24 - 84 years. As well as completing the POI, individuals were also asked to complete a Personal Data Sheet which requested demographic details such as age, sex, and numbers of mentors. Rawles describes a typical respondent as being about 40, white, living in a large city, having a doctorate, and engaged in teaching or research. The dissertation abstract is somewhat unclear as it does not indicate how many individuals responded and shows Rawles' conclusions as percentages rather than as numbers. These are:

- 1) 66.3% of the subjects had a mentor, with 65% of the women and 68% of the men in this category.
- 2) Fewer physicists had mentors than any other group i.e. physicists 52%, biologists 71%, anthropologists 75%, and psychologists 67%.
- 3) 85% of the mentors were male and most of these were employed as teachers. The average mentorship lasted 4.6 years.
- 4) There is a positive relationship between the level of self-actualisation of scientists and whether they had a mentor. Those who had mentors were more self-actualising.
- 5) There is a sex difference in level of self-actualisation among scientists, with women attaining higher POI levels.
- 6) Individuals who had mentors tend to serve as mentors to others. 62% of the females and 64% of the males were themselves mentors.
- 7) Individuals who are mentors are more self actualising than those who are not.



8) Scientists as a group are not highly self-actualising, the psychologists attained the highest levels of self-actualisation.

9) Scientists who serve as mentors earn more money and hold higher positions than those who do not.

I noted in 1994 that whilst the study was conclusive in acknowledging the benefits of mentor relationships for American scientists it seemed somewhat unusual that no chemists were amongst the sample, and that those in the 'softer' sciences of psychology and anthropology were deemed to be pure scientists. That psychologists achieved high levels of self-actualisation on the POI was not surprising since their profession demands a high level of interpersonal skill and related attributes.

The fact that the physicists scored low for self-actualisation may indicate a less well-adjusted individual, but it could also be argued that physicists need have less intimate contact with others in the course of their work, and indeed that this very isolation is necessary for their creativity. That the women scored overall higher rates of self-actualisation would support Burke (1984) and Reich (1985) in their findings that the psychosocial and affective issues in mentoring are of greater importance to women. However the fact that this test was scored in accordance with the clinical approach may have some bearing on how the men in the study interpreted the value of this data. Indeed my initial study (Bennetts, 1994) suggests that both men and women place equal value on these issues.

Despite Rawles' work being the only research study that I have identified which has directly addressed the issue of self-actualisation and mentoring, it is not one which can be extrapolated to mentoring and the creative process, nor does it portray an in-depth phenomenological density. However it remains an important marker within the mentoring literature as the first serious study of the relevance of mentoring to the actualisation of self.

### **Related Developmental Theories**

Erikson identified eight stages of human development, and linked these stages to eight psychosocial steps, which he considered to be potential crises, as each step involved a '*radical change in perspective*' (Erikson, 1959). These stages, crises and linked values have been adapted here to include some of Erikson's (1985) later work on the human life cycle.

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<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Infancy</b>
Crisis	Basic Trust v Basic Mistrust
Basic Strengths	Hope

Significant Relations  
Related Social Principles  
Psychosocial Modalities

Maternal Person  
Cosmic Order  
To get/To give in return

**Stage 2**

Crisis  
Basic Strengths  
Basic Antipathies  
Significant Relations  
Related Social Principles  
Psychosocial Modalities

**Early Childhood**

Autonomy v Shame/Doubt  
Will  
Compulsion  
Parental Persons  
Law and Order  
To hold on/To let go

**Stage 3**

Crisis  
Basic Strengths  
Basic Antipathies  
Significant Relations  
Related Social Principles  
Psychosocial Modalities

**Play Age**

Initiative v. Guilt  
Purpose  
Inhibition  
Basic Family  
Ideal Prototypes  
To make (for)/ make like (play)

**Stage 4**

Crisis  
Basic Strengths  
Basic Antipathies  
Significant Relations  
Related Social Principles  
Psychosocial Modalities

**School Age**

Industry v. Inferiority  
Competence  
Inertia  
Neighbourhood/School  
Technological Elements  
Make things complete/together

**Stage 5**

Crisis  
Basic Strengths  
Basic Antipathies  
Significant Relations  
Related Social Principles  
Psychosocial Modalities

**Adolescence**

Identity v. Identity Confusion  
Fidelity/Loyalty  
Repudiation  
Peers, outgroups, role models  
Ideological Perspectives  
To be oneself (or not), share self

**Stage 6**

Crisis  
Basic Strengths  
Basic Antipathies

**Young Adulthood**

Intimacy v. Isolation  
Love  
Exclusivity

Significant Relations	Partnerships (friends, sex, etc.)
Related Social Principles	Co-operation/Competition
Psychosocial Modalities	To lose and find oneself in another

### **Stage 7**

Crisis  
 Basic Strengths  
 Basic Antipathies  
 Significant Relations  
 Related Social Principles  
 Psychosocial Modalities

### **Adulthood**

Generativity v. Stagnation  
 Care  
 Rejectivity  
 Divided Labour/Shared Household  
 Education and Tradition  
 To make be/To take care of

### **Stage 8**

Crisis  
 Basic Strengths  
 Basic Antipathies  
 Significant Relations  
 Related Social Elements  
 Psychosocial Elements

### **Old Age**

Integrity v. Despair/Disgust  
 Wisdom  
 Disdain  
 Humankind/My Kind  
 Wisdom  
 To be, through having been. To face not being.

Erikson (1985) recognises that such a model must always be seen in the context of historical relativity, and notes that it is not intended as an '*all-inclusive accounting of a perfect human life*' (p. 9). Nevertheless it is a useful means of visualising the possibilities of the human journey, whether or not it is accepted that all humans must of necessity pass this way. Following Erikson's influence, Havighurst (1972) proposes that there are certain developmental tasks which need to be learned at each stage of life. He defines such tasks as follows:

'A developmental task is a task which arises at, or about, a certain period in the life of the individual, successful achievement of which leads to his happiness and to success with later tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by the society, and difficulty with later tasks.'  
 (Havighurst, 1972, p. 2)

Some tasks, he explains, arise from physical maturation, whilst others are cultural, and others emerge as personal values and aspirations of the self. Havighurst notes that by the age of three or four, the self is effective in defining and accomplishing developmental tasks, and suggests that there are certain moments in the life of the individual when learning is more likely to take place. He refers to these times as 'teachable moments', and suggests that they occur throughout the length of the life-span.

Although his statements regarding the social class system and education appear somewhat dated and therefore questionable, and his view of the activities of the older woman seems limited to the Church Ladies Circle, he does acknowledge the need and ability of older people to be involved in adult educational programmes.

Maslow's (1943) theory of human motivation states that once the basic physiological needs for food, safety, love and esteem have been met then other higher needs will emerge such as the need for self-actualisation. Having our essential needs met however does not necessarily make for happiness, and Fromm (1993) maintains that the real issue is one of the aim and meaning of human life. He argues that the effect of met needs on human life should be evaluated in the light of whether they detract from, or contribute to the growth of the individual, and contrasts the egotistic materialistic view of *having*, with the psychological and spiritual view of *being*.

Westen (1996) has questioned why, if safety is a basic need in Maslow's hierarchy, do individuals put themselves in positions of vulnerability such as high risk sexual behaviours which may lead to HIV infection? He suggests that if people do not actually feel scared, then they will not focus on their safety needs.

There seems to be some confusion here about what constitutes basic physiological safety, and it seems clear from Maslow (1943) that he intended that it meant freedom from life threatening forces. Taking risks in personal behaviour often stems from a feeling of being safe enough to do so, and should not be seen as a rebuttal of the need for safety. The requirement for physiological safety is a basic need. Risk taking however, is more often than not, a choice.

In one of his early papers Maslow says:

'A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately happy. What a man can be, he must be. This need we may call self-actualisation.' (Maslow, 1943, p. 162)

Maslow maintained that humans had an essential inner nature, a 'core of Being' and that this core of Being was a potentiality which starts becoming a 'self' as soon as it starts to have contact and transaction with the outside world. This inner core might be shaped or stifled by external events, and if frustrated, suppressed or denied, will result in subtle or obvious psychological ill-health (Maslow, 1968). Becoming psychologically unwell therefore, may be caused by a failure to grow into what we were meant to be.

Buhler (1967) drew attention to the neglect of human life goals and values by psychologists, and proposed twelve levels of development in the area of personal functioning from the humanistic viewpoint. Summarised here these are:

1) **Activity** The extent to which the baby is passive or aggressive implies the natural tendency of the child to be dependent or independent, although these traits are not unalterable. Such primary activity includes responses to new experiences and stimuli. Curiosity, the interest or lack of interest in discovering and doing, may also be rooted in this stage.

2) **Selective Perception** The ability of directed activity, operating with both selective perception and imagination. This may take the form of imagery, colour, and feelings, as in the creative process. When perception, imagination and activity operate in unison, Buhler suggests that the core of the rudimentary self is evident. That is, there are the beginnings of purposeful behaviours in the direction of the development of potential.

3) **Reactions to Care and Contact** Whilst recognising that psychosocial needs are a basic need, Buhler suggests that these must take place in the emotional climate of love and care. Babies respond to smiles and sounds with imitative movements (Piaget, 1951), and it appears that there is a basic need for human caring as well as human contact.

4) **Will, Conscience, Identity** These factors are often in conflict as the child becomes aware that what it wants, is often at variance with what is 'naughty' or 'good', and relate to the child's first attempts at discovering an autonomous self. The level of autonomy achieved is obviously dependent on environmental factors, and may lead to the child submitting to and identifying with the adults' goals, or may, in the case of a child with creative potential, be the first attempt at self-actualisation.

5) **Mastery** This deals with the area of 'I can' or 'I cannot', and is visible from a very early age as children struggle to master their own motor movements. Buhler notes that semi-consciously this may be the first realisation of success or failure. Also at this stage, the children who exhibit adaptive behaviour to conform and fit in on a social level, can be distinguished from those more creative children who show themselves to be more independent, do not always conform to others' expectations, and do not behave conventionally. Whilst both groups participate in approved activities, she cautiously concludes that it is the 'insiders', the more socially 'adjusted' who seek experiences which are more immediately gratifying, as opposed to the creative 'outsiders' who are more open to experience, who will risk awaiting more long-term outcomes, and are more individualistic.

**6) Constructiveness and Destructiveness** These concepts are developed as children are influenced by their environment, with constructiveness used here as the basic orientation of children to work matters out for themselves and others, so that there is a beneficial result, as opposed to the destructiveness and hostility of those who damage both others and self.

**7) Achievement Motivation** This is the period when prior experience of mastery and success converge, to generate an individual concept of achievement. This is the time when achievement becomes established as a goal by the child.

**8) Beliefs and Values** The constructive and destructive attitudes which are becoming built, are results of the evaluations and experience of the growing child. These now begin to form opinions and convictions, beliefs and values which establish themselves as goal-determining principles.

**9) Love and Committing Relationships** Buhler describes healthy intimacy and commitment as 'freely chosen bonds', noting that their free choice distinguishes them from unfree dependency, whilst recognising that they also represent a voluntary reduction of independence. If intimacy and commitment are shared by both partners in a sex and love relationship, it can be developed beyond the functional, to the ecstatic experience of unity, the essential goal of the mature individual.

**10) Integration** The setting of life goals involves the ability to integrate and organise values and beliefs. It is also influenced by age and time, aptitudes and deficiencies, and environmental issues. Buhler notes that most of all, it is emotional dynamics which influence people the most. The area of integration is somewhat grey, and Buhler questions whether a stable and even maturation process is any guarantee of successfully integrating needs and wants and goals. She notes that it is not only researchers who have little insight into what makes people choose between preferences, but that individuals themselves frequently seem not to know what it is they really want.

**11) Direction, Purpose and Meaning** The concept of meaningfulness is defined by Buhler as having two characteristics, one of which is a contributory constituent to a teleological whole, the other which calls for an act of faith in a meaningful act, by which to accept the self. She says:

'As for creative work, it usually enhances a person's enthusiasm for life and his self-esteem. It also helps him more quickly to find his identity and to establish himself as a person in his own right.' (Buhler, 1967, p.47)

Suggesting that creative people find it easier to set goals and direction, Buhler also remarks that to be meaningful, and to fulfil a basic existential human need, these goals must be chosen in accordance with the best individual potentialities.

12) **Fulfilment and Failure** Buhler notes here that those whom she has studied, who had lived essentially fulfilled lives, appear to have maintained an equilibrium between the basic tendencies of need-satisfaction, self-limiting adaptation, creative expansion, and upholding of the internal order, and to be constructive within whatever aspect they believe in. She says:

'The most successful lives in terms of fulfilment I found to be those who were rather conscious of their life being something they ought to do something with and were responsible for - be it in religious terms with God, or in existential terms in relationship to the universal order, or simply in ethical terms of non-metaphysical convictions.' (Buhler, 1967, p. 49)

Glover (1988) proposes that the distinctive self is more than that which we start with, and that we partly create ourselves during the course of our lives whenever we make choices and decisions. However Laing remarks that we are also social beings, and that we go through life continually confirmed or disconfirmed by others (Laing, 1990). Presumably we in our turn also continually confirm and disconfirm others. Laing notes:

'Some areas of a person's being may cry out for confirmation more than others. Some forms of disconfirmation may be more destructive of self-development than others.' (Laing, 1990, p.99)

Daloz offers a note of caution in regard to concentrating too much on developmental stages and suggests that:

'It is the people, not the stages, the moving picture, not the snapshots, that should command our attention. This is particularly important in education because few teachers or mentors ever see a student through an entire journey. Rather we accompany students along some legs of some of their journeys, and if we are to play our part well, we need to view their movements with a broader eye, to see whence they have come and where they are headed.' (Daloz, 1986, p.42)

Secord and Backman (1964. p. 599) noted that despite few studies on the subject, the influence of a significant other person was a vital factor in shaping the concept of self. Since then both Levinson (1976), and Sheehy (1976) have given lively and comprehensive accounts of the developmental life cycle of adults, and both have made note of the influence of the mentor within those life cycles. Levinson (1976, p. 98) is perhaps best remembered for noting that the most developmentally crucial task of the mentor is to support and facilitate '*the realisation of the Dream*'. Levinson's view of the mentor in the lives of the men he studied is that most men receive little mentoring and that relationships of quality are rare (p.338).

My 1994 study had shown that men had enjoyed good mentor relationships and so had not supported Levinson's findings in this area, and I assumed that this was due to times having changed, and that perhaps men felt more able to disclose personal feelings to a woman interviewer. Nevertheless Levinson's idea of the mentor and 'the Dream' still seems to hold true within this study, with the artists linking their development to their vision of what they might become.

Levinson's later work on the developmental stages of women's lives (1996) is interesting in as much as the dreams of women are articulated less than those of the men he interviewed in his original study. Despite twenty years having gone by it seems that the women Levinson studied are in some ways still far behind his 1976 male cohort, in terms of expectations and opportunities. He quotes only one woman in the early adult transition as actually having had a vision of herself as an artist, and who sacrificed her Dream to please her family, her parents and her husband (Levinson, 1996, p. 240). Despite this later work of Levinson's being more of an insight into gender than into mentor relationships, he does make an important point in relation to holistic self-development when he concludes:

'A woman cannot become individuated when she lives primarily as a traditional homemaker and suppresses most of the 'masculine' in her self. Likewise a man's individuation is limited when he dedicates himself to living as a provisioner and suppresses the 'feminine'. (Levinson, 1996, p. 419)

## **Intimacy**

Whilst posing difficulties for some mentor relationships, the issue of intimacy is one which is given a high profile across the whole of the mentoring spectrum.

These perspectives range from organisational (Reich 1985, McKeen and Burke 1989, Hunt and Michael 1983, Kram 1983, Kizilos 1990, Blunt 1995, Weber 1980, Westoff 1986, Myers and Humphreys 1985, Johnson 1980, George and Kummerow 1981); to academic (Ragins 1990, Harrison 1986, Shaughnessy 1989, Runions 1980, Stephenson 1995a, 1995b, 1996, Oustrakas 1977, Merriam 1983); and through to psychological settings (Auster 1984, Baum 1992, Burton 1979, Chao 1992, Foulds 1969, Lange 1988, Levinson 1976, Nicola 1990).

Bushardt et al (1991) even offer a biological perspective on this aspect:

'Mentoring relationships appear to meet many of the basic needs of intimacy that extramarital affairs provide, and they may function as a substitute for mating behaviour, which carries strong societal moral judgement. Adult development appears to support the mentoring process as being interwoven with biological reproductive strategies.' (p.631)



This perspective when read in conjunction with one of Bushardt's references, Thornhill's (1979) paper on sexual selection, proves to offer some insights into the phenomena, in terms of the behavioural strategies which are used to maximise the genetic fitness of individuals within each gender. Bushardt argues that the similarities between male/female reproductive strategies and the mentoring process, are most salient in terms of selection criteria, acquisition strategies, and demographics.

Even within peer mentor relationships there is evidence of close attachment. Prillaman and Richardson (1989) note that the major benefit referred to by parents of young creative people in a mentor programme, was the '*special relationship*' which developed between the mentor and the learner.

Phillips (1979) has written of what he terms '*the peculiar intimacy*' between professor and student. He likens the mentor/learner relationship in its early stages as that of a courtier and noble, with the student swearing fealty to the professor.

He notes that the student who never actually works in academia, but who attends university for vocational reasons, never discovers what he terms '*the important, central relationship*' (p.341). The key scholarly arrangement, he maintains, '*is a quiet one, committed and intense, reserved only for those who wish to go the entire distance*'. '*The relationship between professor and student*' he states, '*is intimate in every sense of the word*' (p.339), and often leads to long-lasting and intense personal friendship.

Burke (1984), who examined the mentor relationships of 80 men and women attending management development courses, found that although 52% of the cohort described their relationships as 'fairly close or intense' and 13% described relationships as 'very close and intense', the relationships overall did not appear to be as emotionally intimate and intense as those observed by Levinson (1978).

And Philips (1979) maintains that students who are more intent on the job market than on preparing to dedicate themselves to carrying knowledge from one generation to the next, and improving it on the way, are less likely to experience the intimacy which arises from the mentor alliance (p. 347). However such a statement perhaps reflects too harshly on vocational students, and as Burke's study restricted students to recollections of their relationships with workplace mentors only (p.356), his results are perhaps not surprising.

Ragins and McFarlane (1990) have postulated that those mentors involved in cross-gender mentor relationships may project an asexual parental role, in order to avoid the sexual tension which they felt is increased with the intimacy component of friendship.

However this hypothesis was not supported by the results of their study which was based in organisational settings. They do highlight however, the difficulties faced by mentors and learners when faced with rumours of sexual involvement. It should be noted here that although intimacy within relationships may lead to sexual involvement, sexual involvement does not necessarily include intimacy, and it is intimacy which appears to be a key factor in the mentor relationship.

Gender differences played no discernable part in Williams' (1992) study which focussed on trust, openness and self-disclosure in mentor relationships. Those mentors who were more accessible to learners were perceived as also displaying more of these interpersonal qualities. This finding is suggestive of the added importance of the length of time one is able to spend with a mentor, in that trust, openness and self-disclosure are only likely to develop over a period of time and are rarely found in superficial, casual relationships.

Shuster's (1990) Ph.D. study of mentor relationships of women in the visual arts showed that women were just as likely as men to seek and to initiate mentor relationships with prospective mentees, but her comparative study with non-mentored individuals indicated that there were no apparent career benefits to being mentored. She proposed that the personality of those involved in mentor relationships was less autonomous than their counterparts without mentor relationships.

This study is interesting because it brings into question the purpose and value of mentor relationships in the visual arts. However the abstract itself does not provide enough insight into the nature and definition of mentoring in the study, and serves only as a guide to current research. Nor does it define what Schuster means by 'career', which for many lone artists is very different to the structured work pattern experienced by people who work for others.

Kalbfleisch and Davies (1993) propose that for a mentoring relationship to work well there has to be a willingness to become intimate. Their study indicated that those who perceived less risk in taking part in intimate relationships, were more likely to take part in a mentor relationship. This willingness to risk intimacy was directly linked to self-esteem and communication competence. They conclude their study by stating that this also implies that those with poor self-esteem and communication skills, and who would most benefit from the mentor relationship, might well be the ones who are less likely to have such a relationship.

My study (Bennetts,1994) would support the assumptions that communication skills and a willingness to take risks with intimacy are important facets of the relationship, but would contend that within the traditional model of mentoring, these qualities develop at their own rate and are key factors in moving the relationship through its various stages. Cohen and Galbraith (1996) also acknowledge the importance of adequate time necessary to establish a climate of psychological and emotional support within the relationship. To do otherwise, they assert, would not allow for creation of the trust required to support a relationship which may at times, need to deal with confrontation.

Atteberry (1986) has likened the mentor/learner relationship to one which is '*portentous for a spousal-mentor role*' (p.66). She notes that whilst Levinson (1978) has remarked that a husband cannot be a wife's mentor, her study of husband/wife relationships showed that 60% of her cohort (six out of ten) had relationships which corresponded to the mentor relationship. She concludes that spousal mentoring does occur, with similar opportunity for success or catastrophe as those in non-spousal mentoring.

Harrison (1986 p.117) however, does not hold the view that a romantic or sexual attraction need necessarily mean the end of a mentoring relationship, but notes that it can cause complications if a problem in one area spills over into the next. She quotes one instance where the relationship ended because of unwanted sexual attention, and another where the two married. Obviously much depends on the emotional maturity of the two parties and also on the way that the power issues are recognised and handled, but it would appear that little headway has been made into understanding the issue of intimacy and emotional support within mentoring in the last ten years.

Such support and intensity is still recognised as an important aspect of the mentor relationship (Howard 1996, Oliver, Abels 1996), and indeed intimacy is a pre-requisite of any friendship. However in all but a few accounts, this dynamic has not been not interpreted in a way which gives meaning to the interaction, but has remained as a 'problem' issue for those who implement mentor initiatives. Intimacy, that deep and caring involvement with other human beings, is an integral part of self-actualisation and mental health, and is held to be a predictor of potential facilitating ability within caring professions (Foulds, 1969). It is deserving of considered attention within the mentor relationship.

### **Psychological Health**

Although mentors can be of help with more general mid-life health issues (Sheehy, 1996, p. 208), mentoring has been recognised as being instrumental in enabling new employees to accrue psychological benefits within organisations (Oliver, Abels 1996).

They state:

' The most useful mentoring activities during the survival phase are those which buttress the mentee's psychological development. Role modelling, counselling, psychological support (i.e. friendship, nurturance, serving as an emotional sounding board) skill based tutoring, and providing occupational protection data...' ( p. 201)

Smith and Alred (1995) view mentoring as a way that '*the fruitful dimensions of counselling can be translated from a purely therapeutic context to the workplace*' (p. 7 - 8) They point out that as the mentoring relationship requires a willingness to engage, to seek trust, and to be challenged it has parallels with the counselling process, and should be regarded with comparable seriousness. The language of counselling, they say, can influence the language of career support and development (p. 8). My 1994 study would support the notion that the mentor role is somewhat similar to the person-centred counsellor role, and that there are certain core conditions and qualities which can be transferred and applied.

Pazzaglini and Hanson (1976) describe the impact on both the adult and child, of a '*significant other*':

'To enable an adult to regain his emotional balance and restore his sense of well-being and life-style is no small task. But to guide a child back to the path of healthy emotional development is to recreate a potential of being which is unlike any other.' (p. 99)

However the counselling relationship has certain boundary issues which require handling with skill and self-confidence, and which do not transfer well to mentoring. The issue of absolute confidentiality between the two parties, which for some counsellors is akin to the confidentiality of the confessional and which requires the intervention of a court of law to break, is unlikely to find favour with an organisational mentor scheme, which in most cases consists of three parties, the mentor, the learner, and the organisation. Nevertheless by likening mentoring to counselling, Smith and Alred raise the significance and importance of the therapeutic in the mentor dynamic, as Burton (1977, 1979) has done in the past. At a basic level, the role of a mentor is one of support and praise (Lyons, Scroggins, Rule, 1990, p. 279), and any honest evidence-based encouragement which boosts esteem and confidence will automatically support the psychological development of the learner.

Blunt (1995) remarks that he has the clear impression that his mentor was interested mainly in Blunt's well-being and success, rather than his own personal credit.

Yet mentoring as a tool for increasing and developing psychological well-being appears to be going mainly unnoticed, and stress in the workplace has become a 20th century disease, to be off-loaded on the staff counsellor rather than be dealt with at source.

McKeen and Burke (1989, p.34) have highlighted the importance of female mentors for women at work, in terms of their ability to alleviate career stress and act as unique role models for dealing with stereotyping and discrimination. It would now seem timely that those who implement mentor programmes, consider researching the extent to which mentoring can reduce such stress, instead of focussing mainly on organisational outcomes. Blunt remarks:

'Training and development is a world rich in paradigms, and it is sometimes difficult for professionals in the field to break out of the notion that no act of learning is worthwhile or complete unless it has watertight philosophical clarity and works towards tangible outcomes.' (p.39)

### **Power**

The issue of power within the mentor/learner relationship has been, and continues to be of importance to those in the field. Auster (1984) views the relationship primarily as a power dependent dyad and notes that whatever the affective quality of the relationship, the power ultimately rests with the mentor due to his/her greater supply of valued resources. He cites '*structural imbalance*' as being the factor which gives the organisational mentor power over the learner, whose need for organisational resources may create a dependence which has little to do with the mentor's own personal power.

He points out that at some time in the life of the mentor/learner relationship, the price paid by the learner becomes no longer attractive and the relationship will become one of '*sentimental feelings of gratitude, appreciation and affection*', or end in an authoritarian and possessive dispute. Haensley and Parsons (1993) propose however, that the power of the mentor can be a positive asset in acting as a protective shield for the protégé during the '*elusive process of the emergence of creative ideas and skills*' (p.213), whilst others argue that the new-found increased effectiveness of the learner, produces a positive use of power and ability (Kalbfleisch & Davies 1993 p. 402, Lange 1988 p. 109).

Sheehy (1996) in her account of the lives of creative women, provides an interesting twist to the power issue when describing a singer whose mentor '*took advantage of my need to please*' (p.235) and who became mentally and physically exhausted by constantly working to achieve her best. One has to question just who is responsible here, and this highlights the interlinked concepts of intentionality and perception. Having a mentor does not mean that one should abnegate responsibility for one's actions.

Hunt and Michael (1983 p. 482) have introduced the notion of '*the reflected power*' of the learner, that is the power and resultant benefits associated with being in an alliance with a higher level mentor. Noe (1988) raises the issue of the perceived power base of the prospective learner, noting that as men and women have different strategies for influencing others, the tactics used by women may result in them being ignored by prospective mentors.

Weber (1980) provides some balance here by pointing out that both mentor and learner are prey to power games, and that:

'Tensions develop from the contradictory needs that arise: autonomy vs. daring, freedom vs. direction, protege's action vs. mentor's will, trust vs. doubt, and respect for the mentor vs. challenge of the mentor. The tensions seem inevitable, but they can be managed, depending on the parties.' (p.24)

Clearly there are issues here. One is how the new-found power generated by an effective mentor relationship is used, and another relates to how the two individuals treat each other within the relationship. My initial study indicated that the traditional mentor relationship was not subjected to power games, but it is obvious that those who experience mentor relationships in organisations do take on a relationship with potential for abuse.

With power comes responsibility, responsibility which is in the hands of both individuals, and which should be acknowledged and understood by both parties. Such understanding requires more than a desire for a learning relationship. It requires maturity and wisdom which may only be a product of age and experience. The issue of power is dealt with more fully in Chapter Seven.

## **Creativity**

It is noticeable that the issue of creativity as a by-product of the mentoring relationship is mentioned only infrequently in the organisational and academic literature, and poses the question of whether creativity is valued in such settings.

Formal mentor systems in organisations can serve as a safe environment for the testing of creative ideas (Boags 1996), whilst Zey (1986) has pointed out that senior workers can be effective in working as mentors to young scientists in their creative prime. Harrison and Klopff (1986) describe a mutual creativity in their account of their own mentor relationship within a university setting, and Runions' (1980, p. 155) vision of mentoring is as part of a whole support system in schools which cater for the gifted and talented, envisaging a future where mentors work with learners in '*creative problem solving, creative production, and critical thinking*'.

However in the main it is the psychological literature which sheds most light on this aspect of the relationship. To be a mentor in mid-life is viewed as a means of revitalising one's energies into '*creative and productive action*' (Kram, 1983, p. 609); affords an opportunity to engage in '*a special archetypal relationship to another*' (Burton, 1977, p. 117); and is likened to the creative process in Jungian analysis (Burton, 1979).

Baum (1992) recognises that the mentor may be seen as an ego-ideal who, if realistic, may influence the learner to work and be creative, and if unrealistic, may lead to a learner becoming either a workaholic, or one who substitutes fantasy for reality.

Shaughnessy (1989) has called for more empirical work to be done in the area of creativity and mentoring, and is explicit in stating that:

'...mentoring in the creative realm differs greatly from academic and corporate mentoring.' (p.22)

He points out that such mentors must give of themselves emotionally, but that the bringing of creative potential to fruition is in itself its own reward. The creative child, he notes, can present particular difficulties for mentors in that their frustration tolerance is lower, their long range goals may be ambiguous, and their zeitgeist differs. Encouragement therefore should be constructive and genteel, with the mentor willing to be more cognisant of the child's foibles and weaknesses. Shaughnessy also notes that the creative adult presents even more difficulties than the creative child, as the adult may have familial or marital problems which impede creative progress. The adult's need for emotional support and encouragement may thus be greater, but conversely his or her level of emotional depth may also be viewed as a valuable strength.

Kaufmann's (1981) study of the 1964 - 1968 Presidential Scholars also highlights the importance of the mentor in the lives of the creatively gifted. Drawing from a pool of 14,000 scholars who had all achieved the highest scores in the National Merit Qualifying Test, Kaufmann administered a questionnaire based on Levinson's (1978) mentorship model, which asked the length of time of the relationship, the sex of the mentor, the influence of the mentor, and the status of the relationship at the time of the study.

Her findings were significant in that they indicated that the creatively gifted valued the role modelling, support and encouragement of their mentors as opposed to the more professional networking role. Kaufmann suggests that this may indicate that gifted adults prefer a more qualitative, skill-orientated mentorship to one which emphasises climbing the organisational ladder (p.577).

Probably the most comprehensive writing on creative individuals and the generativity link has been undertaken by Torrance (1980, 1981, 1983, 1984, 1989a, 1989b, 1993; Torrance and Wu, 1981). Drawing on the data produced by his 22 year longitudinal study, his 1984 publication is a concise but clear account of the benefits for the creative person in having a mentor, and the drawbacks of being mentorless.

Torrance's study focussed on pupils in two elementary schools in Minnesota during the years 1958 to 1964. The Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (Torrance, 1962) were administered to these pupils during each year of their schooling. During the years 1979 to 1980 follow-up data of adult and adolescent creative behaviour were obtained from 220 (118 women and 102 men) of the 400 original cohort. Complete data for his 1984 study were only available for 212 (96 men and 116 women) of this cohort. The participants' mentor experiences were ascertained by use of the following questions:

1. Have you ever had a mentor - an older person in your occupational field or educational experience who "took you under his wing"?
2. If you had more than one mentor, please select the one that influenced you most. Was this person male or female?
3. What was this person's official position?
4. How long was this person your mentor?
5. Approximately how much older than you was this person?
6. What did this person do that influenced you the most?
7. If you no longer consider this person your mentor, what were the circumstances of the termination of the mentorship?
8. How do you feel about this person now? Why do you feel this way?
9. Have you adopted any of the qualities of this person as your own?
10. If yes, please specify. If no, please discuss why you chose not to adopt any of his/her qualities.' (Torrance, 1984, p.4)

Additionally experiential data about education, frustrations and satisfaction in relation to twelve aspects of life (work, recognition, challenge, income, marital status, children, leisure activities, friendships, community involvement, opportunity for independent action, creative output, joy in living) were taken into account. Also included were data about dreams and hopes for the future, and reports of spurs and obstacles to achievement. Torrance found that not only did the results indicate that the presence or absence of a mentor made a significant difference to creative achievement, but that although all the groups (Men, No Mentor; Men, Mentor; Women, No Mentor; Women, Mentor) attained fairly high levels of education, the lowest achievers were women with no mentors, and the highest achievers were women with mentors.



This evidence alone is interesting and is perhaps indicative of how a supportive mentor can help those who have been less able to achieve through lack of opportunity and networks, and could possibly be extrapolated to others in such situations. Torrance points out that one limitation of this study is that the more education one acquires, the more chance one has of finding a mentor, but also notes that only one third of the mentors were in fact associated with college, university, or professional school experiences. I would suggest that this is also an interesting finding for the role of the traditional mentor in the lives of the creatively gifted. Torrance, Goff and Satterfield's (1998) book on creative mentoring with economically disadvantaged children owes much to this early study. Although it could be argued that the experience of being exposed to the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking over a period of years was as much responsible for the creative achievement of these individuals as having a mentor, these empirical findings do indicate clearly that mentors are able to make a difference in the creative achievements of those mentored. List and Renzulli's (1991) study of creative female artists indicated that despite negative formal educational experiences, the women had experienced at least one mentor relationship. Torrance (1984) concludes that there are seven important rules for those who mentor the creative individual. These are:

**'HELP THEM TO:**

Be unafraid of "falling in love with something" and pursue it with intensity and in-depth. A person is motivated most to do the things they love and can do best.

Know, understand, take pride in, practice, use, exploit and enjoy their greatest strengths.

Learn to free themselves from the expectations of others and to walk away from the games that others try to impose on them.

Free themselves to play their own game in such a way as to make the best use of their strengths and follow their dreams.

Find some great teachers and attach themselves to these teachers.

Avoid wasting a lot of expensive, unproductive energy in trying to be well-rounded.

Learn the skills of inter-dependence and give freely of the infinity of their greatest strengths.' (pp. 56 - 57)

**Metaphysical Aspects**

Despite Levinson's (1978) experience, that mentor relationships are mainly short-term, and the prevailing trend in the modern formal programmes for alliances of a limited period, like Weber (1980), I found that most of the traditional relationships which I studied ended only in death or when distance became too difficult to manage (Bennetts, 1994).

Torrance (1984) in his longitudinal 22 year study on the experiences of 220 adults in their 30's, showed that 52% of these relationships which started in adolescence were still continuing. He remarks:

'In a creative mentor-mentee relationship, neither party knows where the process will go. There should be a willingness to let one thing lead to another, without fear that it will lead to anything damaging to either party. The relationship should be entered into with trust and there should be an awareness that while it might endure for a life-time, it must change with time and the mentor must continue to grow.

There must also be an awareness that the mentee may grow in ways making the relationship no longer useful. Even when this point is reached the spiritual aspects of the relationship may endure though the mentor and the mentee may never see one another. In fact if the relationship is a deep and a caring one, this is quite likely to occur.' (Torrance, 1984, p. 54)

Torrance recognises that the spiritual aspect of the relationship can be important to both parties and this aspect is a theme which usually goes unmentioned in mentor studies in the West, for reasons not known.

Runions (1980) alludes to a metaphysical element when he describes the transformational role of the mentor (p.154 -155) and refers to the '*psychological home base of the learner*' as one which is with the mentor, not in a classroom, implying a linking of mental processes which have less to do with physical geography than with emotional ties.

Kanter (1977) too, appears to be intimating a relationship on a spiritual plane when he likens mentor relationships to having top level '*rabbis or godfathers*'. The writer Heller (1993) remarks:

'I often sense him standing next to me in judgement, as he did so many years ago. It's an eerie feeling'. (p.112)

My own study contains some similar quotations from level headed and intelligent people who found the phenomenon to be somewhat ineffable. In Winstone's (1986) study of personal transformation in mentoring she states:

'Only a handful of researchers...appeared to catch a glimpse of the larger reality of which the relationship is an inextricable part.' (p. 83)

Winstone identified 28 themes in her study, many of which point to a metaphysical relationship. Amongst these is the statement that:

'One recognises that the relationship exists on a far deeper level than most, and that it encompasses a shared intuitive understanding and an enduring spiritual bond.' (p.86)

However she is quick to point out the relevance of this to day to day living:

'...there is a spiritual, or transcendent, quality to the experience which emerges in the themes and appears to be in, but not of, the relationship. It is alluded to in the themes, yet not fully explicated by co-researchers - it is vital, yet ineffable. This process is synergistic. Finally the comprehensive nature of transformation means that the effects of the experience have thoroughly practical, everyday, significance.' (p.90)

Lange (1988) describes her own experience of the significance of such a transformation at a time when she was feeling lacking in motivation or energy, and her doctoral supervisor suggested that a paper she had recently written might be of publishable quality.

'I stopped breathing, and it seemed as if everything in the environment stopped too. After a few seconds of being frozen in time, I remember feeling energised. The colors and sounds took on a new intensity. Apparently no-one else noticed my reaction....That shift in perceiving myself as who I wanted to be represented a significant change in my personal and professional life.' (p.109)

Schwartz and Williams (1995) discuss the role of the mentor as mythic hero which they interpret as relating to the spiritual, moral, social, and psychological development of the individual.

Burton (1979, 1977) likens the counsellor to the mentor and quotes Frank (1977) as proposing that the unusual communication between counsellor and client may be attributable to telepathy or clairvoyance. Frank's paper, whilst likely to be contentious in academic circles, concludes by saying that the religio-magical and scientific faces of psychotherapy are coming increasingly to resemble each other (p.6). The religio-magical element is echoed by Levinson (1976):

'He takes the younger man under his wing, invites him into a new occupational world, shows him round, imparts his wisdom, cares, sponsors, criticises, and bestows his blessing. The teacher and the sponsoring have their value, but the blessing is the crucial element. (Levinson, 1976, p. 23)

Sheehy (1996) refers to mentors as '*spiritual walkers*', Daloz (1987) talks of '*blessings*' (p.29) and '*benedictions*' (p.171), and notes:

'... all mentors serve some sort of higher tradition, As keepers of the educational fires, as the most accessible exemplars of what it means 'to be educated', mentors embody answers to questions like "How does she know so much?" "How can I become like that?" and "What am I supposed to know?" Viewed from sufficient distance, it all looks like magic, and we ought not to be too surprised when we are treated like magicians.' (p.32)

Perhaps Daloz has touched on a rational explanation here, in that the learner in assuming the mentor to be the source of much wisdom, endows the mentor with a 'talismán effect'.

However the literature in this area of mentoring is sparse and it is necessary to separate those papers which deal with spirituality as part of the essence of the mentor relationship, from those which discuss mentors who bring religion into the relationship for doctrinal purposes. Heinrich et al's 1997 study discusses spirituality as an outcome of the psychological and emotional journey of mid-life doctoral students, and Bowker (1993) notes that female American Indians associate their success with a mentor, and a strong sense of spirituality. However this study fails to indicate whether or not the spirituality stemmed from the mentor relationship, or was a previous personal strength.

### **A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

It is now perhaps timely to examine some cross-cultural mentor studies to see how the aspects of the mentor relationship are affected by culture and custom. In 1995 Paul Torrance wrote to tell me that he and a colleague, Kathy Goff had hoped for some time to publish a book on cross-cultural mentor relationships (1995a), and although this had not yet happened he very generously provided me with all the monographs and the introduction to their book. These monographs are mainly unpublished and I am fortunate in being given the opportunity to comment on them in this study as they provide a larger world-view of mentoring than that normally discussed in the UK. The monographs are from a variety of countries and include Spain, Romania, India, Saudi Arabia, Japan and Brazil. They were all written by citizens of those countries and whilst single studies cannot be held to be necessarily representative of all experience, the writers are nonetheless, respected academics in their fields. The Japanese and Brazilian studies are from Torrance's Personal Library, but are not included in Torrance's introduction. However I have included them here as they are nevertheless of interest.

Perhaps the most striking of these monographs is Bellon's (1985, trans. Goff, 1991) study of mentoring throughout the history of Spanish education. Put quite simply, mentoring in the Spanish educational system has always existed culturally, with the mentor being found in the monasteries, or assuming the status of an honoured member of the household. Since 1975 however, mentoring has been mandatory in education, and is recognised as the way to assist students' personal and intellectual growth throughout a sustained continuous process. Mentors are a part of the student's life from General Basic Education, through Middle and High School, and on to Higher Education. It is also recognised that in order for mentors to fulfil their required duties they need to be addressing their own development:

'...it is necessary to intensify his/her understanding of instructional technology, and offer him/her the necessary means for personal development and self-actualisation.' (Goff, 1991, p.34)

In Bilbao in the early 1950's, an institute of mentor/teachers was created at Gaztelueta College. These mentors were charged with the personal development of the student which included the human, spiritual and scholastic, and is a much more holistic model of mentoring than in the UK or USA. Bellon quotes Gonzalez Simancas' (1975) description of the mentor as a teacher:

'An agreement, live interaction, must exist between students and mentor/teachers in order to enrich the lives of the students through the interaction of diverse personalities. But to be really effective, the mentor should address all personal affairs which can only be aired in private conversation.' (Goff, 1991, p.28)

In the Spanish culture it is also clear that self-actualisation for the learner is perhaps of greater importance than the intellectual:

'...that is not merely instruction nor merely intellectual in nature, but that is intent on promoting the development of the full potential of the individual, which includes scientific knowledge and personal knowledge of feelings and will'. (Goff, 1991, p.34)

By contrast Sato's (undated, but post 1984) manuscript highlights how restrictive the Japanese scholastic culture is for children, compared to that of children in America. Japanese students attend Jukku, a second school which begins after their regular school day, and this supplements their learning even during holiday periods. He also remarks that Japanese students are raised in an atmosphere of '*strict uniformity and age-differentiated code of behaviour*' (p. 2), which forbids free communication with adults. This being so the educational emphasis in Japan is on factual assimilation rather than full human development, or at least full human development as it is understood in Spain.

Sato likens the word 'mentor' to that of 'sensei', which originally meant '*one who is born earlier*' (p. 3), and through being born earlier is now able to transmit the skills, knowledge and values which have been traditionally inherited, to the next generation. Sensei usually denotes intimacy and respect, but has become more commonplace in Japanese culture to now mean someone with more knowledge, skills or higher social status in almost any area, such as a doctor. However Sato notes that senseis should also demonstrate by example, the behaviour and personality traits which they consider suitable as adult models.

Despite the fact that Sato uses the word 'intimacy', it is clearly not meant in the same way that the word would be understood in the West, and one senses a formality about the context in which it is used. Yet the relationship is obviously special as it is noted that the sensei often gives the main speech at wedding ceremonies, and that the relationship of sensei to student endures throughout life. Spirituality or spiritual growth, is not mentioned as being either a part of the relationship, or a task for the sensei to fulfil.

The Brazilian study is of interest as it is focussed on the mentor in the life of creative individuals and sheds light of the issue of gender and the artistic culture in Brazil. Wechlser (undated but post 1987) interviewed a mixed sex cohort of 20 writers and poets between the ages of 25 and 45.

Her question was primarily whether creative individuals in Brazil had mentors, or whether the cultural environment offered other alternatives, and owes much to the influence of Torrance (1984). Her study found that the unanimous response of the cohort was that their mothers had acted in the role of mentor to acknowledge, support, and encourage their creativity. This was true of both male and female respondents. In some cases an aunt, maid or sister substituted for the mother, but the figure was always female. Fathers were seen as disapproving of creative ability and considered writing and poetry to be unmasculine. Radio also played a part in stimulating the imagination as television had arrived late to Brazil. Weschler's cohort surmised that the radio was also more conducive to imagination as there is little need to fantasise when television has already produced the image.

Another common characteristic of the cohort was the sense of isolation and loneliness caused by feeling different from their peers. Such isolation, real or imagined, caused them to retreat into an inner world, and to express their sensitivity and need for love through their writing. This isolation had its own rewards however and allowed them to become super-sensitive to the outside world, sensing the subtleties of nature, and feeling and becoming a part of it. These experiences were translated into poems and writing, with many keeping diaries and journals which still serve reflectively as creative inspiration today. Such experiences when likened to those of Wordsworth, Blake or Coleridge, would be classed as metaphysical or spiritual in form, but these words are not used by Weschler.

It is interesting to note that none of the cohort eventually found careers in writing, as literature was not valued as a way of earning money or acquiring status. Only one man remarked that his creativity in school was later acknowledged by a teacher, with whom he fell in love. All others affirmed that their verbal and literary talents went unrecognised at school. A 38 year old poet had recently left his job in bureaucracy to teach and lecture to young people on the importance of expressing emotions through poetry and literature.

Weschler concludes that the mentor as educator in schools is notably absent in Brazil, and surmises that this may be because of teachers being unaware of how important they are to their pupils' future achievements. She also calls for work to be undertaken with those in other creative areas such as science and drama. What we are not told however is the sex of the teachers involved.

Are they primarily male and therefore promulgating the Brazilian male ethos? Or is it that in Brazil creativity is still seen as being linked to IQ and therefore overlooked in some pupils? Is it that quiet introverted children tend to be ignored? Or is it a basic financial truth recognised by teachers as well as by Weschler, that creative writers in Brazil cannot survive through their writing alone and therefore require a career which will provide a stable income? Her study does however highlight a common feature in creative individuals, that of isolation and loneliness, and this phenomenon has been noted in the USA where it has been suggested that children as young as five might have to curb or repress their creativity in order to fit into the 'norm' (Torrance 1963).

Nicola's (1990, p.136) definition of mentoring comes from the Romanian Encyclopaedic Dictionary where a mentor is held to be a '*spiritual leader, advisor, guide, educator*'. Nicola's study of 31 eminent Romanians finds that creative original personalities are the product of long-term influence by others:

'To whom they remain spiritually attached their whole lives. A great intellectual love, mutual sacrifice and a reciprocal feeling binds the mentor and the mentee in a **spiritual family**'. (p.140 emphasis in original)

The criteria chosen by Nicola for inclusion in his study were that the personalities studied should have gained national, sometimes international reputations by virtue of being a mentor, master, and head of a school. The fields chosen were those of: architecture, biology, physics, history-epigraphy, literary criticism, applied mathematics, medicine, medical plants, and sociological-monographical investigation. Using documented biographical evidence of historic figures in Romanian cultures, Nicola aimed to obtain answers to most of the ten questions used in Torrance's mentor study (1984).

He also studied the accounts of the '*multitude of disciples*' of these personalities, and who have continued the work they started. Although admitting that some of his sources did not offer sufficient data for each case Nicola proposes that:

'The study of mentor relationship suggests it could be taken as a **model of genesis of a human competence**; expresses the unity between theory and method, flexibility and invariability, real and virtual, individual and culture, thinking and learning, intellect and affectivity.' (p.140 emphasis in original)

He informs us that in Romania '*The same as for natural kinship, the verb "to be mentee" can't be conjugated in the past tense; it designates a state valid all life long*'. This 'familial' relationship is one which is particularly applicable to the traditional mentor alliance, but which could rarely be applied to the arranged relationships in organisational settings.

No relationship ended because of dislike or dissonance, but only because of a change of professional status and distance, and 29 mentees of the 31 mentors, have now themselves become notable mentors. Nicola concludes:

'The mentor relationships represent a significant factor of progress in the learning processes, creative production, leadership and team activity. Beyond the picture of refined beauty and greatness, such models of civilisation, representative for the different historical epochs, could be a Didactica Magna for comprehension of the complex, long life and contradictory process of personality formation.' (p. 143)

Soliman's (1986) monograph on mentoring notes that mentor relationships are deeply rooted in the Arab culture, and have evolved to indicate the '*teaching of all that was required at any given time to make a person complete and integrated*' (p. 2). Such teaching was holistic and included spiritual knowledge and guidance and health care. The relationship is one of committed care and closeness, and is discussed mainly in the context of the student/professorial alliance, although counsellors, teachers, and social workers also serve in such relationships. Soliman also notes the role of grandparents in Arab culture, who serve to protect children from too harsh an upbringing, and who frequently punish parents who are too strict.

Whilst spending a year at The University of Georgia as a Visiting Scholar, Soliman carried out research into mentor relationships among 47 Arab students on campus. Thirty nine students completed the questionnaires which consisted of the Torrance Mentor Questions (1984), but which also asked whether the mentor relationship for the student continued when the student went to America, and how the mentor felt about the student going to study abroad. Almost two-thirds of the cohort reported having mentors with half of the male participants (11) naming a family member as mentor. The most frequently named other mentor was a professor. However mentors had differing levels of education, with some reported as having none at all. The most important function of a mentor was reported as that of caring, with males reporting the addition of financial support. The characteristics adopted by the students from their mentors were all in the domain of interpersonal and personality traits. Soliman proposes that the students' needs for interpersonal caring were more predominant than those needs which were skill related. The affective side of the relationship was held in high regard:

'Expressions of feelings which received the highest mention were: appreciation, respect, love, and considering the mentor as an ideal. Other expressions were; friendship, likeness, valuing, admiration, brotherhood, good feelings, gratefulness and loyalty'. (p.26)

The majority of participants reported positive feelings from their mentors with regard to studying abroad, and also that the relationships continued during this period.



Soliman notes the paucity of female mentors in his study, and indeed as only 5 of his cohort were females students, it may be many years before females in Arab cultures have the requisite role models. Soliman (p.37) also remarks that the mentor relationship continues after the death of the mentor with the mentor remaining an ideal to be emulated, and his support and values remaining a source of inspiration.

One of the most interesting of the accounts of mentoring is that of Raina and Vats (undated but post 1985), in which they liken the mentor relationship to that of the guru in Indian culture. The word 'guru' has been debased by Western usage, but originally meant '*one who can lead from darkness to light; from untruth to truth, and from death to immortality*' (p.2). The sacred books, state Raina and Vats, repeat that man cannot gain salvation except through a Master of Truth, a divine soul. Esoteric truths can only be transmitted by the guru, and without one, no initiation is possible. The transmission of knowledge, within diverse disciplines such as medicine, music, and philosophy, was essentially one of the oral tradition, and as the purpose of education initially in India was one of salvation, the training period for the student was 25 years long. The student was expected to test the worthiness of the guru, but when the guru had passed the test then the student must submit to the guru without reservation, and the guru must encourage the spirit of free inquiry and learning. The aim of the relationship was total transformation which took place in an atmosphere of '*benevolence, love and affection*' (p. 19). Despite the seeming submission on the part of the student, the system allowed for the student to leave the guru if they were incompetent, had temper problems, were offensive, or wasted the student's time. Such a system might still find favour today in some settings, but was a very necessary provision in an age when the student was otherwise bound by custom and law.

Raina and Vats relate that today the quest for perfection and knowledge is still carried out by students of the performing arts, as well as in the field of science, and is not influenced by caste or regional barriers. They note the disgrace brought upon the term 'guru' by those not authorised to use the title, whose chief concern is modern luxury, and who are not content to remain true to the one-to-one relationship, but require massed discipleship. Despite such charlatans, they believe that the nature of the guru/student relationship is perennial, and is instrumental in the development of creativity and exceptional talent. The guru, they state:

'...is considered to be the prime alchemist of the soul who brings about the great mental and personality change. It is therefore not surprising that some Indian psychologists consider the guru/shisya [student] relationship as the most acceptable model of psychotherapy in Indian settings.((p.26, insert mine)

The diversity in mentoring across cultures and customs does not detract from the mentor relationship, but merely serves to highlight the areas of commonality which appear to be the essentials of a learning alliance in the traditional mentor mode.

## **Conclusion**

The interpersonal aspects of the traditional mentor relationship have not been widely researched as this review has attempted to indicate. Kalbfleisch and Davies (1993), echoing Reich (1985), called for investigation into the facets of naturally occurring relationships as the first priority for those wishing to enhance formal programmes. Merriam (1983) too is insistent that:

'The fundamental question for adult educators and researchers is not how mentoring leads to material success, but how it relates to adult development and adult learning.' (p.171)

That mentoring enables the development of self-esteem, which may have an influence on self-actualisation, and ultimately well-being, is seemingly being overlooked by researchers and writers in the Western world at a time when stress levels and other mental health problems are rising. There are few links made between mentoring creative individuals and psychological support, despite the difficulties and coping strategies faced by creative individuals in terms of isolation and being seen as different in childhood. Although the field of scholarship in this area has been examined and furthered by Torrance and his students, it has mainly been from a quantitative approach based on the Torrance Mentor Questionnaire. No research data is available on mentoring and creative individuals with regard to mood swings and peak experiences. No work has been undertaken to establish the meaning and significance of the mentor in the lives of creative people, but models for adult development have been suggested by Levinson (1976, 1996) and Sheehy (1976, 1996) and these will require assessing in the culture of today. Self-actualisation and the metaphysical aspects of the relationship lack experiential data, but are worthy of investigation in terms of mentoring psychology. The nature and use of power is reasonably well-documented within the formal mentor relationship, but how it is managed in naturally forming alliances remains an unknown. The lack of mentoring definition and relative paucity of substantive literature makes for difficulty in distilling and synthesising past work.

However there appears to be much scope for researchers who wish to investigate mentor phenomena in terms of an interpersonal model of relating, which may enable this complex alliance to be more fully understood, and provide data to inform the practice and process of mentoring.

# Chapter Four

## Research Methodology

'If art is to nourish the roots of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him.' Kennedy, address Amherst College, October 26th, 1963.

'Though this be madness, yet there is method in it.' Shakespeare, 'Hamlet'

### Research Aim and Purpose

The overall aim of this research was to examine the interpersonal relationship of the traditional mentor and the creative artist, with a view to discovering the meaning of the relationship, and its relevance to human development, psychological well-being, and self-actualisation.

The inquiry was an attempt at enabling understanding of what took place in traditional mentor relationships, and what meanings were ascribed to such relationships by the artists involved. Any inquiry which focusses on addressing the actions, meanings and beliefs of human subjects is one which Dilthey (1813 -1911) in Makkreel and Rodi (1989), would warrant as deserving of examination in the context of the human sciences, most suitably addressed within a qualitative research paradigm .

Qualitative research has a history of use in education (Eisner, 1990), social work (Powell, 1989), psychology (West, 1986), organisational studies (Marshall, 1981), medical science (Fagerhaugh & Strauss, 1977), anthropology (Adler & Adler 1989), and sociology (Hargreaves, 1981). It is particularly suited to studies which focus on adult learning experience because it draws from various disciplines, fields and subject matter in an attempt to make more clear the complexity of human action and thought, and uses methodologies which involve the study and collection of empirical materials to '*describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives*' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p. 2). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) view the qualitative researcher as 'bricoleur', a Jack of all trades, or professional do-it yourself person whom they describe as:

'adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks, ranging from interviewing to observing, to interpreting personal or historical documents, to intensive self-reflection and introspection....The researcher-as-bricoleur works between and within competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms.' (pp. 2-3)

They describe the product of such work as a '*bricolage*', a complex, dense, reflexive, collage-like creation which represents the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon studied, and which connects the parts to the whole, and stresses the inherent meaningful relationships.

Although it is commonly accepted that qualitative research is 'loose', and unstructured, and that eventually theory will emerge and be grounded in data, it is undeniable that any researcher must have some idea of where the research focus is directed. Wolcott (1982) notes that it would be both foolish and impossible to embark upon research without knowing what one was looking for in the '*quest*' (p.157). It would be dishonest therefore, after completing a research project on mentor relationships to propose a further study on this topic, and then indicate that I had no idea of my field of interest. Indeed if this had been the case then it is doubtful that my application to study for a higher degree would have been acceptable to my choice of university. Whilst acknowledging that 'the past is another country' my research area was mapped out by my prior experience, and I had ideas and hunches which had come about as a result of such experience. So although I had no preconception of the terrain ahead, I knew where I had come from and in which direction I would like to go. This was coupled with as open a mind as possible and a willingness to change course according to circumstance. Krieger remarks:

'The practice of interviewing others last, after already forming one's own ideas, is not the standard one in social science. Interviews and library searches are usually done first, and then one develops one's own thinking based on them. The practice of consulting others later has perhaps more affinity with the artist's quest to be original, than with the academic's desire to come to conclusions based on evidence. To foster originality, one must often sequester, or protect, the self and its ideas and give them room to develop somewhat independently, without too much influence from others.'  
(Krieger, S. 1991, p.189)

The following is a list of my initial intentions which were based on issues arising from my previous work in this field:

- \* To discuss the research findings together with those from my initial study into mentor relationships, in order to discover to what extent it might be possible to achieve a model of generalisability, in a phenomenological sense, as opposed to a statistical sense. (Morgan, 1984).
- \* To produce a negotiated account of the meaning of the mentor relationship in the experience of participants.
- \* To examine and identify the strategies which support the creativity and well-being of individuals in the context of the mentor relationship.

- \* To investigate the phenomena involved in the non-material (transcendent) aspect of the mentor relationship, and achieve a descriptive and theoretical account of such experience.
- \* To establish the value of the relationship, and its relevance to human development in terms of self-actualisation in order to enable a more complete understanding of the mentor role in adult development and education.
- \* To examine the experience of the mentor/learner relationship in the lives of different types of creative artists

Such information would, I reasoned, be of use to those who work with creative children and adults in both educational and mental health settings, and would perhaps provide a holistic theory of the developmental mentor relationship from a psychological and educational perspective, as the mentor concept is at present somewhat ill-formed and immature.

### **Ontological and Epistemological Stance**

The chosen paradigm for the research took as its position the notion of a reality which is the product of human intellect and human construction, but which recognises that such constructions have led to a historical or virtual reality which is, albeit inappropriately, understood as 'real'. In taking this stance I placed myself as researcher as central to the inquiry along with the participants, recognising that 'truths' and 'reality' are constructed in the light of the values of both myself and those I have chosen to study, and in doing so acknowledge that the findings of this study were subjectively mediated and created as the inquiry proceeded.

Such a perspective was in keeping with the concept of the research practice of '*self-as-instrument*' (Rew, Bechtel and Sapp, 1993, p. 300), and recognised that the relationship of myself to those whose relationships I studied was crucial to this research. My choice to write this thesis in the first person was taken in order to make both the reader of the finished text, and myself, actively conscious of my 'self' in all aspects of the researcher/participant relationship. Ronai (1992, p. 105) has noted her own difficulties in identifying within the text the role or 'voice' in which she was speaking at the time.

She concludes that it is dishonest and contrived to sort out separate influences and label them, even though one '*voice*' may speak louder than the rest at times, as '*self*' incorporates influences from all the roles one plays.

My aim within this thesis was neither to take the 'confessional' stance, nor simply reminisce, but to incorporate what Dilthey (in Makkreel and Rodi, 1989), termed '*reflexive self-awareness*', an awareness of my conscious processes and feelings in relation to the project and to the participants, recognising that in such a state '*the subject is not at all separated from what is perceived*' (p. 339).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) point out that:

'This posture effectively challenges the traditional distinction between ontology and epistemology; what can be known is inextricably linked with the interaction between a particular investigator and a particular group'.  
(p.110)

This position fitted within the larger concept of the qualitative interpretivist perspective and drew on both the constructivist viewpoint that knowledge is actively created within the interaction of the investigator and the respondents, and the critical theorist viewpoint that knowledge is both value mediated and value dependent.

### **Methodological Approaches**

Schwandt (1994) quotes Goodman (1978) as the philosopher most responsible for defining a constructivist theory of reality and knowledge, and who proposes that instead of seeking to look for '*truths*', we adopt the notion of '*rightness*'. Such a concept of rightness, of both fitting and working, is one which would fit *into* a context, or discourse or symbolic interaction, but is not about fitting *onto* an independent reality. This pragmatic approach is one which seeks to advance understanding not in order to arrive '*at a truth about something already made, but about something right - to construct something that works cognitively, that fits together and handles new cases, that may implement further inquiry and invention*' (Goodman, 1978, p.163).

Guba and Lincoln's (1985) own perspective is equally wide-ranging and eclectic and accepts multiple, conflicting constructions, all of which are potentially meaningful. Schwandt (1994) describes in detail the six suggested properties of constructions which Guba and Lincoln propose:

- '1. Constructions are attempts to make sense of or to interpret experience, and most are self-sustaining or renewing.
2. The nature or quality of a construction that can be held depends upon the range and scope of information available to a constructor, and the constructor's sophistication in dealing with that information.

3. Constructions are extensively shared, and some of those shared are disciplined constructions, that is, collective and systematic attempts to come to common agreement about a state of affairs, for example, science.
4. Although all constructions must be considered meaningful, some are rightly labelled malconstruction because they are incomplete, simplistic, uninformed, internally inconsistent, or derived by inadequate methodology.
5. The judgement of whether a given construction is malformed can be made only with reference to the paradigm out of which the constructor operates; in other words criteria or standards are framework specific, so for instance religious construction can only be judged adequate or inadequate utilising the particular theological paradigm from which it is derived.
6. One's constructions are challenged when one becomes aware that new information conflicts with the held construction or when one senses a lack of intellectual sophistication needed to make sense of new information.' (p.129)

In other words, meaning is what we make it to be within a set of assumptions as those named here, and human action and interaction can be understood within frameworks of social structures and belief systems. And, as Bruner (1990, p.30) reminds us, constructivism '*does not insist there is only one way of constructing meaning, or one right way*'. Miles and Huberman (1994) have asserted that:

'...social phenomena, such as language, decisions, conflicts, and hierarchies, exist objectively in the world and exert strong influences over human activities because people construe them in common ways. Things that are believed become real and can be inquired into.' (p.4)

My stance would paraphrase such an assertion by holding that social phenomena *only exist objectively in the world because they are commonly held to be real*. It is my belief that if an objective reality exists outside human construct and custom, then it is not one which most humans are able to comprehend in entirety whilst living in the everyday world of phenomena. This philosophy owes much to the eastern Buddhist viewpoint which assumes a constructivist position in acknowledging that perception is changeable by psychological practices (Claxton, 1987), and is a position which is slowly becoming adopted into mainstream western thought by students of philosophy and physics alike.

Within the qualitative framework sit competing methodological strategies for conducting an inquiry into human relationships, but first it is perhaps timely to examine interpretivist, hermeneutic, heuristic, and critical theorist approaches, as it is these which have been most influential in my thinking. Later in this chapter I will focus on issues of strategy, validity, and ethics.

Schwandt (1994) notes that although we may feel professionally impelled to use a special language for the methodological procedures which are used in interpretive inquiries, '*at base all interpretive inquirers watch, listen, ask, record and examine*' (p.119). All of these activities take place with the aim of attending to the lives of human subjects in all their complexity and detail, with a view to attributing meaning and sense to everyday lived experience. The objective researcher, distanced from the subjective experience under study, has become less and less countenanced as either practical, feasible or desirable in recent years, and the struggle with how to establish an objective interpretive science of subjective human experience, has given way to an active, subjective engagement of researcher and researched.

Rabinow and Sullivan (1987) propose that the act of interpretation is not merely a methodological option, but is the very nature of human inquiry itself, and that it is necessary to assume that we live the hermeneutical life, that interpretation is part of the nature of our being. Therefore if we accept an ontological hermeneutic as a premise, the opposition between objectivity and subjectivity is overcome (Schwandt, 1994).

The word 'hermeneutics' comes from the Greek word 'hermeneuin', 'to interpret', and indeed in Greek mythology it was Hermes who acted as interpreter between the gods and mortals to create language. Pinar and McKnight (1995) write that:

'Hermeneutically, what one strives for is a position of truthfulness and understanding from which to speak.' (Pinar and McKnight, 1995, p. 184)

Wachterhauser (1986) has proposed that both language and history are also constituents of the human condition, and that both are the condition and limit of our understanding. Such condition and limit are integral to the process of making meaning, and are what makes such a process a hermeneutical activity. Historically, hermeneutical interpretation has been concerned with understanding Biblical and ancient text but has been argued as being equally suitable for the interpreting of narrative which can be likened to the interpretation of written text (Taylor 1987).

Hermeneutic phenomenology was developed from Husserl's phenomenology by Heidegger, who, following Dilthey's nineteenth century view that human actions could only be apprehended through hermeneutical understanding (in Makkreel & Rodi, 1989, p. 454), proposed it as the method of investigation most suitable for the study of human action (Packer, 1985).



Husserl's philosophy was concerned with the nature of existence, or 'Being'. Heidegger's philosophy was more concerned with the meaning of the nature of human Being. Heidegger proposed that humans are so preoccupied in the everyday minutiae of social living, and living in the eyes of other people, that they exist in an 'inauthentic' mode. Authenticity for Heidegger demands living in the world through knowledge or through poetic modes of expression, in order to understand and make contact with a purer kind of Being. His hermeneutical phenomenology, was an attempt to strip away and identify the taken for granted, everyday life, in an attempt to reveal Being (Heidegger, 1978).

The phenomenological approach aims to identify the essence of the phenomena under study, whilst attempting to 'bracket' preconceptions, and give a full account of the pure experience. Phenomenology therefore, investigates what Van Manen (1990) calls 'lived experience', and is a study of the way that consciousness perceives objects. It asks the question, 'What is the essence or structure of this phenomenon?' Hermeneutics takes phenomenology beyond this question to ask 'What are the conditions under which this happens which make it possible to interpret its meaning?' (Patton, 1990). Heidegger's hermeneutic however, is not simply to uncover hidden phenomena, but to interpret meaning in a way which goes beyond what is given directly by the description. In other words, to use the descriptive, everyday given information, as a clue for meanings that are not given explicitly. (Cohen, Omery, 1994).

Heidegger viewed hermeneutics as a philosophy rather than a method, and indeed denounced method in favour of reflection, which he felt could not translate to any clear or teachable method (Speigelberg, 1982). Research which is based on Heideggerian hermeneutics is research which looks for what it means to be human, and utilises as 'method' the processes of thinking, reading and writing (Wilson, Hutchinson, 1991).

Bruner (1986, p.122-123) predicts that a negotiatory or hermeneutic approach has direct implications for the conduct of education in as much as it encourages a culture of the forum, a culture of dialogue and action. He says:

'In the end, it is the transaction of meaning by human beings, human beings armed with reason and buttressed by the faith that sense can be made and remade, that makes human culture - and by culture, I do not mean surface consensus.' (p.159)

In accepting an ontological hermeneutics as a way of being, a way of life, I am saying that what I 'know' is a result of interpreted construction which might take place individually or with others, but which only assumes meaning, that is becomes meaningful, when it is experienced in terms of other social constructs.

The word 'heuristic' is derived from another Greek word, 'heuristic' which means 'to find' or 'to discover' Moustakas (1990) reminds us however, that it refers to an internal search process which acknowledges the self of the researcher in all aspects of the discovery. It has its roots in humanistic psychology (Patton, 1990) and includes Polanyi's (1983) concept of **tacit knowing**, which recognises that some knowledge cannot be put into words; **intuition**, the immediacy of knowledge without the use of logic or reasoning; **indwelling**, the willingness of the researcher to remain immersed in the research question; and **focussing**, an inner receptive state where one is able to attend to essence and themes.

Heuristic inductive approaches to the examination of phenomena blend well with the hermeneutical approach and help identify useful methods for practice. Janesick (1994) summarises the five stage heuristic approach as:

'First, immersion in the setting starts the inductive process.

Second the incubation process allows for thinking, becoming aware of nuance and meaning in the setting, and capturing intuitive insights to achieve understanding.

Third, there is a phase of illumination that allows for expanding awareness.

Fourth, and most understandably, there is a phase of explication that includes description and explanation to capture the experience of individuals in the study.

Finally, creative synthesis enables one to bring together as a whole the individual's story, including the meaning of the lived experience.' (Janesick, 1994, p.216)

Heuristic inquiry identifies and illustrates themes, processes and patterns through a thorough process of 'indwelling' with the data, and careful and rigorous analysis 'of situations, events, conversations, relationships, feelings, thoughts, values and beliefs' (Moustakas, 1990). It is required that researchers in heuristic inquiry have had in-depth personal knowledge of the experience under study, or equivalent encounters, and that the one conducting the research uses this experience within the study. This apparent methodological dichotomy should not necessarily cause difficulty for researchers who have been trained in the person-centred counselling model, as one of the many commonalities in both heuristics and hermeneutics is neither total self centredness nor total distancing, but *appropriate* self-sharing, as and when and if, necessary. To 'bracket' pre-suppositions does not mean to deny experience, and I found, like Hopfl (1992), that this was '*an impossible task in practice*', and that it was more appropriate in this study, for me to openly and honestly admit my preconceptions, and then attempt to formulate a way of working with them. To this end the heuristic interpretive framework which I chose to use was one which accommodated both my 'self' and the 'selves' with whom I worked.

Within an ontological hermeneutic standpoint is the issue of verification of the interpretation of meaning. Taylor (1987) maintains that there can be no verification procedure to fall back on if the interpretation seems implausible or simply incomprehensible, but that we are only able to offer further interpretation as '*we are in an interpretive circle*' (p.75).

Whilst accepting that there may be more than one way of interpreting findings, Taylor's standpoint does not sit easily with my viewpoint which assumes that knowledge is a result of interpreted construction. I see no reason why one individual within the 'interpretive circle' cannot also be viewed as someone with more experience of the phenomena under inquiry, who uses that experience in dialogue with the individual being studied to achieve sense and meaning based on theoretical and empirical evidence, and enables those under study to act or change in the light of that new perspective. It is at this point that my stance draws on aspects of critical theorism and connoisseurship.

The critical theorist approach acknowledges the preconceived ideas and assumptions of the one conducting the research and recognises that groups and individuals live within ideologies which affect their existence in relative and material ways, such as those of class, gender or race. The self-conscious criticism which critical researchers employ, enables them to try to become aware of such inequalities, and to use the research context as a means of implementing awareness which may lead to necessary change. The work of the critical researcher is accepted as credible only when the constructs are plausible to those who constructed them.

The feminist researcher Lather (1991), has named the process by which the research moves those being studied to a deeper understanding of the world in order for them to transform it, as catalytic validity. She maintains that studies which possess catalytic validity will both display the reality altering impact of the inquiry process, and also direct that impact to enable those under study to gain self-understanding and self-direction.

My stance was one which attempted to enable both those being researched and myself, as one who was involved in the study, to examine our lives in order to improve our understanding and our quality of life. Such an approach within the framework of this study necessitated an examination of socially acceptable mores and custom within relationships, and the psychological effects which these have on individuals and their well-being.

The 'change' referred to here is concerned with cognitive change, the extent to which individuals understood their own actions, their own constraints, and the cultural perceptions of relationships in general, more fully in the light of the research interviews.

Eisner (1991, p.63) has acknowledged the constructivist approach and has proposed a 'knowing' which is based on an aesthetic value base which he terms 'connoisseurship', the art of apperception, the developed ability to experience the subtleties of form. He uses an artistic metaphor of 'the enlightened eye' for this type of heightened awareness. He argues that when attempting to create meaning within an artistic approach to research, the issue at stake is not one of qualitative as contrasted with non-qualitative or quantitative, but in how one approaches the educational world. He states that:

'In artistic approaches to research, the role that emotion plays in knowing is central. Far from the ideal of emotional neutrality which is sought in much of social science research, the artistically oriented researcher recognises that knowing is not simply a uni-dimensional phenomena, but takes a variety of forms. The researcher knows also that the forms one uses to represent what one knows, affect what can be said... To know a rose by its Latin name and yet to miss its fragrance is to miss much of the rose's meaning. Artistic approaches to research are very much interested in helping people experience the fragrance.' (Eisner, 1981, pp. 8 - 9)

Such an appreciation of the importance of aesthetic knowing had obvious implications for a study based on the experiences of those in the creative arts field, and I have attempted to pay due deference to the intuitive felt processes of both myself and those I interviewed in terms of carrying out the study and its subsequent analysis. This stance makes explicit use of the emotional and imaginal, and acknowledges that mind and matter transact, and that 'we make our experience, not simply discover it' (Eisner, 1991, p.7).

My approach therefore, was one of a heuristic inductive approach combined with hermeneutical eclectism which drew on various similar viewpoints but always at the service of those in the research study itself. I have also assumed a holistic viewpoint which is in keeping with the study and which accepts that the whole is always something greater than its component parts. Such a viewpoint is compatible with my subsequent analysis of material evidence, as I see deconstruction as helpful only when it is followed by an honest attempt at developing a wider understanding and synthesis.

### **The Hermeneutical Process**

Collin and Young (1988a) describe hermeneutical inquiry in the following way:

'Hermeneutical inquiry is one of the methodologies appropriate to phenomenological philosophy which in contrast to positivist philosophy, admits individual consciousness is a proper subject of study. Such study demands interpretation, and this is the essence of hermeneutics. Our starting point is the text, verbal narrative, dialogue or action that we wish, for some reason, to understand more fully'. (p.154)

Packer (1985) explains the difference between a rationalist explanation and a hermeneutic interpretation as:

'...like the difference between a map of a city and an account of that city by someone who lives in it and walks its streets. The map is the product of detached description...Different maps would emphasise different aspects of the city: its street layout, its transportation, or its phone lines....They are designed to serve a stranger to the city as much as -perhaps more than- a resident.

The account one would give of living in a city on a daily basis, on the other hand, is likely to be personal, incomplete and prejudiced. Therein lies its usefulness to a newcomer who has come to stay or (to make the simile more accurate) to someone who already lives in the city but now wishes to get to know it better and to live it more fully'. (pp. 1091-1092)

Collin and Young (1988a) have proposed the three steps in the process of hermeneutical inquiry as;

- 1) recognition of the researcher's initial framework
- 2) identification of the actor's framework
- 3) construction of an interpretation' (pp. 155-156)

and quote Packer (1985) as suggesting that although researchers may approach text and narrative with preconceived ideas based on theory, it is important that the interpretive framework be based on practical understanding of the actions of those who are being studied.

My interpretation of **Step 1** has been to acknowledge and recognise the existence of my prior empirical study, and my mentor experiences, but always to be aware that each interview is unique and presents new evidence. Such an interpretation fits with what Kvale (1983) describes as requiring the interviewer to have '*a foreknowledge of the theme as well as being able to bracket his suppositions and be open to the emergence of new aspects of the theme of investigation*' (p.188).

**Step 2** demands that the participant's experience of the context of action be taken into account when developing a conceptual framework, and that such experience will result in different interpretations. In other words it demands that the participants' actions and feelings are understood, reframed, and presented in the context of individual experience.

Finally **Step 3** concerns itself with a negotiated and jointly constructed interpretation, encompassing what Kvale (1983) describes as a '*hermeneutical circle*' (p.185), which is Taylor's (1987) '*interpretive circle*'. This acknowledges the process of a recognition of separate parts of information, and constant incremental movement towards shared meaning by an examination of these parts, until finally a whole unitary meaning is negotiated.

Collin and Young (1988a) also point out that explanations are expected to bring something new to our understanding of the original narrative and should not be simply a reiteration of the point of view first described. They have also argued that the practice of counselling is particularly suited to hermeneutics and acknowledge that counselling practitioners are engaged daily in a form of hermeneutical inquiry (Collin and Young 1988a p.159).

Although in my previous research into the mentor relationship I had specifically used a person-centred counselling approach and had attempted to justify such an approach as one which was relevant and ethically sound, I had not attempted to justify its use on hermeneutical grounds. However when examining the six significant issues for hermeneutical researchers highlighted by Collin and Young (1988b) I became aware that my previous work had addressed all six issues of subjectivity, reliability, validity, accessibility, feasibility and confidentiality, albeit not in great depth, and some in more detail than others.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) have proposed that qualitative inquiry concerns itself with establishing trustworthiness to counteract the charge often made that such inquiry is 'undisciplined'. These issues are integrated within this chapter and discussed again in Chapter Eight of this thesis.

### **Methodological Issues**

In assessing which strategies to use in order to achieve deep understanding of what I understood to be a very private relationship, I had to consider whether there were more effective ways of gathering the required information than the ones used in the early research. I had also to examine how best to work in an area of great sensitivity whilst acknowledging the inherent issues of power and dependence within my relationship to the participants. As such my thinking was coloured considerably by the lessons I learnt from my initial study, and from its aftermath, but such experience is invaluable, and to some extent the initial study was a pilot project for the methodology of the new work. There are many methods within qualitative inquiry for eliciting information from participants. What was most important was to decide which methods would enable the collection of the right data for the inquiry. Having established my stance as one of eclectic hermeneutics, then it is apparent that my leanings were towards interpreting text, or narrative about the traditional mentor relationship. However as it has also been established that I was influenced by the constructivist viewpoint then it was necessary for me to interpret text or narrative in a way which could be negotiated and discussed, but which reserved the stance of critical theorist to enable reference within those negotiations to prior theory, in order to enable new understanding, and action.

As such although it would seem timely to discuss the value of structured interviewing with its pre-set question format and its attempts to work in a quasi-scientific objective fashion, such argument would neither be in keeping with my research, nor in line with my world-view. Therefore although I cannot pretend that I considered anything which would attempt to objectify those who took part in this study, I did find it necessary to consider other means of accessing the sensitive data which my past experience had warned me to expect, and to have ignored this experience because it was a preconception would have been foolhardy and unethical.

### **Collecting Sensitive Information**

Lee (1993) has remarked that although the invention of the confessional box in 1565 was to help overcome the unease of the questioner rather than the informant, it is less difficult to discuss personal details '*where privacy and anonymity are guaranteed, and when disclosure takes place in a non-censorious atmosphere*' (p.97).

Much could be said then for using a questionnaire which was couched in open-ended terms and in which participants might feel encouraged to disclose previously unspoken information. By excluding the influence of the interviewer it is reasoned that a more valid response is elicited from the participants. Such practice however is unlikely to produce more information than that required to answer the immediate question and does not allow for a freer expression of individual experience.

These experiences in turn are unable to be seen in the context of a greater experience, and are described by Lee (1993) as '*truncated and narrow*'. It is difficult to be clear and specific when attempting to elicit information about issues which seem ineffable even in conversation, and which would appear impossibly convoluted in questionnaire form. It was also ethically unacceptable to me as a means of working with participants as it did not enable any feel of mutuality and reciprocity, which are the hallmarks of a relationship which strives for equality. Nor did it allow for meaning to be negotiated. It is also questionable whether there is no researcher contamination as researchers have total control from the outset in phrasing and interpreting the questionnaire. Although I used this method of information collection as one way of working with a group of teachers (see Appendix I), it was as a secondary means of communication after a lengthy period of acquaintance with the group, and was used to access information which was considerably less sensitive than that arising in the one-to-one interviews with creative people.

The use of the focus group has also elicited interest in researchers (Singer, 1992, Bowser and Sieber, 1992) who attempt to access sensitive information in the community under study.

This method entails working with a group of individuals who share similar experience, and who with the aid of the researcher, highlight and discuss certain aspects which are of interest to the researcher, or which have a bearing on the topic under research. Such a method however, whilst providing a supportive environment in which a participant may feel less alone, and enabling a forum for constructed meaning, would not provide the anonymity which was an essential part of my research design. My experience of working with groups on issues such as sexuality, power and negotiation, has been that it sometimes leads to participants exaggerating or minimising their personal responses in an attempt to be the same as others in the group. I have found such groups only useful for work on issues which call for a collective community voice such as when working with gay men who were collectively empowered by this approach, rather than those which call for a personal voice.

Direct observation of communities and individuals by covert or collaborative means has often been employed as a way of accessing sensitive information (Humphreys, 1970, Douglas, 1976), and indeed the collaborative approach might have been given consideration had not my prior research study shown the relationship between the mentor and the learner to be private and mutually exclusive.

Some individuals had never discussed the dynamics of the relationship with each other, let alone allowed somebody to observe their interactions, and I discounted this approach on the grounds of ethics and of methodological inadequacy. My prior experience of observing from behind a one-way mirror, the interactions of convicted sex offenders with each other, and with probation officers, has convinced me that even the most accurate observation of behaviour does not give insight into the felt emotions of those observed, but only how they act in that particular circumstance. One is often directly oppositional to the other, and for this study it was important to ensure that I had ascertained as accurately as possible the felt reality of the participants, otherwise I would only be presenting a half-truth.

In recent years much has been written by feminist researchers on the politics of relating to those being studied, and we have been encouraged to treat human subjects as human beings and not as objects (Oakley 1981, Rheinharz 1992, Smith, 1987). However to those who work within a humanistic stance, this approach, whilst welcome in academic circles, is not new. Martin Buber (1958), the Jewish theologian argued throughout his life that '*all life was in meeting*', that is, in the genuine and open exchange of dialogue with another person. The humanistic approach has already been dealt with in Chapter Two and has been greatly influential in my choice of study, and in how I approached that work.



Bearing in mind that the methodology for the previous study had proved so successful in enabling sensitive information to be shared so openly then the unstructured research interview was an obvious choice of strategy in the initial phase of information gathering.

Within heuristic inquiry it is also the recommended method of practice (Moustakas, 1990). This being so I became the primary 'instrument' of information collection through an unstructured interview process, which allowed for sensitivity, subjectivity, mutuality, and confidentiality, and which focussed on the mentor in the life of the individual, from a variety of personal viewpoints.

### **Aspects of Debate in Interviewing**

Oakley considers the traditional structured mode of interviewing to owe more to a masculine vantage point than to a feminist one and therefore identifies a dissonance between her informal, unstructured, interviewing methods and those commonly described in textbooks as 'formal' interview techniques (Oakley, 1981). Malseed however, notes that Oakley's interpretation of such textbooks is perhaps more to do with an inadequate characterisation of the texts than the inadequacies of a masculine paradigm of society (Malseed, 1987).

She maintains that Oakley fails to fully explore the implications for data collection in her quoted sources, and holds that the non-hierarchical, interactive interview which Oakley espouses, does in fact accord with the textbooks' outline of appropriate methods for research into subjective phenomena. Oakley (1987) counters by replying that the use of the alternative informal interview was one which had been referred to as '*deviation from the normal*' (Finch, 1984), and maintains that although informal interviewing is recognised as a research strategy it does not deter from the fact that textbooks have treated informal interviewing as a deviation from that which is usual i.e. a structured process. She notes that the accounts of the use of informal interviewing have tended to be given by women (p.632).

Such academic debate is perhaps a reflection of a depth of feeling which can sometimes do more to separate the sexes than to unite them. To play one type of interviewing off against another is, in the words of Fontana and Frey (1994);

'... a futile effort, a leftover from the paradigmatic quantitative/qualitative hostility of past generations.' (p. 373)

The collaborative interactive interview is one which has flourished for many years in the field of humanistic counselling and psychotherapy, is practised by both sexes to a greater or lesser degree of adequacy.

It owes more to skill, and the philosophy of the interviewer, than to gender. Historically both men and women have suffered from generalisations about gender, and the humanistic stance does not labour differences of gender but argues for a philosophy of individuality. As such it is a fitting philosophy for a project focussed on individual experience and self-actualisation.

### **Professional and Personal Experience**

The heuristic stance calls for an acknowledgement of all aspects of 'self' by the researcher. As such it is appropriate to give some indication of my background experience, and also some personal history. I have worked for many years in health settings within a variety of disciplines and with an equally varied client group. Much of this early work has been in helping clients adjust to a life of partial capacity after stroke, cardiac problem, or loss of limb. Some of this work involved clinical hypnosis in relation to stress, or nicotine addiction. Later work has involved assessing the interactions of clients with close relatives or loved ones to establish the level of support which would be available to the client on discharge from hospital. In the last ten years my work has involved a combination of teaching, training and counselling on issues of sexual health, primarily HIV, AIDS and Hepatitis. The client groups have included all the emergency services as well as probation, education, private and voluntary sector workers.

This work has included close and detailed observation of convicted paedophiles and sex offenders during their interactions with probation staff during rehabilitation sessions, and the giving of feedback of these observations to probation officers. The skills utilised were those of watching, interpreting verbal and non-verbal communication, challenging stated assumptions, assessing and reporting. Other work involved counselling children who had been sexually abused and who had concerns about possible HIV infection. This called for the skills of listening, empathy, accurate reflection, supporting, summarising, probing and challenging. It also called for the creation of a climate of trust, equality and confidentiality (Bennetts, Brown and Sloan, 1992).

Throughout the last decade my approach has followed the humanist tradition discussed in Chapter Two, although I have worked within an eclectic framework which owes much to Egan's (1990) values and philosophy, and which addresses the issue of the 'shadow side' (the previously unspoken and hidden concerns) of clients, as well as the issue of timeliness, in helping clients to move on. I have also worked for three years on Dr. Gerard Egan's 'Skilled Helper' summer school at York, as a trainer in this model of counselling.

My interviewing technique as primary research instrument, was one which drew on my experience of dealing with sensitive areas of a client's life, in a way which was most fitting to the tenet in health care 'first do no harm'.

I have already noted that the researcher and participants are inextricably linked, and therefore it is perhaps necessary to establish at this point that I am more than that defined by my job, and that my gender, colour, class and age have a bearing on how I ultimately make sense of the research material. Although I have attempted at all times to address the issues from a humanistic and not gender defined stance, it should be understood that I am female, that I was born in the U.K. in 1947 and that my parents were white working class.

Although I was brought up in the Church of England, I have no religious beliefs, but have respect for the belief systems of others. I accept the possibility of intelligent life systems outside of this solar system, but have no experience of either a personal or a transcendental God. However I maintain a position that even if life was originally an accident, that human beings have a responsibility towards striving to understand their place in history, and their own and others' nature, in order to evolve to reach their potential. It is also important to state that I presently perceive myself to be involved in a mentor relationship. Collin (1986b) has noted that :

'...the researcher who could analyse and reflect upon his/her role as a mentor or as a protégé/e would have considerable insight into those questions in which we have declared our interest: the evolution and context of the relationship, its subjective aspects, the practical realities of the interaction, its conduct and outcomes.' (p.54)

However she also notes that there are serious ethical issues attached to such methodology and that the researcher would be limited to only one case. I have been mindful of such concerns throughout this study and have used my own experiences in intuitive ways during interviews in terms of deciding whether or not to pursue a certain issue, and also as a way of enabling empathy and a certain reflexivity between myself and those I interviewed in a shared negotiatory forum. Merriam (1989) notes:

'In investigating a field of social practice where social interaction and processes are of utmost importance, what better data collection instrument than human beings themselves?' (Merriam, 1989, p. 166)

### **The Person-centred Process as Primary Method**

Respondents were interviewed in a setting of their choice, usually their own home, at a time most suitable to them, and for the length of time which was appropriate to each person.

By having this flexibility of approach I hoped to reduce the power imbalance which is inherent in the researcher/participant relationship no matter how relaxed the situation. The interviews were taped on a Sony Professional cassette deck which had a powered microphone, high specifications, and was capable of multi-directional recording. I had used this tape deck for my earlier work and found that even the silences could be interpreted easily because of the changes in breath patterns which were noticeable in playback. Many individuals own their own cassette player these days and the cassette deck did not cause concern to any participant. In the main the initial interview lasted between one hour and one and a quarter hours. Subsequent interviews to confirm, clarify or investigate issues, lasted between half an hour, and one and a half hours. Utilising a tape recorder enabled me to become fully involved in the life experience of the participant without the requirement to take obtrusive notes.

Such involvement is not a necessary and desirable part of a normal counselling interview where the stance is always one of empathy, but at a professional uninvolved distance. This element of uninvolvedness, leads to a less than equal relationship in counselling and although it is deemed to be a necessary element of the alliance, is one which I have argued elsewhere as producing a relationship which is not as genuine as counsellors would have clients believe (Bennetts, 1994). The research interview however demanded a necessary involvement and a mutuality which was honest, and which established deep rapport.

The taped interviews were transcribed in their entirety and were available to respondents for verification or alteration. All participants signed a Participant Release form (Appendix IV), and although all were offered copies of the tapes, not more than six or seven participants took advantage of this offer. The process of transcription was slow but edifying, in as much as it was a time for reflection, and a time for seeing more clearly the concepts which were the terms of reference for each respondent. Each interview took approximately five and a half to six hours to transcribe, and as the total number of interview hours amounted to 78, the resultant transcription took approximately 468 hours.

### **Approaching and Accessing a Cohort**

The South-West of England is particularly rich in its artistic communities and although some of this has historically been because of the quality of light in this area, a more pertinent reason these days is both the quality of life which is slower and encourages reflection, and the ambience of like minded individuals who value the non-material as much as the material, within life. These qualities of life ultimately make themselves known in both life-style, and in art form. The initial difficulty I was faced with was not whom to interview, but rather whom not to interview.

I automatically discounted close friends who had known about my previous work, and whom I felt should not feel compromised in situations when the interviews were concerned with sensitive, personal issues. Having said that, some participants who were interviewed have now become friends by *virtue* of having disclosed such sensitive material.

It is difficult to establish where my early work ended and my new research began, as in actuality one flowed quite naturally on from the other. However whilst I was waiting for my Ph.D. application to be accepted, I continued to think about and discuss the area of traditional mentoring with those who were working in the field of creative arts. To this end a discussion with Neil Blunt at De Montfort University led to me making contact with staff at Arts Training South West, and visiting their offices in Taunton, where I spent time discussing with them the relevance of my proposed research to their work, both in the education of artists, and those who work in the management field of arts education such as galleries and colleges. They suggested I make contact with Falmouth College of Arts and discuss my proposal with the Principal, who could arrange access to staff and students.

I had formulated some idea about the age groups on whom I wished to concentrate, and these included individuals over the age of 45, as it had been this group which had previously shown themselves to have had mentors and been mentors. However I also wanted to look at a younger group of artists with a view to some longitudinal studies of the mentor relationships, and students at art colleges seemed ideal. My third group were artists living and working in the community who were supporting themselves by their work and whom I reasoned might well have mentors and might be able to provide information on strategies for coping with the isolation of working alone.

The subsequent meeting with the Principal of Falmouth College of Arts resulted in my being granted access to staff and students in the Fine Arts of print making, sculpture, and painting, with assurances that mailing of initial letters to prospective respondents would be carried out by the administration team at Falmouth.

It was agreed that I should also access the photographers, illustrators, and ceramicists if the first mailing provided few positive responses. The Principal suggested that I also approach Dartington College of Art in Devon so that I might gain access to a different type of artist, including dancers, musicians and writers, and that my initial entry would be best achieved by sharing my ideas with the archivist there.

No requirement was asked of me to share my findings with the College, nor were any restrictions placed upon me except to give the assurance that I would not knowingly do anything which might cause a student to have psychological difficulties, as I was told that some art students have to maintain a very careful emotional balance.

The advice to contact the archivist at Dartington proved to be sound, and after a successful meeting I left my Master's dissertation with her in order to enable her to get a feel for my line of inquiry. Within a fortnight I had a very positive reply, which led to my meeting the Academic Vice-Principal who, on my behalf, approached the Principal of the College. Access was granted to staff and students there although my initial focus was on students who were writers. As with Falmouth no restrictions were placed on my work and there was no request to see the final thesis prior to binding.

Within three months the initial letter was mailed out to the college for sending to prospective participants. It appeared that a lot had been achieved in a very short time but in actuality this was the start of a series of difficulties.

### **Problems Arising During the Process**

The initial mail out to those attached to Falmouth College of Arts went to 52 fine arts second year students and all the staff. I had chosen students in their second year as these were young people and it seemed important to me that they should have orientated themselves into college life, before being asked to take part in a research project. I had also anticipated some of the students forming mentor relationships at the college, and as I was influenced by my initial research I thought that these would have taken at least a year to even be recognised for what they were. In the event there were only three responses to that mailing. One was from a staff member and two were from students. A further mailing produced nothing at all, and a third mailing, some four months after the first, produced only one more response from a mature student.

The Dartington mailing proved to be even less productive. My letter which was supposed to have been sent to students by the administration staff, was in fact pinned up on a notice board along with a variety of other information. Eventually I wrote to the Vice Principal who taught creative writing and he approached his students directly, and then sent me their telephone numbers. Contact with these students revealed that they had no idea what they had agreed to, as none of them had seen my original letter of intent. From this group only one was in a position to take part in the study, although two members of staff also came forward at that time. Punch (1986) notes that:

'...the impact that the presence of researchers has on the setting is related to the status and visibility of the field workers. The 'lone wolf' often requires no funding, gains easy access, and melts away into the field.' (p.23)

A negative side of this is that sometimes the status of a team of people, or explicit organisational support, lends greater credence to the issue under research.

The 'lone wolf' can be sometimes too invisible and an absence of control by the gatekeepers does not necessarily ensure an easy ride for a researcher. I was now experiencing the down-side of gate-keepers who perceived that they had nothing to lose by allowing me access to their establishments, but were busy people and had nothing in particular to gain by becoming actively involved in my work. My experience was merely one of benign neglect, for which I was for the most part grateful, with both sets of gate-keepers instrumental in allowing me space to conduct interviews, and both courteous and approachable.

The geography of the South-West of England, and its subsequent holiday traffic, also made proximity to participants something more of an issue than might be the case in a major city. Falmouth College of Arts was only 15 miles away from my home but took forty minutes to reach even in winter. Dartington College of Art was 85 miles away in another county, and took between two and two and a half hours depending on traffic conditions. At this time I had been given only half a day per week to conduct research away from my paid employment. Some visits to other counties meant taking a day off work, and frequently entailed an overnight stay. Because of the intensity of the shared experience it became necessary for me to limit the number of interviews to two per day. This seemingly leisurely approach was sound common sense as I found the sessions on top of my paid work, to be physically and emotionally exhausting. Ellis (1991a) is mindful that emotions are not the exclusive property of participants, and a prolonged period of ill-health followed a particularly hard schedule of interviews, conferences, and professional commitments.

Brannen (1988) has noted the similarity between the stress of the unstructured research interview and the counselling session and says:

'...if 'researcher support' were to be formalised in the research process, other benefits would accrue as well as improvements in the psychological well-being and general morale of the researchers.' (p.562)

Despite my experience in the area of counselling it was difficult not to be affected in both positive and negative ways by the process of accessing such deeply personal data, whilst also in a stressful full-time job. I have noted elsewhere (Bennetts, 1994) that within a counselling setting it is normal practice to have a counselling supervisor, trained in counselling techniques, with whom to discuss issues arising from the counselling session. The researcher, in accessing sensitive data, runs as great a risk of becoming as emotionally and mentally drained as does the counsellor, and frequently has no option but to stop for a while.

For me this simply meant stopping all participant and some personal contact for approximately two months, but still continuing to read, write and think. And although it also meant giving up my job permanently to alleviate stress, this was a positive outcome of a negative situation and eventually led to a career change.

### **Opportunities During the Process**

Coupled with these problems however, were some very encouraging responses from those artists who were living in the community, and it was to be these individuals who became the main working cohort. Every interview produced another interview as respondents discussed their feelings about the work with their friends, and in October the following year, 14 months after the official start of my study I took a decision that it would be fruitless in terms of the time element, to continue trying to engage young students when I had a willing community at my disposal. It was precisely at this moment that a trickle of students contacted me to say that they had given their names to Falmouth the previous year and that they were now sure these had not been passed on to me. This mishap took place when the staff member working with me at Falmouth was away on maternity leave. Nonetheless the students were persistent for their own reasons and were duly interviewed.

All the students who responded had selected themselves based on their mentor experiences, and as such provided extremely valuable insights into the process of the relationship. I have no concrete explanation for the lack of response from the others, except that these were young, active and busy students, and that they were in an obtuse way highlighting a fact that I had already been aware of, that most mentor relationships are recognised only in retrospect, years after the event.

At the beginning of the third year of the study I was asked to undertake some case studies of mentoring with community dance artists in the South-West region for The Foundation of Community Dance Mentoring Research. As the mailing to Dartington College had proved fruitless, this gave me a second chance to access dancers for my own study, as well as complete the study for the Foundation.

The cohort grew then, by means of a snowball effect, gently going forward and gathering more participants as time went by. I became much more relaxed about this pace of events and ceased to concern myself with where the next interview would come from, because such concern was unnecessary. The identification of participants continued as the research process evolved and one particular group of respondents selected themselves in the aftermath of one of them hearing a paper I had given at a conference in another county (Bennetts, 1996d).



The conference was centred on women and access to the arts, and I had been asked to give a paper on mentoring as a way of women accessing the arts via a non-conventional route. I also facilitated a workshop which was well attended and in which the women stated that they wanted to talk about the non-material aspects of mentoring. Shortly after this day I received a telephone call from one of the women who told me that she could not stop thinking about the relevance of my work to her life and asked if I would travel to her home and conduct some interviews with her, and a colleague. Both women were artists and the interviews proved to be highly enlightening. Within a week of my first visit I received a telephone call from one of the women I had seen, asking me if I would be willing to interview her mentor, and then conduct a joint interview with both parties present.

This was something of a breakthrough because it gave me an opportunity for insight into how the two parties behaved when they were together, as opposed to how they said they behaved. Having agreed to this, I then received three telephone calls from the mentor in question (which were made from a telephone box in secrecy), who was very obviously anxious to discuss his relationship at the earliest opportunity, and who offered payment for the time involved in my conducting the interview. Needless to say I refused his request to pay me, and tell this now in an attempt to throw light on his eagerness to make sense of his situation.

This serendipitous self-selection posed no methodological difficulties as the purpose of the research was to work with people who had experienced mentor relationships and were in a position to be able to talk about such experience. Qualitative research aims to purposefully select participants who are best placed to answer research questions (Cresswell, 1994), and the research was aiming to produce description and account of experience, and was not therefore concerned with numerical generalisability, or statistical incidence of mentor relationships, but was more interested in themes and understanding. In the event, I interviewed 35 participants in total, between one and five times. This seemingly arbitrary selectivity was dependent on how much information participants chose to discuss, and for the ones I followed throughout the year, depended on what had transpired within that time.

The interview process became a continual circle of verbal interpretation, clarifying and probing, together with a more reflective approach when transcribing text. Participants also found the time between interviews to be particularly helpful in allowing the emotions to settle, and new meaning to be made of stated experience. Many also made particular comment that the interviews had allowed them to give voice to much which had previously been unconscious, and for which there had been no prior forum. The interviews therefore became a part of what Bruner (1990, p.xii) describes as the '*meaning making process*' for both myself and those I interviewed.

Interpretation of participants' stories took place during interviews, when transcribing, and when reading the transcriptions. However interpretation also took place when driving the car, when lying awake at night and when doing housework. Hermeneutic inquiry is a way of reading, a way of thinking, a way of writing, a way of being. It is a philosophy which rejects method, but has a long tradition of thinkers and writings (Van Manen, 1990). Like heuristic inquiry it demands total immersion within the question, and something akin to obsession on the part of the thinker. It cannot be rushed, it cannot be put aside, but requires of the thinker a watchful attention to the question whilst continuing to live in the world.

I found this process to be similar to that involved in vipassana meditative techniques, where the meditator achieves this watchful attention by remaining alert and by merely observing the feel of the breath on the upper lip, unlike some forms of meditation which demand a distancing of consciousness.

Because of the time needed, not just to work within the discipline, but to reach and continue the depth of thought required, I found myself becoming somewhat necessarily reclusive, reading and writing more than ever, and had little inclination for conversation other than that with participants, or friends involved in Ph.D. studies. The obscurity of Heidegger's (ed. Krell, 1978) phenomenological writings helped in this self-made isolation and worked almost like a Buddhist koan, in as much as they were so difficult to make sense of that they completely wiped away all superfluous thought, and left space for insight.

Heidegger (ed. Krell, 1978, p.86) was aware of his '*inelegance of expression*', and says that there were few words or grammar available to describe his concepts clearly. Wilson (1965, p. 99) has remarked that '*Heidegger's fondness for ten-syllable German words, is likely to blunt all but the strongest minds.*' However it is hard not to feel some sympathy for Heidegger if we accept that he knew that the medium in which he chose to express his concepts, that of formal philosophical language, was not necessarily the best medium. As Wilson (1965, p. 94) has noted, Heidegger was a poet or a mystic, who was trying to express his intuitive insights in the language of philosophy.

### **Strategies for Checking Data Reliability**

It is common for researchers to attempt to strengthen their research by using a technique known as 'triangulation'. This term comes from land surveying terminology, where bearings taken in two directions will enable the surveyor to locate their position at the intersection point.

Within research, triangulation of data obtained by the use of more than one method can help to establish validity and reliability. Denzin (1978) quoted in Janesick (1994) refers to four different types of triangulation, summarised here as:

<b>Data triangulation:</b>	the use of a variety of data sources in a study
<b>Investigator triangulation:</b>	the use of several different researchers or evaluators
<b>Theory triangulation:</b>	the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data
<b>Methodological triangulation:</b>	the use of multiple methods to study a single problem

Janesick (1994, p. 215) adds **Interdisciplinary** triangulation to this list and suggest that we look to other disciplines such as art, history, sociology, dance, architecture and anthropology to broaden our understanding of method and substance.

Although using a mixed methodological approach of hermeneutics and heuristics, I only used one method of accessing the information to be analysed from participants, that of the unstructured interview. It would not have been possible to do otherwise without seriously compromising the integrity of the study, the anonymity of the participants, and without breaching confidentiality. I had intended to show photographs and give examples of art work, and musical compositions produced by the participants to highlight how the style and values of mentors had been continued, but this idea had to be abandoned because such work would have identified participants and their mentors very clearly. However I attended many private views of artists' work, and had access to some artists written contributions to these showings, which enabled me to gain a fuller vision of individual's experience.

Together with a continual reframing of interviews as part of the process of eliciting meaning from participants, other methods of checking data and establishing validity took place concurrently. These methods included extensive reading in psychology, mentoring, arts, and educational theory and practice, together with sharing my early research at national, European and international conferences, and mailing copies of papers and my Master's dissertation to scholars and practitioners in the field of mentoring and creativity. In attempting to disseminate work and obtain feedback I contacted both academics and practitioners in non-academic settings, who had an interest in the psychology of relationships, or in mentoring, or the arts, and sent them copies of my dissertation and/or papers relating to one or other studies.

These contacts are listed in Appendix V, so that the reader can see where those interested in mentoring are based, and from which disciplines they are drawn.

### **Trustworthiness of This Study**

As the research progressed the conference papers incorporated the preliminary findings of my new study and I gained immediate feedback from delegates at national and European level in the field of mentoring and in psychology and mental health. This feedback was primarily in terms of emotional responses, supported with secondary academic responses. The papers had clearly touched the personal experience of many individuals in the audience, with some individuals able to discuss this in the public forum and some preferring to discuss it with me privately.

The research findings seemingly fitted the lives of some individuals and lent some weight to claims for validity in terms of the transferability of concepts. Brief conference feedback sheets where available, are included in Appendix VI. Such feedback was not just encouraging for the research, it directly validated the experiences of the audience as well, and individuals said that it enabled them at that moment to make sense of those experiences in a meaningful way.

This level of response has become the norm when I have given papers, (Bennetts, 1995a, 1996b, 1996c, 1996d, 1998), but has been particularly noticeable with Black African, American Indian and other ethnic groups. These groups have also been able to articulate the spiritual aspects of the mentor relationship much more freely in open conference than white participants, who prefer to speak to me privately about this aspect. Stanfield (1994) offers an explanation:

**'In general, spirituality is central rather than marginal or absent in the way Africans explain human development, as opposed to the West, where up until recently social scientists have tended to shy away from studying spirituality as an integral part of social and emotional well-being and as an explanation for human fortunes and misfortunes.'** (Stanfield, 1994, p. 184)

An early publication (Bennetts, 1995b) in *People Management* opened the research to further critique and feedback and resulted in confirmatory telephone calls from both academics and practitioners with regard to their own experience of the interpersonal aspects of the relationship.

This article, although somewhat changed by the sub-editor to follow the lighter style of the journal, led to many contacts in the field of mentoring, and although most of these were working in formal mentor programmes, their belief was that 'real' mentor relationships were as I had described, and it was this format that they wished to reproduce in the formal setting. What also became very clear was that the research enabled individuals to share their own experiences, in the light of the realisation that those experiences were not unique. In July 1995 I had a letter published in *People Management* as part of an ongoing debate on the formal/traditional mentoring theme, and in December 1995 I was invited by that same journal to submit a review (Bennetts 1996a) of 'Mentoring in Action' (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 1995).

By August 1996 reference to my work as a useful resource was made by Blackwell of The University of Nottingham (1996b), and Fullerton of The University of Plymouth (1996) was quoting my work in text. A request from The University of Plymouth to submit a paper for a Staff Educational Development Association publication gave me opportunity to discuss the negative side of the relationship, as well as another chance to name spirituality as an issue for respondents (Bennetts, 1997a).

In September 1996 after my papers had been seen by the Head of Training and Staff Development at the University of Nottingham, I was offered the opportunity of conducting research interviews (letter seen by supervisor) on members of staff who were involved in their mentor programme, but was not able to take up that invitation at the time, due to financial constraints.

It seems clear that those involved in mentoring, are connecting in personal and professional ways to the data from both studies, and the continued requests for permission to photocopy papers for training purposes suggest that this work has been granted an element of credibility by peers. Although my primary method of data collection in this study has been by interview and has only been supported by personal verbal or written communication from others, I would argue that the practical work with teachers described in detail in Appendix I also supports and validates my findings, and to some extent perhaps limits any charge of methodological weakness to which my work is open.

As well as making reference earlier in this chapter to the issues of subjectivity, reliability, validity, accessibility, feasibility and confidentiality which Collin and Young (1988b) have highlighted as necessary concerns for the hermeneutical researcher, I also made reference to the issue of trustworthiness which Lincoln and Guba (1985) deem appropriate for all qualitative methodologies.

I have attempted to establish within this chapter that subjectivity, rather than being something to avoid, is both necessary and desirable when working with participants to negotiate and produce meaning from narrative. Although recognising that this involvement could lend itself to charges of distortion and researcher bias, it must be remembered that the participants were actively involved in the negotiatory process.

Whilst it is therefore possible that individuals could be misrepresented, it is argued that those who took part in this research have been representatives of their own experiences, and that such experiences have been presented fairly. I found that sending parts of the manuscript for confirmation to the participants I was writing about at that time, enabled me to stay in touch with the sense of the whole throughout the process, and saved having to send out large bulky manuscripts to everyone at the end. Such a process of negotiation and reference to the participants during the study lends weight to the claim for reliability and confirmation, and this process has at all times given due regard to participants' individual narratives when attempting to produce a meaningful account of their experiences.

The first concern of the hermeneutical inquirer is the quality of the researcher as a sensing instrument (Collin and Young, 1988b). The data for this study has been collected in a way most fitting to the inquiry and the research participants. It has taken into account the sensitivity of the issues at stake and the stakeholders themselves, and has attempted to inquire into the lives of participants in a way which has helped individuals make more sense of their experience, rather than one which asked questions merely to see how far one could push at the doors of privacy. Such sensitivity has been costly in terms of time and emotional energy for both parties and has brought into the equation the issue of power and responsibility. Whilst I have argued earlier in this chapter that I attempted to create an atmosphere of equality, it should not be assumed that I was willing to abandon the necessary responsibility which is attendant in all research on human subjects.

Wise (1977) has raised concerns that feminist researchers often deny power as an issue and that in doing so may be also denying responsibility. Despite my gender, feminist politics frequently leave me puzzled. Therefore whilst recognising that I am female, and that I bring to this study elements of the feminine, I am above all human and work from a humanist standpoint. As such the issue of responsibility was uppermost in my mind when I began this study. My previous research had shown that certain aspects of the mentor relationship were very deeply hidden and were just as deeply felt. Previous participants required much more than a sensitive interview, they required and deserved sensitive follow-up and de-briefing in order to work out and come to terms with the totality of their experiences. This aspect was one which was obvious to me at the start of this study but one which only became obvious to participants in the course of the interviews.

Although this methodology had to be feasible, and therefore as well as skill, required a necessary willingness from both myself and the participants, no amount of prior warning would have clarified my concerns to participants about their aftercare. It was a process which had, like counselling, to be understood only in retrospect and which led to an earned validity becoming ultimately conferred by those involved in the process. I was also acutely aware that despite my desire to do no harm, I was intervening in some relationships which were taking place in the here and now, and that I felt a certain responsibility to support participants in whatever steps they undertook as a result of that intervention. This is not to say that those whom I interviewed were not responsible for their own actions, but simply to admit the part of the reflective interview in the development of their actions.

Although it would not be practical to produce a complete record of all transcripts, I have used direct quotations from participants within the text, and have threaded throughout the thesis as full an account as possible of the story of one participant. I believe therefore that the issue of accessibility of information has been dealt with in a way which gives the reader the opportunity to make personal meanings and to construct new arguments where appropriate. Such new arguments may be valid and meaningful to the reader, but will not necessarily constitute a meaning which would be acceptable to the now silent participants. However Lincoln and Guba (1985) remind us that it is not good enough to simply be trustworthy and credible to the participants, but that the reader must be satisfied with the end results, and that such satisfaction depends ultimately not on 'unassailability', but on *persuasion* which should be accomplished by establishing credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Confidentiality is always of concern to researchers when attempting to open up their studies to scrutiny whilst protecting their sources of information. Within this work I have used direct quotations from participants and have dispensed with a coding procedure in favour of gender appropriate pseudonyms. However despite deleting the original names from the quotations, the issue of confidentiality became of some concern to one man to whom I had sent a draft copy of a paper due to be published, and from whom I sought approval of my representation of his experience. He telephoned me some days later with a mixture of emotions. He agreed that I had portrayed the event clearly and honestly, but expressed concern that he might be recognised by his mentor because my quotation included a description of a gift his mentor had made to him. Although this episode had taken place over 20 years ago and the gift was typical in terms of appropriateness to the occasion, and therefore was not unusual in type, he was worried that this alone would identify him. I obviously rewrote the text and sent him another copy for approval, but it highlighted to me the sensitivity of participants in relation to apparently insignificant items, and the importance of all participants approving publication of their own words.

Before finishing this chapter my own bias in relation to validity must be mentioned. Perhaps it is because of my work within Egan's model of change which examines the shadow side of narrative, that I constantly find myself asking the question 'Yes, but what's *really* going on here?' Such questioning can be of great value during a research project but can also leave the question in mid-air so that the meaning becomes 'Yes, but what's really going on here *for me*?' Introspection and self-doubt abound at such times and take shape in the form which Marshall (1981) describes graphically here:

'There's another, a dark side to this, the feeling that I've made it all up, and Help! how can I justify all this? It's this thing about **knowing**, sometimes I lose it, sometimes I look at words on a page and think, do I really remember, do I know? This is a difficulty with this approach; it is something you learn to live with.' (p. 399)

The fine line which must be walked between researcher bias and Eisner's connoisseurship can never be denied, it can only be acknowledged. During the course of the interviews it became apparent to me that the psychological make-up of the creative artists involved in this study was remarkably similar to my own, and that this finding was both an asset in terms of enabling a deep understanding, and a problem in terms of increasing the already inherent bias brought about by my own mentor relationship. Although this caused me some concern throughout the length of the research project, on balance I am sure that this study would never have been completed without the insight produced by such natural reciprocity.

Rather than use the derogatory term 'going native' which has been defined as '*becoming increasingly like the group under study*' (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p.4), my experience was one of slow realisation of *already* being like the group under study. This led to catalytic validity, the intended cognitive change in perception referred to earlier in this chapter, and enabled me to understand my own actions and own constraints, more fully in the light of the research interviews. The effect of the interviews on the participants themselves is discussed in Chapter Eight.

### **Analysis and Process of the Study**

The process of interviewing always produces a large quantity of material for analysis. I have referred earlier in this chapter to the number of interview hours which took place, and indeed the transcriptions provided long accounts of not just mentor relationships, but many other issues, some related to creativity, some related to life in general.



The participants were interested and interesting, and it became very clear within the first few interviews that creative people are not just *able* to work tangentially, but are more than *likely* to work tangentially. Allowing for such digressions became the norm, and facilitated both a relaxed and stimulating interview. Had I been unwilling to participate in the give and take of information and ideas, then it is doubtful whether the interview process would ever have been completed, as the digressions helped with establishing the relationship. However within that year I learned far more about art and the creative process than in all my years of attending galleries and private views.

Initially I had to work quite hard at not being influenced by my previous study, and at one stage wondered whether it would not have just been easier to have studied a completely new area, than to continue to work so hard at remaining open to new findings. Once I stopped worrying whether my previous study would be shown to be somehow misguided by the new findings, and accepted that such is the nature of research, I gave in completely to the new work as the first stage in the heuristic approach, the immersion. What did remain with me from the first study was my interpretation of the mentor relationship as a process of transformation and journey of self-discovery. Certain new concepts began to appear almost immediately, whilst others seemed to take longer to show themselves. It was interesting to note how with continual re-reading of transcripts, those concepts were there all the time, but had been missed because they had surfaced within conversations which were ostensibly about something else. One or two original concepts from the first study appeared for some time to be missing, but again this was because they were disguised and presented in another language, and as I had become used to the language of those working in training settings, the concepts went unnoticed at first.

Other issues which had been fairly well concealed in my first study were leaping out very quickly with the new group, and this said quite a lot about how the culture in which we work can affect our value systems and our behaviour, in ways both positive and negative. Although I am fairly well practised in de-coding the non-verbal signals which are sent and received, and recognised this way of interpreting as one which would be helpful for a hermeneutical study, I also had to learn the language of art itself, in order to understand other concepts which related to aesthetics. Had I not sensed intuitively that the words which were being used, were being used in a way which meant something new to me, then I might well have misinterpreted what was actually being said, and taken the words at face value.

I began to take more time during interviews to learn the language and understand the setting fully as well as gathering information. I then checked and rechecked my understanding of both the concepts and the language with other participants, in order to achieve as many possible interpretations as possible, and to distil the essence.

It was quite noticeable on reading the transcripts, that participants terms of reference seemed to be those of journeying and change, and that they were very aware in retrospect, of the personal developmental aspect of the relationship. Concurrent with this process was the review of literature which was relevant to mentor relationships, and extensive reading on creativity and psychology. This was the incubation process referred to in stage two of the heuristic inductive approach. The third phase, the illumination, came much later on in the study, and involved the philosophical insights which were necessary for this study, and the sense of both rightness and simplicity which were of such profound import to my own life, that at an earlier stage in my development I might have mistaken this phase for a kind of religious conversion. Although the earth did not exactly move, I certainly felt something akin to the rug being pulled from under my feet.

It was at this point that personal bias loomed the largest, and I had to ask myself just whose story was I writing, whose 'truth' was I presenting? Even after spending many nights considering how else the work could be shown, I have to say that the story is to some extent my own. Although I was intellectually aware at the start of the project that in an heuristic study the researcher's experience is also portrayed, I was not able to engage with that at an emotional level at that point, nor did I understand how it would feel to be open about myself in a public document. All the participants had been given pseudonyms and were therefore anonymous, and it seemed strange to be the one person whose identity could not be disguised.

However I believe that I have represented all of the participants within this work, and that we all share a similar story but live it in our own unique ways. Perhaps that is why the fourth phase of explication and description was the hardest, and demanded an honesty which hurt. To a great extent I was supported by many of the participants who remained interested and involved throughout the duration of the research. Such support was especially noticeable from those students and other participants whose personal and professional development was linked so closely with this work.

Finally the process of creative synthesis was similar to that of turning from a caterpillar into a butterfly overnight and flying for the first time in front of an inquisitive audience. The responsibility to get it right seemed critical and my concern at this point was more about the final reactions of participants, than with reactions of those in academic settings. It was important to me that this work was both relevant and acceptable to those who had taken part in the study, and that it had meaning for them and their lives. I had been asked by student participants to give a copy of the thesis to the Library at Falmouth College of Arts as it could be of help to future students. With this in mind the finished work had to be written in an accessible format, and be meaningful and useful.

The time of waiting between sending out a draft chapter to a participant and receiving a response, was a time of some anxiety. It is one thing to understand cognitively that participants may wish to negotiate meaning even at that late stage, but to invite such negotiation knowing that the whole chapter may need rewriting, is not easy. However this is an important part of the method, despite the fact that this negotiation might mean that the initial taped interview evidence is rendered somewhat redundant by later communication. It also highlights a major problem for researchers in hearing any verbal account given by a participant, in that sometimes what was *said*, is not exactly what was *meant*, despite having been clarified at the time. It also poses a problem in hermeneutics in that the time of reflection between the interview and the written transcript will have allowed participants to have made new connections, and that process will continue.

Participants frequently said 'On reflection, I think what I meant was.....'. When, therefore, can researchers feel that they have reached a point where they are able to say 'This is the definitive meaning of the event' ? It would appear that meaning constantly evolves from how participants interpret their original experience in the light of present knowledge and experience, and this hinders the search for what the event meant at the time which it happened. It seems to be that to some extent making meaning from experience is a strategy for justifying decisions and understanding behaviour from an earlier time.

However there does come a time when negotiation and interpretation has to stop, at least for the purposes of writing up the research process, and this decision must finally be made by the researcher. Gadamer (1975), who was a student of Heidegger, developed philosophical hermeneutics in its more practical aspects, and like Heidegger, always maintained that interpretation was not finite, but always '*on the way*'. My experience of the hermeneutic circle would be better likened to a hermeneutic spiral, not simply a circular event, but one which moves forward and backward in time.

There is little doubt in my mind that the hermeneutic stance which has been utilised within this work was in the main, the most appropriate approach to take. Having said that, it was enhanced by combining the heuristic framework, and used alone might not have enabled the insight into the meaning of the mentor relationship. To be fair to hermeneutics, the fault probably lies in the initial phrasing of part of the research question, in addressing the meaning of the mentor relationship which to some extent is ineffable. The theory and practice of hermeneutics requires long and intense involvement with all aspects of interpretation, and is summed up best by Bruns (1992):

'At all events there is no way to understand hermeneutics except through a piecemeal study of the different topics in its vast inventory - for example, the interpretation of oracles, the silencing of the muses, the quarrel of philosophy and poetry, the logic of allegory, the extravagance of midrash, mystical hermeneutics, the rise of literalism and the individual interpreter, the revelation of self-understanding and the understanding of other people, not to mention the topics that belong more strictly to philosophical hermeneutics itself, particularly as these relate to the problem of historicity or the finitude of understanding: appropriation, power, authority, tradition, the conflict of interpretations, experience, critique, practice, action, freedom, and so on.' (Bruns, 1992, p. 17)

## **Demographic Information**

The material for the study was gathered with the participation of thirty five individuals, 19 of whom were women, and 16 of whom were men. They were aged between 20 and 77 years old and lived in the geographical region between the Midlands and Cornwall. Although it had been my original intention to clearly define how the creativity of the participants primarily manifested itself i.e. painter, dancer, musician, this was not always something that individuals were either able, or happy to define, and many participants simply thought of themselves as working creatively in whatever area they applied themselves. However where it has been possible to be more clear in terms of which discipline individuals allied themselves to, or earned a living from, then this is indicated within the text, and where Fine Art is referred to this indicates painting, sculpture and printmaking.

In my Master's dissertation, I used a numerical code when quoting directly from participants' interviews. That technique, whilst fitting for that particular study, was not one which I was comfortable applying to this study, as it appeared to dehumanise the participants and render them characterless. Within succeeding chapters, all quotations taken directly from the interviews carry a gender appropriate pseudonym. The initials CB within the quotations stand for Chris Bennetts.

This study asks of the reader a willingness to engage in the world of the creative artist at both a cognitive and emotional level. In undertaking this study with these individuals I felt charged also with attempting to provide an account of the mentor relationship which speaks both emotionally and intellectually, in order to enable both the academic and the artist to see the nature of this dynamic relationship more clearly. To do this requires not just the language of academia, but also the language of poetics, as it is only by using such language that it becomes possible to transcend the mundane world of the written word, and enter into the nature of the traditional mentor relationship and interpret its meaning in the life of creative individuals. Calvino (1992) describes such an approach to language:

'The word connects the visible trace with the invisible thing, the absent thing, the thing that is desired or feared, like a frail emergency bridge flung over an abyss. For this reason, the proper use of language, for me personally, is one that enables us to approach things (present or absent) with discretion, attention, and caution, with respect for what things (present or absent) communicate without words.' (Calvino, 1992, p. 77)

White (1976) reminds us for that the early Greek philosophers, philosophy and poetics were intimately connected, and notes:

'The distinction between philosophy and poetry is now so rigidly drawn that a philosopher may absorb all the poetry he wants, but need not (perhaps ought not) integrate any of it into his work - and still be considered a philosopher. To the Greek mind, this state of affairs would have been naive, perhaps even unthinkable. To the modern mind, such discrimination is a symbol of progress in rigorous thinking. For Martin Heidegger, this progress is of questionable value.' (White, 1976, p. ix)

In keeping with this concept I shall end with a story:

'A young man, travelling through a new country, heard that a great Mulla, a Sufi guru, also travelling in that region, had unequalled insight into the mysteries of the world. The young man determined to become his disciple. He found his way to the wise man and said, "I wish to place my education in your hands that I might learn to interpret what I see as I travel through the world."

After six months of travelling from village to village with the great teacher, the young man was confused and disheartened. He decided to reveal his frustration to the Mulla.

"For six months I have observed the services you provide to the people along our route. In one village you tell the hungry that they must work harder in the fields. In another you tell the hungry to give up their preoccupation with food. In yet another village you tell the people to pray for a richer harvest. In each village the problem is the same, but always your message is different. I can find no pattern of truth in your teachings."

The Mulla looked piercingly at the young man.

"Truth? When you came here you did not tell me that you wanted to learn Truth. Truth is like the Buddha. When met on the road it should be killed. If there were only one Truth to be applied to all villages there would be no need of Mullas to travel from village to village.

When you first came to me you said you wanted to 'learn how to interpret' what you see as you travel through the world. Your confusion is simple. To interpret and to state Truths are two quite different things." (from 'Halcolm's Evaluation Parables' in Patton, 1990)

The following chapters aim to provide detailed descriptions of the phenomena experienced by the participants, but will also provide possible interpretations of such phenomena, not in any attempt to 'explain things away', but more in an attempt to provide insight into such events, and enable alternative 'truths' to be examined.

## Chapter Five

### Mentor Relationships in Childhood, Adolescence and Adulthood

'The pot carries its makers thoughts, feelings, and spirit. To overlook this fact is to miss a crucial truth, whether in clay, story, or science. I am speaking of a need for connection. To ignore the continuity between maker and made is to describe a world of objects where the presence of the artist is not recognised in her work, the presence of the scientist not acknowledged in a study. The world of creative endeavour thus becomes disjointed, and those who do its labour become alienated.' Ronai, 'Social Science and the Self', 1991.

'One needs a mentor, otherwise it's very lonely. You need someone to tell you to go on.' Scott, 'Paul Scott', Hilary Spurling, 1990.

'One of the things a writer is for is to say the unsayable, speak the unspeakable, and ask difficult questions.' Rushdie, 'Independent on Sunday', 10th September, 1995.

This chapter will describe the participants' experiences of mentor relationships in their lives, and will quote from retrospective child and adolescent experiences, through to adult relationships which are both retrospective and immediate. An analysis, and full discussion of the study, will take place in later chapters. In this chapter I have attempted to let those interviewed speak for themselves and have quoted directly from the interviews as spoken, complete with grammatical errors and pauses. For ease of reading I have removed certain 'umms' and 'erms', and have punctuated long sentences. Words printed within square brackets [ ] are my own and are to enable the reader to have full understanding when a quotation refers to something mentioned earlier in the interview.

Not all creative individuals communicate best via the spoken word and therefore some participants were more able at giving verbal accounts of the relationship, than others. However I have also attempted to accommodate those who think and speak in a more visual way and these accounts provide a depth of tonality and colour to the overall view, lending the substance and emotionality which would have been missing from a purely intellectual account of this alliance.

This chapter, whilst comprising of quotations from those interviewed, will also have threaded throughout the detailed description of the life experience of Kate, whose story serves as an exemplar within this thesis.

All of the mentor relationships described here are those of the traditional variety, formed naturally, and having no formal constraints.

## **'...I Would Have Been Very Ordinary...'**

Creative ability and special talent made itself known at a very early age for many participants, with most people aware of their abilities by the time they were five, and some recalling that they knew what they wanted to be, and who they were, by age three.

It should be noted here that self-image and creativity were indivisible for these individuals, and that they accepted that their creativity was as much a part of them as their head and hands.

'I can actually remember being in a cot and just staring at the seventies curtains. So for me what came before anything else was shape and colour, and that was a really major input into my life....I could really feel the shapes and the colours, and I find that really exciting in a non-verbal way. So the surroundings I grew up in very much had a major influence on who I am and what my work's about.' Nellie, fine art ceramicist.

What did appear significant to them was the recognition and acceptance of that aspect of their personality by another, the mentor, and it is interesting that very few participants experienced a relationship which acknowledged and expanded their creativity at an early age. The mentor in childhood was often a parent or other close relative.

'I came from a large family and my mother was competent in music, but we were all encouraged to do what ever we felt was right for us. From an early age I always made things, right from models, to big tree houses, to painting, and there was no discouragement of that at all.' Sol

How old were you?' CB

'Well I suppose when I really got involved in materials, I can think back to being probably six. But my parents always kept cupboards full of my paintings and drawings.' Sol

'So it was highly valued, nothing was ever thrown out?' CB

'No, that's right'. Sol, ceramicist.

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'Aunt E. sort of showed me another life. She had antique furniture and everything that she had really was quality. I was three or four. The luxury thing to me was being taken out to tea and having cream cakes. It was just before the war. So I think she sort of sowed the seed somewhere of always looking for beautiful things....

One of my treats was her attic, full of goodies and boxes. We'd pull all of this stuff out and we'd go through it all and I remember picking up sun-bonnets which were beautifully smocked printed cotton, and fine stitching, and this fine fine sewing that she used to show me, and I used to appreciate it as a tiny little thing.

We'd have afternoon tea by her fire with her cat, and it was always sort of home-made scones and home-made strawberry jam, and everything was of the choicest quality. It was just beautiful.' Claire, textile designer, painter.

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Some children whose relatives had not noticed their creativity were fortunate in finding recognition in primary school. In all cases however where a mentor was identified in childhood, the memory of the person recalled as being the one who stimulated, acknowledged or encouraged the creativity of the child, is almost tangible.

'Two people spring to mind and they're both pianists. One of them was my piano teacher Miss H. who I went to when I was seven and a half. She was an old Victorian lady who lived in a brown house which smelled of apples drying and stuff, and she was a strait-laced strict woman. She was quite a strong influence on me. I loved making the music.

The other was Miss S. at school. I remember at the end of a lesson suddenly she played a bit of rag-time on the piano. I must have been eight or nine, and years later I managed to reproduce something like that, but that really stayed with me, that you could produce that sound, and I just used to ask her everyday to do it and play it again, and somehow she did it.

Much later on I earned my first money as a performer playing boogie piano in a really rough rock band when I was about fourteen or fifteen. That keyboard skill has been pretty much with me all the time.' Rob, musician.

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'Who was the first?' CB

'Mrs. B.' Carl

'How old were you?' CB

'Seven or eight. She was the first person to take an interest in me and work hard and realise that there was something about me that was special, and that's what I felt at the time.' Carl

'Had your parents recognised it?' CB

'No.' Carl

'Were your parents artistically minded?' CB

'No.' Carl

'So you'd got it. You knew you'd got it, and she was the first person to see it in you?' CB



'Yes, she would give me projects which involved my skills, so I would do a lot of drawing for her. There were painting competitions she would put me in for. I was in charge of the print blocks which printed little pictures, had responsibility for them.' Carl

'What was she like?' CB

'She was quite kind, quite quietly spoken. She died about a couple of years ago. I always meant to go round, she only lived at the back of my Mum's house, and I always meant to go round and say 'thanks very much.' I always have a feeling I would have been very ordinary if she hadn't have taught me.' Carl

'How did it feel when she started picking you out?' CB

'It made me special. Suddenly being at school was something I might enjoy. There was somebody at school who was actually me, and it was enjoyable, and I was there doing it, and that wasn't true of any other teacher or any other lesson.' Carl

'So you felt more like you really were within her class?' CB

'Yes, in fact I can't remember anything else about school.' Carl, theatre designer.

### **'A Glimpse of Other Possibilities...'**

For most participants though, there was no relationship of significance until early adolescence. One man described his family as one which was extremely musically gifted, but also narrowly fundamental and therefore whilst they did not approve of professional musicians, were very involved in local church music and singing. His mother had been advised to sing professionally, but her brother had prevented this from happening because it was *'not the thing for a respectable young lady'* to do and might lead to *'bad company'*. At five years old he had been able to play the organ, but never discussed his musical ability with either his friends or his teachers as it *'wasn't the sort of tradition for boys to be brought up in'*. He describes the fortuitous way in which his creativity was eventually noticed by others, and the resultant change in his life.

'I was not happy in my first two years at the grammar school at all, but then came a strange incident. We'd all been rather chattery in morning assembly, and the history master who was a Welshman who was very keen on music, punished us by getting us to go after school and sing the psalm that we should have sung in the morning.

He said 'Is there anyone here who could play the piano for the psalm?' Well I'd never played a psalm because I was brought up in this non-conformist tradition and I didn't know what a psalm was, but I decided I'd have a go. And I played the psalm, and that did the trick because that opened the door for me to move into other circles in the school in a very strange way. Soon I was accompanying the school choir, and was involved in playing for school plays and all these things one did in schools.

This man opened the door, but there was in the school a teacher of English, and he gave me the most tremendous encouragement. He gave me more than encouragement. He was training to be a congregational minister when he was a young man. Then came the war and he was a conscientious objector, and in fact was imprisoned for two years for it. So he was a strong pacifist, a strong socialist, and he was a vegetarian.

And all these things were in the back of my mind quite strongly as a young boy. When I was about eight, I'd heard about the first world war and felt physically sick. It was an immediate physical reaction, so I'd always felt strongly about these things. I felt an enormous sense of affinity, and he began to give me support.

He was the sort of person who every time I played anything would drop me a note to say how much he'd enjoyed it. He then presented me with a complete set of Beethoven sonatas with a dedication which said 'For the pleasure of hearing you playing, from your friend and teacher'. So it really was wonderful and that gave me a tremendous sense of worth, wholeness. He was known as a very severe master. Charles

'So other people didn't have the same relationship as you had?' CB

'No I don't think they did. I think he sensed in me a certain relationship, he would invite me back to his home and he had a very enthusiastic Welsh wife.... He also took me to hear Vaughan Williams and so from a very early age there was a direct contact with these people, and if there was a possibility of an introduction, there would be an introduction, so that from quite an early age I was sending compositions to Vaughan Williams, just boyish compositions, but he was so good that he sent them back with remarks on them.' Charles, musician.

Sally, who is multi-talented in her creative output, described her early mentors as having a coffee shop where all the local *'layabouts, the kind of adolescent society'* would gather. From that base the local youth often went to the home of the owners to watch nature programmes on television, about condors or other wild-life. She admits to having a wonderful home but *'at that age you're always trying to escape from home aren't you?'*:

'They ran a little coffee shop which became the meeting place for all the local kids. It was a very hip place to be. They were an extremely glamorous couple, they looked extraordinary. She looked like Cher and he looked like God. We had never seen anything like them before and I fell completely in love with both of them.

From then until I left college at 18 they became a focus for my social life. I think what they did for me was to do with getting a glimpse of other possibilities. They said 'You don't have to chase a career structure. Human happiness can be found in less linear ways than going to university or working your way up through some kind of very formal structure.'

They did a bit of everything. He was a wonderful photographer and a print-maker. She was a print-maker, but she now teaches Yoga nationally and internationally. Neither of them would describe themselves as 'I am a photographer', but they were just very rounded people. Their house was just full of extraordinary things, they were just interested in everything'. Terri, performer, designer, painter.

## **'A World of Beauty and Idealism...'**

It became apparent that for some people, their secondary school ethos had not supported their artistic creativity:

**'I found school music just awful and I have to put that on record.'** Rob, musician

Nor had it supported the artistic creativity of the teacher who took an interest in their talent:

**'I was the first one to pioneer art because we were very much an academic school. Graduates were going to Oxford and Cambridge and we had quite a high scholarship achievement. I was the first one to get a scholarship in art. Since then other people have followed my footsteps but the person who motivated this was a man called Mr. B.'**

**'We used to put on theatrical events and we made a terrific team when we actually put up all these stage sets up and painted them, and I spent weeks and weeks doing all this, and all these backdrops. They were quite spectacular.'** Edward

**'So he paid quite a lot of attention to detail did he?'** CB

**'Oh heavens yes. We used to work weekends and nights.'** Edward

**'So what made you want to put in extra time?'** CB

**'I hadn't thought about that at all. I suppose he had passion, and it rubbed off, for art, in a school which had negative vibrations in that direction. It's amazing....it was important for me to prove him right in the fact that this was a subject that people could achieve things within academically.'** Edward

**'So you wanted to help him to achieve his dream?'** CB

**'I didn't realise it at the time, but that's what it was, yes.'** Edward, ceramicist.

Those teachers who made a difference are remembered as possessing a certain quality which made their subject vital, and as introducing an element of culture and life into otherwise arid settings.

**'He was cultivated in a kind of rough way, and his house, which I went to later, had hundreds of books and paintings, and it was just cultivated. I don't think any of the other teachers were particularly cultivated.'** Keith

**'So was he fairly isolated within the school?'** CB

'Yes, I would say so, Partly because art as a subject would be totally peripheral to the kind of thinking in that school, which was very academic. I think that he probably conveyed a belief system rather than just taught something. Other people would have just taught Macbeth, but you never got the feeling that they **lived** Macbeth. He lived it. There was a kind of living quality about it rather than academic second hand, or third hand quality.

I was yearning against all the environmental and social odds of the place, it's just suburban and that sort of thing and deadly. I knew that, and he was opening a world of beauty and idealism that I was looking for, and knew existed. He was able to manifest that in a clumsy sort of way. To a world that transcended the banalities of that commercial and utilitarian town. Keith, painter, writer.

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'He was quite a major influence on me because he treated students as human beings really, and spoke to them about films and books.' Eric

'So he involved you in much more than just the school curriculum?' CB

'Yes. He created a cultural ethos in a place which was very spartan. He was passionate about the things he did.' Eric, actor, teacher.

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'I became a sort of star pupil. I actually was studying physics and biology. I was doing a sixth form course in the sciences. I used to hang around. He'd have a little group which was interesting in itself, and the art room was a kind of oasis where we used to go, and there was coffee. That was most unusual. The smell of coffee in that kind of school was pretty unusual. There were books, and we would be discovering.' Keith, painter, writer.

Early collaboration with the mentor, where appropriate to the art form, or with the mentor's support, was a common occurrence for participants. Eric tried to channel his creativity into a career more acceptable to his parents, and despite acting in school plays, kept an image in mind of himself as 'a rugby playing vet'. He stayed in contact with his mentor after leaving school and although he tried accountancy and the family business, enlisted his mentor's support to enter university and eventually completed a degree in theology and drama.

Now in his early 50's, Eric has been a successful head of year in a secondary school, and now runs his own theatre company. His parents however, continue to hope that he will go back to education and a more 'settled' life.

At the time of Eric's schooldays, the issue of careers for boys was one which became of pressing concern around the ages of 12 to 14 years, whereas most of the women I interviewed who were of a similar age, did not seem to have had similar experiences of a negative attitude toward the arts and creativity in secondary schools. It may be that this was because the arts were seen as more acceptable for women, and this could be linked to the idea that women in those days should not have serious careers. However, it may also be because the mentors they described were very strong characters who were able to act also as secure role models.

'She taught E.Lit. at school and she was my form teacher when I was in the fifth form. She very rarely smiled, she was like a cold fish. Then she started to teach me and she was an inspiration because she admired all the qualities everybody else thought were irritating and wrong. So everything that was wrong with me in the eyes of the world, she admired and supported, in terms of rebelliousness, questioning.

There was a particular incident where the local Conservative party were putting up election posters in the school, and we were not allowed our Che [Guevara] posters. So we went down and ripped the Conservative posters up publicly and left them outside the headmistress's office. About 40 minutes later the word had got round to the alderman who came round in his big black car, and there was absolute hell to pay about it. We went for a special tutorial in the bookstore, and there was a council poster in the window by the bookstore and she took it down and gave it to us and said 'I think you've missed one.' and that was the moment when I knew she understood.' Ellen, theatre director, teacher, writer.

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'They were very old-fashioned blue-stockings women, in many ways very similar characters, my art teacher, my English teacher, the head, and the English teacher at college. In their own ways different, but in their passion about their subject totally in tune with each other. The head was a life-long member of the Labour Party and was running this direct grant grammar school. Very highly principled but also quite often seeing the world from a different perspective from the one I'd been brought up with.

But all of them communicated this tremendous sense of enthusiasm and passion about their world, and the fact that they were doing it. It's possible to be female and do something that you care about. I suppose the message is if you care about it enough you can do it. But you have to commit yourself to it, you can't do it by halves because these women had given their lives to it.' Terri, performer, designer, painter.

### **'That's Definitely Not British!'**

It became obvious that the parents of some participants were not at all sure about their children's chosen life, and the issue of parental pressure to obtain a 'proper job' was one which became a recurrent theme. This was mainly noticeable in families which had no previous history of a career in the arts, and mainly affected first born children:

'My mother wanted me to go into accountancy and I was terrible with maths.' Ian, painter.

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'From the age of eight I loved drama. I won prizes and knew I was interested in theatre. My parents were very dictatorial and they didn't approve of it, they are snobs, and it was an embarrassment to them that any daughter of theirs would want to go on the stage. It was the sixties. They were convinced from a very early age that I was going to have an early and bad end. They were sure that I needed to get a sensible degree, get a job, do all those things. Because in those days you could pretty much guarantee a career if you chose to have one. Even now they still fuss on.' Ellen, theatre director, teacher, writer.

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'Parents want the best. Mum wanted me to go into a bank, and Dad wanted me to be a draughtsman or engineer.' Carl, theatre designer.

Some participants though, were aware of sometimes nothing more than a simple lack of understanding at the root of the disapproval:

'My parents thought there was something the matter with me and I ought to go and see a psychologist because they found I'd written some poetry. 'That's definitely not British! Wheel him off and have him looked at!' I'd written a spoof on Milton's 'On Going Blind' entitled 'On Wearing Glasses', because I'd been sent for an eye test. They didn't know about Milton and thought there was something the matter with me.' Duncan, theatre director, impresario.

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'My Dad's criticism all these years has been his way of worrying about me. With a great deal of love he's going to come down and see, and be proud of what I do, and I want that for him as well, because it's a sad state of affairs that he's not satisfied not only with his own achievements in life, but with his children's achievements.

I've tried to stress to him that it's really important that he has brought into the world three really nice people regardless of their achievements...he's finally learning from his children at last.' Nellie, fine art ceramicist.

Those participants whose parents were themselves creative, were the ones who named their parents as their first mentors.

'The first one was my father. He was a man with an inner world that was very strong, so he lived mostly in it. He was an academic, a lecturer at a university. He was a scientist, very fond of poetry...he was a great teacher.' Katherine, writer.

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'Mum had a great deal of drawing skill, but had never used it. She trained as a radiographer going into the science side and working in the health service all her life. Dad worked as an electrical engineer. He was really interested in the theatre, he used to do the lighting for the local amateur dramatics.

So he was interested in the theatre but never expressed himself in that way, it was always the technical side. So there was an atmosphere of support for that whole area of interest, but neither of them would say they were artists.' Terri, performer, designer, painter.

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'My father trained as an artist and he worked as a graphic artist at weekends and evenings...I was always amazed as a kid because both him and my mother would put up these easels on the dining table and they'd paint. Of course it was natural for me to draw too, I'd have my own area on top of the grand piano. The whole atmosphere was the right kind for doing anything creative in really.' Laura, ceramicist.

### **'It Almost Represents the Human...'**

What is perhaps most noticeable here is that creativity does not necessarily imply 'arts' alone, and that some participants perceive the scientific mind to be made up in much the same way. Tina is a mature student who initially studied politics at university and who spent a year in America as an exchange student.

In that final year she had the opportunity to combine arts and politics, and so chose to study ceramics as one of her courses. She found her tutor to be so inspirational that this aspect of her personality took precedence over the politics. She now works in ceramics but incorporates text into her pieces in thought-provoking and moving ways. She says of her art:

'I don't see myself exclusively as a visual person, because there's a lot of stuff you can't convey visually'.

When asked if she felt this was where her life would be she says:

'I hope so. But politics may become part of what I'm doing.' Tina, ceramicist.

Adrian, another student, was torn between arts, geology, science and agriculture. His family background is both artistic and scientific and he says:

'I had a real dilemma about the art side because I'm both ways inclined.' Adrian, sculptor.

To Adrian both sides of his personality relate, as he puts it, 'perfectly', and he would like to be able to apply himself to science and art. Barbara, also a student, experienced some opposition and bewilderment from her tutors when as a potential Oxbridge candidate, she chose instead to go for a B Tech in art. She admits to finding her art course at college more difficult than her academic studies but says that it makes her happy. She describes the mentor support she did get in the following way:

'It makes you feel more confident in being you, like there's someone else who knows about it and sort of understands why you're doing it. Then if anything happens, they're always there to turn to, or it makes you feel more comfortable in the position you're in, enabling you to do more.' Barbara, sculptor.

These three students highlight the difficulties which can arise for the creative individual in the academic system in the UK, with regard to having to make choices between the arts and sciences in tertiary education, and this theme was echoed by other student participants. It was particularly interesting to listen to the technical aspects required for some of the art works, and to realise that students in the arts frequently work in ways not dissimilar to any student pursuing a more scientific line of inquiry

'How does the text and ceramics work, how do you put words on to the clay?' CB

'It's horrific, technical things. It's been a nightmare. You have to make a screen up, like for screen printing, then you have to make a transfer, then you put the transfer on fired clay, and hope it sticks.' Tina

'And is it doing?' CB

'Sometimes.' (laughing) 'I'm working at the moment on testing different things to try and get to stick on to clay better, so I've just done twenty different tests which have to go in the kiln tomorrow, which then get taken out and I decide which I'm going to use. Tina, ceramicist.

Nellie expands on this theme:

'You've got to have good technical skill because glazing is an art in itself, and it's chemistry. You've got to be able to build, and you've got to have an idea in the first place. So it's really different stages and it fulfils me completely as a person, because of the nature of working in clay.

I've worked out what it is that I want to do, what I want to get across, what I want to express. Then the next phase is I don't switch that off altogether, but it becomes a design problem, so you work through and work out how the nuts and bolts fit, then it becomes an engineering problem.

Then you pull it all together at the end and you've got the body, mind and spirit, if you like, encompassed in the work, which is actually what my work's about at the moment. It's about that process, and what it is. It almost represents the human aspects.' Nellie, fine art ceramicist



## **'The Beauty of Seeing Relationships...'**

Within interviews there were constant references to mentors helping the creative person 'to see' or 'to look', and it was obviously a key factor across artistic disciplines in terms of developing the aesthetic sense. Claire (textile designer, painter) described herself as being *'terribly grateful'* to her mentor for enabling her to 'see' and be excited by things, and develop a higher sense of awareness, but more detailed accounts are offered by others:

**'I used to think he was a bit of a strange influence because he didn't seem to quite tie in with what everyone else was doing, and it turned out he was the most inspired influence of all. He taught you to look and see, and create something out of your environment. The other academic approach was to just look. They didn't have the realisation that you could actually absorb what you saw and then you could redesign it.'** Ian, painter.

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**'He was the biggest single influence of my life. It was like he was a great lump of mud, but in the mud was gold, and I saw the gold. I didn't know how to look at paintings, looking at paintings is quite a skill like listening to music.'**

**He actually somehow could open the book and I'd see a glimpse that it was beautiful, or coherent, or well-organised, or magical or something. I could just see a glimmer of that...I'm much better at it now...that was a spiritual revelation, not a blinding one, but I could see.'** Keith, painter, writer.

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**'This is when it comes to spirituality, it's such an internal emotion, not just feeling, but maybe it's based on things like soul, and a soul response to something, whether it be a person, or visual, or hearing, or smell or whatever. But it just is that. The way that it evokes in you something that gives me strength.'** Karen, photographer, fine artist.

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**'I mean he made me see. he helped me to see, and that is the most important thing for a painter. What it really means is seeing beyond practical viewing. We mostly focus on practical things, What we see is about what is practical. It's essential to see things in practical terms, you couldn't walk across a room really if all the sensations that were possible were hitting your brain at once, you wouldn't be able to do that.'**

**It's the selective ability, the practical selective ability which enables us to survive, and the most fundamental of that practical ability is about identifying objects, the basic way we perceive. But there's a whole vast range of perceptions which one tends to cut out.'**

Learning to see means learning not to cut them all out. It's the aesthetic, beyond the practical, the beauty of seeing relationships really, like the beauty of looking at the shadow on the wall.' Andrew, painter.

All of the mentors were described as having commitment to their work and a deep passion for their subject in a way which obviously left its mark on those who were learning. However there was also a naked honesty about the mentors in as much as they had no pretensions, and seemed to feel no need to fit into a mould.

Initially it appeared to me that the pattern of these relationships was not following the pattern of my earlier study in one way, as communication skills were rarely referred to explicitly in these obviously empathic alliances. I had to remind myself that my 1994 study had been with those who worked in human service settings, and that the phrase 'communication skills' was the jargon of such settings. With a cohort who communicated via a multitude of media I would have to look much deeper. As the interviews progressed however, I was able to see that much of the communication was non-verbal, and intuitive, and there seemed to be a 'recognition' of, and an affinity for, each other. Such intuition had figured in my first study, but few individuals had been able to articulate what happened, or how it happened. For a few in this study, this aspect of the relationship was recognised right at the start.

'When I met T we had this instant knowing, and we spent about five minutes gazing at each other's eyes, and we had this silent communication where I was saying things I knew I could communicate telepathically with him.

How, I didn't know. But I knew whatever I was saying he was understanding completely, and I knew in some sense that I was understanding what he was saying.' Di, creative movement teacher.

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'Which comes first intellectual or emotional? I think the way I make progress is to make intellectual decisions which I then put on hold, meeting Elaine was like that....it was just a feeling that things were easy, it felt right. Elaine just bowled into my life and I was completely open and frank with her about even the most precious bits of me. I can remember sitting there and doing it. It was ever so significant.' Rob, musician.

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'The first day I met him I started talking to him about some of the things that interested me, because he had such an open kind of approach, and straight away one just started saying what was on one's mind. I hadn't said it to anyone else, but you just knew this guy was the one to tell.' Andrew, painter.

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'There hasn't been a lot of talking between us, very rare, and I've had a sense a lot of the time, that nobody else, nobody really understands what I'm doing. But I went to see him once at his house, and had supper with him and his wife, and he and I were sitting in the garden, it was a summer's evening and his wife was preparing the supper.

And he just said to me that he didn't know what it was about me, but it was something about the directness of our relationship, that we could communicate without all these other layers, and he'd always known, he knew that when he and I felt exactly the same. Interestingly on each occasion, he's the one who's identified it. Perhaps I would have been too reticent to articulate it.' Niamh, poet

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'There was just an understanding. I think it was one of my first understandings of this kind of thread that can link you with people, and maybe nothing has to be said, but you know that they know.' Laura, ceramicist.

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'I think there's this feeling that we're coming from the same place, and you don't know where that place is. Physically the location can be totally different, but it's that feeling of shared experience, shared knowledge, recognition.' Helen, potter.

Returning to the text of the interviews I came across a discussion which was ostensibly about 'seeing' when I was checking out my understanding of the interaction between the viewer and the art work, and which also seems to give a clue to the process described above:

'It's a deeper understanding, something that I have now when I look at things, or when I feel things. I can really take it on board because it actually means something to me. Its going off the instincts a lot more, rather than 'doing this because that's how it's done in the outside world' or 'this is a certain fad, so this is the way we draw because this is popular'. It's not that. It's actually whether it feels right.' Laura

'So is it like an emotional relationship you have, when you're seeing?' CB

'Oh yes, it's emotional, and it's a mix of taking something and digesting it ever so quickly, and recognising what it's given you.' Laura

'So it's interpretive?' CB

'It's interpretive, yes, yes.' Laura, ceramicist.

Bella has difficulties in expressing herself with words especially when she feels strongly about something. She feels that this stems from having a difficult and abusive childhood which led to her retreating behind chairs and under tables, creating a safe but isolated environment, and remaining silent whilst living in her own world. She too uses other means of communicating when she becomes emotionally roused.

'If it's something that I feel very strongly about and I'm trying to explain..., I think words are inadequate, a very sort of inadequate language. I will naturally revert to movement, or sound, like jumping up and down or making a noise, that for me, I think, totally conveys what I'm trying to say.'  
Bella

A particularly interesting point made by one man in terms of communication and empathy, is described here:

'...because words can't express and describe concepts and ideas easily, well not all the time, visual context is very important, so you can actually exchange and develop ideas by talking through visual images and almost start holding conversations visually, where you think 'Well what if I start drawing, what if you thought about it this way...'. Sol, ceramicist.

Empathy and communication was also made apparent via tactile experience, but in a way which felt safe and which had a prior foundation, as Kate explains:

'...because he cared.' Kate

'How did you sense the message?' CB

'His eyes and his body language.' Kate

'So how was his body language?' CB

'Well I've realised that he and I, -- I would touch him.' Kate

'So it's physical?' CB

'Yes I touch him on the arm like a sort of hold. I was saying thanks to him once, and I did it because I thought "I want to do this", and occasionally he's done the same to me, and it's always felt just right. It's if you get into more talking you spoil it, and there doesn't need to be any more than that.'  
Kate

'So that kind of communication is enough by itself?' CB

'Yes. It's only when I was saying about me touching his arm and him touching my arm, when I was saying those things to you I was thinking "God, in another circumstance that could be sexual harassment, that could be inappropriate behaviour." ' Kate

'What makes you realise that it isn't inappropriate behaviour?' CB

'Because there's the foundation to that already, before the touching.'

'Which is that of..?' CB

**'Trust, respect.' Kate, fine artist.**

The 'beauty of seeing relationships' is applicable in research too and caused me to speculate whether the directness of the empathy between creative sensitive individuals is one and the same as 'seeing', the direct empathy between the viewer and the art-work?

I tested this intuitive hunch out with Barbara whose mentor is her sister, and who had described what seemed like telepathic experiences in her first interview.

**'The word 'see', what does it mean for you?' CB**

**'I think it can be purely observing, but reading what is there visually, and you interpret it, because you must have something in your head that you're looking for, to make some sort of judgement on what you see.' Barbara**

**'That sounds again like a very intuitive process. How similar is it to understanding your sister, this process of seeing?' CB**

**'One is visual, and one is based totally on non-material things. Barbara**

**'Tell me about this non-material thing. To experience that, what's it like?'  
CB**

At this point Barbara's description, though convoluted, became one which I seemed to follow intuitively. I knew she related better to visual images, and so I used a mixture of words and imagery to decipher the following description.

**'It's like something which you don't have so much control over, or you can't pinpoint it exactly, it's more like you're moving into something, like different feelings and different ideas which come up in your head in ways you interact. It's like sometimes it's as though you're having a conversation with someone, you can see yourself having a conversation with someone, and it's whether you're totally involved in the conversation, or whether you're just...**

**I think it's being totally at ease with somebody, like not having anything to fear and sort of being very open with them. If you were with someone you didn't know very well, or had a lesser relationship with, you'd be totally contained within yourself. You sort of share more.' Barbara**

**'Become one person, flow together?' CB**

**'Yes, parts of you.' Barbara**

**'So you retain the sense of self...' CB**

**'Yes.' Barbara**

**'...but you're very much flowing into that other person's sense of self as well...' CB**

**'Yes.' Barbara**

'...so you can actually see and understand them completely, and they you. Would that be right?' CB

'Yes, yes! When you're with other people you put up an outside guard, and you're quite worried. You just totally let all that go.' Barbara

'I'm trying to put a visual thing on this. So there are still two people, but the circles overlap. Would that be it?' CB

'Yes, yes!' Barbara, sculptor.

It could be said that I was putting my own interpretation onto Barbara's words, and I would agree that this was indeed the case, however the essence of hermeneutics is interpretation. Barbara, and all other participants, were free to correct any interpretation of their experiences as they saw fit, and the benefit of leading questions has been acknowledged as part of the process of reliability checking (Kvale, 1996). Bella, who works best with the three dimensional form of art, described the continuity of this organic relationship in the following way:

'If I were to ask you to create something which would describe your relationship with Philip, what would you create?' CB

'A spiral I think. Because it's kind of continuous, but it's also going in and out. So it's like constantly changing, and I get that feeling from a spiral. It's always there.' Bella.

It is interesting to note that the means of communicating messages within the relationship by each artist is to some extent the same as the medium in which they choose to work. It is not simply verbal, but tactile, visual and aesthetic. As the mentor needs to be able to read, understand and respond to these communications in a meaningful way, it raises the question whether the traditional mentor relationship is an art form in itself?

### **'Just a Little Bit Beyond Where I'm At...'**

The role of the mentor for the lone creative artist goes beyond that of friend and role model. Creative artists are mainly working independently of organisations, although some of those interviewed teach as well. There is then, no firm career structure for the artist, no annual increment, and no superannuation to buffer retirement.

They are dependent on themselves, much more so than those who use their creative talents within architecture or journalism. It is therefore important that they are able to judge the quality of their work in relation to their last work, or their last acclaimed work.

Many ceramicists, painters, and photographers for instance, do not have their own gallery with a constant stream of work on display, but are dependent on being offered exhibitions to show their work, and it is important in the world of art, that the work shown is the latest work completed. Most art is about being at the leading edge, and whilst retrospective exhibitions are offered, they are not usually what the art critics find most challenging.

This is no different really to how academics work. The whole point of a researcher giving a paper at a conference, or publishing in a journal, is to let the world know what they are working on and what they have found. Occasionally towards retirement very well-known academics may publish a collection of their work, but it is not this which wins them either critical acclaim or disapproval.

It is the new work, the new insights, the new discoveries, which are eagerly awaited. The creative artist has a CV, and this is the information which is usually found in the catalogue of the work at private views of new exhibitions, and new shows of any kind. This usually lists where the artist went to college, and names all major and minor showings of work since leaving college. The catalogue itself will form part of the next CV, especially if a leading art critic has written the introduction, or a commentary, to the work.

New work then, is the life-blood of the creative artist, whether poet, musician or theatre performer. It is not judged against the work of others, but against the last acclaimed work of the individuals themselves, and as such requires individuals to be aware of the value and worth of their work. Some creative people rely solely on their own judgement for deciding on the quality of their work, and sounding out their new ideas, but others rely on the mentor to give them honest appraisal.

It is neither easy to give nor to receive criticism, but it appears that the mentor is able to do so in such a way that it is acceptable and sought.

'I think it's just talking about the next thing, and she will listen to the next thing. I might have an idea and sometimes she'll just get very excited about the next idea, and suddenly that's it. You have to trust somebody an awful lot to do that, and once I've gone through that stage if she thinks it's a good idea then I feel quite happy about talking to other people about it.' Carl, theatre designer

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'He tends to be my sounding board the whole way through.' Bella.

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'It's very rare for him to ask me to change something, but he's a very sensitive man and if he has something derogatory to say he will hold it until it's the right time. If it's something that is praising he will openly come out with that.' Laura, ceramicist.

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'What part, if any, does the other person play in your creative life?' CB

'Oh it's the critical review, What everybody needs in life is reassurance, about anything you do, and you get to a point where you have a list of criteria that you're working towards that you have to satisfy, and you might possibly write that down, or you might have it in your mind.

You then come to a point where you have one sketchy answer to the problem, and in some cases it could be me sitting at the wheel making a pot, and I might come up with a rather nice pot, and I think 'I like that', but you don't know because you always have self-doubt. All creative people have self-doubt, you're never satisfied ever with what you do...at that point you need some reassurance. At that point she comes along and says 'That's a bit too small' or something.

And then you usually make it bigger, or she says 'That's terrific, that's right, that's got energy, that's got life, I like that', and so you carry on and you make more.'

'Do you ever keep it the way it is after she's said 'Change it'? CB

'No.' Edward, ceramicist.

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'Do you listen to her?' CB

'Yes of course I do, I hate it as well though. Well I don't hate it, I really rely on it.'

'So why do you accept it from her, what is it about her which enables you to take critical feedback? CB

'My rational answer is that I have a strong impulse or strong respect for women, all the women in my life. But it goes a little bit deeper than that, it's to do with what I call the feminine aspect in myself, and in the world as I see it. So to me the women that I meet like her...they've got an understanding of life which is just a little bit beyond where I'm at.

And sometimes I get a glimpse of it, or can just hear the music far off, or I can just smell it, or I can just catch a flash of it, and it closes. And I want, I want to take part in that understanding. So when she makes a criticism about the painting it's like I'm gritting my teeth. I want to resist and argue, but it's usually so to the core, it educates. I think that's what the educational process is becoming for me, is that it's leading me on to this sense of being that I only half glimpse. And that's part of the growth process, that I don't know where I am when I'm in it, and then it becomes consolidated and I can verbalise it, reflect on it, and all the rest of it.



But I think that's what she does and I can take it from her. Also she's a really clever person, she's educated and very clear and concentrated about some key things.'

'What does she do?' CB

'She's a poet....She also teaches English and drama.' Michael, painter.

### **'The Cross-roads We Exist At...'**

A common theme throughout the interviews was the issue of how the creative person handles close relationships. Discussion with my supervisor in the early stages of this work led to my addressing the issue of whether or not creative people were selfish in seeming to put their work before their relationships. Women have a history of oppression in many areas of life and therefore it should have been no surprise to discover that many of the female participants in this study had been accused of selfishness when attempting to pursue their creativity beyond that of producing and raising children.

Julia is a sculptor, but has also made pots, been a textile designer, and painted. Her father did not consider her art work to be a 'proper job', but she had a loving mother who became a strong role-model when her father left the family home. Julia was encouraged in whatever she chose to do, and is unique in this study as having had only one mentor, her mother. Julia's mother was not artistic in the accepted sense of the word, but had a passion for the visual art of film, and Julia recalls spending many hours accompanying her mother to cinema houses.

Julia considers that by the time she was 19 she was already fixed in her personal views and does not think that she is a different person to her 19 year old self, except in terms of experience. At the time her mother died, there were other family losses and worries, and it was at that time that a family member started to carve in stone. Julia was given a piece of stone and produced her first sculpture, that of a mother and child. Until her interview with me, she admitted that she hadn't put the dates together before. All three of her children now work in the arts field.

However she had not enjoyed the support of her former husband who had only coped with her running a small pottery business because it wasn't competing with him. When she attempted to work as a sculptor she ran into problems:

'It was when I started exhibiting as an individual and became a person in my own right again that the trouble became worse. I think he saw me as a nourisher. I was there to look after him and the children, and help him in his career, and so when I had the semblance of a career of my own it wasn't very popular.'

I had to do everything as I had done before. Apart from 4 years, he always came home for a cooked meal at lunch time. I was lucky if I had a couple of hours in the afternoon, very lucky.' Julia, sculptor.

Julia's husband became very threatened by her work. One day during an argument he smashed her exhibition piece for her Diploma, and on the morning of an art examination he poured a bowl of porridge over her head.

She recalls walking up the road to the exam picking bits of porridge from her hair, but found courage from the example of her early mentor, her mother. Now divorced and very successful she says:

'When I meet someone now and I think they'd make a lovely companion, you have to think to yourself automatically, 'Well how much time have I got to put into it?' And I haven't, it wouldn't be fair to anyone.' Julia, sculptor.

And of her marriage she says that the most disempowering element was the waste of energy, that it couldn't go into creativity.

Michael too had problems with his relationship and his art work. He graduated from art college and married almost immediately as his girlfriend was pregnant. He says that although his wife liked the idea of having an artist around the place, she had problems with the reality. He admits to not being ready for marriage and all that it entailed in terms of parental responsibilities, But when I asked him in what way he didn't get the support he wanted, he replied:

'It's a bloody good question because she did support me in so many ways. She paid for my studio for a while, she paid the rent on that. I think the way she didn't support it was she didn't take it seriously.' Michael, painter.

There are similarities here to the refrain throughout Julia's interview, in that it was alright for her creativity to be a hobby, but not for it to be a serious venture. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, creative individuals find that their creativity is who they are, and not a separate issue. By not taking their creativity seriously it can be interpreted as not taking who they are seriously, and having their very self denied.

Michael is now in a relationship with a woman he describes as his mentor, and which has lasted for ten years. Interestingly enough he describes the paintings which he did during his marriage in the following way:

'...the paintings were really alienated; sealed messages from one part to another. I look at them now and they're empty of people, or they were very tragic, isolated objects. A lot of images of deserts...' Michael, painter.

He talks of his relationship now as a 'true marriage':

'The normal vision of marriage is the capitalist patriarchal, which reproduces as a means of production, and what we're talking about is a true marriage which is what I fantasise that the ancient goddess cultures had, that there is a goddess and her consort.

And I think that's what I'm learning about with her. And it hints to me that it's psychologically healthier for the individuals and the planet, if men and women can get together in that creative, spiritual, sexual relationship with one another.

That's why it's nurtured my art work. My wife didn't have a happy relationship with her own sexuality and her own artistic and creative process. Jill is continually relating and dialoguing about her poetry or her students' [poetry] and it's informed by her creative approach and attitudes, and I'm feeding off that, and I know that she's going to be there for me, whereas there's nothing worse than that kind of embarrassed silence.' Michael

'Which is what you got from your wife?' CB

'From my wife, yes.' Michael, painter.

For some people their marriage partners had openly mocked their efforts at becoming creative and this had repressed the growth of the individual concerned:

'He was very scornful about things that I did and I didn't feel confident despite sounding a confident person. I wasn't at all confident....I can remember writing and I put it in a book, and he found it and sort of sneered about it one day, and it didn't drive me on to do more, it put me off completely.' Niamh, poet.

Elaine, a singer, says that her marriage held her creativity down '*dreadfully*,

'...if I did sing, I was told off. I was told I made a row.' Elaine, singer.

She now lives with her children and Rob, her mentor, and considers him her 'life partner'.

Rob says:

'...the woman before Elaine, said 'I think you're going to have to find somebody who totally takes on board what you're doing.' Rob

'So it can actually work if you get the right person who understands what creativity is about?' CB

'Oh yes. We work together a great deal, but we constantly try and recognise our differences so that we can work apart as well. Rob

'So you do need plenty of space still?' CB

**'Yes, we need more than we get really. The cross-roads we exist at is that Elaine has all the social science background, and the common sense, so she plans the projects. It's a great partnership and the most satisfying one of my life.'** Rob, musician.

As well as the creative individual needing to find the right person to share a life with, there is also the issue of how creative people manage other relationships in terms of time.

Many people felt that they needed to be quite disciplined with regard to how much time they gave to their friends and family, because of the demands of working when the creative mood was there.

**Katherine a married writer, says of her need for time in her study:**

**'You see I've justified it because I've had to earn a living by it'. Katherine, writer.**

**This is echoed by Julia:**

**'Unless I shut myself off and say I'm not seeing anybody for two or three days, I don't get on with the work. I can't sort of switch back and forth very easily.'** Julia, sculptor.

**Nellie once married but now living with a partner, was unequivocal in her reply to my question:**

**'Does the creative individual have to put their creativity before relationships?' CB**

**'Well if I lost my relationship I would sure as hell continue to be creative, I would never, sacrifice what I do for a partner, never. I would possibly temporarily sacrifice what I do for my child, but that's about it. It's a bit like being gay, you either are or you're not, that a lot of people are [creative] but they haven't come out of the closet. (laughs)' Nellie, fine art ceramicist.**

**During one interview, I was attempting to understand the issue of managing friendships whilst working with the creative drive, and I put forward a hunch which had formed as a result of both the interview process, and my own need for time alone to write:**

**'You said you sometimes felt unsure about people in terms of relationships. Is this because when you are with people it can be very draining in terms of creative energy, and the 'rationing' is about finding it difficult to cut off and keep it all in, because you're either sharing **totally**, or you're having to hold back because of not wanting to expend the creativity?' CB**

**'Absolutely! I've never actually put it into words or really thought it out in my mind before, but yes, yes!...this is absolutely true. Even to the extent that this morning I didn't do anything, I was just waiting for you to come (laughs).**

Yes if my daughter says 'Come over', I mean, I don't really like making commitments, it's very very selfish but I'm almost like, when I've done what I want to do, then I can.' Claire, textile designer, painter.

If the creativity would suffer as a result of expending limited supplies of energy in too many directions then maybe the issue is less about being selfish, and more to do with a strategy for creative survival. As Michael remarked:

'The job is how to differentiate between them and not exclude one or the other. They've all got to be kind of integrated, but differentiated.' Michael, painter.

Not all of those interviewed needed to curtail their interactions with others. Indeed those who work in the dramatic arts find that the company of their colleagues is essential to their creativity.

'There was a chap at the drama department who was quite important. Every Friday afternoon a group of us did three hours, an improvisation session. The kind of work we did is what's now appearing on television, with the group of actors who are given problems on the hoof and they have to solve them.

For three years every Friday afternoon we did this, creativity on the hoof, under pressure. Eventually we started doing it in front of audiences. Just like the television programmes the audience could select the props, or select the scene, or select the line, the play, or whatever.

I think that was quite important, because you are exposed and you have to trust the people you are with tremendously. And one of the things you learn is that it is quite futile getting into a yes/no confrontation because it doesn't go anywhere, and you have to adapt, and bend, and weave, and listen, and listen, and listen, and listen, and listen, in order to feed yourself.' Duncan, theatre director, impresario.

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'I work as part of a team by choice, because I didn't get that same buzz when I was completely free-lance. I've always enjoyed working as part of a team, and now I'm in a situation where you can create that team. I rely on people's energy. I rely on people's life-force and excitement.' Carl

'It recharges you?' CB

'Yes. It is very good at recharging me. Directing is quite tiring being outside that process, and you're trying to be the one that's creating the climate for creativity. That's my job, but if you had to do that all the time and nobody else was, that would be the most exhausting job in the world. I tend to invent the wheel all the time, invent it all over again. And I can only do that if there's an awful lot of people out there who have passions and energy and interest that'll stoke that, keep that fire going.' Carl, theatre designer.

Those participants who required both interaction with others and time to create alone seemed to find that their needs were best met through teaching others.

'The ideal would be having time for my own work, but having the time to share it with others as well.. And even if I won the lottery tomorrow and I gave up this job I'd still want to do part-time teaching, and keep on with those sorts of relationships.' Sol

'Why?' CB

'Partly because it's a two-way thing. I hope the students get a lot from me, but I also get a lot from them. The variety, just being able to talk with people about the variety of things that they are doing.' Sol, ceramicist.

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'I actually think creatively on the spot better than I do in writing, which is why, going back to what I was saying about the balance between teaching and writing, I wouldn't like it to be purely my own studying'. Paul

'So one could actually fire off the other?' CB

'Absolutely'. Paul

'The teaching will fire off the other, the teaching will fire off something you are going to put down in writing and maybe expand on later?' CB

'Yes. I mean ideally, in the ideal world, that's for me the benefit of doing an even balance. I mean I want more time for the writing, because I'm not getting enough time. I mean I've got lots of ideas and not enough time to work them out.' Paul

'What would be the right balance?' CB

'I basically have one day I spend on writing, but even that goes and because of family commitments I really can't do much at weekends and at evenings. ...But the sheer weight of the administration and teaching and preparation, marking and so on really means it's only a day a week at the moment in term time, and then I try and make it four days out of five in the vacation, if I can, leaving one day for keeping other things ticking over, but it's difficult to get that generally.

It's very frustrating to me because I do love the teaching, but it does take too much time. Well to be honest if it were purely the teaching and the writing I could find more time for the writing, it's the administration that's the problem.' Paul, writer.

The refrain of administrative work taking tutors away from their creative work, was also echoed by students who perceived that it also took tutors away from them, and sometimes put on 'hold' the relationships of those students who saw their tutors as mentors. It would appear that although the students and tutors are able to feed each other's creativity when they are together, there is little time for tutors actually to be as creative as they would wish, due in part to work which could perhaps be undertaken by competent secretaries and personal assistants.

All of the participants interviewed were only too aware of the difficulties inherent in managing time for others along with time for their creative art. Whilst recognising that I was in the main, party only to one version of events, I saw no evidence of selfish behaviour by participants, just a clear single-mindedness in relation to creativity.

In contrast there appeared to be some evidence of a lack of understanding by others who, maybe, are not very clear about how the creative process works, do not understand that it is not a 9am to 5pm occurrence, and in many cases appear to be jealous of the time given to it. It seems that for good relationships to flourish and grow, at least a modicum of awareness, independence, and maturity, is necessary in both parties.

### **'Something That Other People Did...'**

For some participants, their route to the art world had not been via the usual channels in their late teens, but had come about as the result of upheaval in their personal and professional lives. The mentor had been a particular catalyst for these individuals, who had reassessed their way of living and relating to the world, and made huge changes as a result.

For Karen, meeting a mentor at 16 changed her life.

'I worked in a drawing office straight from school. Mine wasn't a moneyed background, it wasn't a background that was artistic, it was a supportive family who said 'No. Go and get a proper job!.' Karen

'Were you the first person in your family to want to work in a creative way?'  
CB

'Well Mum had worked in a drawing office in years gone, but yes really I'm very different to my brother and sister. My parents were doing it in the kindest way. I really wanted to do a foundation course in art, but didn't do it, took on this job in a drawing office, and this is where I met Paul.

Initially he was just a nice guy in a small drawing office who was just someone very gentle. Over a period of years we became very close. I recognise that he changed my life completely, my way of thought, from being someone who actually didn't think very much. That's not to say I wasn't bright, but just didn't know what potential I had, and he was able to see that.' Karen, photographer, fine artist.

Karen eventually went to art college and took a degree in fine art. Today she works as a photographer, and recently has done some innovative work with children with special needs, allowing them to use camera and film to portray their personalities and who they are, more fully. Her story is told in more detail later in this chapter.

Nellie took her daughter and went on the road for two years in a bus after divorcing her husband. She thought she might be able to be more creative in such a setting, but found the politics of camp site life to be tedious, and realised that instead of being able to be creative on the road, all she could manage to do was to live. Prior to going on the road she had taken a two year course in ceramics and come out with the top grade.

'It was only when I went on the road and starved myself completely of the facility to do that, that I realised I had to go back to it, so it wasn't until I was without it that I realised I needed it more than anything else.' Nellie, fine art ceramicist

Her two mentors were very different in personality, one older man who was pessimistic about the difficulties of making a living in art when also trying to maintain a family, and one younger man who was as passionate about the subject as she was. She feels she obtained a realistic viewpoint overall, as the pessimism and optimism acted as a balance for each other.

'My confidence was at an all time low after having dragged through a horrible divorce, and all the rest of it, being a single parent, and they told me I was good, and it took me a long time to believe them. They really laid it on in the end that I had good ideas and the skill to go with it.' Nellie, fine art ceramicist

Kate worked in one of the human service professions before doing a degree at art college. She comes from a large family and recalls that she felt unable to express herself and her emotions either verbally or creatively due to a lack of individual attention, and the fact that her family were physically undemonstrative. Both the primary and secondary schools she attended had deprived art of its status as a meaningful subject:

'In the education system at home when you were at primary school there was painting, but that was always built into leisure time. It wasn't like part of the syllabus. Then going on to secondary school, art was for people with special needs.' Kate

'So it was looked upon as something you only did if you couldn't do anything else?' CB

'Yes, and it was quite clear that people who did art, or metal work, or wood work, or anything like that, it was because they couldn't do anything else.' Kate, fine artist.

Kate had a breakdown and left her job. Seven or eight months later she started an access course in fine art on a part time basis. The tutor there had recognised her state of health, and intimated to her that he had just come through a similar experience. She knows that she didn't really have the background to be accepted on the course, and feels she was given a real break.



'I always felt that it [art] was something other people did, and I always felt like someone who was sneaking in the back door watching, and being really envious that some people felt really comfortable in that field. But it was never something that I had any access to, only in the sense that I felt very comfortable with it. But I never had the confidence to think that maybe, maybe I've got something that can link me into that, and it's not a 'them and us' situation.' Kate, fine artist.

Bella worked as an assistant to the financial director of a large company. She had had an abusive childhood, with poor parenting, and although she worked and played hard, she led what she describes as an 'unbalanced' lifestyle. She looks upon that time of partying and drugs as a means of trying to escape from a life that she didn't want.

When her job was made redundant, she took a small part time post, began attending some adult education classes, and there started working in print and clay. She eventually met Philip a man with a similar background who is a painter and a dancer. He encouraged her to seek professional therapy and supported her through her period of transition:

'It began, even though we were quite equal in some senses, it began like a mentor, because we'd go to galleries and I'd be looking at paintings and he'd be pointing things out, and now I do it with him. He helped me to unlock. I know I did the work, but I think if I hadn't met him at that point, it would have been a few years ahead, and I might not be here now.' Bella

'So he unlocked the emotional side?' CB

'I think so yes, and once that, it was like a sponge. He's very special, he's very sensitive to abuse in all forms, which I suppose we both are. We were involved in a lot of anti-road protest together, because it was abuse of the land, abuse of the people, abuse of rights, y'know verbal, mental, physical, it's all the same.

He's got a very strong energy, quite a charismatic, but he's not the sort that would ever manipulate. He drums as well. He can actually pull a whole group of people together, he's like a catalyst really and that's what I feel he was for me....So I'd say that he enabled me to grow to a point where I feel now that I don't have boundaries.' Bella

**'Off the Rails...'**

For some participants the route to working in the creative arts was as a result of a breakdown or a near breakdown. Nellie's marriage had sapped her confidence and made her think that she was a 'nervous, neurotic mess'. Her time on the road had not helped her to use her creativity and she had become unwell:

'On the road if I hadn't gone back [to be creative] I'd have gone mad. By the time I left living in a bus I was in a very destructive relationship, and I was within a fortnight of a breakdown, I'm sure of it. I phoned up my Dad and asked him to get me out, and he was there in four hours. Things have improved now. I now feel I know myself reasonably well, and have an insight into those around me who I'm close to as well.' Nellie

'So that crisis was quite instrumental? CB

'Oh absolutely. I love the fact that I've been through everything I've been through. I look back and I think I wouldn't be who I am if I hadn't. It's like a cliché but it's so true, and I wouldn't be who I am if I hadn't been through all of those things.' Nellie

'Has it influenced your work?' CB

'God yes! Absolutely. I've done a great deal of work about birth, about pregnancy. I used my work as counselling for myself, and that's why it keeps me sane. I can express myself verbally, so I often wonder why I need to communicate visually as well. I think it's because there are so few people I can talk to who understand what I'm talking about.' Nellie, fine art ceramicist

Kate had left her job in one of the human services after a breakdown which she took a long time to recover from. She thinks that although she tried to be creative within her job, where it all 'fell down' for her, was that there were not enough resources, means or time to work in that way. She is sensitive to atmosphere and surroundings, and says:

'I knew this college was a place I could be in easily. There's a feeling of care and respect here which would be nourishing for me. I felt there was a real environment where I could be quite easily. And that has stayed.' Kate, fine artist.

When she first became ill she put her trust in someone who had worked in a similar field, and who had had a similar experience to the one she was going through. She speaks very coherently of how it was for her in that time, and how much it meant to her to talk to someone who knew that her experience was real.

'So it was helpful to have a common experience or understanding?' CB

'Yes. And I also knew that there were some people who, if I said how dangerously crazy I felt, they would not be able to handle it, and I knew I would not be able to say it to them. But there was one person in particular...and I knew I was able to say to him there are days when I just wanted to kill myself, and I can't go near the front door, I'm afraid to go out.

And I could say all those things and he knew exactly, he wasn't afraid of what I was saying, he knew that that was real and it wasn't bizarre....We looked at the word 'breakdown' and the different language that's used to describe it, and he said 'Well you've had an emotional car crash, you've come off the road, you've just careered right off the road, and once you lose control of the wheel that's it.'

By him saying that it gave me permission to look at how I can use metaphors to make sense of what had happened. I preferred thinking about a railway track, because a road is a bit more interesting, but I had literally got stuck in a track, and this train was going as quick as it could and it only took a tiny thing to send me off the rails, and that had more value for me than the road. There's only one way, and you can't go back, you can't go down a side-road, you can't stop, and there's a great speed and power behind it.' Kate, fine artist

Kate also saw an occupational counsellor but feels that this relationship was a lot less rewarding for her than that with her mentor, as the counsellor worked for her employer, and therefore the relationship seemed to be too connected to where she had come from.

To see the counsellor she had to attend a building where she knew those who worked there, and she found the whole process quite stigmatising. The counsellor only knew her as a client who was ill, whereas her mentor knew her professional expertise and her personal strengths from when she was well, and could therefore see her as a whole individual.

She feels that the existing trust was a key factor in the mentor relationship and that her mentor genuinely cared for her. Seven or eight months later she took an access course in fine art with the support of her partner whose own background was in the arts, and she is now in her final year of a degree course.

She sees her art work as something that nurtures and nourishes her, has a good working relationship with her tutor whom she feels, now acts as a mentor to her, and recognises that he shares similar qualities to her previous mentor:

'...very strong child-like traits to their character in a sense that it's good, and it's wholesome, and they're celebrating, and they're passionate, and they're caring, and they're honest, but that's all contained within a responsible adult.' Kate, fine artist

Andrew's experience of mental distress came about in a very different way to that of Nellie and Kate, but his recovery was also brought about by the intervention of a mentor figure. Andrew worked as a painter and lived alone in a bed-sitter which doubled as a studio. He had a university contract to teach for two days a week over three ten week terms, a total of 60 days teaching over the year, but no other source of income, Because he had a contract, and therefore a regular monthly salary, albeit small, he was unable to claim any benefits to help with his living expenses.

His bills for oil paint came to half of his total income, which forced him into almost penniless isolation:

'So that's half, well it's more than half because that was before tax. So I was actually living on a phenomenally small amount of money, I mean really really minute, it was just survival stuff. But I had this good job, I was painting well. I was stuck, I was trapped, and so basically I had no life, I couldn't afford to go and do anything to meet people.

I was eating very poorly, I didn't even have a kitchen in this place. It was one room, with a little tiny electric ring, just one ring. I had some wooden boxes for a kitchen. For someone with very little money there was no chance of getting anything like a studio at all, so you just had to work in that room that one lived in, and it was an unfurnished room. It was quite a decent sized room, but that was it, and I sort of lived out my mad period in this empty sort of box. Andrew, painter.

Andrew worked hard at his painting during this time, producing works which have since been described as masterpieces. He became more and more isolated and contemplated suicide. Eventually he met Anne, a student whom he describes as being '*extremely opposed to my way of thinking*':

'She got me out of it just by being her. She was a wonderful woman. Oh yes she was magic, just very rational, very intelligent, and when I was with her this madness would just go (snaps his fingers)...she was just very calm and very rational, and humane, and loving as well, and compassionate....she was a student who was committed, there was no doubt about that, you knew where she was and I knew where I was.' Andrew

'So how long did the relationship last?' CB

'Quite a long time, we lived together for three years.' Andrew

So you had no slipping back into the mad period in that time?' CB

'We-e-ell as soon as she was away I'd go mad (laughs loudly), then she'd come back again. Yes it would resurface at intervals, every now and again, but less and less so.' Andrew

'So really she did have quite an important influence on your life?' CB

'Oh she saved my life really, yes.' Andrew, painter.

He explained the problems he experienced with lack of money competing with his need to paint:

'People who aren't painters don't understand. It's a bit like you having to pay for every word you use. It's quite expensive, and each time you put one down and then throw it away, you're throwing money away. The psychology of that is..- well you simply have to get used to it and have to learn to forget it. But the trouble is if you learn to forget it it's a bit like being a spendthrift, and all of a sudden at the end of the week, you've spent all this money.

It's terrifying actually, and it's also very difficult when you've got dependants as well. At the time of the mad period I had no dependants, I was just me, therefore I could take those extreme decisions to spend all my money on paint, except for the rent. But when you've got a family you can't, you've got this different sort of set of responsibilities and all of that.' Andrew, painter.

'So are responsibilities within relationships difficult for creative people, not just in terms of money, but in terms of how much time you give to them?' CB

'Oh absolutely, absolutely.'

'Obviously there were advantages in being with Anne because she got you out of the madness, but were there then disadvantages in terms of having to give time back?' CB

'We had a flat, and finding that the physical circumstance was better, helped me to get out of the problem, the madness, it was my resurrection. Yes there were tensions, but not as extreme as they might have been. She was a student and was travelling to college. I had a lot of freedom. I had to chuck her out of my room I painted in because she started to move in, and I said 'No, you're a student, you have a studio at college.' Andrew. painter.

When we ended this third interview in a period of a year, Andrew made an interesting remark:

'...it's an area which one doesn't often talk about, because people don't want to know about madness because it is frightening. If I was on my own now, who knows, you can almost imagine you might reinfect yourself. I couldn't have done this before, it is good to talk about these things. One of the problems with madness is that I didn't have a close friend to talk to about things.' Andrew

'The people you have been able to talk to about it, have they been people who have experienced it as well?' CB

'I've sort of related more to other painters who've had it, like Soutine. It's been through the arts rather than talking. In a good Munch those things are there.' Andrew

'The arts have a clearer way of communicating the emotions than day to day living?' CB

'Oh absolutely.' Andrew

'I almost wonder to what extent it's almost crucial, it seems to have been a real turning point for so many people I've interviewed.' CB

'Well that's right, that's right. The thought has occurred to me whilst we've been talking, is that if people actually don't get to that sort of point, then maybe they are not so fulfilled and whole than those of us who have gone through this particular doorway. I was proud I was mad, all the time. I thought, Well, these people just don't know (laughs)'. Andrew, painter.

This subject of mental well-being is one which is important to everyone, and yet, as Andrew says, most people would be frightened by it. During the year of interviewing, I too had gone through a breakdown, and felt secure enough about the nature of this to share it with participants when it seemed appropriate to the interview. Andrew may well have discussed the subject with me anyway after a year in getting to know me, but I doubt it, as although I had intended to address this topic with participants, it was, at that point only from an intellectual stance and would have borne no relation to what I now know about such occurrences.

After my breakdown, I was able much more, to address it from an experiential point of view, with a good deal of insider knowledge to which Andrew could relate.

Nellie, Kate and Andrew, in their different ways, found that relating to a caring mentor was important in terms of becoming well again.

However for the majority of participants, the mentor was instrumental in maintaining psychological well-being in their day to day creative lives, helping them to cope with the low periods which bordered on depression. Terri discusses these occurrences at some length:

'They're to do with vulnerability. I talked about this well-spring of confidence which you have to have. There's a complete contradiction to that, which is, to make good art you have to make yourself very vulnerable.

So there's this tremendous tension all the time, there's this tremendous opposition in every working artist, which is, you have to believe in yourself, and you have to think you're totally crap at the same time.

It's to do with either thinking, 'I'm really hopeless, I actually should be working on the checkouts at Safeways, I really can't do this, I'm really awful, or else thinking, 'I'm going to bloody well do this because I know I'm bloody great!' That's the vacillation really.' Terri

'So what part does the mentor play when you are in that hole?' CB

'They bring you back from the 'I'm crap'. They bring you back from that and they give you self-value. Or sometimes they'll put a question which makes you think,' Actually maybe I could have done a bit better on this.

Maybe I can do better than what I've just done, maybe it isn't quite good enough', and he does that successfully for me. I'm not very good at receiving that kind of input from many people, which is terrible isn't it?' Terri

'It's not terrible, it's survival, it's about sensitivity.' CB

'Yes, I protect myself from criticism a lot, and there are few people I allow to penetrate that.' Terri

'If it's done the wrong way it's terribly hurtful.' CB

'Yes and destructive'. Terri, performer, designer, painter.

One man described how even as a young boy, his mentor had ensured that his confidence was not broken:

'She gave me a steady stream of the right stuff, just manageable chunks, digestible chunks of the information I needed, and she had a very good way of putting you in for exams when you were two exams past the one you were taking.

So I always found exams kind of pleasurable almost. I just rolled in and played the piano, and got the highest marks in the country for grade eight.'  
Rob

'So she never let you fail?' CB

'No, no, that's it yes! Thank you for telling me that.' Rob, musician

Carl touches upon what sounds like the creative imperative when describing how his mentors have supported his creativity:

'They keep you sane. I need to do what I do. There isn't any alternative, and the stakes for that get higher and higher because you know you need to do it. I enjoy what I do. I find it very hard and getting harder, and I need encouragement from people I respect and trust. It's very easy to get a whole lot of stuff from people you don't respect or trust. It sort of keeps me sane because I find it harder and harder. There's a certain amount at stake which goes up.

If it's working then more come to see, and more expect it to work the next time. I feel like I need to work more and more. Without that [mentor] I'd probably crack up and I wouldn't enjoy what I do. I wouldn't do it on my own.' Carl, theatre designer.

The area of how mental well-being, creativity and self are linked will be explored more fully in a later chapter.

### **'Through the Crack in the Door...'**

Being a creative artist however, is not all about angst and depression, but also encompasses the heights of emotional and creative experience, when the creator and that which is created become indivisible, and finally, like giving birth, work is produced which has a life of its own. Laura describes this phenomenon, which seems to occur with a 'letting go' of conscious control.

'At those points I just want to capture it. You can't work towards them because you'd be so conscious of it, but it suddenly appears, and I think 'My goodness I must get myself into this state on every occasion', and of course you can't do it, you can't do it. It's when everything is absolutely balanced with me. I don't know if I'm more right or left brained, I really don't know, but I know that to get anything good to come out it's got to be balanced. One side's got to read and understand what's going on on the other side, and when it suddenly kind of hits, it's wonderful, its euphoric really.

I suppose the confidence that comes through to the hands actually makes such deliberate decisions, it's wonderful. My work has changed from being very careful work to be much more intuitive, but I've now realised that I don't have to give up one for the other, I can do both. All my decision making is a lot earlier [the design process], there's not that decision after decision, after decision. Then that euphoric feeling kind of comes through.'  
Laura

'What's the end result like?' CB

'When it does come through, it's got a life of its own. I'm not restricting it by my own inadequacies, I'm saying 'There you are, your own spirit.'  
Laura, ceramicist.

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'I don't know what the analogy might be, but it's as though you're on a real high. I mean I suppose people may get it with drugs or what ever, but you can get to a stage where you just feel you're completely buzzing, and you could almost do anything, you know anything's possible. Yeah, it's almost, it's a joining of the physical and the soul, and so everything is actually working together.' Sol, ceramicist.

Everyone who had experienced this phenomena had noted retrospectively that they became unaware of the passing of linear time at such moments, and that food and drink became unnecessary. In fact the first noticeable external reality for most of them was a mundane awareness of a pressing need to go to the lavatory. At this point many hours could have gone by, but there was no tiredness and no desire to stop. Paul describes how the results of such work are integrated into his more usual mode of working:

'I suppose the thing with me is that it always gets heavily overwritten before it gets published anyway, so I rather suspect that it's indistinguishable ultimately from the other stuff where the inspiration's more trickling, ...It's so rare for me that I've had say one chapter that's a result of those kind of experiences, and one chapter which totally isn't. It's usually a mix, so it's difficult to say. What I will say is rare, is that I go back to something which is the result of a peak experience, if we want to call it that, and it's rubbish. It doesn't usually happen I'm pleased to say, at least so far. I mean I do have the ability to know when I'm actually writing decent stuff, which is nice. And equally that means I know when I'm writing rubbish.' Paul, writer.

Katherine, also a writer, likens the experience to transcendence:

'It's when it's written through you. They say when you draw the bow, it aims the arrow. It's a gift, grace. You wait an awful long time. You can't even wait for it because it might not happen. But sometimes I hit on the right formula and suddenly the words come through. I think (at that time) I have got a glimpse of what it's all about. I suppose Buddhists exist in that world, but I can see through the crack in the door.' Katherine, writer.

This experience was one which appeared to take place alone, and one which produced work which was recognised by the creator as being very good and, on the face of it, seems not to require a second opinion from a mentor for its value to be recognised. Having said that, it appeared that those individuals with mentors still share the products of that experience with them.



The question of whether or not such experiences are to some extent enabled by the presence of a stabilising mentor in the life of creative individuals must also be asked. Unfortunately such moments cannot be willed into being and remain elusive. Michael describes the hunt for the experience in terms of C. S. Lewis's children's tale:

'It's like the door at the back of the cupboard into Narnia. It's not going to be there when you want it to be there, and expect it to be there, but if you go through the build-up, or when you feel inspired and in the mood, then you're likely to hit it like a warm current of water when you're swimming off the beach. It feels very elusive to me.' Michael, artist.

Bella told me that the 'high' produced by taking drugs was similar to the 'high' of the peak experience described in the sense of being ecstatic. When I asked her about the results of work produced when she had taken drugs, she laughed and said that sometimes it was very hard to connect with again when looked at the next day, as it was from a completely different perspective than that work produced without drug use. She felt that on the whole it was probably better to be able to experience life without a drug hangover, and be able to achieve natural highs.

Throughout the interviews it became noticeable that the sense of self of the participants in this study was much more explicit than in my previous study, and although I have already remarked that those interviewed viewed their creativity and their sense of self as inseparable, it became apparent that the feeling of self-knowledge came from the sense of wholeness which appears to be linked in part to the experience just described, and in part to the act of creating:

'When I'm actually making it I am really happy. While I'm doing it I become almost euphoric. Its strange, I can't explain it. It's almost as though something else is taking over, and using you. It's very difficult to explain, you just feel so high, it's a lovely feeling.'" Julia

'I'm interested in the fact that you can't see it [creativity] stopping. You said earlier it was like a bottomless well.' CB

'I feel I'd lose my identity, ... I feel I would lose me again.' Julia, sculptor.

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'I was offered an exhibition a few weeks ago, but that's not the reason for making it.' Sol

'So what is the reason for making it?' CB

'Well I think it's just to feel as though you're whole, it's difficult to describe.' (laughs) Sol

So you feel whole when you're actually creating?' CB

'Yes, and it doesn't really matter what I'm doing. It could be the extension [he is building], I just get the same feeling from that as producing pictures, whatever.' Sol

'It's the creativeness?' CB

'Yes.' Sol

'Can you imagine life without that creative drive?' CB

'No, not at all. It has to come out somehow.' Sol, ceramicist

### **'A Meeting of Souls...'**

In my earlier study, there was a deep personal closeness within the mentor relationship and this intimacy was discussed with me in either emotional, spiritual, or physical terms. Within adult relationships the issue of love and sexual attraction between the two individuals was often implicit, and not admitted verbally to each other. This information was usually disclosed to me somewhat diffidently toward the latter part of the interview. Having said that many of those in adult relationships did find themselves either married to their mentor, or in a long-term liaison which was underpinned by an extraordinary level of commitment and integrity. Within this study the depth of care and regard each party held for each other was just as apparent, but there were a proportionally larger number of long-term live-in relationships and marriages with mentors. Indeed it did seem to be this level of permanency which supported the creativity of most of the participants.

An interesting element of this particular study however, was the taken for granted normality of the love which was felt for the mentor figure, and the obvious pride of the participants when describing the mentor's skills and attributes. There was no shyness or reticence when discussing the personal intimacy, and no indication that those involved thought that there should be any.

This in itself was interesting and indicated none of the conflict of interest issues of those in my previous study who worked in professions where boundaries were strictly defined. It is perhaps worth noting here, that the only participant who had discussed how physical contact might in other circumstances be seen as 'inappropriate' was Kate, whose former profession had been in a human service setting. One man talked of the inevitability of his first 'total relationship' in the following way:

'It was just there, one of those rare relationships which is just there. You can walk round it, you can stub your toe on it, but it's there as a palpable solid thing, and you can't ignore it.' Duncan, theatre director, impresario.

When I asked Michael in what way his mentor relationship differed from any other sexual relationship, he had no hesitation in explaining:

'We've got two bedrooms and I think that's really significant. We've said ideally that we'd have a bedroom each and a shared, a marital, bedroom. that in itself is different from the received ideas about heterosexual love and nuclear families. Maybe one of the characteristics, to sort this out, is that the sexual aspect, which usually validates the regular relationship, is episodic, and that there are other key factors along which the relationship is going. We can be talking ten to the dozen about the art ideas, philosophy, feminism, gardening. We're not together just for procreation.' Michael, painter.

I asked the same question of Di, who again, responded immediately:

'People could say that sexual attraction could happen in any relationship. What would you say to that ?' CB

'There's a sense of sacredness about this. Definitely sacredness.' Di, creative movement teacher.

Karen explained the difference as:

'It's a relationship that absolutely and utterly allows and supports growth. That's what it is. Other relationships I think, start to contain somebody.'  
Karen, photographer

One of the aims of this study was to discover how individuals managed the emotional content of this relationship within their existing relationships, as in my previous study not everyone was free to live together. As this study progressed I was fortunate in meeting two women who were both single, and who were involved in long-term loving mentor relationships with men who were married. During the course of a year, they were generous enough to allow me access to their lives and to the progression of these alliances.

Liz and Stephen had met when Liz had taken a part-time teaching job to support her art work. Stephen, although employed full-time in teaching, had originally trained as an architect. Some years later he retrained as a teacher, in order to spend more time with his son who had a life threatening illness and whose prognosis was poor, but his son died the week prior to Stephen starting his teaching job. His wife began a relationship with someone else and his marriage ended.

He remarried and has another son who is now 8. Stephen now works with children with special needs. During all the changes and upheaval in his life, Stephen feels that his creativity played second fiddle, and that it has only resurfaced since meeting Liz. Liz had also been married, to a man who did not support her creative art and was very jealous of her need to work. The marriage ended and Liz was offered a part-time teaching post at a local school.

The school were most supportive when Liz undertook an M.A. in Education, and continued to exhibit her art work. An attractive teaching post became available at another school, and Liz applied but was unsuccessful. It was at this point that her mentor relationship with Stephen began. Liz had always found Stephen to be a kindred spirit within the school, but had not realised just how much he understood her and wanted to share her disappointment. They started to communicate their ideas on this theme to one another, in an art form which used found objects, such as stones, feathers, leaves or driftwood, and which expressed, via visual puns, their emotional status.

Their creativity flourished along with the relationship, but their time alone together was limited both by opportunity and by responsibilities. They had known each other for three years when I interviewed them, and had reached an agreement to try and not see each other at all. Liz's post had recently been made redundant, mainly, she felt, because the head teacher suspected that she and Stephen were having a physical relationship. This however was untrue, as despite the fact that Stephen had not had a physical relationship with his wife for eight years, he was also unable, through guilt, to begin one with Liz. He had attempted to leave his wife on one occasion, but could not handle the trauma, and wanted to be with his son as he grew up. When his wife discovered the relationship with Liz, and thought she was losing Stephen, she renewed the physical relationship with him.

The head teacher who made Liz's post redundant had offered Stephen a job which required a married couple as house-parents, and so Stephen's salary suddenly became inextricably linked to his marriage.

Liz was working toward an exhibition of pieces of sculpture when we met. She described how she was working at that time:

'Because it involves every area of my life, he's in all of my work. The last show I did was a total expression of my feelings for him, and reflected the beauty and the unattainability of our relationship. There's a gold thread actually holding it, and it travels all the way through. He holds it all together for me by allowing me to truly express how I feel inside.' Liz, visual artist

I said to her that it seemed that the need for a physical relationship was more a means of communicating than of simply needing a sexual response.

'Yes oh yes, because that's not what it's about. People misconstrue it. It's not about that, it's much more than that, that's just one way of showing it, but the rest of it....it cheapens it in a way because it's at a much deeper level than sexual gratification. I mean it's just a meeting of souls, absolutely. If you meet your soul mate, then you find that you've got a total communication with each other in every area' Liz, visual artist.

Liz had made a attempt at breaking away from Stephen by forming a romantic attachment to someone else. However because her new relationship was based on physical attraction and lacked the mental stimulus of her mentor relationship, she had felt that it was a poor substitute and had ended it. When I interviewed Liz and Stephen together at their request, they were physically very demonstrative to each other, but spoke candidly of their decision to remain in their present state of being apart because of the ramifications for Stephen, if they were to live together. Meanwhile they entertained dreams of a shared old age, and remained apart, hardly ever seeing each other. Liz was philosophical about this, and felt that at least she wouldn't have to compromise her creativity, as in her previous marriage.

Towards the end of the shared interview both Liz and Stephen talked about their need to have the relationship recognised, and how much it meant to them to have shared the nature of this alliance with an outsider. Stephen said:

'I think in our relationship it is important because it is so secretive, and I've always thought that I could contain that and manage with that, but actually it is quite important to be able to say to somebody, 'I love this person', (turns to Liz), y'know, her whole being. I love this person, and I can say that to you.' Stephen.

When I saw Liz, nearly a year later she told me that the interview had crystallised a lot of things for her. She said that the day after Stephen had said how much he cared for her, she suddenly felt that she needed him with her there and then, permanently. However she was alone, and that had suddenly started to matter. She had seen Stephen only once since then, and they had had a day together when they had simply gone shopping with each other. Their feelings remained unaltered, but Liz was now resigned to a life without him. Her creative work had meanwhile, come to a halt. Three or four weeks prior to my meeting Liz again I had sent Stephen a Participant Release Form (Appendix IV), which participants signed to grant permission to use quotations from interviews.

Stephen had returned it signed, with a note at the bottom saying that he and Liz weren't '*seeing each other*' at the time, because it was too painful. He added that their '*love was as strong as ever*'.

I discussed with Liz my concerns that the interview had ended their relationship, but she was adamant that this was not the case, and that it had simply acted as a focus for a lot of issues. She hopes that she will work creatively and energetically again one day, and is planning to produce an exhibition which will encompass her spiritual life and her relationship with God. Meanwhile she is working in a new part-time post, teaching mature students. She said:

'At the end of the day it's not so much how much you love someone, but how much you can make it work.' Liz, visual artist.

Karen, as described earlier in this chapter, met Paul when she was 16, and working in a drawing office. He helped her to see her own potential and eventually she took a degree in Fine Art. Initially although they had a close rapport, they were simply close friends, and Paul married about three months after he and Karen met. Five years later however, as they became closer, a physical relationship had developed, and although this had continued for eighteen years, was not the prime reason for the relationship. They supported each other's work and creativity throughout the years, and Karen spoke of how the relationship began:

'He was teaching me extraordinary things, books that I'd never read before, artists that I'd never looked at.' Karen, photographer, fine artist.

She told me that the relationship wouldn't have survived if it were merely based on physical attraction, and although they had lived a long way apart for some years now they had continued to support each other's creativity, and each other's emotional health. She had no wish for him to leave his family and said:

'There is a need, but there is also a compassion and a vulnerability, and I think I couldn't take him away from other things that are important to him'.  
Karen, photographer, fine artist.

When I first interviewed Karen she was 33 and living at home with her parents. She was experiencing some confusion, because she had recently met David, a married man approaching 50, who had been extremely supportive of her new role in creative work with children in schools. They lived close to each other and Karen recognised that she was using him as a mentor. She found that whereas her relationship with Paul had grown slowly over the years to reach the intensity they had, the new relationship with David had moved much more quickly and was even more intense, but not physical

She still loved Paul and had discussed the situation with him. Paul was happy that she had someone who would support her, and did not seem to feel that his relationship with Karen was under threat in any way. Karen knew how valuable both relationships were to her creative life, and yet her obvious confusion with regard to her ability to love more than one person at once, was evident at that first meeting. She said that she found she was using '*that very charged energy*' from her new mentor relationship in her creative work, and admitted to being terrified by its intensity.

A second interview with Karen some months later, had to be postponed, and when I made contact with her again at a new telephone number, it was clear that she and David now lived together.

We met at their new home and Karen described her time of transition. She said that the relationship with David had seemed momentous, as if it were going somewhere, and that there was somehow more of an equality to it than she had experienced in her relationship with Paul. This may be something to do with meeting David as a peer, whereas when she met Paul she had little artistic knowledge. She described 'an honesty' to the relationship which seemed to be about the fact that she and David were not having to hide their relationship, but were able to have it validated by openness.

Paul, meanwhile had experienced panic at the thought of losing his relationship with Karen, and announcing that he was leaving his wife, had asked Karen to live with him.

He said that he *'felt like he was losing his best friend'*. Karen assured him that she would always be his friend, and despite a difficult few months, felt that there was now some hope that she and Paul would eventually continue as friends. Paul however, appeared to have moved out of the family home, and was living at a new address. This posed the question of how much Paul's relationship with Karen had been instrumental in maintaining the relationship he had with his wife.

Karen recognises that her relationship with David is one which will make demands from both of them with regard to other relationships and commitments, but also acknowledges that there is a certain inevitability about being together. Her creativity has flourished, and she describes her relationship with both her mentors as *'a particular connection that you make with somebody'*. She told me that she and David felt that their relationship could be explained in Sufi terminology, in that they both felt that they had been given a gift, but now they had to earn it.

Talking to both Karen and Liz highlighted the issue of 'seizing the day', or courage in mentor relationships, and how, despite the high idealism of the alliance, human frailty, fear of change, and love itself, can be key factors in whether or not the relationship is managed or mangled. Both women discussed the problems inherent in maintaining the aspects of mentor relationships which because of others must remain covert, and which, because of limited communication, can lead to misunderstandings and insecurities. Karen also spoke of this in the light of relationships which function at a distance:

*'It allows you a certain amount of space, but within that you can over-think, you can very easily over-work and over-read certain messages and signs.'*  
Karen, photographer, fine artist.

The commonality in these stories is that both of the women have chosen to live in the present, in the here and now moment, and not spend their lives mourning the past or wishing for the future.

It would be wrong to assume that in either case everybody will live 'happily ever after', or indeed 'sadly ever after', as both these two examples, and many of the others quoted, are not fixed in time, but are vital growing human relationships, which may or may not continue to meet the creative and emotional needs of those involved in them. For the most part, those who had married or were living with the mentor or learner, were unequivocal in stating the importance of that relationship in their life to their creative and personal well-being.

One man however described a relationship which had foundered, despite earlier promise. Eric was attracted to one of his students by a certain empathy, and although they married, there was a gap in their experience of life as there was eleven years between them, and she was a teenager when they met.

He feels that they both ended up idealising each other, and therefore marrying individuals who didn't actually exist, so that their relationship was mainly built upon a joint love of their shared work, and never really had the personal intimacy which comes from a joint love of each other. He says that they used:

'...that obsession with the work, to shield ourselves from meeting each other, so it protected us. Ironically the marriage foundered some years later because we had been neglecting our own feelings, and yet here were we, purveyors of feeling.' Eric, actor, teacher.

He thinks the harm they did each other was in not facing up to emotional truths which, had they been discussed sooner, could perhaps have been resolved. Of his present partner, who was a mature student and who was also working in the college when they met, he says:

'We just immediately talked for an hour. We just laid our lives out, in an hour.' Eric

'What was it that made you feel free enough to do that at that first meeting?'  
CB

'Because I felt very quickly, I mean intuitively, I felt very quickly, we were on the same wavelength, how we respond to life, we understand each other. So it was like a sort of 'YES!'. Eric

'A recognition?' CB

'Yes it was a recognition. Exactly! It was a recognition.' Eric, actor, teacher.

He remarked that although he and his wife had once had the same recognition of shared understanding, it had all been focussed in the work and not on each other.



This was the first time that I had interviewed anyone who had provided an insight into why a mentor/learner relationship might fail as a live-in relationship, and lent weight to my earlier surmising, that all three of Rogers' core conditions of, empathy, genuineness and unconditional acceptance, are essential to such relationships. Eric and his wife were clearly not able to be themselves with each other, and were unable to strike a balance between work and intimacy. He shares with his present partner a balanced mental, spiritual and physical relationship.

### **'A Purity in Their Passion'...**

When towards the end of the interviews, I asked participants what meaning they attributed to their mentor relationships I received some spontaneous, and some considered replies.

More than a quarter of participants felt that they had known their mentors in previous lives, and had been reincarnated, sometimes as part of a group of people, and that therefore the relationship was pre-ordained. This explained to them the 'recognition' which they had experienced on meeting.

**'I feel an ancient bond.'** Di, creative movement teacher.

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**'I believe we come together with people to learn lessons, and if we don't learn them then we have to do it again. Things present themselves all the time, and you repeat patterns until one day you learn the lesson.'** Ruth, painter, sculptor

Three participants likened the experience to aspects of Sufi philosophy, five to Buddhist philosophy, two to the new resurgence philosophy, four to a more general spiritual experience, and three to aspects of Zen Buddhism. Five others referred to the spiritual influence of Quaker, pagan, and Roman Catholic beliefs as part of both their relationship and their creativity. One common thread here, was the element of passion, stillness and silence which was necessary for the creative process, and which seemed too, to be a recognisable part of the essence of the mentor, whether the mentor was aware of it or not.

It is important here to note that what is being discussed is not the liturgical aspect of spiritual philosophies, which differ between religions, but rather the contemplative, meditative sense of the sacred, which is common to all cultures and religious philosophies, but which is often lost in the liturgy and ceremony of public worship.

Andrew and I discussed the difficulties inherent in trying to find the words to verbalise this experience and its relevance to both his work and my thesis, without being seen as 'religious', but by simply accepting it as another aspect of human reality:

'I occasionally write notes, and the sort of words that are used by theologians would come into it, and I remember struggling round with it. I felt very embarrassed around them sometimes, because there's all those institutions which use all these words, and they ruin it for everybody you see.. I sort of had this dilemma about those words....when one's working quite well there are a lot of words in one's head, and I often find that the most useful verbal thing that is going on in my head is a very theological or spiritual kind of analysis.

I start to think. The thing that interests me most of all is space. To me space is the fundamental thing. Without space nothing exists, and as a painter I'm dealing with space all the time. I start to think to myself 'What is this space? Does it go on forever, is it a mechanical thing or has it got something in it, some energy, some feeling of love you know?'

One relates all that thinking to the painting, and it's when I'm thinking most sort of purely about the nature of reality, which does involve all those theological concepts, you can't get away from it, that's when the painting goes best. So the two things are really linked up, but they're not theological. It's me thinking about the nature of reality. When it's verbal, I let whatever words want to use themselves, use themselves, that's all. But the nice thing is it gets into the painting.

...people that deny those words can be just as spiritual as those who don't, so it's all very difficult to sort out. But I felt that in his passion [mentor] for the issues that he was concerned with, they were absolutely non-possessive, absolutely non-acquisitive in the crude sense of monetary value.

One really felt that these things he was trying to deal with had a kind of absoluteness, a kind of purity in their passion, which was nothing to do with whether or not he was going to be successful. That sort of passion was very pure, and to me that's spiritual in a way, it's to do with a passion beyond sort of human boring interactions and all that.'

'I think that's why the non-verbal arts are so important. What you're talking about [CB's thesis]...it's the human condition, but in such a personal kind of way. That's what good art does. It actually links the general with the individual in such a way that everyone can identify with it. But I think it's very unusual in an academic situation.' Andrew

'It's unusual, having said that I don't think it's impossible. I'm doing it because I'm naive in as much as I've come to academia late in life, and I've not grown up being told it can't be done. I mean you talk about the "ism's", the "minimalism's" and the "post-modernism's" of the art world. With academia it's the "ologys", the "ontology's", the "epistemologies" of this and that, and by the time you've sorted out "truth", it can be lost in it all. I think the art, if there is an art in writing for academia, is to try and write it in a way that anybody can understand it who's not an academic. To write it in a way that is truthful, but is emotional.' CB

'Who's the audience for a piece of work like this?' Andrew

'Apart from the examiner, then research papers and conferences, but to put it in a language without everyone thinking "Oh she's on a religious thing", is very difficult.' CB

'It is, and that's why you can listen to a piece of music and everyone will know which is the spiritual and which isn't. But as soon as you use that word 'spiritual', it suddenly puts it into that category 'religious'. I can see the problem and I don't know what one does about it.' Andrew, painter.

Another repeated thread was the concept of a journey or spiritual path, with the mentor serving as a marker point or companion, as well as a catalyst or alchemist.

'They've been milestones, messengers. It's all to do with stages of growth.'  
Katherine, writer.

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'We've gone on journeys together.' Duncan, theatre director, impresario.

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'She believes in ...the magical aspect and the mystical aspect of life, and I think that meant a lot to me, meeting someone who wouldn't pooh pooh that and took it seriously, that life was a lot bigger and richer experience than just rational positivism.

At the time I met her she was doing a Ph. D., so she knew, it wasn't just kind of untested, there was a fair amount of rigour,...and I was feeling very "out to lunch" about spirituality and meaning,... I was on the run from the Christians, and the shame and guilt which was associated with it for me.

So I hung onto this sharp shamanistic approach to life, which gives it a lot more meaning, and [she] facilitated that.' Michael, painter

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'I sort of feel he's my other half. If either one of us gets down, it conveniently seems to fall at a time when the other one's up, or stronger. So there's fundamentally a strong link, and in our lives there's been a lot of similarities; drugged up mother, father died young, sexual abuse.

So again there's another level we can communicate on, and also the spiritual. So I do see he's quite integral. I see very much that myself and Philip are alchemists for each other, but interchangeable roles. Each of us have taught things to each other.' Bella.

Bella sees the alchemical process as being to do with personal transformation, and links it to her art practice of wanting to replace abuse in all its forms e.g. rape of the land, with land conservation and respect for others. When people in Coventry Cathedral celebrated 100 years of the car by driving cars down the aisle of the cathedral for a blessing, she and her friends protested quietly but dramatically.

Bella's friend's mother and her friend's child had both been killed by cars. So prior to the car blessing, the friend had her naked body painted with statistics of car deaths in Britain, and at a certain point in the blessing, simply took her coat off to reveal these extremely 'vital statistics'. Bella holds a dream of one day working with abused individuals in community projects, to plant trees for everyone who has suffered from forms of abuse.

Such creative approaches to working with negative experiences were common amongst the participants.

Fox (1992) has remarked:

**'In order to rediscover spirituality, which is at the heart of any authentic and healthy religion, we have to be free of religion.'** (Fox, 1992, p. 24)

It is clear that the spiritual aspect of human experience is hard to convey within everyday language as something which has validity in its own right, and which, whilst accepted as a part of religious experience, is in it and not of it. It is also clear that the meaning and significance of the mentor relationship is something which too demands another mode of understanding, one which addresses the senses more directly than that of the written or spoken word.

### **'There's This Whole Circle...'**

As some of those interviewed had themselves acted in mentor roles for others in the arts, I was interested to understand what it was that they looked for in an individual. Everyone talked of the need for passion, enthusiasm, talent, integrity, a willingness to take risks, and some similarity, which had all surfaced in my previous study. However what was made more specific in this study was the need not just for risk taking behaviour, which could imply foolhardiness, but for courage, bravery, originality, imagination and life.

**'I think it's bravery I'm looking for, and I think it's honesty I'm looking for. You do sort of recognise it in other people and particularly the bravery. The two things sort of go together but there's something about the bravery. I just feel very warm, I just want to reward bravery.'** Carl, theatre designer.

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**'It's life. There's a light coming out of their eyes, fun, humour. It's not disciplined, they're usually naughty, but you recognise each other. It's similar spirits actually, very similar spirits, particular types of souls. I've got a bit of time for that I think, similar types of energies.'** Ellen, theatre designer, writer, teacher.

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'It was his creative approach to music rather than a dogmatic formalistic approach, and he was always wanting to encourage children to get out of themselves what he believed was in them, and then to build on it....He was sensitive.' Charles, musician.

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'...she was so vulnerable but she was able to stick at it. She could so easily have succumbed and sunk without trace, but she grabbed that and was going to go for it. She's always thinking about how she can move on.'  
Elaine, singer

These descriptions of the learners mirror to a great extent the descriptions of mentors as in my original study, and lend weight to the premise that although mentor and learner pairs may be different, each pairing is in a sense, a mirror image which may or may not be recognised at the time, but is realised in retrospect. Laura talked about how she introduced the work of her own mentor to one of her students, and how she feels that the inspiration has now been passed on.

'It was around the time of the dissertation that he [Tom] chose to work with experiential artists. I mentioned to him about John, and I set him down watching this particular video about John talking about Brancussi. It's interesting now that when Tom writes from America where he is now, he mentions John's name. Isn't that interesting? It's like there's this whole circle. I've been inspired by John, and I'm passing it on to Tom. Just little snippets but it's enough.' Laura, ceramicist.

### **'The Grandeur of Real Human Values...'**

Despite acknowledging the factual knowledge gained from their mentors, participants pointed out that this alone would not have made the relationship special, but that it was the enthusiasm, passion, and inspiration for the creative work which had kept the alliance vital. Charles highlighted the bipartite nature of the traditional mentor relationship in supporting both the professional and the personal dreams of the learner:

'There was a two-fold influence. There was the feeling that he understood me as a musician, but also that he understood me as a growing boy with ideals as well as ideas.' Charles, musician

As the oldest participant, Charles had had the longest time to reflect on his two mentor relationships, and he was able to offer his opinion of the value of the mentor in the life of the creative person from his long experience as a well respected musician.

'One's well-being depends on one's inner life. You see I think the inner life depends on two things. One is the degree of stillness and silences one can go into, and the other is the fanning of the flame within that silence. I think it was Aristotle who said "It's not the filling of the vessel, it's the kindling of a flame." But that flame grows in silence.' Charles

'So is the value of the other person to fan the flame, or to notice the spark?'  
CB

'I think it's to do both. It's to breathe the sense of calmness which enables one to know there is a flame there. To recognise that the spark is there to be kindled, and then to know how to kindle it...its more intuition than methodology. All the great artists have been able to defy convention because they felt strongly about it, but every artist will also talk about discipline. So I think it's getting a combination of these two things. The danger is that the discipline is going to be the overpowering of the two and is going to quench. The other danger is that there will be no discipline and the thing will just go astray.' Charles, musician.

Other participants commented:

'...he somehow did a conjuring trick which pulled out of me something that must have been there.' Carl, theatre designer

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'Enabling, actually allowing you to get over hurdles, giving you the courage, the strength, the self-confidence. To give someone something they already have, you know like putting a mirror in front of you and saying, "Look, it's there." They have to be incredibly knowledgeable to know when someone's good.' Helen, potter

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'...he's the key for me to open up to all the facets of the diamond. He's the only person I would completely trust to do that, and I trust him. He's that key.' Di, creative movement teacher.

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'I suppose what they've helped me to do is to establish a set of values that are right for me. You're kind of eclectic of other people's ideas, and you convert them into being right for you, therefore you have your own ownership of them... and you run your life accordingly. I suppose they add up to a total experience of quality of life, they add up to giving people quality values.

I think it's what everyone is looking for when they go through life. They're looking for mentors to sort of give them indications of what's important to them. I think you live by the examples of others.' Edward, ceramicist

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'It opened the door to the realities of the potential aesthetic experience as the major way of human knowing, which my upbringing, background, schooling, family, didn't have any contact with.' Eric, actor, teacher.

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'He pointed me to a lot of writing I value. I wish he was here to have an argument with. I really cried when he died, it was just awful you know, I just valued the conversations with him so much. He'd been ill for a long time. It was sort of hearing it on the radio, not knowing how ill, and stuff like that. These people are extraordinary aren't they, they really are, they're more important than family.' Rob, musician.

To attempt to give examples from all of the interviews would run into many pages of text, and would not highlight any more clearly the worth and depth of gratitude which the participants held for their mentors.

Laura reiterated the value of the lived oral history of the mentor, to the world of the new student of art, in order to place the story in context, relate it to the whole, and allow it to take its place in the continuing education of the artist:

'They used to talk about their past and people who were important to them. So they were relaying their past just like I do to the students.' Laura

'Is that valuable?' CB

'Oh yes, yes! Because it actually puts a person in context to things that maybe a student wouldn't understand because they haven't lived through it. For instance I was saying to them [students], when I was doing ceramics there were only a few books. Now there are shelves and shelves and shelves. Because of the lack of communication that is bound to make it a different subject completely to what it is now.' Laura, ceramicist.

Finally, Andrew brought a clear-cut moral issue into mentoring in arguing that '*there is a tremendous responsibility*' on mentors in the creative arts to carry forward the values of the human being:

'There is this whole philosophy in the art world whereby what happened ten years ago is of no consequence anymore, and that's tragic, because it's only by understanding the past that you can actually go forward to the future with any kind of level quality, if you're talking about the grandeur of real human values.' Andrew, painter

Eric's mentor, were he still alive, might well be pleased with how the values he awoke in Eric, are now being carried forward to the future:

'The ... project is about promoting the aesthetic way of knowing as an important human way of knowing, of understanding life through image, metaphor, the non-cerebral, the belly way of knowing, a spiritual way of knowing, through the processes of art, and of accessing people to those processes, to responding to each other's art, and so on.' Eric, actor, teacher.

The areas of interest from the first study which required more investigation, have been examined and given more substance here. The study has not however inferred any differences in the types of creative artist studied in relation to their mentor experiences, but surprisingly has merely highlighted the similarities across creative types. The dancers whom I interviewed for the Foundation for Community Dance Mentoring Research Project were clear about the need for mentoring to be mainly uncontrived. When asked how mentor initiatives could be provided and supported they said:

'I think a group, or umbrella organisation could provide support, ...but if the individual, or the two people don't want that mentor relationship, then it doesn't matter how much support the organisation gives, it decreases the value of mentoring just to do it for the sake of it.

There's got to be motivation [from individual] I think there's a lot of personal responsibility there. I've just been on a course where we were assigned mentors, and I was very lucky because my mentor and I got on, and so I have actually developed a relationship with her and we keep in contact even though the course is finished, but other people on the course, they had no relationship with their mentor and it just didn't work, and they got nothing out of that relationship at all.

I think one of the problems was that they couldn't change their mentor, and if you're given one it's much harder to say 'this isn't working'. If you have no respect for them then what they say has very little value.' Wendy, dancer, choreographer

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'The starting point needs to be the needs of the mentee, it's got to be tailored to peoples' needs, and that needs to come through, it's learner-centred. A recognition for the most part, that mentoring is informal, and to try and establish some kind of structured assignment programme where you place mentors with mentees and expect mentoring to happen is not a recognition of how mentoring generally works. Tom, dancer, choreographer.

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'It's someone you trust, I don't think it can be devised, not for me anyway because I'm very picky. It's something that can happen organically. If someone selected someone for me I don't think that would have worked. I had a deep respect for him and his work, and his choreography, and other choreographers I've worked with it just hasn't been there. That was fundamental to the whole experience.' Rebecca, dancer, choreographer.

This chapter has allowed the participants own voices to be heard and has attempted to indicate how the mentor relationship functions in the life of the creative artist. Whilst acknowledging that not every pair would necessarily experience the relationship in exactly the same way, I would maintain that this account is representative of the group as a whole.



I would also conclude that the results of this study support the earlier study with those who worked in training settings, in as much as the conditions under which the traditional mentor relationship develops and is kept vital are the same, and that those conditions are transferable to another setting. However for those involved in the study, the meaning of the mentor relationship does not lie in any pattern which may be discerned within the alliance, but in how the behaviour and experiences within each relationship are interpreted, made sense of, and lived with.

The following chapters will discuss in more detail the issues raised here in relation to existing relevant theory, while the value and meaning of the interview process to the participants and to myself, will be discussed in the final chapter.

## Chapter Six

### Self, Creative Ability, and The Mentor

'My feeling is that the concept of creativeness and the concept of the healthy, self-actualising, fully human person seems to be coming closer and closer together, and may perhaps turn out to be the same thing.' Maslow, 1971.

'Middle class society has tended to belittle emotional expression, and education has stressed objectivity and suppression of emotional experiencing. It is obvious however, that emotional expression is an important aspect of all kinds of creative performances in music, writing, dance and the visual arts. It is also clear that emotional expression is an important part of a healthy, fully functioning human being.' Torrance, Goff and Satterfield, 1998.

'Fairy tales, unlike any other sort of literature, direct the child to discover his identity and calling.' Bettelheim, 'The Uses of Enchantment', 1976.

#### Self and Others

The individuals who took part in this research self-selected, or were chosen, because at some time in their lives they had all experienced close personal relationships which had supported their creativity. This therefore, is a study of supportive relationships, and seeks to identify how such mentor relationships are beneficial to artists. The research could arguably be seen as somewhat unbalanced in that not enough regard has been paid to those relationships which hinder creative development and which could be described as unhealthy.

However like Maslow (1973), Barron (1963), and Vaillant (1977), I chose to study those individuals who perceived themselves to be presently psychologically healthy, and who had learned which of their relationships were of benefit in maintaining such health. And like Maslow, Barron and Vaillant I came to understand that the dividing line between well-being and mental distress is blurred, and that '*soundness is a way of reacting to problems, not an absence of them*' (Barron, 1963). In other words much of our ability to cope with life depends on our ability to adapt to circumstance. And such adaptation depends on our ability to learn. Likewise the dividing line between healthy relationships and abusive relationships is sometimes finer than we realise.

So whilst accepting the limitations of this study as being one which was focussed primarily on positive relationships and mental health in artists, participants related their relational life histories which also included detailed accounts of unsupportive relationships. Therefore I would suggest that as a by-product of the main work, the study has also identified issues which are detrimental to relationships, and to psychological well-being.

One of the purposes of this thesis is to examine the role of the mentor in the development of the full potential of artists. This chapter will take a broad overall view of the mentor in the life of the artist during childhood, adolescence and adulthood, before addressing in some detail the concepts and issues arising from the study.

### **Formative Childhood Experience**

It is clear that no matter how we choose to define and construct a 'self', it cannot be separated from the system within which we live, or those with whom we interact.

Yet what is not perhaps so obvious in our development, is the effect of the environment in which we spend time. Whilst acknowledging that young children may not have the verbal capacity to form memory much before the age of three or four (Terr, 1988), they are able to recall visual images from a much earlier age (Bennetts, Brown and Sloan, 1992, p. 5), and for those participating in this study these images are recalled and sensed quite clearly.

That such sensory stimulus is assimilated and remembered by the artistic child is interesting and exciting. But what is more interesting, in terms of Buhler's remarks on selective perception and self, is that Nellie recalled '*feeling the shapes and the colours*'.

This remark is also interesting when seen from an Eastern philosophical perspective such as Buddhism, which maintains the view of 'no-self', and holds that this state of oneness with the external world may be realised during meditation. Claxton has proposed that there are three characteristics of the constructed self. These are Separateness, a sense of Me and Not-Me, limited in space and content; Persistence, Me as limited in time; and Autonomy, Me having control over thought and action. However within the meditative experience, these boundaries begin to blur, slip and disappear.

'But what then could I possibly be? As the inquiry through meditation progresses, so different answers to this arise. The senses of separateness, solidarity and autonomy begin to disperse, as does the mist under the eye of the rising sun.' (Claxton, 1986, p.68)

The first memories which Nellie recalls are visual and sensual, and are from a very early age when self had not been constructed, and when the world could be experienced as something not separate from self, and colours and shapes could be felt. How much of this experience is responsible for Nellie's use of shape and colour in her work can however, only be speculative, but Nellie remembers it clearly and is certain of its value. She also recognises that her later childhood environment was important to her construction of self and says:

'I grew up in a very old, large house, and that helped my imagination to thrive really. It helped me to be myself, to have the space to be myself.'  
Nellie, fine art ceramicist.

Whether self exists other than via personal constructions is not for debate here, as this study is more concerned with how self reaches its potential.

It is perhaps necessary to accept that if we did not construct a self, then we would not be able to feed ourselves, live independently, or play any useful role in society. The act of constructing self therefore, needs to be seen as an act of survival, the first creative act we perform.

Bella had a very different childhood from Nellie, and recalled that her early abusive environment led to her retreating into her own imaginative world which was one of silence. Her artistic abilities are still best used via a visual medium, and although highly articulate in our meetings, she admits that she lives in her head to a certain extent, and finds the language of words somewhat inadequate. Bella's mother was taking tranquillisers for much of Bella's childhood, and Bella's reaction to her mother '*not being there*' was one of withdrawal, which Erikson would identify as being the expected reaction for the Stage 1 life crisis. Her father worked away from home so was unable to provide much secondary support, and later sexual abuse by a neighbour at the Stage 4 life crisis compounded her sense of isolation and powerlessness.

What is common to both Nellie and Bella despite their differing environment, is their recall of these early influences, and that these experiences were used creatively to define both their art and their selves. Bella's creativity was not diminished by her experiences, although her 'self' was denied and abused for many years. However her creativity and self flourished and developed only when in confirming relationships such as those with her art tutors and with Philip, her long-term mentor, with whom she enjoys a high level of spoken, visual, and intuitive communication.

She is now a young adult, and works creatively and constructively in her life and her art. Although she does not live permanently with Philip, she shares her life with him, and they live together for parts of the year. She does not see herself marrying, but she envisages that they will be together all their lives.

Early research by Torrance (1957) with veterans from the Air Force Advanced Survival School led him to propose that creativity is the key to human survival, and in a later paper notes that creative expression is:

'...the natural healthy way of coping with these intense emotional experiences. They become traumatic only when, for some reason, creative expression does not occur.' (Torrance, 1986)

Bella's ability to escape into a world of her own making owes much to her creative imagination, and Watkins (1990, p. 33) cites Slama-Cazacu (1976) as describing imaginary conversations as '*compensatory forms of dialogue*' which primarily take place when there is no real 'other' for the child to interact with.

Whilst Repina (1971) is anxious that imagination is not used as an escape from reality, it remains probable that Bella's imagination saved her, and that without such escape from time to time, her life would have been unbearable. Unusual strategies in extreme situations are very necessary, and should only cause concern to self and others if they continue long after they are needed.

Robertson (1988) proposes that growth from personal difficulty is not merely self-serving, but that it can help actualise the potential we have been given by past generations, as well as be of significance to the potential of generations to come, and says:

'Growth occurs within the context of relationships without which no self exists. ...From a relational perspective, trying to grow from tragedy is really a profound responsibility of human love rather than a brazen excess of self-indulgence.' (Robertson, 1988, p. 80)

Returning to Laing's (1970) concept of 'confirming' it would seem that the mentor figure confirms and validates the self of the creative person at whatever stage of life, and for those whose early life was difficult, perhaps plays a crucial role:

'If mistreated children are not to become criminals or mentally ill, it is essential that *at least once in their life* they come in contact with a person who knows without any doubt that the environment, not the helpless, battered child, is at fault. In this regard, knowledge or ignorance on the part of society can be instrumental in either saving or destroying a life.' (Miller, 1990 emphasis in original)

Miller's work as a psychoanalyst over the last twenty years has provided much insight into the long term effects of abusive childhoods. Of specific interest to this study is her work on creativity and destruction as a result of childhood trauma (Miller, 1990). Her central thesis in this work is that childhood trauma will produce either despots or artists. Drawing on case studies of Hitler, Soutine, Keaton, Stalin and others, she compares their early experiences with their later life.

She argues that although creativity permits survival and helps a person live with psychic damage, it still conceals rather than reveals the truth, and thus cannot prevent a person from being self-destructive (p.43).

She concludes that in all cases of severe trauma, those children who later became creative rather than destructive, were those who had had contact with a '*stabilising witness*', a person who confirmed the child's perceptions and made it possible for the child to recognise the wrong done to them (p.50).

All children deserve good parenting, but for many reasons, some children do not have many early supportive experiences. If, as Pazzaglini (1976) suggests, the child needs sustained contact with a reachable identity figure in order to achieve a realistic self-image and level of confidence, then such a figure may be found within the mentor, with whom a personal relationship can develop.

Storr (1992) believes that the process of personality depends on human relationships and is easily interfered with. He contends:

'It is only if a child has experienced objective love that it becomes an adult capable of loving; and the full development of personality can only take place in a setting of adult loving and being loved.' (Storr, 1992, p. 177)

Pleiss and Feldhusen (1995) suggest that heroes, role models and mentors are all important in the lives of creatively gifted children. Heroes are people usually admired from afar and may even be fictional characters, or historical personages. Role models are people who may or may not have some contact with the child, but whom the child wishes to emulate, and are more available in a day to day way for the child to observe.

Mentors are seen in Pleiss and Feldhusen's paper as adults who introduce children to ideas and activities within their field of expertise and who have intense and personally supportive relationships with them. Obviously mentors may at times also be role models, or even heroes; but not all role models or heroes are available for the personal involvement which identifies the mentor relationship, and it is within the personal relationship that the self of the child will grow.

Pleiss and Feldhusen suggest that '*what the mentor models is himself*', and that the pupil must imitate not the techniques of the mentor, but '*the vision of what he himself may become*' (p.160). Whilst agreeing with the concept of the mentor as an exemplar to be assimilated into the self of the child, I am somewhat uneasy with the implication that the child should become like the mentor, and would argue that it is imperative that the creative child is enabled by the mentor to become more like the child's true self. From this study it also seems important that the student does learn the mentor's techniques as the relationship is both instrumental in relation to creative skills, and developmental in relation to self.

As well as the concept of the mentor as 'confirmer' of self and of perceptions, there is also the concept of the mentor as someone who recognises the creativity in the child, and who affirms this ability. Even the children who had happy early experiences, noted how the mentor figure in acknowledging their skill, enabled them to feel whole.

It is noticeable that although very few of those interviewed experienced an early mentor relationship, those who did, recall more than the learning that took place, they recall the aesthetics of the whole, the smells, the touch, the sounds, the tastes and the emotional impact of the events. It is a significant relationship which engages the senses and which is recalled with remarkable clarity.

Rob enjoyed early mentor relationships with his piano teachers, who encouraged his ability and fed his imagination with music. He recalls the discipline of his piano lessons quite clearly, but speaks of loving to make the music. Rob, like all the artists who experienced childhood mentor validation, was given opportunities to act creatively, under the tutelage of a supportive and knowledgeable older person.

His creativity was not subsumed by the discipline, but grew alongside it, and although he was encouraged to play publicly, he did so willingly without coercion. Like all those in this study who recalled childhood mentor relationships, he was given opportunities to perform with peers, or alone. No artist recalled performing with an adult during their childhood. Whether this was a conscious act on the part of the mentors is not known, but it most probably served to reinforce the self-esteem of the child in a way which did not invite comparison with an adult.

The ability of the mentor to perceive the innate being of the child has been noted by the writer and psychologist James Hillman (1995). He discusses the perception of the '*oak in the acorn*' by a significant adult and argues that:

'Seeing is believing, *believing in* what you see, and this instantly confers belief to whomever, whatever, receives your sight. The gift of sight surpasses the gift of insight. For such sight blesses, it does transformative work.' (Hillman, 1995)

Hillmann asks us to recognise that sight, or imaginative perception, is an illuminative act, one that sheds light, and notes that the image that the mentor spots is:

'..the complete *how* of a presentation. How something presents itself, which requires of course attention to see it, to notice. Here I am, right before your eyes, do you read me, do you read ME? I am, as I am.' (Hillman, 1995)

He argues that the acorn, or what Maslow (1968) would call 'the core of Being', is not a concealed invisible potential, but rather is thoroughly visible in the 'how of action'. So that what is seen is not *that* a child paints, but *how* the child paints, not *that* a child writes, but *how* the child writes.

The invisible, he says, acts like an implicate folded order, all through the visible '*like the butter in a French croissant*', the genius loci, the spirit of the place, invisible but visible. The mentor does not see by means of types, categories and classes, but just by reading the image as it is, by the perceptive imagination of how the child is. The mentor therefore, is one who is skilled in perception, and the language to convey that perception.

To see the acorn, requires an eye for the image, an eye for the show, and language to say what we see. Failures in our loves, friendships and families, often come down to failures of imaginative perception. When we are not looking with the eye of the heart, love is indeed blind, for then we are failing to see the other person as a bearer of an acorn of imaginative truth.

...Perception brings into being and maintains the being of whatever is perceived. And when perception sees in 'the intuitive holiness of the heart's affections' (Keats), things are revealed that prove the truth of the imagination.' (Hillman, 1995)

I am not totally convinced by Hillman's argument that sight surpasses insight and would suggest that the act he speaks of is less an act of sight alone, and more an act of discernment, which can be a combination of sight and insight. However I would agree that the mentor's perception is invaluable to the artist, adding that perception itself must be a creative act, one which not only acknowledges creativity, but one which also permits opportunity for creativity, and which continues to support creativity.

Hillman has also touched on a critical requirement in a mentor, and that is the ability to be imaginative, and to see possibilities. If the mentor were to apply Egan's model of change to the process of mentoring he or she would be asking 'What would this person be like in order to be more truly him/her self?', 'How would this person be acting in order to be who he/she was meant to be?'. The mentor would be using imagination and vision to bring into the mind's eye the '*possibility of being*' (Rilke, 1977), and would be creating in the true sense of the word.

In 1923 the German poet Rilke (1977) wrote a poem which described the way in which imagination and love can combine to create that in which we believe, which in this instance is the unicorn.

This is the creature there has never been.  
They never knew it, and yet, nonetheless,  
they loved the way it moved, its suppleness,  
its neck, its very gaze, mild and serene.



Not there, because they loved it, it behaved  
as though it were. They always left some space.  
And in that clear unpeopled space they saved  
it lightly reared its head, with scarce a trace

of not being there. They fed it, not with corn,  
but only with the possibility  
of being. And that was able to confer

such strength, its brow put forth a horn. One horn.  
Whiteley it stole up to a maid - to *be*  
within the silver mirror and in her.

(Rilke, R. M. 1977, emphasis in original)

How many artists in this study had been '*not there*', but because they had been loved by a mentor, had begun to behave as if they were, had been fed with '*the possibility of being*', and eventually had become themselves? Rilke tells us that those who loved the unicorn also behaved as if it already existed, '*they always left some space*'.

When mentors behave toward students as if the images in the mentors' imagination already exist, then students begin to act in ways which fulfil those dreams. Without such permission 'to be', such opportunity to develop, individuals may miss the teachable moment for any specific part of the life cycle, and remain a flower '*born to blush unseen*' (Gray, 1905), or at least until another mentor comes along at the next stage of development.

Torrance (1963) proposes that children as young as five might be sacrificing their creativity to conform to the norm of peers, and he suggests that such sacrifice and repression of creativity could be a factor in mental breakdown. He remarks that the higher the creative abilities are, and the stronger the needs for expression, then the more severe will be the pressure on children to conform.

'As a consequence, at each critical stage of development, many children sacrifice their creativity. For some this may begin at age five. For others it comes at age nine, or twelve, or at some later time. As they learn to cope with the new demands of a stage, some children recover, while others apparently abandon their creativity, distort it, or hold tight reins on it.'  
(Torrance, 1963, p.48)

He notes however that it is probable that creativity can be revived at any age, given the right conditions. It would seem apparent that the mentor relationships experienced and described in this study, have fulfilled the conditions of care and for creative growth, at whatever stage of the developmental cycle they took place.

However it is obviously more beneficial to well-being if such helpful relationships begin when we are very young, and are continued by one or another person throughout the life span. Torrance is adamant in his conviction that children should be encouraged to develop their personalities to the full.

'To help them avoid mental breakdowns, to help them develop their personalities in a healthy manner, are important concerns to any parent. I think there is little question but that the stifling of one's creative desires and abilities cuts at the very satisfaction in living and ultimately creates overwhelming tension and breakdown.

There is also little doubt in my mind that the ability to learn and think creatively is our most valuable resource in coping with life's stresses and in maintaining our sanity.' (Torrance, 1963, p. 45)

## **Adolescence**

It is interesting to note that even participants who had enjoyed parental mentoring turned to others during their adolescence. Those who had perfectly adequate parental relationships with no mentor content were also finding the support they sought from outside the family circle. Likewise those with poor parenting were now in a better position to extend their social circle, to meet prospective mentors, and to enjoy other possibilities.

Adrian however had remained in an extremely rewarding mentor relationship with his grandmother who was in her eighties and who was also an artist. He recounted her attention to detail and how her methodical way of working was influencing his thoughts about the artistic process, something which he had always tried to rush in an attempt to see the final image. His mentor had struggled with her own attempts to work in the arts, and had broken away from her family over sixty years ago, to follow her dream. Adrian admires how she has lived her life and recognises it could not have been easy for a woman in her day to have left her home for her art.

'I like what's she's done with her life, and I like the way she went about it as well. It was hard, because she broke away from her parents to do what she's doing now. I think that initial separation must have been pretty hard.'  
Adrian, sculptor.

For this young man in the early years of becoming his own person, his mentor is a valuable model, and an irreplaceable art historian. And what Adrian is learning is not just about art, its techniques and process, but how to live the creative life, a life which demands risk and requires encouragement. Dillon and Woodman (1991) describe a similar experience:

'Pure encouragement and fearlessness in the pursuit of one's art are what I learned from this work with Betty. She showed me a way to live life, not just produce work in clay.' (Dillon & Woodman 1991, p. 68)

It is clear that those interviewed were not just able to believe in the dreams of their mentors and therefore transform themselves, but that they also wanted to transcend the ordinary world, for a more creative world of beauty and idealism which they knew existed somewhere. Whilst such idealism is in keeping with Erikson's Stage 5 of human development, and whilst many individuals found or replaced mentor figures at this stage, not all artists were so fortunate and because of circumstance, had still not found the confirmation that they sought.

The most common factor amongst those artists who did meet mentors at this stage of development was that of being taught to see, to perceive, to look with the '*enlightened eye*' (Eisner, 1991). Beauty, it is said, is in the eye of the beholder. But an appreciation of such beauty by an enthusiastic and passionate mentor can be infectious and can help a student to appreciate and apprehend that beauty. Huntley (1970) in his homage to the beauty of mathematics, 'The Divine Proportion', describes a seminal moment in his life as a student at university:

'Striding rapidly up and down between the class and the blackboard, waving his arms about excitedly, with his tattered gown, green with age, billowing out behind him, he spoke in staccato phrases: "Och, a truly beautiful theorem! Beautiful!...Beautiful! Look at it! *Look at it!* What simplicity! What economy! Just four lines and one transversal." His voice rises in a crescendo. "What elegance! *Any* lines, *any* transversal! Its generality is *astonishing*." Then muttering to himself "Beautiful!...beautiful!...", he stopped, slightly embarrassed (he was from Aberdeen), and returned to earth.

The students were amused. But not all. Sparks from that blazing enthusiasm fell on at least one boy. He took fire and that fire was never extinguished. Hence this book.' (Huntley, 1970, p.5)

Mathematics is a true science, but it is also a symbolic art. The quest to create beauty and truth in art is no less important than seeing it in mathematics. And the ability to recognise the beauty and truth in that which is created, is the aesthetic sense, and is crucial to artists if they are to be able to portray the 'truth' of that which is seen. Those who work in the theatre learn to see and say this 'truth' in very individual ways. Truth becomes felt, and is an aesthetic rather than a cognitive knowledge. Ellen describes how her mentor enabled her to see emotions, access them, and express them:

'She'd sit two people who were playing a scene opposite each other. She'd then drop a word in your ear, such as 'tomorrow', and you had to keep repeating it on the outgoing breath. Then she'd ask questions just gently in the ear, and you didn't answer the questions, you just said the word.

So she'd say 'What colour comes to mind?' and you'd say 'tomorrow', but it may have a grey colour around.' Ellen, theatre director, teacher, writer.

Ellen learned how to communicate colour, mood, and emotion within the visual, verbal and imaginative world of theatre, a skill which moves the technical craft of the performer, into the artistry of good theatre.

It has been suggested that the artistic experience is a joint product of the stimuli within the work of art, and the response of the spectator to such stimuli (Kreitler and Kreitler, 1972, p.237), and the more intense the experience, the more emotionally involved the spectator may become. Indeed, they suggest that the relationship between the work of art and the viewer, is that of empathy:

'...it seems probable that the emotional involvement of spectators of art in the contents and forms of works of art is a manifestation of the basic human tendency and capacity to empathise.' (Kreitler and Kreitler, 1972, p. 266)

Of course the level of involvement between the spectator and the art work will depend on the empathic ability of the viewer, the place in which the work is seen, and the mood and mind set of the one doing the looking. However the aesthetic eye, like the perceptive child in 'The Emperor's New Clothes', seeks only the truth, regardless of the peripherals. Sontag (1967) speaks of transference, of experiencing the luminosity of the thing in itself. Such description sounds not unlike Hillman's requirement that the mentor 'sees how' the child is, sees the essence of the child itself.

When Keith described how his mentor had helped him to see, he was not able to say exactly *what* his mentor had done, but in his description it is quite possible to *feel* that which had taken place, and to have a sense of the excitement and revelation which Keith had experienced.

'He actually somehow could open the book and I'd see a glimpse that it was beautiful, or coherent, or well-organised, or magical or something. I could just see a glimmer of that...I'm much better at it now...that was a spiritual revelation, not a blinding one, but I could see.' (Keith, painter, writer)

Keith's mentor was a man of great passion and conviction, cultivated but embittered by the effects of World War One, who regarded himself as a failure, disappointed because he had not been able to realise his dreams. But Keith recognised, as he puts it, '*the biggest single influence of my life. It was like he was a great lump of mud, but in the mud was gold, and I saw the gold.*' Keith recognised *how* his mentor really was and also that his mentor showed him how to see, by living the passion, living the art. To paraphrase Hillman (1995), not *that* he did it, but *how* he did it.

'It wasn't that he said very much, he did it. You don't learn the curriculum, you learn what's between the lines, and I think somehow he just lived this [art] world. He wasn't a particularly articulate person. It was the way he looked at paintings, you just knew that he had a commitment to them, they just meant something to him. I'm trying to articulate something which was pretty unconscious.' Keith, painter, writer.

Keith's mentor had seen how Keith really was, and this in turn had been reciprocated. The similarities which are present in the relationship of the art work to the aesthetic eye, and the relationship of the mentor to the artist present food for thought.

Throughout the study it was apparent that although the two could communicate via whatever medium they worked best in, visual, tactile, etc., much between the mentor and the artist was empathic and intuitive, and that each knew the other with, in Niamh's words *a' directness...that we could communicate without all these other layers.*' This seems to suggest a relationship which is an art form in itself, and which is alive and vibrant.

Whilst the mentor in early childhood supported and encouraged the child to be creative, it was in adolescence that the two were more likely to work together on collaborative ventures, and therefore could begin to enjoy a more reciprocal relationship.

Such validation of the skills of the emerging young adult led to a sense of pride and achievement and to a relationship which was clearly close and respectful. Edward found it important at this time to prove that his mentor was right in believing that an art scholarship was academically valid. The passion and principles of the mentors became more noticeable to the adolescents, who were busy developing passion and principles of their own. Today Edward's life is still founded on principles:

'I suppose you could say that whatever I do it's essential that there's a sound principle behind it, and that the outcomes have to have value, valued outcomes.' Edward, ceramicist.

This seems to be a time of mutual support and mutual validation, built on foundations of trust and regard, as in my 1994 study. However the mentor relationship is particularly important for those in this study, in that many of them were not able to convince their parents that a life in the creative arts was as worthwhile as a life in a profession with a career structure. Haensly and Parsons (1993) point out that the facilitation of creativity by mentors must begin early in youth, and that such adult/youth relationships are significant in enabling increased independence and autonomy.

Eric, like many boys of 14 and 15, tried to please his parents whilst being much more in tune with his mentor. Sacrificing his own view of self, for the view of his parents, he succeeded in an area which his parents approved of, and worked as well as he could during that time, but only found happiness and his true self when finally doing a Drama and Theology degree when he was 25.

'Even now my mother is expecting me to get a proper job and I'm 52. It was growing deep, and I was reading literature and plays, and going to the theatre whenever I could, and I just said to them [parents] that I had to leave. I contacted Peter, because I wanted to go into a University as I was excited by the literary stuff as well.

But my A levels weren't particularly good and they were science. So I got into University and Peter helped me to get in, 'cos I went to see him and it was before he was famous, he was working on radio, he'd left teaching. I spent an afternoon and an evening with him.' He said I'd probably enjoy it and I could go into education, he said he could see me teaching. So I did, and I loved it.' Eric, actor, teacher.

It appears that Peter had seen how Eric really was, whilst his parents only saw what they would like him to be. Both used their imaginative vision, but only the mentor perceived Eric's nature.

It is understandable for parents to be concerned that children find work which will be financially rewarding, and it is obviously more difficult for those parents who have had no prior experience of relatives working in the arts field to accept that such a life has its own rewards. It should also be recognised that in the transition from school to the outside world, there will be pressures on that young person to conform and to choose a profession with social status. Positive support from parents at this stage, may be just as essential as the care and guidance of a mentor if creativity is not to take a back seat. Quite how such parental support would be managed and accepted in conjunction with what Josselson (1988) sees as the adolescent's task of separating from parental influence at this stage of development, is hard to envisage, but the task of such individuation must be seen in relational context and will vary according to circumstance and parents.

Ellen relates how her parents influence on her was overcome by her own determination, and by the support of her mentor:

'From the age of eight I loved drama. I won prizes and knew I was interested in theatre. My parents were very dictatorial and they didn't approve of it. They are snobs, and it was an embarrassment to them that any daughter of theirs would want to go on the stage. They were convinced from a very early age that I was going to have an early and bad end.' Ellen

'What did this teacher give you which was most important?' CB

**'Respect. Respect was the thing I most needed then, from an adult who I respected. That gave me confidence. She kept me from going off the rails. If there hadn't been anyone in the school who supported me I would have gone down the road my parents most feared. My father went to see her and told her to stop encouraging me, and she told him she wouldn't do that.'**  
Ellen, theatre director, teacher, writer.

Indeed Cooper, Grotevant and Condon (1983) maintain that it is in the re-balancing of individuality and connectedness with parents at this stage, that true individuation takes place.

Some of the students who took part in this study had experienced pressure from within schools and colleges, to choose the sciences instead of the arts, and although they were well able to see the similarities in both disciplines, it seemed that not all staff in academic settings could integrate the two. It also seemed that some staff were able to acknowledge the creative side of the adolescent but were not prepared to give it credence or to take it seriously, and indeed Jaques (1970) has written of teachers' concerns that creative work might somehow tarnish academic standards. Barbara's experience demonstrates this lack of understanding:

**'My maths teacher asked what I was doing, and I said 'art', and she said 'oh art and maths?', and I said 'just art'. I had an interview for college and he couldn't understand either. My predicted grades were for Oxford and Cambridge, and he kept asking me why would a potential Oxbridge candidate want to do a B Tech.'** Barbara, sculptor.

And Adrian had a similar experience:

**'What kind of help did you get at school?' CB**

**'Nothing, I had quite a rough deal. There's no-one who actually taught me.'**  
Adrian

The mentors who were of help to these students were those who understood the creative process, and could see how it could be applied in any field. Edward is very clear about his role within the arts:

**'In a way I'm passing on aesthetic values, things which have meaning and value aesthetically, and giving people the means to make value judgements on things, and that's important. Art is one of the most liberal educations you can have. If you are actually a creative person, you make value judgements on what you do, then impose them on everything in life.'**  
Edward, ceramicist.

This in itself might be the key for those who teach in secondary education. If it is creativity itself which gives the sense of self and achievement, then it would be worth teachers considering how they could bring creativity into all disciplines. The art of being creative is not limited to the creative arts and, as Stoddard pointed out some years ago:

'It is a function of education - a creative function - to open the mind to self-revelation, thus unifying the personality. In so doing, education clears the channels of communication. As we ponder the self-revelations of others in any creative aspect of art, sciences, or behaviour, we may tap the springs of some small creativity within ourselves. (Stoddard, 1959, p. 197)

Whilst Trickett and Buchanan (1997) note that many successful interventions have been developed to enable young people to cope with the stresses of school transitions, such interventions must be based on a perceived need for support. If teachers themselves do not recognise that creativity is a very necessary part of any career, or that working within the creative arts is a valid choice for the future, and do not appreciate that young people sometimes need support and guidance when asked to decide between the arts and sciences, then interventions in this area are unlikely to happen. Teacher mentors who did make a difference are those who listened, heard, and displayed empathy toward the students. In verifying the significance of Roger's core conditions to the learning process, Tausch (1978) commented:

'If we want to diminish stress, aversion and impairment of physical and emotional health in schools and *at the same time* facilitate the development of personality and the quality of intellectual performance then we will need a different kind of teacher than we seem to produce at present. Teachers are needed who can create an atmosphere in their classes where there is empathic understanding, where pupils receive warmth and respect, where genuineness is encouraged and where the teacher can be facilitative in non-directive ways. (Tausch, 1978, p. 5)

Such a clear-cut choice between the arts and sciences at such a young age is not expected in European or North American schools and colleges, and this allows for a more free interchange of ideas in the developing adult, and a recognition of the overlap between the two disciplines. Tina enjoyed the benefit of a mentor who worked in the Scottish education system, and he was able to enable creative thinking in the areas of history and politics.

'He made you see things in a completely different way. He would give you the facts, but say 'OK, what do these facts mean?' and he could take you to different aspects of it which I'd never really thought about before. Tina, sculptor.

Those whose early upbringing has failed them, may miss their opportunity for creative development once more if they are unable to obtain support within their school life.



'We know that the first impressions of childhood accompany us inalienably through life, and that, just as indestructibly, certain educational influences can keep people all their lives within those limits. In these circumstances it is not surprising that conflicts break out between the personality moulded by educational and other influences of the infantile milieu and one's own individual style of life. It is a conflict which all those must face who are called upon to live a life that is independent and creative.' (Jung, 1986, p. 307).

The presence of a supportive mentor at this stage of development can do much to maintain and promote the creativity of the individual, as well as continuing to boost self-image and esteem. It appears that the person who has experienced such support, coupled with collaborative achievement in an area of creative endeavour, is unlikely to relinquish that side of their persona without a struggle.

### **Adulthood**

As artists move into adulthood and maturity they are faced with similar problems to those working in fields external to the arts. There are financial difficulties, families to be managed, and personal relationships to be maintained, but unless artists decide to teach, they must learn to do all this without the benefit of a secure income and a recognised career structure.

It can be seen from the descriptions in Chapter Five, that those who choose the arts, have surely not done so because it affords a particularly easy ride through life. Indeed it appears that they do so because they have to, that there is no realistic alternative if they are to be themselves, and that they sense an internal creative imperative. Sol speaks of this when he says '*It has to come out somehow*', and Carl confirmed this '*I need to do what I do.*' Neither artist was intimating that they had no choice in the matter, or that they were unhappy about it, but simply implied their awareness that this was who they were.

The role of the mentor in the life of the adult artist seems to be a continuation of the previous role of maintaining the artist's self-worth by providing a sounding board for new ideas, and by giving clear feedback from a position of authority, regard and respect.

Carl remarked that it was easy to get feedback from people whom he did not respect and trust, but that because the stakes for success became higher and higher, such feedback was useless. Carl, like so many artists, felt that he was only as good as his last piece of work, and to a large extent this continual push for new work from the art world forces the artist to produce more and more original pieces. Failure to do so may mean falling out of sight of the art world and never being able to make a come-back.

Few can believe that the artistic life is easy if we reflect on what it must feel like to be on a creative treadmill which demands that each contribution goes just that little bit further, and that every piece of work must be completely fresh. The artist then has to find a means of getting the work seen, in order to have each new piece critiqued by the public and the art world in general.

It would make the academic requirement of one or two publications a year seem almost leisurely, were it not for the fact that academics too are now being forced onto a similar treadmill at a time when for many, the administrative support has been drastically cut, and the teaching commitments have been increased.

Such a life is hardly conducive to creative acts, and yet it is the everyday life of many artists. However although there are many similarities between academics and artists in terms of creative approaches, one difference is that artists have to sell new work in order to live, whereas academics can usually depend on a regular salary. Most artists in this study relied only on their mentors, with one or two relying on themselves for the highly critical review that new work requires, and in fact as most artists were in permanent relationships with their mentors, they were able to receive this feedback very quickly.

It was interesting that the everydayness of these permanent relationships did not seem to detract from the high esteem which the artist had for the critical eye of the mentor. Having said that, where the artist and mentor were involved in a romantic relationship, it appeared to work at a different level to that of most marriages, or regular relationships. Within these alliances each person maintained a high level of autonomy, and in many cases, a good deal of personal space in which to develop. Whilst all of the artists said that they would probably not change their work if they liked it but their mentor had doubts, when I asked if they had ever kept the work the same when this occurred, they smiled and admitted that on those few occasions they had in fact altered it and produced better work.

Some artists did rely on their own judgement, but these were those who were well-established in their field, and who had learned to trust their intuition completely regarding their work. These individuals tended to be those who had had very influential mentor relationships in the past, whose perception of self-worth was strong, and who were able to reflect on how their mentor would perhaps have approached a problem.

Baum (1992) suggests that a successful conclusion to a mentor relationship is when the protege '*internalises*' the admired qualities of the mentor, and then either consciously or unconsciously, refers to the internal mentor for advice when faced with a problem.

'There was something I was thinking of a couple of days ago, and I thought 'Yes. That's almost the same as what he said, and that's absolutely right.' Andrew, painter.

Such internalisation was also a feature of my 1994 study and surfaced mainly after the enforced ending of the mentor relationship by death or by distance. Burton (1977) also reports that those who had experienced mentor relationships during the transition to young adulthood, were more likely to be more confirmed in their adulthood.

It seems that it is perfectly possible for artists to share their life with another person, and not be seen as selfish in sometimes putting their creative work before everything else. Those whose relationships worked best were those whose partners were their mentors. The mentors had insight into the creative process because they too were creative and understood the need for time alone in which to work. The benefit to the artist was that of not just a loving relationship, but of having a trusted and respected critic at close hand, who was able to give feedback in an honest but supportive manner.

Katherine, a well-respected author, was one of the participants whose creativity went unsupported until she was a 30 year old adult. She worked as creatively as she could whilst trying to bring up two children and support an academic husband, but when he left her for another woman she woke up to the fact that her creativity had been '*damped down*' during the marriage. She met a mentor who asked her what she did besides housework, and when she told him that she used to '*write a bit of poetry*', he handed her a pad and asked her to write him a poem there and then. She wrote him a sonnet.

'Can you identify any emotions at that minute you wrote the sonnet?' CB

'Oh yes, I became one person, I became one-pointed and I knew then 'I'm me', I became myself. Then I started to write the first book.' Katherine, writer.

It is interesting to see how Katherine's creativity was freed by a more clear sense of self which had been achieved by her mentor simply asking her to 'be' that self which she had kept hidden.

Many people in my 1994 study conducted their mentor relationships at a distance, after circumstances had decreed that one or other move elsewhere. I concluded that if communication continued, via the telephone, by letters, or by visits, then these relationships would continue to be maintained.

In this study, although one or two artists did have mentor relationships with people who lived at a distance, these relationships were much less able to meet the needs of the artists in terms of fast feedback on new work, or in terms of psychological well-being. The artists with such long distance mentors also needed support systems such as peer relationships with other artists. Although writers could mail their new work, it is hardly feasible for painters and sculptors to do this, or for dancers to show a new piece of choreography without the mentor being there in person.

Proximity in mentor relationships therefore, seems to be more of an issue for some types of artist than others, but as many artists are spontaneous people who like to bounce new ideas off a valued 'sounding board', proximity and accessibility to the company of the mentor are perhaps crucial, whereas for those working in teaching or training they are just valuable and desirable.

It seemed that it was only when artists and their mentors did move to new locations that many mentor relationships petered out and reverted to friendships. This does not suggest shallowness on either part, but merely reflects the need for immediacy and the value of face to face interaction within the alliance.

It would be wrong to assume that the role of the mentor is to praise the artist regardless of the quality of the output, or to be there to respond to every whim and wish of the artist. To do so would be to misunderstand just why these relationships are so valuable. The relationships are not sycophantic on either side. They are sincere, and are relationships in which each takes the other's creative art, and by definition the other's self, seriously. Julia's husband's gravest error of judgement was not in coming home for hot lunches, or being threatened by her success, or even in damaging her Diploma piece. It was far greater than any of those, and lay in his complete inability to believe that she was a serious artist with a valid contribution to make to the world.

Likewise Michael's wife's mistake was not in becoming pregnant. Nor, on the face of it could she have done more to help a young artist than to finance his studio, and cook his meals. But all Michael wanted was to paint, to be taken seriously as a painter, and be seen for who he is.

This was his wife's mistake, as despite loving him, she just did not take his work seriously, and he despite loving her, was too young to have enough self-confidence for it not to matter. This is less an issue of gender, but more of an issue of personhood, an issue of self.

A recurring aspect of the relationships was that of the willingness and necessity to take risks when working creatively. Whilst this will be dealt with more fully in the next chapter which deals with creativity and the creative process, it is also an important factor for the relationship itself. My 1994 study indicated that risk in self-disclosing personal information was part of the initiation process of the mentor relationship (Chapter Two) and was an important part of establishing honest communication. That finding has been confirmed within this study, with the only difference being that such disclosure seemed to come about as a result of a recognition of something within the other person, more than a need to disclose personal information to establish trust and intimacy.

Indeed, it appeared that for many individuals it was a recognition of 'some thing' within the other, some pre-existing connection which led to the sharing. Artists described this phenomena with some measure of awe and significance, and it is clear that the relationships were deeply intuitive, bringing us once more to the ability 'to see', to the perception of the other, and to a knowledge of the other which defies any rationality.

When faced with the inexplicable, humans tend to search for meaning and significance. It has been suggested that experience does not need to be rational in order to be meaningful, and that the creative freedom of humans consists in the ability to make meaning from experiences which cannot be wholly understood objectively (Tambiah, 1993). Those with belief systems which supported the notion of reincarnation, attached that model of thinking to their experience, and felt that each must have known the other in a previous life. Others admitted that they had no idea of how such intuitive communication happened, only that it did, and that it confirmed their decision to share personal information with an almost total stranger.

Yet others attached religious significance to the event and saw the hand of God in the occasion, and those who embrace the newly resurgent philosophies, spoke of telepathy, spiritual guides or teachers. Whatever the underlying conviction, the result of the experience was that of being fully open with the mentor, in the conviction that this behaviour was right.

Frank (1977) maintains that telepathy and clairvoyance are beneficial to physical and psychological illness, and opens up the question of whether the psychotherapeutic approaches utilised by Westerners may also be using the same essential techniques:

'What is the relevance of telepathy to psychotherapy? Almost all schools stress the importance of the therapist's empathy with the patient, and existentialist schools speak of the essence of therapy's being the therapist's ability to merge with the essence of the patient. Are these euphemisms for telepathy?' (Frank, 1977)

Although Barbara had the experience of feeling as though she and her mentor were flowing into each other's sense of self, and that the boundaries of self became open, this might well be explained as simply that two siblings who had grown up together were able to read each others non-verbal communication with great accuracy.

Such explanation however would not be applicable to the greater majority of artists, who did not have sibling mentor relationships, and who experienced this interaction not just during the length of the relationship, but on the first occasion that they met.

King (1979) offers one solution. His study results indicate that the pupil size of the eye can send a message of interest to the one being looked at and that this message may be interpreted as a message of high expectancy, resulting in a positive relationship. He says:

'Nonrational insight came as a revelation to those who suddenly realised the mysterious 'something' that tells whether they are getting on with their fellows.' (King, 1979, p. 253)

King's results, whilst based only on thirteen individuals, are interesting, but do not shed light on what might make the pupil size of the eye enlarge. In other words, the results do not show what it is that is seen, only that the looker has enlarged pupils, and that the one being addressed responds positively. Ellen described this recognition:

Never met her before in my life, just immediately recognised her and got on with her as if I'd know her for twenty years. I just saw her, it was 'oh there you are!', and she had the same experience. It's a recognition, it's a kind of life-force, it's also that I also see auras and always have done, but there's a particular kind of light as well.' Ellen theatre director, teacher, writer.

And Duncan feels that one must be open to the phenomena:

'The quality of openness to these relationships is exactly what gives you the energy and the intuition. It's always instantly recognisable.' Duncan, theatre director, impresario.

The recognition of some 'thing', the intuitive 'knowing', the desire to be totally open and unafraid of sharing, is not easily explained. In fact it is not really explicable at all in any logical sense, but it is recognised as trustworthy despite being somewhat ineffable. To rephrase Hillman (1995), what matters is not so much '*what* it is' or even '*how* it is', but that the phenomena is simply '*that* it is'.

David Bohm asserts that the universe is fundamentally that of an unbroken wholeness which he names, '*that which is*' (Zukav, 1979). He sees the universe as containing an order, which is enfolded into the process of the universe, but which may not be readily apparent. This enfolded order is the implicate order of the universe, where every thing and every particle is related. However in the unfolded, or explicate order of the universe, particles will appear to be unconnected and unrelated.

Whilst Zukav (1979) is aware that it is naive to overstate the similarities between the physics of Bohm and Eastern philosophies, he also notes that it is foolish to ignore them. These psychological practices which have been developed over two thousand years are based on the concept of an 'unbroken wholeness', and Zukav notes:

'If Bohm's physics, or one similar to it, should become the main thrust of physics in the future, the dances of East and West could blend in exquisite harmony. It is possible that physics curricula of the twenty-first century could include classes in meditation.' (Zukav, 1979, p. 327)

The aim of meditation is to escape from the constructions we have made, so that we can experience pure awareness, the 'suchness' of reality, the '*that which is*'. Nellie remembered feeling the shapes and the colours, being intimately connected with her environment, an experience which even well-practised meditators would count themselves fortunate to have. The constructions we build are hard to escape, and even the language which we use can become in itself a prison for our imagination and make description '*totally incompatible with what we want to say*' (Bohm 1977, in Zukav, 1979).

Stewart (1969) cites Namache's (1961) concept of 'cold' cognition, and 'caring' cognition in relation to knowing and understanding others:

"Caring' cognition refers to a knowing that involves the whole individual. It is characterised by a warm positive feeling and an intimate global relation to what is known. It involves something of the union of the knower and the known. ...The subject-object split is temporarily overcome. 'Cold' cognition by contrast is analytical, detached, objective. It entails a separation of the knower and the known.' (Stewart, 1969, p. 64)

What is the nature of the intuitive communication between the artist and the mentor? Is it an apprehension of Bohm's connectedness? Is it a fleeting return to that early state of being one with the world which Piaget acknowledged? Is it Frank's telepathy? Is it Namache's caring cognition? Does it matter that we find an answer? Or can we simply take an Eastern philosophical view and accept this phenomena as '*that which is*'?

Hodgson (1991, p. 456) suggests that we use the metaphor of a mainframe computer and terminals, when considering the relationship between a universal mind and individual minds, but whatever the nature of such acute perception, the artists are certain of its 'reality', and to translate such certainty into words requires more than an academic discourse, it requires a poet:

'It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.' (St. Exupery, 1975)

The mentor relationship described in this chapter, is one which functions at the level of both intellect and emotions, head and heart, left and right brain. It is both instrumental and developmental, and affords a balanced relationship which enables the artist to fulfil Jung's (1970) perception of healthy mental individuation, '*the ability to work and love*'.

## **Conclusion**

The mentor role has been taken in this study by those who were also parent, sibling, teacher, friend, partner, and colleague. In fact it would perhaps be more accurate to acknowledge that within the life of artists, the role and mantle of the mentor remains the same, but as in all the best stories, only the names change. When the role passed to another mentor, the relationship of the one relinquishing the role and the participant did not disappear, it simply reverted to what it was originally, that of parent, teacher etc. Those meeting a mentor during adulthood tended to remain with that one person, perhaps because their life was more stable, and their development more formed.

The 'otherness' or metaphysical aspect of the mentor relationship is a singular feature of both this and my 1994 study, and to a great extent is still unaccounted for in rational terms. But the concept of a 'spirit of the mentor' is much closer to that of Homer's Mentor than could have been foreseen, as it will be remembered that it was the goddess Athene, '*the mistress of disguises*' (Fitzgerald, 1988, p.252) who entered the body of Mentor (the one closest to Telemachos), whenever Telemachos required help, and gave Mentor an 'other-worldly' air.

'But who is that Mentor, who has the appearance of a plain simple, ordinary person? When one regards him close up, there appears in him something more than human.' ('Telemachus' Fenelon 1699, trans. Riley 1994, p.81)

Perhaps there is something to be said for a concept of a 'spiritual mentor' who works through those best placed to help the artist. However it is not a view likely to be embraced by everybody as it requires a belief in, or experience of, another type of conscious intelligence.



Kate is perhaps the person who should have the final word on this perspective, and the following quotation is taken from a letter she wrote to me after she approved her words in Chapter Five and in which she refers to her mentors as her 'life source':

'And so this brings me back to your work and the role of mentors in my life. I have had no one consistent person, within my child/adult life - and yet I feel I have had 'some thing'.

This presence was with me when I was desperately lonely and unhappy as a child, it was with me when I was bullied at school, when I was dealing with my teenage years, young adulthood, leaving home, university life, and it was with me during my breakdown.

I am not religious, but I've resorted to fantasy and make believe in my childhood for comfort - and I think this has evolved into a general belief, need and respect for the unknown elements of life. This unknown element, presence, being, companion, remains with me continually.

And in an unorthodox way I wonder has *this* been my mentor all along? It has always quietly let me know that I will survive, and come through, and that I will reunite the child and adult in me, - and I will be whole.' (personal correspondence, 1997)

If we consider once more, the mentor relationship as a art form, then Dewey's (1958) words have particular significance in helping us to understand the spiritual element of the alliance:

'Expression strikes below the barriers that separate human beings from one another. ...Every intense experience of friendship and affection completes itself artistically. The sense of communion generated by a work of art may take on a definite religious quality.' (Dewey, 1958, p. 270)

Kate's dream of what she would become, coupled with those who enabled it to be, has played a crucial part in her development, even at times when she would have been forgiven for letting that dream fade. Grasping the dream is not just about persistent belief, but requires courage. This is no one-sided courage, but requires both a willingness on the part of the artist and a sense of responsibility on the part of the mentor, to engage in that shared journey. Kadinsky (1977) who has written on the aspect of the spiritual in art, explains:

'Veiled in obscurity are the causes of this need to move ever upwards and forwards, by sweat of the brow, through sufferings and fears. When one stage has been accomplished and many evil stones cleared from the road, some unseen and wicked hand scatters new obstacles in the way, so that the path often seems blocked and totally obliterated. But there never fails to come to the rescue some human being, like ourselves in everything except that he has a secret power of vision.

He sees and points the way. The power to do that he would sometimes fain lay aside, for it is a bitter cross to bear. But he cannot do so.' (Kadinsky, 1977, p. 4)

Terri remarked that it was her mentor's support and encouragement which enabled her to seize the moment, and make her dream happen, but in noting that it *'was really very liberating and frightening'*, is obviously aware of the courage that it took:

'There is a tendency to say 'one day I will go home', 'one day I will do that', 'one day I'll be a painter', 'one day I'll do this'. There's a tendency to put the dream off, and then you don't have to confront it, you don't have to deal with it.' Terri, performer, painter.

The truly creative person then, would seem to be one who fits Heidegger's later concept of authenticity (Zimmerman, 1993, p. 256), and who encounters and engages with the world by 'letting it be', rather than one who spends time in activities which divert attention from the world.

Levinson's concept of the Dream and the role of the mentor in enabling that dream to be fulfilled seem to be as important as ever, but ultimately much is up to individuals and their ability to seize 'the teachable moment' and create new ways of being. In Storr's words:

'Becoming what one is is a creative act comparable with creating a work of art. It is freeing oneself from the tyranny of one's upbringing; emancipating oneself from convention, from education, from class, from religious belief, from all the social constraints, prejudices, and assumptions which prevent one from realising one's own nature in its totality.' (Storr, 1993, p. 153).

# Chapter Seven

## The Creative Process

'The creative person is both more primitive and more cultivated, more destructive, a lot madder and a lot saner, than the average person.' Barron, 1963.

'To attain expertness in any worthwhile skill, Japanese commonly expect that it will require many years of intensive training and practice. They regard short cuts as harmful. In 'expertness', the highest point attainable is 'satori', a sudden flash of enlightenment. The attainment of satori involves many things. It requires intense devotion. One must be 'in love' with something. It requires constant practice of even simple operations over a long period of time. It requires concentration and absorption to the exclusion of other things. Generally it involves an intensive, long-term, one-to-one relationship to a 'sensei' (teacher).' Torrance, 1979.

'If Watson and Crick had not discovered the nature of DNA, one can be virtually certain that other scientists would eventually have determined it. With art - whether painting, music or literature - it is quite different. If Shakespeare had not written *Hamlet*, no other playwright would have done so.' Wolpert, 'The Unnatural Nature of Science', 1993.

### Self-Actualised Creativeness

Maslow (1968, pp.137/138) differentiated between people with '*special talent creativeness*', those with a particular gift in a specialist creative area, and '*self-actualising creativeness*', those who were able to do almost anything creatively, and who possessed an innocent perceptiveness of the kind seen in young children, combined with sophisticated minds. He proposed that such perception was a fundamental characteristic of human nature, but one which became dulled and inhibited as the human became encultured.

The participants in this study had special skills in the arts field, but I have already noted at the outset of the research that they had some difficulty in describing themselves as 'painter' 'actor' etc., as they applied creative thinking to many areas of their lives, and many of them could have succeeded in fields outside that of artistic endeavour. Therefore I do not consider that this is a study of prodigies or extremely gifted people, but rather one which has examined people who have made a life in the creative arts by their hard work and creative thinking.

May (1959) has pointed out that strictly speaking, it is not proper to think of a '*creative person*', but only a '*creative act*', the person creating.

However as all the participants in this study were actively working in creative fields, I have chosen to refer to them as creative people. As the creative process for those in this study is not separate from the relationships which support that creativity, those relationships are examined in this chapter in terms of mental health, self-actualisation, intimacy, power, and the metaphysical; the issues which this thesis holds as its parameters for investigation.

It appears that being creative is the ability to have novel ideas combined with the ability to give form to those ideas. But as Davies (1983) remarks:

'The fact that a creative chemist has access to chemical elements, or a creative writer to words, cannot explain their adeptness in combining these parts into creative and valuable wholes.' (Davies, 1983, p.46)

Rogers (1959) suggests that the conditions which foster constructive creativity consist of psychological safety and psychological freedom. Let us firstly consider the three associated processes which Rogers suggests make up the condition of **psychological safety**.

1) *Accepting the individual as of unconditional worth*: Rogers maintains that when people with a facilitating function sense the potential of another person and have unconditional faith toward them, no matter what the present state of that person, then facilitators are fostering creativity. The felt effect of facilitators by the other is a sensed climate of safety, wherein one is able to be oneself. This in turn fosters a relaxed climate for experimentation in spontaneous ways, and supports a move toward creativity.

2) *Providing a climate in which external evaluation is absent* : We foster creativity, Rogers notes, when we cease to judge people from our own locus of evaluation. This enables freedom from defensiveness, and encourages in the person a sharper sense of self-evaluation. This is not to say that a facilitator must not have reactions about a product which has been created, but more to say that the facilitator should not react to the product based on the values of the outside world. To do so would inhibit creativity in the other.

3) *Understanding empathically*: This condition, according to Rogers, provides the ultimate in psychological safety. Facilitators who purport to accept others but who have no understanding of them, may change as their knowledge of the other grows. But empathic understanding of the other person is a full understanding of that person's world, and that person's point of view. Such understanding permits the real self of the individual to emerge.

**Psychological Freedom**, the second of Rogers' conditions, is when the facilitator allows the individual complete freedom of symbolic expression. This fosters openness, spontaneity, and the juggling of concepts and meanings which form part of the creative process.

Rogers notes that it is *symbolic* expression which is encouraged, as to encourage all expressions of feeling and impulses may not be freeing. To destroy a symbol of a repressive past is psychologically freeing, but to destroy the thing in actuality may lead to guilt, and narrow the freedom which is sought.

Rogers was not completely satisfied with his description of this freedom, and perhaps this was because he sensed in it a form of value judgement which he so stoutly stands against in his call for the locus of evaluation to sit with the creative person. However he attempts to elucidate this concept more clearly by saying that although the facilitator should give permission to be free, this permission is not indulgent, but should foster responsibility in the other.

These conditions were to form Rogers' theory of creativity and are based on the core conditions for learning and personal growth described in an earlier chapter. When the relationships of the participants within this study are compared to this theory, then it may be seen that the mentors were acting in such facilitating roles as those described by Rogers. No matter what the age of the artists at the time of the mentor relationship, the artists were made to feel that they had worth, that their creations and ideas had value, and that they as people, were understood completely. These conditions were coupled with an environment which allowed the type of expression described by Rogers, that of symbolic freedom coupled with a clear sense of personal responsibility.

It could be argued that the mentors were judgemental, and that it was this judgemental ability that was so keenly sought by the artists. But what was actually sought was not judgement of the artists' persona, but the critical expertise of their mentors simply in relation to the quality of the pieces of art, not the art's right to exist as a valid expression of the artists' imagination. It can also be seen from the previous chapter, that as the artists became older and internalised their mentors' qualities, their own locus of evaluation became more established, and the need for feedback from the mentor became less important.

Torrance (1979b, p.12) has pointed out that creative behaviour is more likely to be consistent if the necessary skills are combined with creative abilities, together with motivation or commitment.

He notes that the person with high creative abilities and skills may begin to achieve creatively if the motivation can be aroused, and similarly the person with motivation and ability can achieve creatively if he or she acquire the necessary skills. Although it may be possible for some students to teach and motivate themselves, it has been shown here that the mentor teaches skills for the creative art, models the creative life, and provides an environment in which it is psychologically safe to experiment with ideas and materials. By what Torrance calls, '*rewarding*' creative behaviour (1995b, p. 79) mentors encourage the creative process, enable self-esteem to develop, and '*provide powerful motivation for learning*'.

### **Creativity and Relationships**

In taking the stance that creativity is healthy and not pathological May (1975) removes himself completely from the idea that talent is a disease, and creativity a neurosis. Authentic creativity, he maintains, is the process of bringing something new into being, and is defined by a quality of encounter or engagement with the world. Escapist creativity on the other hand, is one which is passive and which lacks and sometimes avoids, genuine encounter, for example the person who is able mentally to conceptualise a story in minute detail, but who never gets around to writing anything down, and hence never actually creates.

May (1975) maintains that this passive state is not the same as receptivity, that state of high awareness, where the artist is open to encounter, and is awaiting the creative moment. Authentic creativity he says, requires courage, the courage to be fully committed, in the knowledge that we may possibly be wrong. In an earlier work May (1953) referred to courage as a virtue of maturity, in terms of the courage to be oneself, as opposed to automaton conformity, and notes that such courage is required not only at the obvious developmental stages of life, but whenever we move from the familiar to the unfamiliar.

Courage is therefore essential to what we might be, and is crucial to the personal make-up of the creative artist if anything is to be created. It is the willingness to fail repeatedly that characterises the highest creative achievement (Rose 1996), and such courage requires self-confidence and self-esteem. Storr has suggested that the creative person is:

'...constantly seeking to discover himself, to remodel his own identity, and to find meaning in the universe through what he creates.' (Storr, 1989, p. xiv)

But he questions the significance of human relationships in the life of the creative artist, noting that:

'However important personal relationships may be for the creatively gifted person, it is often the case that his particular field of endeavour is still more important. The meaning of his life is constituted less by his personal relationships than it is by his work.' (Storr, 1989, p. 74)

As May's (1975) concept of '*encounter*' and '*engagement*' bring to mind the notion of relationality to the world and to others, it may be that the importance of relationships to the creative person depends on how significant those relationships are to the creative process, either in terms of support or in terms of inspiration.

Storr (1994) has described his own childhood as lonely and somewhat friendless. His work as a psychiatrist stemmed from his learned ability to listen in an attempt to make friends, but he admits that the therapeutic relationship is a:

'..way of relating which is protective because you don't have to reveal yourself, and therefore you don't have to risk rejection or being despised - which I certainly felt for most of my childhood.' (Storr, 1994)

Although he is a respected writer and has experienced the 'highs' of creative flow, he has also had to cope with continual bouts of depression, which have been exacerbated by listening to the problems of patients for long periods. And despite his success he feels that his writing is a poor substitute for music:

'I would really like to have been a musician. *Passionately*. It was the thing in which I was always most interested, but I wasn't frightfully gifted, so nobody took seriously the idea that I could do it professionally. I still regret it very much. I would like to have done music more than anything in life by *far*, and writing is a very poor substitute.' (Storr, 1994, emphasis in original)

That Storr (1992) sees the act of becoming as one which takes place in isolation, rather than in relation to others is significant. Storr's life is one which most people would describe as successful. He has worked in ways which are creative and productive, but he feels unfulfilled, and despite his assertion that creative work is more important than relationships, one might speculate how much more fulfilled he might have been were he to have met a mentor in childhood who had taken his musical passion seriously, and given him the self-confidence to try and realise his dream.

Like Storr, the artists within this study would not have described themselves as gifted. But they shared a passion and determination with their mentors, and learned the discipline required for their art through such supportive relationships which developed their self-esteem.

Charles describes how mentors can help artists to see their hidden resources and assist them to focus on the essentials for their discipline:

'It's a sort of pump-priming thing. It does inspire you in the sense that it breathes a spirit into one, it is an inspirational thing, it lights the fires within one, it keeps them going. I think it also blows away an enormous amount of dust, so much of what one thinks, what one does, is a clutter and needs to be got rid of, so that one gets right down to the basics.

I think with a good teacher this is what happens, they get rid of clutter rather than adding to clutter. Whereas a bad teacher just adds to clutter the whole time.

Tagore [Rabindranath] told a story of a parrot who was a beautiful singer, but the people around just didn't understand the parrot, and kept feeding it with song sheets in order to make it sing better, until finally the parrot gave up singing altogether and died. The parrot got so stuffed with externals, that the internal [pause] - I think that's the other thing one wants to say, that they encourage the internal, the inner life to grow, that they get right through to the inner life, and they know the resources are there if they can be opened up, but so often they're closed because of this great clutter that's put on.' Charles, musician

It is clear that those within this study who were unsupported as children and adolescents were still able to work in creative ways, but it is also clear that their creativity became much more focussed and that they became much more themselves when in a mentor relationship. The study also shows that when participants were in personal non-mentor relationships where their work was not taken seriously, then those relationships were impossible to maintain, although their creativity survived.

There are probably many gifted artists who have had no mentor figure in their lives and who are still fulfilled and creative, but it seems reasonable to propose that for those whose creativity requires actualising, or whose early lives hover on the brink of despair, the presence of a strong mentor relationship at some point in those lives, not only enables the development of self-esteem and confidence required to form other friendships and love relationships, but confirms and acknowledges the artist's hidden resources, affording opportunities for creative development in the area of unfulfilled dreams.

## **Mental Health**

Much has been written on the mood swings of creative artists, and many artists have periods of both manic activity and depression, but although some artists may describe their depression as 'madness', by no means could all of the people suffering from manic-depression or schizophrenia be described as artists.

Jamison (1994, p. 258) warns against the reductionist view of seeing only a clinical syndrome in what is beautiful and original but notes that over-generalisation in the area of the creative personality and mood swings does the artist no favours, and neither does denial of the facts.



She maintains that artists are not diminished even if one does conclude that they are more likely to suffer from inherited recurrent mania and depression, and be more prone to suicide. She advocates sensitive counselling for the creative person of the benefits and liabilities of mood disorders, and argues for an awareness of potentially damaging medication, and the minimisation of drug levels.

Storr (1972) cites the playwright Strindberg as saying:

'Not everyone is capable of being mad; and of those lucky enough to be capable of madness, not many have the courage for it.' (Storr, 1972, p. 260)

Storr (1972) maintains the position that the idea that genius and madness are somehow allied, may originate in the feeling that both creative people and mad people have mental experiences which the ordinary person does not share. He argues that creative people have a superior controlling apparatus which strengthens their ability to cope with the stress of such experiences, coupled with more insight into their own inner world. The creative person in Storr's view, is not likely to become mad because the ego never loses control. However because creative inspiration gives the impression that the artist is controlled by external forces, it has been erroneously believed that creativity and neurosis are linked.

Jamison's (1989) study of 47 British poets, playwrights, novelists, biographers and artists (painters) sought to examine the role of mood swings in creative people, and found a strikingly high 38% rate of treatment for affective illness, in comparison with lifetime prevalence rates in the general population of 1% for bi-polar (mania and depression) and 5% for unipolar (mania or depression). The study also revealed similarities between hypomanic states and creative states, and she notes that the continuum of normal to hypomanic activity is poorly understood. She queries also the extent to which artists and writers might simply be more sensitive to their own mood states, and therefore perhaps more able to articulate and describe them.

I would suggest that as some of the depressive states can inhibit creativity, then this might have bearing on the fact that the cohort sought medical intervention more often than those people who are in what Jaques (1970, p.118) calls non-creative jobs, where their tasks and objectives are set for them.

Frosch (1987) is unconvinced of the link between genius and madness in musicians, announcing the case to be 'not proven', but accepts that such thinking has enabled artists to allow their eccentricity to blossom. He states:

**'The creative furore of a Mozart may on the surface look like mania, but is unlikely to have the same structure or meaning. It grows out of thought and careful planning: it is structured and has a product.'** (Frosch, 1987, p. 321)

Richards et al (1988) found a higher incidence of creativity amongst the immediate relatives of those with manic-depression or depressive illness, and two studies of British chemistry and architectural students showed that a higher incidence of creativity and academic achievement was associated with greater psychological disturbance and an increased use of mental health facilities (Lucas and Stringer, 1972, Banks et al, 1970).

It is important to be well aware of the controversial aspects of such studies, as many creative artists are totally sane, and not all chemists would wish to describe themselves as mad. However whilst the evidence of a link between creativity and mood disorders is looking increasingly intriguing in the psychological and medical literature of the present day, what my study aimed to examine was the extent to which mentors might be of help in maintaining mental well-being in the lives of artists who experience the mood swing continuum as part of their creative process.

It is still not clear whether mood swings are a necessary part of the creative personality, or simply a handicap, nor is it clear whether the creativity would still function if the mood disorders were 'cured'. What is most certainly a handicap, is the negative language which is used by the medical and caring professions, and the general public, to describe intense mood swings, and to label artists as mentally ill ignores in Jamison's words (1996) *'the enormous discipline, will and rationality that are essential to truly creative work'*.

It is hardly surprising that few people wish to talk about their own mental health when any deviation from the average is seen as mental illness, and it is to the credit of those in my study that they were able to be so open and honest about their own experiences of the low and high creative states. Maslow's (1968) attempts to move away from the established psychological thinking of what is 'normal' and work with self-actualised people led him to believe that:

**'Certainly it seems more and more clear that what we call 'normal' in psychology is really a psychopathology of the average, so undramatic and widespread that we don't even notice it ordinarily.**

**The existentialist's study of the authentic person and of authentic living helps to throw this general phoniness, this living by illusions and by fear into a harsh clear light which reveals it clearly as sickness, even tho (sic) widely shared.'** (Maslow, 1968, p. 16)

Egan (1990, p. 96) supports this view, identifies passivity as the main component of the psychopathology of the average, and maintains that such unused human potential probably constitutes a more serious social problem than emotional disorders as it is much more widespread.

Sutherland (1987) has noted that:

'Great achievements in literature, art, science medicine, politics or business are often attained by individuals who are driven by a single purpose to the detriment of other sides of their lives: without such people the world would be a poorer place.' (Sutherland, 1987, p. 262)

Many of those who took part in this study acknowledged with equanimity and good humour the part that their moods played in their creative process. Terri describes the days of fire and ashes which she feels are absolutely essential to the creative process which requires both increased activity and thought patterns, and the reflective quieter time necessary for re-fuelling the creative fire.

'You have a day of fire, when things are really cooking, and then probably you're going to have a day of ashes the next day, and sometimes being alone is the ashes, you haven't got anything, you're empty.

And sometimes the ashes day will revive you. I say 'day', it could be a month, it could be a year, but you need that time in which you are private.'  
Terri performer, designer.

Terri's mentor is also her partner and recognises her need for time alone to recharge. Yet, as may be seen in an earlier chapter, he is also aware of when to intervene and restore her sense of self-value. Carl likens the lows to the aftermath of giving birth:

'Usually it's just how I imagine a post-natal depression to be. It's terrible actually. When you're directing, you spend something of yourself, there's something that goes, and I always have this terrible drop afterwards and it is quite a depression when you think 'Is that as good as I am?' Carl, theatre designer.

Carl works in a team and his mentor is the first person with whom he shares his embryonic ideas when in his quiet periods. He finds her positive feedback and enthusiasm invaluable at that point, and once she becomes excited about the next project then Carl begins to work again. This ebb and flow of creativity is accepted as part of the creative process, and the mentors are not expected to prevent this happening, but rather as noted elsewhere (Bennetts, 1996e), by understanding the creative cycle and being prepared to act as sounding boards when necessary, they function as 'buffers for the blues'.

Many of those who are now involved in mentor relationships were able to describe how those relationships supported their well-being by a variety of means, but perhaps the most important participants who contributed to this aspect of my research were Kate and Andrew, who had both had severe depressive episodes and contemplated suicide, who both became well again through determination and supportive mentor relationships, and who were both willing to discuss in great detail the process of such experience, which will be examined here in the light of Jaques (1965) work.

Jaques' (1965) study of the mid-life crises of 310 painters, poets, composers and sculptors showed a remarkable rise in the number of suicides between the period of early adulthood and mature adulthood, which for his study he defines as between 35 and 39 years old.

Jaques does not insist that this depressive crisis only manifests itself in creative individuals, but that within such personalities the essence of the mid-life crisis is most fully revealed. He identifies the two factors of the mid-life crisis as the mode of work, and the content of work.

Jaques proposes that the mode of work between early and mature adulthood is, in general, a change from one of precipitate creativity, a '*hot from the fire*' intense outpouring, to a '*sculpted*' creativity, one which is worked and reworked to refinement. He allows that there may be isolated instances where creative work in early adulthood is refined and honed, or times in mature adulthood when bursts of inspiration give rise to rapid creative production, but his argument rests on the premise that these times are rare. This idea is interesting, as he suggests that there are some forms of creative art more amenable to rapid creation, such as poetry or musical composition, whereas stone sculpting and oil painting lend themselves to working and reworking.

He also proposes that the content and quality of creative work shifts during this transition, from being lyrical and descriptive, to content and quality which have tragic and philosophical overtones, and which eventually evolve into the serene creativity of mature adulthood. His study supports the earlier work of Milner (1958) and Ehrenzweig (1967), but is particularly enlightening as he appears to have captured more than the clinical features of the depression by enabling some poetic insight into the sense of despair which accompanies such intense episodes. Jaques quotes from Dante in order to describe the emotional content of the mid-life crisis, and as I cannot better this quotation and can testify to its aptness, I will reproduce it here:

'In the middle of the journey of our life, I came to myself within a dark wood where the straight way was lost. Ah, how hard it is to tell of that wood, savage and harsh and dense, the thought of which renews my fear. So bitter is it that death is hardly more.' (Dante, 'The Divine Comedy')

Both Kate and Andrew gave descriptions of the same psychological state, and both described it in the same word 'the void'. I too used that word in my discussions with them, as it is a grey place of no direction, no meaning, no purpose and no hope, and contains only that which is most often not faced in everyday existence, the self.

Although Jaques terms this event to be '*the mid-life crisis*', I found that it seems to be more linked to a stage of transition, rather than to chronological age, and seems to be exacerbated by other extreme external pressures which inhibit the free flow of creativity, such as Kate's extraordinarily stressful job, or Andrew's increasingly desperate financial state. Such pressures may result in what Csikszentmihalyi (1990, p. 36) terms '*psychic entropy*', which may give the question of pointlessness much more immediacy.

The possibility of suicide during this stage is very real, but contrary to popular belief, appears to be considered from a lucid and logical viewpoint, as opposed to an emotional and irrational stance. Jaques remarks that in order to weather the mid-life crisis, both the death instinct and death itself must be recognised and faced, and that:

'The misery and despair of suffering and chaos unconsciously brought about by oneself are encountered and must be surmounted for life to be endured and for creativity to continue.' (Jaques, 1995, p.505)

I would also add that it appears that unless a creative act takes place, the crisis cannot be seen to be over, and although this seemingly places creativity within the context of therapy, I am not arguing for a theory of therapy which sees creativity as a tool in the therapist's box, but for a theory of creativity which encompasses the cyclical nature of the creative process, views it as normal, and accepts that all creativity arises from a state of chaos and disorder.

Kate relates her experience of coming out of the void after considering suicide, together with her feelings of fragmentation:

'For me it was like trying to get back in touch with myself, because when I went off sick from work it was as if I had loaned out bits of myself to people, and there was nothing left. It's like when you loan somebody a book and you don't realise it's gone until you go and look for it yourself, and you think "who did I loan it to and how do I get it back?" And for me, I had loaned myself out to everybody.

Some people did eventually give bits of me back, other people I didn't have access to to get my bits back. But that's how I view it, and I really had to go back to basics because I was completely grounded in the sense I couldn't go out of my house, and there was nothing left but me looking at me.

I felt that I could do nothing, absolutely nothing. I actually started to do some drawing, just on a very simple small scale. It petrified me because at that moment I wasn't doing anything, I wasn't answering the telephone, nothing. Then with the support of my partner I decided I'd go and do adult education classes in ceramics. It was my first step out into mixing with people, and within that I was able to get a better sense of myself. I was coming to.' Kate

'So you were finding the bits of your self again?' CB

'Yes and then I progressed from that to doing a part-time access course in fine art. And again it was about building up my confidence, not actually in so much of what I was producing, my end product, that wasn't what I needed my confidence built in. It was just the confidence that this was something I wanted to continue with, as being as valid and justified as my previous job had been.' Kate, fine artist.

Both Kate and Andrew had to make an existential choice within their despair, to be or not to be; to make their lives meaningful enough to be worth continuing, or to put an end to the issue forever. Andrew describes his existence at the deepest part of the cycle:

'I mean it was an incredibly productive year. I thought well if I can't achieve anything else at least I'll produce some fantastic pictures out of this madness. So I was building up all these pictures, can you imagine all that thick dark paint, all these pictures in this one room? (laughing) And I had this garage where I stored my work. I had a Honda 50 for transport, couldn't carry pictures on it. I got into this state where I wasn't sleeping as well, that goes with the tremendously intense kind of state of mind, not sleeping, getting hallucinatory sort of dreams, sometimes half awake half asleep. I can remember being half awake, half asleep and thinking 'Oh gosh my heart's stopped', and that terrible sort of fear of one's physical decay.

It was solitude that created my state of mind, turning it from what it was, which was a kind of slightly intense interesting life, turned it over an edge, it just went over an edge. I can remember in the winter walking by these electric trains and see these great flashes of light when they go across the points. And I didn't know whether they were my flashes inside, or the trains, they were that bright. And that kind of confusion between the inner worlds and the outer worlds was building up you know. When I was working at the University I would be walking down a corridor, and it was like there was an invisible pane of glass between me and the other people. I felt that tremendous sort of distance.

I went to see a doctor but I didn't notice any difference with these pills. I didn't really want to do that, I was sort of proud of being mad rather than ashamed of it, and it seemed like something one had to somehow get through oneself. It seemed important to me to get through it myself, and as I say I was doing some good work. I didn't really want some drug to get in the way and bugger it all up.

It did get very terrifying, I did actually think about jumping in front of a train at one point, it was that bad, it was frightening. I thought well if that's what you intend well you'd better go and get on with it. I actually went as far as the railway line. There was this great big wire fence there and I thought oh sod it, I'm too bored with it already! (laughing). Andrew, painter.

Wilson (1972) has described how the effort required to kill oneself may actually reduce the urge to do so. Boredom he says, cripples the will, whereas meaning stimulates it (p.26). Andrew's feeling of boredom with the effort required to kill himself, made him reject the idea on that day, and the very effort of rejection gave him a sense of purpose, because if he could not be bothered to die, then he had to get on and live. Meaning, says Wilson, is a by-product of effort or concentration, and he maintains that Maslow, in assuming that peak experiences of meaning could not be forced, had overlooked the fact that '*crises or difficulties can often produce a sense of meaning when more pleasant stimuli have failed*' (pp.26/27).

Such a life choice is not faced by everyone, but as has already been recognised, not everyone reaches the levels reached by Kate and Andrew. Many people avoid having to think about the meaning of life by furious and frantic attempts at escaping from the humdrum via such diversions as work, hobbies, or drinking too much.

Cohen and Taylor (1992) describe the recognition of the stultifying monotony of living by habit which constitutes the majority of peoples' experience of the mid-life transition.

'..we begin to see that the routine nature of the world emanates from ourselves. Our personality - that last apparent repository of individuality and spontaneity in a predictable world - is itself the source of the problem, It is we who bring routine to the world; our characters have set like plaster and we can behave in no other way. When this view overcomes us, even the real diversity of our activities, the multi-sidedness of our characters, the range of roles we are involved in, offer little consolation.

This diversity itself is patterned and predictable: *What are we* but the sum total of separate constituents called father, wife, lover, chartered accountant, bridge club secretary? That which at times we thought to be really ourselves - individual, spontaneous, free - was simply bourgeois mother playing out her lines or loving husband enacting the rituals of married life. No wonder we can scarcely move from our chairs on days when this view of life presents itself to consciousness' (Cohen and Taylor, 1992, p. 52, emphasis added)

Facing the question of 'what are we?' involves an re-examination of self, of the meaning in life, and an acknowledgement that we will ultimately die. Little wonder that many people have no wish to become engaged in such debate.

Life can be seen as absurd and meaningless, and as phenomenology accepts that there is no one truth, but only many descriptions of many experiences, then the thought of life as meaningless is one which Camus maintains, must be acceptable (1975, p. 44). Camus said that there is only one serious philosophical question, that of suicide; and to judge whether or not life is worth living, amounts to answering that fundamental question.

The boredom of Cohen and Taylor (1992) is a close relation to the 'absurdity' of Camus, but boredom is a precursor of the underlying philosophical problem, whereas absurdity is the outcome. To a great extent the artist lives the 'absurd' life by the necessity of creating works just for art's sake.

**'To work and create 'for nothing', to sculpture in clay, to know that one's creation has no future, to see one's work destroyed in a day while being aware that, fundamentally this has no more importance than building for centuries - this is the difficult wisdom that absurd thought sanctions. Performing these two tasks simultaneously, negating on the one hand and magnifying on the other, is the way open to the absurd creator. He must give the void its colours.'** (Camus, 1975, p. 103)

But to remove the greyness from the void, and say 'yes' to life requires an understanding that although life may be meaningless, and death is ultimately inevitable, between 'the rock and the hard place' stands freedom. To achieve such understanding requires Torrance's (1979b) commitment and motivation. It also demands encounter and courage, the very same constituents which May (1975) assures us are required for authentic creativity.

And not least, it requires an irrepressible sense of humour, because to craft a future in the light of such profound experience demands to a great extent a fondness for the ridiculous.

Although it is commonly assumed that the depressed individual is hardly capable of creative work or of rational thinking, my study indicates that the thinking which took place at this period was both rational and logical, and although the emotional content of the experience could not be ignored, the mind was working overtime to reach a solution.

Andrew's creative output actually increased at this period and the work which he did then is acknowledged as some of his finest. This contradicts the received wisdom that all depressive episodes mean an end to creative work. Kate was unable to continue with her job in a caring profession, where every attempt to be creative could be undone overnight, but was still able to attend a fine arts course and produce highly creative work.

Had I not had personal experience of such a transition, then at this point in the thesis I might have been somewhat more sceptical of the level of the artists' sanity during this period of their lives. However having had the experience myself, and whilst cognisant of the subjectivity of such evidence, I can confirm the intensity of mental activity which can occur, as Chapters Three and Four were written during this time, and I gave a paper at the European Conference on Mental Health Promotion to an audience of psychiatrists and psychologists, a somewhat ironic act which helped to restore my sense of humour (Bennetts, 1996e).



I also recognise the struggle between acknowledging the meaninglessness of life as an ultimate truth and choosing suicide, or endowing it with personal meaning and purpose, which Money (1992) has maintained is a prerequisite for mental health. Such depth of reflection requires withdrawal from company to allow the necessary time to sort through the issues, and also requires withdrawal from the external act of creating and a retreat into the internal act of creative thinking. Creative people experiencing such withdrawal may be concerned that they may never create again, and this fear itself can become destructive to the creative cycle.

Andrew recognises the importance of this transition and how it acted as a marker point on his journey, transforming him and allowing him access to a more direct communication with his art:

'I mean it's like you've crossed a sort of bridge, and it's a terrifying bridge, and you could turn back and fall down it again quite easily, and it's frightening. One wants to do everything in one's power not to. So everything one does in a way is to do with not falling back into that, it's a fundamental understanding of life and moving forward. In that period I discovered a way of working which just cut through all the hang-ups. I had ideas about composition, and I got on to a kind of emotional and experiential level which was very naked and very direct at times, and I could put it down [on canvas].' Andrew, painter.

Wilson (1972) has proposed that humans evolve through a sense of external meaning, and that when the sense of meaning is strong, the sense of drive, will and general health is maintained at a high level. He proposes that the most important way of preventing the degeneration of meaning is probably religion, but says that as authoritarian religion works best for intellectually uncomplicated people it is least likely to be of help to the sophisticated and neurotic people who need it most. However he maintains that where religion fails, in certain aspects art succeeds:

'A great symphony or poem is an *active reminder* of the reality of meaning: it provides a stimulus like an electric shock, re-animating the will and the appetite for life.' (Wilson, 1972, p. 40)

The participants in this study who had experienced cyclical mood swings but in perhaps less depth than Kate and Andrew, were able to discuss the importance of understanding the psychology of creativity, and felt that with more knowledge of why such episodes occurred, there may be less fear for their future creative output when they did occur. Indeed Ehrenzweig (1993) maintains that it is only the creative personality which can tolerate this experience:

'The uncreative sterile mind shies at death and the fact of human mortality. For this reason uncreative man cannot tolerate the genuine emotional experience of self-destruction which accompanies the creative ego rhythm on its swing downwards, and desperately clings to his surface functions.' (Ehrenzweig, 1993, p.189)

The period of constant referral back to participants regarding mood swings and the creative process, confirmed my interpretation of individuals' experiences and rendered those individuals more secure in the light that they were not alone. This finding leads to the question of the importance of including the nature of the creative cycle and its relationship to mental health not only in the educational process of the artist, but also in the educational process of everyone, as a key element of creative development and the promotion of mental well-being. Milligan and Clare (1994, p. 192) state firmly that those who become more informed about depression will be more able to cope with such incidents in self and in others.

Jaques (1965) describes the process of transition as a '*working through*' and to some extent that does describe the sheer mental effort needed to work logically and rationally with such deep and emotive issues, but it is also Terri's '*ashes*' period, a time for resting, reflecting, and re-creating. I have noted earlier in this chapter that the language used to describe the mood swings is a handicap in itself.

Therefore whilst I have continued to use such terminology as 'depression' and 'breakdown' within this thesis, I am much more drawn to the terms 'fire and ashes', as these are closer to the meaning and experience of the event itself as it is a transformational experience, and evokes the image of the eternal phoenix.

It is hard to imagine anyone having such an experience and remaining unchanged. Indeed those who did reach the level described here appear somewhat altered not only in perception, but also in attitude. The following excerpt from one of my conversations with Andrew is reproduced here to shed light on the positive aspect of the event.

'The intensity of the work and the intensity of the colours increased. The perception of truth was very sharp, and I really did feel I'd penetrated reality or whatever, and touched on it much more. What you have to do is to bring the good with you, and hopefully you will see everything in a more profound and wonderful way now than you did before. That's certainly what's happened to me. I actually feel I have a sort of perception which takes one past ego, and it takes one past all sorts of hang-ups, and to me life's been a wonderful thing ever since.' Andrew

'I felt that although life was ultimately meaningless I could put my own meaning to it, and give it my own point, but I wasn't having to live up to anyone else's meanings and values.' CB

'Exactly! and that's a big freedom isn't it? Yes, oh absolutely! I've always focussed on the work and I had ideas about how life should be, a whole set of ideas like that. Probably from the time of going to art college one felt it was a kind of move into a certain area of freedom, because one wasn't expected to copy how one's neighbour behaved.'

But nevertheless one still built up a certain sort of idea about what one should do and how life should be, and so on. I think that it's to do with ambition, dogged by a certain ambition. The freedom that you are talking about, yeah I certainly came out of it with very much more personal freedom, I can say that, and it's an inevitable result of it because you know you have to take that freedom because you hadn't taken it before. You'd allowed yourself blindly to walk into a prison.' Andrew

'Yes it felt like where I was before was more of a prison than where I am now, so really going through the doors of madness, was really going through the doors to freedom.' CB

'Yes it was walking out of prison, but it was a hard route, a hard corridor out, yes.' Andrew, painter.

Such a personal and solitary experience is not something which anyone would be able to prevent, as it is a private, lonely, and maybe a very necessary journey, with no place in the void, even for a mentor. It is a time of stillness, a time of waiting, and a time of just being. Eliot, who had experience of the phenomena perhaps says it best.

'I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope  
for hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love  
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith  
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.  
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:  
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.' (Eliot, 1963b, p. 180)

By recognising that the stillness will also be '*the dancing*', Eliot recognises that the experience also affords opportunity for growth and change. So when the decision to 'be' has been made, what is needed by the self is more than the company of friends, it is the support, care and understanding of a mentor who understands the drive to continue to create, who can appreciate the creative strengths of the artist, and who perhaps can in Andrew's words (Chapter Five), save a life. Kristeva (1987) remarks:

'A word of love is often a more effective, profound, and durable treatment than electroshock therapy or psychotropic drugs; sometimes it is the only treatment for a condition that is no doubt a consequence not only of our biological nature but also, and *at the same time* of an inopportune or ill-intentioned word.' (Kristeva, 1987, pp. 48 - 49)

Terri has no doubt of the value of the mentor to her well-being:

'The need to keep moving forward as an artist is completely supported by them, the need for your confidence being boosted is completely supported by them, the need for intelligent and sensitive criticism is completely supported by them. So in those areas absolutely, your well-being is dependent on that kind of help.' Terri, performer, designer, painter.

Heard and Lake (1986), in their discussion of adult attachment relationships, conclude that the skills for co-operative acts and nurturing self and others cannot be achieved until adults have relationships with those who:

'...recognise their potential for creativity, and who can provide information, protection and comfort that enables them to restore the experience of competence, whenever their skills are no longer effective.' (Heard & Lake 1986, p. 436)

Ainsworth (1989) has suggested that, amongst others such as priests, pastors, and therapists, the mentor figure might be seen as an attachment figure and indeed my 1994 study indicated that this was how the mentor role could be interpreted. She notes that in attachment relationships there is a criterion which is not always present in other affectional bonds, that of:

'...the experience of security and comfort obtained from the relationship with the partner, and yet the ability to move off from the secure base provided by the partner with the confidence to engage in other activities.' (Ainsworth, 1989, p.711)

That the mentors within this study have encouraged creativity within a supportive relationship has been made apparent by artists, and that the artists have enjoyed great personal freedom to engage with the world and its inhabitants has also been made clear.

Therefore whilst the relationship is one of attachment, and fulfils West, Sheldon and Reiffer's (1987, p. 738) expectation '*that the relationship to the attachment figure will be relatively long-lived or permanent*', it should be understood within the intimacy and autonomy continuum of secure attachment theory, and not the fear of intimacy and fear of autonomy continuum which is present in insecure neurotic attachment to others.

Drawing on Bowlby's (1960) theory of attachment, Holmes (1996, p.19), proposes that secure attachment provides the foundation for intimacy and autonomy, in that we are more able to take chances and make choices for ourselves if we can be sure that attachment and intimacy will be available if needed. Intimacy is possible if we can allow ourselves to be apart from the one we love without feeling that they are gone forever, and if we are autonomous enough to allow ourselves to become close to someone without fear of engulfment.

Insecure men, Holmes (p. 20) maintains, who are neurotically attached may long for intimacy but be fearful to become involved, and he says that insecure women may long for autonomy, but be fearful to be assertive in case they lose the security of the attachment figure.

He asserts that it is the job of the self to integrate intimacy and autonomy, and indeed it appears to be this very security and balance between intimacy and autonomy within the mentor relationship, which assists in the well-being of the artist. The delicate act of holding someone with an open palm does not denote an act of carelessness, but rather an act of consideration. However it is also a human balancing act, and like all human acts, is not immune to casualties. Suicides, or even 'the willing of death', may occur from time to time, but we should perhaps recognise some of these deaths more as the results of lucid choices made when there is no more for artists to create, rather than acts of insanity. Frankl (1967) notes that Goethe worked for seven years on the manuscript of the second part of Faust, and two months later he died.

The area of creativity and mood swings is one which continues to provoke strong debate and is an area of considerable interest for research. But although the questions of whether mood swings are an integral part of the creative process, or whether creative artists who experience such swings are really mentally ill are fascinating, further discussion is beyond the research scope of this thesis which aims to examine the role played by the mentor at these times.

### **Peak Functioning and Self-Actualisation**

Shostrom's Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) which is detailed in Chapter Three, is not the only measure of self-actualisation available. Buckmaster and Davis (1985) developed two measures of adult self-development which they compared with the POI.

Reflections on Self and Environment (ROSE), and the What About You? (WAY), were designed to test creative ability in the arts. The ROSE items were based directly on Shostrom's POI and the characteristics of self-actualisation, whilst the WAY items were identified from recurrent traits of creative people.

Buckmaster and Davis (1985, p. 36) found that whilst the two instruments differed, the tests *'largely identified the same people.'* They concluded that although ROSE and WAY were designed independently of each other, there seemed to be a strong relationship between creativity and self-actualisation. However their comparison of the POI and the WAY/ROSE data was inconclusive, as only 47 students undertook the POI compared with 116 who undertook the WAY/ROSE.

Maslow (1971), is realistic in relation to self-actualisation, acknowledging that it is not a *'matter of one great moment'* (p.49), but that it is a matter of degree, worked toward by way of attitude and behaviour, in a voyage of discovery of the self. Therefore it is an incremental process of education, and recognises no end point.

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, Maslow (1968, p. 97) defined self-actualisation as a state of being in which we are more truly ourselves, more perfectly actualise our potential, are closer to the core of our Being, and are more fully human. Self-actualising persons are those who '*seem to be fulfilling themselves and doing the best that they are capable of doing*' (Maslow 1973, p. 178), and enjoy peak experiences more frequently than the average person.

For this study, it is important to examine in some detail the phenomena of peak functioning referred to by many participants, in order to attempt an understanding of the apparently metaphysical aspects of the mentor relationship.

Privette (1983a), defines peak performance as the high level functioning of humans in any activity, whereas Leach (1963) refers to peak experience as an intensity of perception, emotion and profundity, which causes the moment to stand out in permanent contrast to the experiences which surround it in time and space. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) introduces the concept of *flow* as a description of optimal experience. His studies in this area have some relevance to this thesis, as his original doctoral study was an examination of how young artists set about creating a painting (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 242). Privette (1983a) compares the three phenomena and notes that:

'Peak experience and peak performance are models of optimal human experiencing, and therefore are important in personality study. Flow, although not always at a high level, shares many qualities with both constructs. Important attributes shared by all three include absorption, valuing, joy, spontaneity, a sense of power, and personal identity and involvement....Peak experience for example is mystic and transpersonal; peak performance is transactive, clearly focusing on self as well as the valued object; and flow is fun.' (Privette, 1983a, p. 1361)

Privette and Landsman's (1983b) study of adult arts and psychology students is fascinating as it indicates that during peak performance there is a greater focus on self, than on any other person. They note that this unusual finding may in part be due to their questionnaire which asked respondents not to consider the evaluation of others when filling in the form. The intention of this request had been to allow free thinking about the event without external influence. Nonetheless such a result is intriguing for this study which addresses the influence of the mentor on the self-actualisation of the artist.

The features of the peak performance described by some participants in the Chapter Five consist of: no sense of the passing of linear time; no requirement for food and drink; a feeling of spirituality; transcendence and joy; a sense of unity and balance; a sense of power and euphoria; a fast stream of intuitive and focussed creativity; and a product which has a life of its own.

The experience cannot be willed or cajoled into happening, but when it does happen it creates in the artist a sense of wholeness, rightness and certainty. One painter recognises that he has 'tasted the feeling' but has not yet been able to turn it into a peak performance as far as his art goes:

'It's very fleeting. In my case I know that there is something there but I haven't been able to carry it down to the studio to a working surface. I've tasted it now and again, and part of the fun of continuing to work is to hope that you'll come into it. I suppose that in the past people have said 'so and so has finally found themselves' and there, I haven't. (laughs) Ian, painter.

Michael obviously identifies with this sense of elusiveness of the experience:

'I think its a bit like surfing. So I'm working away and it could be days or minutes in some cases, and the painting builds up and builds up, and it always feels like it gets to a point where ideas or an image coalesce in your mind, and a painting that you've been working on for weeks could be executed in the last half an hour. I think 'Well why didn't I just start off with a blank canvas and just do the half an hour job at the end!!'

I feel like the wave's building and then it mounts up, and it's that point where the ideas, the self-consciousness goes, and you feel like you're channelling, and you're not really thinking and evaluating and reflecting about what you're doing.

And if it's really good, all the paints and colours you've worked out, you've arrived at them, then you're off, and the colours will hang together nicely, the image feels right, there's this sense of chasing the tail of a fish through dark water. You can just see it, it's going off....There's a certain amount of surrender isn't there?' Michael, painter.

Bella discussed such episodes with me without me raising the topic directly. It is interesting to note that she links this peak experience with self-actualisation, somewhat akin to Ian's fleeting glimpse of how his self actualisation could be connected to this experience.

'At what point do you feel most yourself?' CB

'Once I start to make something, or if I'm painting in the actual act of doing, there is a point where I'll just switch off and I can be there for hours. And when I'm really engrossed I forget to eat.' Bella

'What happens to time at that point?' CB

'For me it's like there is no linear time, y'know, it could be days, weeks. It'll only be when I'm tired or if I need to go to the toilet, or if I feel I'm really hungry and I haven't eaten in six hours or whatever. I'm not really aware of time.' Bella.

Kate, and Claire describe their experiences as follows:

'It's been during life drawing, when it's been a complete day of life drawing, and there's been plenty of time to warm up. I mean I can't do a two-hour block of it, it doesn't work, it's usually day blocks when I feel I'm really in it. I actually feel cut off from the rest of the group, but in a way that's me, because I do feel cut off when I'm engrossed, and I have to stay cut off or otherwise my energies get distracted into something else. And I'm on this train now and it feels as if it's getting faster and faster, and I just have to hang in there.' Kate, ceramicist.

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'When you really lose yourself, that is just heaven. You're going beyond self and for me I think I'm probably working quite quickly. Your eyes and your mind are working together absolutely, and you're totally lost. If I can make a cup of coffee and take it into the studio, and it's full and it's cold, I've been lost.' Claire textile designer, painter.

The loss of self and the acute sense of self appear to be in direct contrast to one another, and Privette (1983b) has queried whether the two are really oppositional, or only semantically so. Certainly the sense of the self within the peak performance is one which is interesting, as it seems that there is a fusion, an awareness of self only as part of the action undertaken, part of the flow.

Although the self is aware, it is aware of being a part of a larger phenomenon, and although it seems as if anything could be achieved whilst in this state, it remains questionable as to what part, other than that of a medium, the self is actually playing.

Whereas in peak experience there is a greater awareness and understanding of the external world in relation to an increased awareness of self. There is a sense of meaning, and a sense of place in the world.

Privette has noted the intense absorption within the peak states and in flow, and Quarrick (1989) likens the absorbed state to hypnotic trance states. He states:

"Absorption is a particular kind of attention that is qualitatively different from the orientation maintained in everyday life. It is a non-ordinary function that makes possible those states like hypnosis and mystical experience.' (Quarrick, 1989, p. 18)

To a certain extent the state of consciousness wherein the subject is awake, aware, relaxed, and in control is indeed reminiscent of the hypnotic state. In hypnosis, contrary to popular belief, the individual is awake, aware and relaxed, and even when practising self-hypnosis, the '*alert state*' (Abudarham, 1991, p. 18) can be employed and the individual will return to 'normal' consciousness in an emergency.



However the hypnotic state is not transcendent, it does not produce external creative work, and although it can be exceedingly pleasant, it does not produce joy and is in no respect mystical. Having said that, Quarrick does highlight an important issue for this study, when he cites Hilgard (1970) as saying that those who are most easily absorbed are also those who are most easily hypnotised:

'What we found out was that the hypnotisable person was capable of a deep involvement in one or more imaginative-feeling areas of experience - reading a novel, listening to music, having an aesthetic experience of nature, or engaging in absorbing adventures of body or mind. This involvement is one of the things the existentialist is talking about when he speaks of the breaking down of the distinction between the subject and the object of his experience; it is what those seeking expansion of consciousness mean by their all-embracing experiences; it is something like Maslow's peak experiences...' (Hilgard, 1970)

Although Quarrick has identified absorption as an ingredient of hypnosis, it is clear that the hypnotic state is not a peak experience, nor is it creatively productive, but what Hilgard's research indicates is that absorption is not simply a product of the peak experience, but that the facility to be absorbed is a pre-requisite of such experience.

Her identification of the importance of aesthetic ability in order to be absorbed is also important for this study, and suggests that creative individuals are perhaps more predisposed to the peak experience. Having said that it is clear that absorption is only part of the peak experience, and is not the experience itself. In Chapter Five Sol has described the 'high' involved as '*a joining of the physical and the soul*', Katherine says '*it's a gift, grace*', and Laura says of the work produced at such times '*its got a life of its own. I'm not restricting it by my own inadequacies. I'm saying, there you are, your own spirit*'.

Jaynes (1990) has proposed that human consciousness evolved relatively recently when the left half of the brain became aware of the right half. Until then Jaynes maintains, humans considered the products of the right side of their brains to be voices of the gods.

He views the hypnotic state as a vestige of the bicameral mind, noting that it is a right brain state, the right brain being responsible for creativity, spatial awareness, intuition, and synthethis (Springer, Deutsch 1993). He says:

'What is it that hypnosis supplies that does this extraordinary enabling, that allows us to do things we cannot ordinarily do except with great difficulty? Or is it 'we' that do them? Indeed, in hypnosis it is as if someone else were doing things through us. And why is this so? Why is this easier? Is it that we have to lose our conscious selves to gain such control, which cannot then be *by us*?

On another level, why is it that in our daily lives we cannot get up above ourselves to authorise ourselves into being what we really wish to be?' (Jaynes, 1990, p. 402)

The answer, he says, is because of the limitations placed on us by our learned consciousness in the present millennium, and he suggests that what we need to do is regain some vestige of the bicameral mind. If absorption is a prerequisite of peak experience and peak performance; if it is more likely to be found in creative people; if attainment of these states goes beyond hypnosis in as much as they produce joy and achievement; then can peak experience and performance be seen as extremely advanced states of hypnosis? Both states share the same sense of timelessness, and both are right sided brain experiences, but peak experiences and performances are also transcendent, or appear so.

However if as Jayne's suggests, the voices of the gods are heard more clearly by the split mind, then the sense of otherness and transcendence may be simply more a function of how the conscious apprehension of the peak experience is perceived. In the 'trance' of the hypnotic state, any phenomenon is experienced as just 'how it is', as in the dream state, without question or need for rationalisation and therefore with no recollection on 'waking' of any transcendent component. Jaynes notes that those who become actively involved in religious faiths are actually able to change themselves through prayerful practices similar to post-hypnotic suggestion, and recognises:

'But for the rest of us, who must scuttle along on conscious models and sceptical ethics, we have to accept our lessened control. We are learned in self-doubt, scholars of our very failures, geniuses at excuse and tomorrowing our resolves. And so we become practiced in powerless resolution until hope gets undone and dies in the unattempted. ...And then to rise above this noise of knowings and really change ourselves, we need an authorisation that 'we' do not have. (Jaynes, 1990, p. 403)

It is not the purpose of this thesis to argue whether or not it would be more beneficial for humans to acknowledge their own capabilities and seek a way of accessing the benefits of peak experience and performance via practices akin to those in formal religions, or whether they should simply turn to religious beliefs and benefit from 'God-given' experiences. What is of interest however, is that the religious mystic and the 'able and awake hypnotic' are perhaps not distanced too far from each other.

### **Well-Being and Intimacy**

Money (1996) has described mental health to mean:

'The identification and enhancement of positive states of human consciousness, wellness and wholeness, happiness and vitality, ecstasy and joy. Such states entail enchantment, happiness, delight, peace, serenity, insight, illumination, self-knowledge, and rapture.' (Money, 1996, p. 272)

However although it is possible to identify peak experiences and peak performances, and also possible to recognise the resultant emotional content of such events, it does not appear possible to produce them at will, and their enhancement is redundant as these are ultimate experiences in themselves. Nevertheless it needs to be stated that such events are experienced to a greater or lesser extent by the artists, and that these events are indicative of mental well-being. Although mentors seem to function only as a support system to artists in peak performances when creator and created function in unity, artists do at times share the peak experience with mentors, and on these occasions function in a unity which transcends self whilst still retaining a sense of self.

Barbara's account (Chapter Five) of how she and her mentor flow together is typical of such experience, and far from such 'flowing' negating the sense of self, it appears both to remove the boundaries between the two individuals, and accentuate the uniqueness of personhood. This directness of communication and perception within the alliance has been referred to in the previous chapter and to a great extent explains the 'magic and specialness' which my previous study had only highlighted (Bennetts, 1994). As Bailey when citing Maslow's peak experiences, notes:

'To have a clear perception that the universe is all one and that the individual has a place in it - that one belongs - can be such a profound experience that it changes one's life forever. During such an experience there is a tendency to lay aside the kind of self-centred thoughts that preoccupy human beings, - it is fundamentally an unselfish experience, with profound implications for the self.' (Bailey, 1996, p.18).

Such experiences are of a spiritual nature, but have less to do with formal religion and more to do with the essential spirituality of the human condition. They are embedded in our humanity, but are experienced as transcending that humanity and forging links with the universe. Maslow (1959) maintains the stance that self-actualisation and peak experiences go hand in hand, are indicators of psychological health, and are essentially human characteristics:

'Self-actualising creativeness is hard to define because sometimes it seems to be synonymous with health itself. And since self-actualisation or health must ultimately be defined as the coming to pass of the fullest humanness, or as the 'Being' of the person, it is as if self-actualising creativity were almost synonymous with,...or a defining characteristic of, essential humanness.' (Maslow, 1959. p. 94)

Maslow argues that such thinking encourages the possibility that there is creativity in every person, even if only as suppressed potential, and suggests that this leads us to wonder why potential was lost, how much may be left, and how much may be recovered? I would agree that the creative potential is present in everyone, but that due to circumstance, some people, such as Kate or Julia, suppress this potential.

However I would add that for those whose creativity has been suppressed, traditional mentor relationships can be a key factor in repossessing what has been lost, and that within such relationships lie the means to achieving creative self-actualisation and full human functioning.

Bailey (1996) proposes that a model for mental health can be found in the three Hebrew characters that form the word Shalom. These are Aish or Shin (fire), Mayim or Mem (water), and Lamed (teaching). Translating these characters into the emotional, intellectual and inspirational (spiritual) aspects of mental health, she states that the least explored and least accessible of these three key elements is the spiritual or inspirational. She also notes the problem of language when discussing this issue and recognises, like Andrew and myself in Chapter Five, that although spirituality is often equated with religion, she is not speaking of religion.

Bailey describes the practice of stillness, or reflection which accompanies spiritual awareness, which has overtones of Andrew describing his mentor's 'absoluteness' and 'purity of passion', and which Claire describes as Japanese thinking:

'I have a feeling she was into the Japanese way of thinking.' Claire

'Like Zen, into the process?' CB

'Yes, and into the stillness too.' Claire, textile designer, painter.

When Helen and I discussed the concept of art versus craft, the issue of the 'still moment' arose:

'I would have thought that craft became art when you put soul into it and it became metaphysical.' CB

'That is recognised in Japan in Eastern culture, but not in Western art. Ceramics is a very high form of art and it allows and recognises that aspect to be put into it. But you have to have that cultural language to understand it, and western culture doesn't have that language. It's quite a difficult thing to develop that refinement of vision and awareness. I think you have to be in tune with that appreciation of the quiet still moment.' Helen, potter.

It seems that artists are in tune with the mentor in such 'still moments', and which accounts for the sense of the spiritual within the relationships. Bailey's concept of Shalom as a model for mental health is fascinating as the noun is neither masculine nor feminine, and denotes a certain transcendence which is reminiscent of the mentor relationship described by Di:

'During that course of time I reached an incredible depth of silence in myself, which I know he deeply respects, and then I felt a new relationship came out of that when I was able to sink into that almost complete stillness. And I knew we could communicate there on the silent level. I knew that we met in this place, no boundaries, nothing, we were equal in this stillness, we were equal.' Di, creative movement teacher.

This stillness does not imply an emptiness, but rather the type of silence referred to by Fiumara (1990):

'In my opinion the creation of an empty space, or distance, within the dialogic relation might be the only way of letting the deeper meanings and implications of that relationship emerge.' (Fiumara, 1990, p. 102)

The deeper meanings and implications of which Fiumara writes come from a perception of the spiritual, the unspoken, and may lead to individuals both apprehending, and following, their own truths. Di has been learning from her mentor for seven years now, and has reached a point in the relationship where she is learning to trust herself as much as her teacher.

'I've even asked him questions this year and he hasn't answered them because he knows that ultimately I can answer those for myself, I have to follow my own truth.' Di, creative movement teacher

Andrew notes that his first mentor enabled him to find and express his own truths by means of the non-verbal:

'Everything in the world has an emotional possibility. He just opened up what those possibilities were enormously. If one is open to visual things, then the most powerful ones are the ones which open up quite difficult areas of human emotion. I have always said that for me that's what painting's about, expressing emotions. That is the absolute fundamental purpose of it. A critic some years ago said what comes across in my work is the emotional thing, and the way it was written was almost saying that's not what I'm trying to do, but it's exactly what I'm trying to do.

You could say 'What about the intellect?', but for me the emotional truth is the fundamental one'. ...I think the whole issue of truth [in art] is personally important. A friend asked what were the most crucial things in my painting, and I started listing a whole load of things. He said 'That's very interesting that you think the spiritual matters, because I've always seen your work as to do with truth!' Andrew, painter

And Duncan relates how the role of the mentor in the theatrical world is to enable others to find the personal truths of the parts they have to play, via the space which Fiumara (1990) has described.

'I learnt a lot about creating space from him. Space is created by creating tension through space, and some very elemental rules which people in a lifetime don't pick up; how to handle actors on a stage, how to create space, how to create space within a text; and in physical space, how to express relationships through space. Because in order to find the truth, to guide any actor to find the truth behind the written word, you have to discover why the written word is being said, and all you get from the playwright is the written word.

Most theatre is appalling bad because people haven't found the underlying truths, the sub-text. You become a psychologist. Every single person has a different route to get to the truth, and so you have to identify the different route for each person who comes to you with their own baggage and preconceptions. Duncan

'So whose truths are they trying to get to, yours or theirs?' CB

'Their own individual truths for those parts. You may have a view of what those truths may be, but if you impose those truths on them they won't find 'it' for themselves. It has to be a co-operative venture, and actors are in the main uncerebral. The joy of working with actors is that in the main they are intuitive.' Duncan, theatre director, impresario.

That intuition and perception underpin the ability to read the emotional sub-text of the mentor relationship should be understood by now as central to the mentor alliance, but what should also be understood is that the silence and the space within the alliance is also a powerful mode of communication, and that such silence does not indicate a lack of communion and understanding, but total communion.

The issue of communion is dealt with again in the final chapter of this thesis as this became a key issue within the research interview itself in terms of the hermeneutic process.

Whilst this chapter has attempted, like previous chapters, to shed light on the mentor relationship by means of the written word, it is clear that unless it incorporates the music of a poetic approach, such a medium is hardly adequate for enabling understanding of the communicative silence, the stillness and the space that binds the mentor and artist together in the timelessness of the relationship:

'Except for the point, the still point,  
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.  
I can only say, *there* we have been: but I cannot say where.  
And I cannot say for how long, for that is to place it in time. (Eliot, 1963c)

The loss of the sense of linear time combined with an acute sense of the here and now moment, the still point at the hub of the wheel, is an element which is common to the peak performance, the peak experience, flow, and the communion between the mentor and the learner.

Time, according to participants, seems to stand still, and when this occurs it is then that a sense of self is apprehended which lives in the present moment. Laura has now become a mentor for a mature student and although she describes herself as a private person notes also that when in deep conversation with him she experiences real communication:

'..the real ease of being able to communicate with somebody. There was one evening when we chatted for seven hours; another time he came round and it was eight hours.' Laura, ceramicist

And Liz says:

'..he gives me the freedom to operate the way I am. He gives me a spark and a zest for living, because I know the highs are so high. If I'm with him for five minutes every second is just like a jewel, it's just perfect communication.' Liz, visual artist

However it was Ellen who provided the clearest vision of the linkage between the concepts of communication, time and spirituality, those metaphysical qualities which seem to act as Clifford's (1983) '*beneficial intangibles*', and my '*ineffables*' (Bennetts 1994).

'When there is communication, and I don't mean only the exchange of information, but when there is *communication*, there is *communion*, and it happens out of time. It's an experience which is outside time, and it's completely whole, and that is often what people call spiritual.' Ellen, theatre designer, teacher, writer

At this point it could be argued that such experience which has been felt by so many individuals, is one which suggests the apprehension of a God given state of grace. However I am more inclined to conclude that such experience is part of the human condition, but one which because it defies rational explanation, is seen as 'supernatural', or religious and therefore not commonly discussed, rendering the phenomena to seem even rarer.

It may be remembered that Shostrom's (1966) Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) measured the degree to which the individual was oriented in the present and the ability to link past and future events into a meaningful continuity; together with the degree to which an individual was motivated by self, or by others (Chapter Three). It was against these two concepts, that all the other elements of self-actualisation were compared.

Whilst it recognised that humans exist in the present, it remains somewhat questionable as to whether humans are always aware of the nature of their existence in the present moment. When so much of life is taken up with the requirement to provide for the future, then one lives in anticipation of the future moment, and when one is constantly mindful of past mistakes and errors of choice, then it is difficult to begin life afresh.

Maslow's idea of the self-actualised individual is one who has learned from the past, and who has used that knowledge to move on to a present with future goals which are related in meaningful context to the present situation. It is not a linear process, but a cyclical process which accepts the requirement for meaning to be revealed from reflecting, and a future to be conjured from here and now aspirations.

Liz could easily have fallen in to the trap of living in the future whilst hoping that Stephen might one day leave, or be left by, his wife. But to do that would have been to put her life and her creativity 'on hold', and Liz had been put 'on hold' first by her family and secondly by her former husband.

'I had emotional repression in my family. In those days you were not allowed to express yourself. I had a dream when I was eleven or twelve that I was run over by a car and killed. Then I became a character which became me in all my dreams. [In my family] I wasn't allowed to be me, I was expected to be a certain type, and I've fought that ever since. He's the first person who really believes in me and just wants me to be myself, loves me as I am, with him I can be who I am and it's accepted.' Liz, visual artist.

Although feeling that her 'self' had died when she was a child, she was able to learn from the past and let it go, and although her love for Stephen never wavered, she had enough self-respect and self-knowledge to realise that if Stephen was not able to actively share a life with her, then that was his choice no matter how understandable his reasons were.

Her choice was to get on with her life, and express the creativity which had been denied for so long. As a mentor Stephen had given Liz self-value, and Liz's decision to live actively in the present without him, only reinforces the strength of that gift.

Likewise Karen chose to live actively in the present when deciding to share a life with her mentor David. She had developed her creative potential whilst living on the periphery of Paul, her former mentor's life, never asking or expecting him to leave his existing relationship. David and Karen's decision to seize the moment and live in the present had immediate repercussions on Paul, who may have hoped that Karen would always be there for him. But Karen too had learned that her self and her own needs mattered, and cannot be blamed for applying the lesson.

### **Power and Intimacy**

The levels of intimacy within the relationship range from that of communion without words or symbols, to that of symbolic interaction via visual or other media, to that of physical intimacy.



As discussed in Chapter Three it seems that it is the issue of physical intimacy which causes some disquiet amongst those who write about the mentor relationship. And yet as indicated within my 1994 study, this aspect of the relationship was handled with care and concern for the other, and did not display any of the hallmarks of the abusive relationship which relate to sexual harassment, and which stem from misuse of power. Whilst the inherent power within the relationship was acknowledged, the abuse of power was never an issue for either party within that study. However I am aware that such a statement lends itself to challenge and examination, and requires more explanation. Firstly it is important to separate the element of power from the element of sexual expression, and deal with the two issues individually, as it is only by such a division that it is possible to make sense of either part as they relate to this work.

Early in the first months of this research I was called upon to think more closely about the nature of the mentor relationship as a force for the actualisation of self. During one debate with myself, and at a time when I was entering such thoughts into a learning log and sending them to my supervisor, I became embroiled, like Maslow and Rogers, in a 'red herring' argument with myself, about whether self-actualisation was always 'good', and if so good for whom, and did it matter anyway? Were humans more apt to grow toward perfection or away from it?

My supervisor replied in a similar vein, but in addressing the issue of good and evil referred to the fact that some people might regard Hitler as a possible mentor. At a supervision session some weeks later it was suggested that perhaps I should consider the relationship that Speer had with Hitler.

Subsequent reading of Sereny's (1995) book on the extraordinary relationship between these two men, led me between the twin poles of delight and despair; delight, as I thought I recognised the relationship to be that about which I had written, and despair as I pondered what this might mean for my studies.

For the best part of a month I struggled with the implications of the Hitler/Speer relationship which on the surface appeared identical to the mentor relationship, although my instincts were telling me that there was a fundamental difference which I was missing. Over the days I read the book three times, and made copious notes. Hitler recognised Speer's abilities and creative skills, gave Speer opportunities to display those skills, boosted Speer's self-confidence, and saw the dream he had of himself mirrored in Speer.

Speer had an unhappy childhood and was unable to show his love for his parents but through Hitler's belief in him, he developed faith in himself, saw Hitler as his hero, had deep feelings of love for him which to Speer's joy, were reciprocated.

**Speer also recognised the intensity and need each had for the other:**

**'...for some mysterious reason neither he nor I could give each other up. I know now, as long as he lived, I would have been drawn to him. And I suppose as long as I lived, there was something about me he needed.'** (Speer in Sereny, 1995, p. 423)

**Speer maintains that when he eventually realised that Hitler must be stopped, he devised a plan to kill him, but at the last moment was unable to do so. After Hitler's suicide, Speer denied guilt in relation to the Jews, but admitted responsibility. Had Hitler won the war, he said, then he would have shared in the triumph, and therefore although he continued to deny knowledge of what took place in the prison camps, he was prepared to take responsibility for '*the horrors*' (Sereny, 1995, p. 581). It is interesting to see how Speer took upon himself the role and responsibility of Hitler during the Nuremberg trials, much in the same way in which many individuals model themselves on the admirable qualities and values of their mentors.**

**Yet despite the similarities between Speer's relationship and the traditional mentor relationship in as much as the core conditions for learning were present, both parties enjoyed a certain chemistry, the relationship had no time limits and no external protocols, and the outcomes indicated a sense of self-actualisation and transmission of values, I still sensed that somewhere along the way I had missed something. Returning to the 1994 study I began to analyse the work thoroughly, and within a short space of time the answer became so obvious and so simple that I found it hard to see how I had overlooked it for so long.**

**The whole ethos of the traditional mentor relationship was that it had showed itself to be learner centred, learner driven and based on trust. This is the part of the essence of the relationship. The locus of control is invested with the learner. The learner is the one who chooses whether or not to acknowledge the relationship for what it could be. The learner therefore is the one who names the mentor, and not vice versa. 'What's in a name?' was Shakespeare's question, and whilst it is clear that a name is not the thing itself, it is one way we have of conveying meaning, and bestowing or withholding regard.**

**Speer's relationship with Hitler was identical in so many ways to the mentor alliance, but its difference was that it was driven by and centred on, the visions of Hitler. It was essentially leader driven, leader centred and based on power, and so despite Speer being encouraged to fulfil himself via his creative abilities, that creativity was in the service of the dream of Hitler, not in the service of the dream of Speer.**

Hitler's vision was simply the vehicle through which Speer's skills were allowed to show themselves.

So although I regard the Hitler/Speer personal relationship as a mentor relationship, I think of the professional relationship more in terms of a cult-figure alliance, as the power base was very firmly with Hitler, and was abused by Hitler within his official capacity, on many occasions throughout the relationship. Having said that, it is apparent from Sereny's work, that in their personal lives, both Hitler and Speer saw the best in each other, and that they shared an emotional bond within that private space which lent both of them more humanity and vulnerability than could be imagined. Indeed it could be said that they were rendered more human, and more fully themselves, when each was in the company of the other, and when they were communicating emotionally, rather than intellectually.

One of the outcomes of the foray into the Hitler/Speer alliance was that it highlighted the difficulty which outsiders often have with the intimacy of the traditional mentor relationship when it occurs within organisations and formal settings. How does anyone know whether a relationship consists of a disciple and a cult figure, or that of a learner and a mentor? Certainly from the outside it can be hard to differentiate the two, and as the learner may be experiencing a relationship which provides opportunity and self-esteem, the nature of the alliance may not be questioned for a long time even from the inside. Cult figures differ from mentors in that not only do they abuse their power for their own ends, they are also not content with only one 'disciple' and require enormous ego boosting from anyone who can be enticed into their self-serving web. The cult alliance has all the hallmarks of the abusive relationship, and one of these hallmarks is confusion (Bennetts, 1997a).

When learners are confused about the motives of the partner, find that their confidence is alternately boosted and diminished, experience being played off against others, and realise that their own dreams are only in the service of those of the partner; then that is the time to retreat.

Unfortunately for many people in this situation, their need for self-confidence and self-worth still leaves them open to abuse; and it takes courage to walk away from a relationship which has perhaps provided the first feeling of real love. However when the partner can no longer be trusted completely, then it is important for individuals to accept their feelings of disquiet, engage the intellect, ignore the emotional pull, and leave. The damage that such relationships do is out of all proportion to any good which might have occurred, because the diminution of trust casts a shadow over all possibilities of future healthy relationships.

Perhaps the question that the learners need to be always asking is 'Does this feel right?', because it is at the emotional level that the first intimation of a problem will arise.

If it feels wrong, then the intellect may be able to justify those feelings, and perhaps find a way out. As Andrew has indicated, the emotional truth is the fundamental truth.

The destructive and abusive side to the relationship has been shown to exist for only two participants in this study, and is characterised by being mentor-centred instead of learner centred, catering almost exclusively to the needs of the mentors, and by the mentors still actively pursuing their own goals. These two cases have in common the fact that the mentors are very similar in age to the learners, and have the same profession or interests. It appears that the mentors might feel threatened by the learners, despite feeling flattered by the learners' similar approach to their art, and despite otherwise obviously caring for those learners.

Andrew describes a time when he was short of finances and had been given a major show at a well-known gallery. The gallery director gave Andrew's mentor the task of selecting which pictures would be shown:

I particularly wanted to get some of the M pictures in because I thought they were some of the best things I'd done. I didn't feel it would be a major success to have just the very recent work and I think it would have made a much better show if we had done. But he adamantly refused and he had this thing that it must be recent work and wouldn't budge at all, and I'm convinced that the reason he wouldn't budge was because he saw my M pictures as being in some way too closely related to his own. And he didn't want that to be shown.

In a way he could argue that it was for my advantage, that the [recent] pictures were very different. But there's this little doubt as well because he's such a cunning individual and I really wanted to show those pictures, they were important to me and to this day I've not shown those pictures.

We were very similar in age and there's that whole competitive thing. It came very much into it at that show. He's very politically astute and I think he knows I'm a good painter and he just wanted to make sure that there was no question of me doing anything that appeared to be slightly close to his territory. But you could also look at it in a different way and say that it's good from my point of view that I'm seen absolutely as an independent painter and that that particular relationship isn't made a great deal of in the outside world. There are two sides to it. Andrew

Was that his motive? CB

No, I think that may have been some of it but I think the stronger motive was to make sure I wasn't on his territory anyway. Andrew, painter.

The obvious confusion regarding motive which still exists for Andrew despite his generosity of spirit, is typical of the abusive relationship, where one individual is made to feel that what has happened is for their own good, and is unwilling to think ill of the other.

Such instances have been few but warrant careful investigation and act as cautionary tales. It is perhaps fortunate that Andrew had also experienced the benefit of a warm altruistic mentor relationship prior to becoming involved with the later mentor. It is interesting to note that this mentor was asked to choose the pictures because of his genuine interest in Andrew's work, and that despite geographical distance having separated the two, he still attends Andrew's exhibitions many years later, and has obvious regard for Andrew and his painting. However Andrew feels that it was this act which broke what he described as '*a continuous friendship*'.

Ruth like Andrew, has experienced both a positive and a negative mentor relationship within the same person. Although she and her mentor enjoy similar activities, art-work and sense of style, Ruth feels unable to become her own person as she senses that each step that she makes towards a life as an individual is undermined by her mentor 'taking over' once more:

'It's happened in the class I teach. She asked if she could come and meet everybody, and I said yes, and she came about lunch time and stayed for lunch. I got up and got the vegetable stew, and she sat in my place and she took over the whole thing. And I let it happen because I instantly go into a shell. Everyone was saying 'Oh your work's wonderful', and were all over her. And she offered to come and teach them all to weave, and I thought 'Here she is again, taking over.' Ruth, painter, sculptor.

Whatever the motives behind the behaviour of the mentor, it clearly has the effect on Ruth of disempowerment, and although she attempts to rationalise her feelings of unease, such behaviour always causes her to doubt her own abilities.

Relationships may start out as a mentor relationships, but turn into abusive relationships when mentors become unable to resist the temptation to misuse the inherent power to achieve their own ends. Rob's mentor Phil, prior to meeting Rob, had started a musical critics' group which met regularly, but which had one aim in mind, that of promulgating Phil's message to the world:

'He'd formed a critics' group and he would rule the roost. Talented singers would get together who he saw as evangelising and taking forward this kind of message, you know? He'd go forth and convert. ...The critics group crumbled due to the kind of incessant criticism and the kind of methods adopted where people would be publicly taken apart for their performances, and then put back together, it was like a musical psychoanalysis session. It was a great pain to him that it fell apart. ...I got to know him after that had died. He was obviously looking for people and I fitted the bill.' Rob, musician.

Rob's mentor had a vision of spreading a beneficial message, but his methods were questionable, and did not allow for deviation from his 'truth'.

However he was not a cult figure, just simply too idealistic, and a few years later in a close caring one-to-one relationship with Rob, he not only redeemed himself but passed on his values without even trying.

'I think I have imbibed, and by osmosis taken on certain things that Phil was saying, but my operation is crucially different from his. I'm not as didactic. I don't put these politics as high on the agenda when I'm talking to community groups or whatever. I feel that we should put other things first, so working with those ideas I've changed the way which I apply them. Somewhere along the line this is a catalytic issue, I have in no way forgotten the politics. I would like it to be more to the fore in the things we did. It's a pragmatic decision I suppose to switch the spectrum around to a kind of softer edge for our group. The short answer is, I've carried it forward, but changed it I suppose.' Rob, musician.

Martin Buber (1958) probably describes best how the act of transmission enables the message to be reborn to suit the age:

'But if we are serious about the simile of generation, we must realise that in spiritual as well as physical propagation, it is not the same thing we pass on, but something which acquires newness in the act of transmission. For tradition does not consist in letting contents and forms pass on, finished and inflexible from generation to generation. The values live on in the host, who receives them by becoming part of his very flesh, for they choose and assume his body as the new form which suits the function of the new generation.

A child does not represent the sum total of its parents; it is something that has never been seen before, something quite unpredictable. Similarly, a generation can only receive the teachings in the sense that it renews them. We do not take unless we also give.' (Buber, in Herberg, 1958, p, 318/9)

Storr (1996) in his study of gurus, identifies a good teacher as one who is more interested in his subject and in his pupil than in himself, and notes that the spiritual guides and teachers on whom one can rely, are those who are non-authoritarian and who allow individuals to choose their own paths. It is argued here that the mentor relationships described by participants are not guru relationships in the sense in which the word 'guru' is used in the West, although they are remarkably similar to the traditional meaning of the word 'guru' in Eastern philosophies. Unfortunately these days there are unscrupulous teachers throughout the world who abuse both the title 'guru' and its inherent power, and to have an Eastern guide is no more of a guarantee of a balanced relationship than a guide from any other culture.

The recognition and management of the abuse of power within any learning relationship is fraught with difficulties for which there can be no easy remedy.

However is it contended that the relationships within this study are not those of guru and disciple, but are freely chosen relationships which allow for an exchange of ideas and argument, whilst fostering, nurturing and actively encouraging new thinking and creative growth. Wilmer cites Jung as saying:

'Where love reigns there is no will to power; and where the will to power is paramount, love is lacking. The one is but the shadow of the other.' (Jung, cited in Wilmer, 1987, p. 71)

The issue of sexuality is frequently seen these days as indivisible from the issue of power within relationships, and again is commonly linked to guru/disciple alliances such as the David Koresh cult at Waco, Texas. It is therefore not surprising that those who write of formal mentor relationships within organisations should be somewhat concerned about mentor relationships which become sexual. Having said that, within traditional mentor relationships, any sexual element appears to be always part of a much larger phenomenon, that of love. Whilst accepting that sexual attraction and gratification often stand apart from love and its connotations of some kind of commitment, there has been no evidence in either study to indicate that love is absent from any traditional mentor alliance which has become sexual.

Love appears to be the central emotion of the relationship and is present in some instances, without the sexual element being fulfilled. It seems to be love which drives the alliance, and not the sexual element which is so often the central concern of those who advise against mentor relationships becoming too personal (George and Kummerow, 1981, Halatin and Knotts, 1982, Westoff, 1986, Burke, McKeen et al, 1989, Kizilos, 1990).

Nevertheless for some of those involved in this study, the issue of sexual attraction became important for their creativity and their development. My 1994 study had highlighted that the sexual attraction which each had for the other, was not confined to opposite sex relationships, but was an issue for same sex relationships even where those involved would identify themselves as heterosexual. It seemed as if the relationship transcended gender and that so many of the previous cohort were able to speak freely, if somewhat shyly, about same sex attraction suggested that although individuals were surprised by their feelings, they were not ashamed of them.

Within this study, the issue of same sex attraction was mentioned by two of the participants, and once more, was set within the context of the larger concept of love. Ellen in discussing her emotional attachment to the two female mentors of her youth said:

'I suspect C. was probably lesbian and therefore ruthless about keeping private. But I never thought she didn't love me, never, but there were very clearly defined lines and we never crossed them'. Ellen

'What was the emotional quality of the other relationship?' CB

'She loved me, she loved me.' Ellen

'What did you feel for her?' CB

'I loved her, I adored her, but never spoke in those terms. I wouldn't normally talk about this, but you see I think creative energy's sexual. I think the problem is that anything that feels good, everybody's suddenly frightened of. I think it can be that you are desperately vulnerable at the point where you own up to that, to those feelings. I don't think it is a fear of love, I think it's fear of punishment. Because misbehaviour is punishable, I think it's fear of punishment.' Ellen, theatre director, teacher, writer.

And Duncan remarked quite spontaneously:

'There's someone I haven't talked about yet and it's G.D., and if I've ever been in love with a man it's G. We've gone on journeys together. You can't have the connection without the connection.' Duncan, theatre director, impresario.

Terri however gave a particularly enlightening account of her meaning of the love/sexual attraction connection in relation to her art when I asked her to sum up the emotional content of her mentor relationships:

'You really do want to please these people because you have so much respect for them. you really want them to be proud of you and to think that the work you are doing has value. So that's part of the fuel for it. You have to say 'love' really, because there is just so much power in it, and there isn't any other emotional word that has the kind of power in it that that does. Respect isn't good enough, it has to be love.' Terri

'In what way is that love different from other relationships in life that you could perhaps attach that word to?' CB

'It has no reciprocal thing attached to it.' Terri

It's unconditional?' CB

'Yes. You don't expect, you don't make demands on it. Well you do because you look for further encouragement or criticism or whatever it is that you are getting from it, but it doesn't have any sense of responsibility attached to it. You're not tied to each other in any formal way at all. The basis of the relationship is the exchange that happens, the gift that you are given, that's the basis of it. There are no other ties on it. In a mentor relationship, certainly in theatre I'm thinking about LT in particular, and I've never had any sexual relationship with LT but I would have done because he was such a powerful influence. That potential would have been there. Because you know he's passionate about the world, that passion actually communicates.

You know he's a passionate man, that's one of the things that's incredibly powerful and attractive about him and about the way he communicates, is that enthusiasm and energy and passion. And that's inevitably got sexual reverberations.



Part of the play, part of the pleasure, and part of the sexual energy comes from the 'is it, isn't it, I dunno, maybe, perhaps', that's part of it, and as soon as you've discussed it in a kind of sensible grown-up way it would remove the game, it would remove the play, and it would remove the potential for energy to be generated. So in a lot of situations I'm sure it's taboo, but in a lot of situations it is part of the fun.' Terri, performer, designer, painter.

Terri uses the interaction as a creative dynamo within her work, accepting it as part of her creative life, whilst recognising that for others it could be 'taboo'. It is interesting that Terri uses the word 'taboo' which has its origins in the Tongan and Fijian islands, where 'tabu' meant sacred, or that which is reserved for acts of consecration. It may be remembered that Di referred to the sexual attraction she felt for her mentor as having a sense of sacredness about it and she considers the sexual energy which is generated in her mentor relationship to be a meaningful part of her personal path to achieve her full potential.

Di has been learning from her mentor for seven years now, and during the first three years of their relationship found herself becoming attracted to him. She was able to discuss this with him and he acknowledged her feelings, but did not act on them. She recognises that he could have taken advantage of her at a time when she was somewhat in awe of him, and is pleased that he chose not to do so. She now senses a change in their relationship, is teaching in her own right, and is considering entering into a sexual relationship with him for deeper reasons than simply those which are physical:

'My next step involves taking a risk. I know it's not sexual for the sake of just sexual, but it is actually connected to the creative, can I trust myself? And I know, I have no doubts, if that's what I need to do, that's what I will do. The deeper purpose would be to open gates in my psyche, which could only be opened if I take that step in intimacy.

It's not even about the sexual act, it's actually about can I trust myself, can I trust the other person? I really do believe that. I really have bared my soul in every possible way, but this is a huge risk for me. But by taking this risk I'm stepping into unknown ground.' Di, creative movement teacher.

The meaning which Di attributes to the sexual element in her relationship is reminiscent of the union of the Tantric Buddhist partnership, where sexual expression is used as a means of enlightenment for both parties. Shaw (1994), in her definitive study of Tantric philosophy and practice remarks:

'Since women were among the early teachers and formulators of this genre of practice, it is reasonable to maintain that women did not create or view this practice as one in which they would be manipulated or exploited. It was conducive to women's enlightenment because women helped to design it.

Educated women like Laksminkara, and Sahajayoginicinta, craftswomen like the arrow making Yogini, artistic women like Dombiyogini, courtesans like the Tantric partner of Ghantapa, and female gurus like Gangadhara all practised the yoga of union as part of their own path to enlightenment.' (Shaw 1994, p. 194).

Unfortunately Tantric Buddhism, like many forms of Eastern philosophy, seems to have suffered from the Western problem of immediate gratification syndrome. Whilst the practice requires many years of training and discipline, a lengthy relationship, and high moral and ethical values, it is increasingly being taught on weekend courses in the UK, becoming devalued and debased in the process. Interestingly enough, Shaw's Tantric partnership is also a learning relationship and matches to a great extent, the traditional mentor relationship in terms of respect, trust, values, intimacy and reciprocity. She says:

'Tantric union has explicit intellectual, emotional, meditative, and visualisational content that cannot be circumvented. If the prescribed attitude is not present, the activity becomes ordinary sexuality masquerading as religion, a form of hypocrisy that can be spiritually disastrous. Acts undertaken in the wrong spirit can never bear spiritual fruit. In order to be transformative, a practice must be undertaken with the requisite content as well as the proper ritual form. The requisite content is reciprocity, intimacy, and mutual aspiration to attain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings.' (Shaw, 1994, p. 177)

For Andrew the meaning of the sexual dynamic is that it gives him an energy which he is able to transform into painting:

'Tell me what your mentor said about poets.' CB

'He said that 'poets have to fall in love all the time in order to write, but it's not like that for painters.' I've often thought about it and I just think it can't be true because I know I have to fall in love from time to time to get that energy.' Andrew

'Is it the falling in love that gives you the energy, or does the energy give you the falling in love?' CB

'Ah well, that's another difficult one, it's a chicken and egg thing a bit. But I think it's the falling in love thing most of all that gives you the energy.'  
Andrew, painter

Of course not all love relationships are mentor relationships, and it would be foolish to suggest that just any love relationship, or just any sexual relationship could replace the mentor relationship. It is clear from the participants that the intimacy in mentor relationships is part of a much greater whole which, if appreciated as such by onlookers, would perhaps allow for more understanding in relation to the aspect of intimate behaviour in the learning alliance.

The relating which takes place within personal relationships is unique to the people involved and the nature of this relating is complex, changeable and frequently puzzling. Such is human nature. Duck and Acitelli (1997) note:

'We stress that, in real life, relating occurs in social contexts that are themselves experienced as dynamic structures, and that choice is a key aspect - and a dynamic aspect - of lived relational experience.' (Duck and Acitelli, 1997, p. 19).

From the participants' accounts of their relationships, and the fact that the majority of participants are in freely-chosen permanent loving relationships with their mentors, it should be recognised that the close intimacy which can be seen in traditional mentor relationships is valued and desired. It plays an important role in creative development, which despite being interpreted differently by those involved, should be acknowledged as neither shallow nor meaningless. As Torrance (1984) discovered some years ago, the outcomes of such a caring alliance are not usually harmful, but the risk of intimacy is one which must be taken in this or any personal relationship, which aims to achieve the authenticity which May (1975) maintains is essential for genuine creative encounter.

# Chapter Eight

## Connections and Conclusions

'Being essentially the instrument of his work, (the artist) is subordinate to it, and we have no right to expect him to interpret it for us. He has done his utmost by giving it form, and must leave the interpretation to others and to the future.' Jung 1945, 'Psychological Reflections', 1986.

'The literary work has two poles, which we might call the artistic and the aesthetic: the artistic refers to the text created by the author, and the aesthetic to the realisation accomplished by the reader. From this polarity it follows that the literary work cannot be completely identical with the text, or with the realisation of the text, but in fact must lie half-way between the two.' Iser, 'The Reading Process', 1972.

'A translation is no translation unless it will give you the music of a poem along with the words of it.' Synge, 'The Aran Islands', 1907.

### Overview of the Findings

The participants within this study have taken an active and vital part within the work, and have served during moments of doubt, as constant reminders that the resultant thesis has foundation and substance, and is not simply the product of imagination. This chapter will offer a summary of the findings, review the interview process, suggest some concerns for the education of the creative person, and offer a way of appreciating and understanding the mentor relationship as an art form.

The mentor relationships described by the artists involved have conveyed a level of understanding which is deeper than that from my 1994 study. To what extent this is due to the individuals involved; to the fact that more time has been available for research; or to the use of hermeneutical philosophy and heuristic frameworks; is not clear. What is clear is that the basic pattern revealed by the 1994 study has been borne out by this current work, and that the conditions for traditional mentor relationships appear to be those which Rogers (1957b) suggested as being necessary and sufficient for change; empathy, genuineness, caring, and the skills to communicate these to the other.

However coupled with these conditions is the issue of psychological freedom which Rogers (1959) saw as essential for establishing a climate of creativity. The mentor, in providing this climate, and in rewarding creative endeavour, fosters self-worth in the artist and provides '*powerful motivation for learning*' (Torrance, 1995b, p.79). The artist develops trust and respect for the mentor's work and the mentor's way of living, and by eventually internalising the locus of evaluation, grows towards becoming independent and self-reliant.

This is a continual process and probably more reliant on the stage of individual development than on chronological age. Within the 1994 study the learner profited in personal development by the mentor behaving in three ways; firstly as one who promotes potential, secondly as one who enables self-esteem; and thirdly as one who validates experience in a way which is meaningful to the learner.

Within this study, it has been shown that the mentor recognises and acknowledges the self as a creative entity, affords opportunities to develop creative potential, provides a sound critical review of creative work, and supports creative ebbs and flows. The central cognition of the relationship is that of mutual respect, and from this stems the central emotion of the alliance which is love, but which may be better understood in a more holistic form as 'caritas' or benevolence.

The traditional mentor relationship is a complex interpersonal alliance wherein the relating which takes place may be seen as transformative, illuminative and risky. For creative people it affords opportunities for growth in the area of personal development, allowing artists to learn not only the skills of their craft, but how to live the aesthetic life. It requires the will to engage in a genuine exchange of ideas, to be courageous, and to accept the gift of intimacy. It is obviously not for everyone, but as not everyone wishes to change their horizon, not everyone will recognise and seize the opportunity for such change. However for those who have experienced a traditional mentor relationship, few other relationships if any, will ever match it, for although it is rarely straightforward, it is always memorable.

The communication skills within the creative alliance are more allied with highly developed micro-skills of intuition and perception, than with the macro-skills of listening and attending, and in many instances seem inexplicable. The effect of such communication, coupled with occasional peak experiences, lends the relationship a quality of wholeness and profundity which is often interpreted in metaphysical language, and gives credence to the view that it is a relationship which stands on 'higher ground'. That those artists involved in the alliance experience such occurrences, combined with their ability and willingness to constantly engage with the world and the 'here and now' moment, rather than in activities which bypass, or divert attention from the world, suggests a high level of self-actualisation, and a recognition that *'the sacred is in the ordinary'* (Maslow, 1971, p. 333). Indeed it was in the very uncontrived ordinariness of the relationship that the extraordinary flourished.

The mentor relationship is holistic, in as much as it provides for the whole person and not simply for the development of skills.

As artists frequently work in isolation and solitude for much of their time, and many do not have the benefit of regular salaries or wages, such holistic development is particularly vital in learning how to live as an artist.

Perhaps the most important factor of all however, is that of psychological support, which is necessary when each new success enhances a possibility of future failure, and the will to keep going becomes difficult to sustain alone. At such times the support of someone who understands the creative cycle and regards such events as natural, is both valuable and desirable. Within the study creative people who experienced major breakdowns considered suicide, but used their experience to eventually refine and modify their life-plan.

It has been made apparent by the participants that self and creativity are inseparable, and that when this is recognised and validated, then real progress in understanding both self and creative potential can be made. Torrance (1963) identified the difficulties of children who sacrifice their creativity at early ages, and it may be remembered that those in this study were aware of their creativity from as young as three years old. Whilst they are also aware that mentors were not responsible for that ability, they recognise that it was their mentors who recognised it, nurtured it, and allowed it to come into being. They also recognise that it is in actively creating, that they actualise their potential, that they become who they really are as individuals. This creative principle can be applied to anybody in both work and leisure settings, but seemingly in order to flourish it needs to be appreciated.

Many participants found little appreciation of creative ability from teachers in secondary education, and some also experienced problems in that artistic endeavour was not seen as having the same worth as academic endeavour. It may be remembered that it was not just teachers who had difficulty with understanding art as a valid choice of career, but also some parents. However for those who did have good mentor relationships with teachers and parents at this age of career choice, the benefit of those relationships is still appreciated and valued.

The alliance is primarily learner-centred and is a relationship of benevolence which does not patronise. However it must also be recognised that if the inherent power within the relationship is misused, then the trust and respect will also be diminished and the mentor aspect of the relationship will probably end.

Before examining these results in the light of the continuing education of the creative person it is firstly necessary to take a reflective glance and discuss some issues of the interview process itself in order to establish how that process worked, and what it meant to those involved. As one participant noted in the previous chapter, '*you can't have the connection without the connection*'.

### **'That Experience of Connection...'**

It is difficult to explain rationally how the interviews with many individuals really worked. That I had personal knowledge of the traditional mentor relationship and had spent a long time studying it, could account for my understanding of how the process worked for those involved. What is not so easy to be rational about, is that there were many occasions when I knew the answer the participant would give me before I had even asked the question.

On these occasions I felt that the words, the asking of the question, seemed almost redundant, but had no alternative because I needed the participant to answer for the tape recorder. It was also on these occasions that there was a sense of timelessness to the interviews, as though for the duration of the interview we had stepped out of time, and communication became so much less verbal. This had happened to me sometimes with a whole group when I was teaching, such as the group discussed in Appendix I, and I had come to accept it as a 'peak performance', something which did not happen every day but which allowed communication simply to flow. I rationalised what was happening in the interviews as a product of my 'insider knowledge', not just of the mentor relationship, but of the creative personality.

That I felt empathy with the participants is undeniable, and bias could have become a real issue for me. However empathy alone can not account for what occurred during the interviews. Ellen and I, at the end of one interview, discussed this issue of human connection, and I at this time revealed a fair amount of personal bias, and took part in a general discussion of the topic. I have reproduced that discussion here in full as I believe that it can only shed light on the phenomena that I experienced with the participants, and is in keeping with the philosophy of this thesis of attempting to understand the meaning of human 'Being'.

'There's now more and more as I've got older, more and more of an urgency to the need to understand, and to understand what it means to be human, and what it means to contact. I went to a talk by an American director, who works in L.A., and he was talking about the fact that in L.A. people don't make contact with each other, what happens is they shoot each other, vis a vis what's happening right now in the news [Dunblane]. It's becoming urgent that we understand our selves as human beings, and how we function, in order to be in contact with each other. Ellen

'Do you see there being any spiritual quality to that then? I don't mean religious.' CB

'I think I know what you mean. When there is communication, and I don't mean only the exchange of information, but when there is *communication*, there is *communion*, and it happens out of time. It's an experience which is outside time and it's completely whole, and that is often what people call spiritual. Yes, in that way it's deeply spiritual.' Ellen

'I've been searching for two years for another word to use, and I've not been able to find it. I've sometimes used the word 'metaphysical'. How important is that part of your relationship?' CB

'Well in the work that I do it's absolutely fundamental. If the relationship between the performers isn't that, that's what we aspire to. When it happens then everyone knows what you're talking about. You come right out of time. Ellen

'It is out of time. I wrote to my supervisor towards the end of last year [1995] saying that what had happened with me in many of the interviews was that this had happened, and there'd been an out of time component to the interview because it was moving at that level. It was actually shifting at that level.' CB

'Yes!' Ellen

'Although I was asking questions, some of the questions I didn't need to ask, because I knew the answer, and they knew I knew the answer, and I knew they knew that. I had to do it for the tape, for the formal part of this piece of work.' CB

'But don't you think it's important that we learn to articulate it [that occurrence]?' Ellen

'I do. Because many of the people I've worked with in the past were not able to articulate it. But if we articulate and get something down on paper from all of this, .... people in the past [1994 study], said that it made them feel as if their relationships had been validated, been rubber-stamped.' CB

'Yes!' Ellen

'So it's [traditional mentoring] a wonderful way of learning, but it's being missed. Not by the people experiencing it, but all these other people who think that only material things matter in terms of learning..' CB

'Exactly.' Ellen

'...and as we're moving into the age of technology, we're doing more and more on computers, more and more E mail, that communion's being lost, and it terrifies me.' CB

'Exactly, exactly, you're right because I've just been on a course and we had a lecture from a man called JJ. He was an IT buff and he was hired by [a large multi-national] to project himself into the year 2025 and report on what he saw there. He had a very very free intellect. And he gave us a lecture on it, and he was going on about how wonderful it would be. We'd all have our TV screens, and if I wanted to have dinner with my Mum in Scotland I'd just put my table up to the screen, and she'd put hers up to the screen, and we'd have dinner.



'And I said to him afterwards, "Will this devalue live contact?" and he said "No, absolutely not, and it's going to be even better because you are going to be able to have dinner with your mother." And I said, "But what about this, the actual touching, and the experience that happens between live human beings in the same place". And I asked about live arts as well, and he, he couldn't get the question, because he said "Well you don't have to go to Edinburgh anymore, you can just watch it on your screen." And that is *so* different.' Ellen

'He would probably have thought there was no difference between a print and an oil painting, because they were both portraying the same image...'  
CB

'Yes!' Ellen

'...and yet the difference is qualitative in terms of the texture, the feel of it, the emotion. It's different, it's very very different.' CB

'It's unbelievable. I didn't know that about visual art until I worked in Bruges, and there's a Michelangelo of a small mother and child in white marble, and it was absolutely, it exuded spirit. I'd never seen anything like it before. It was alive with this beautiful energy, I've never seen anything like it. And I'd seen enough photos of Michelangelo's work, but this was nothing like it.' Ellen

'But the technician does seem to feel that if you can produce it on a screen it's virtual reality, when what's really important is missing.' CB

'Exactly! I had a huge argument with my husband in the car, not acrimonious, because he was saying "Well I hear what you're saying, but you need to substantiate it, and what do you mean about the exchange of information and experience, you can exchange information and experience over a screen?" He was playing Devil's Advocate. But it's hard to explain, because I said to him "When I teach, if I'm teaching well, it happens, and you don't refer to it...'  
Ellen

'But you know it's happened?' CB

'Yes. And that's what I've begun to see, is that when the students that I'm working with learn, they learn out of that reality, and it's not logical, it does happen outside of time. But to go back to your original question, it's the only thing worth aspiring to in live art, that experience of connection.

If into that you can then create or allow emotions to move freely, when you're in that space of connection, everybody experiences it all at the same time, it's simultaneous. So you're then going through an emotional archetypal experience together, then it is cleansing, it cleans the whole system, it cleanses society.' Ellen

'And is it healing?' CB

'Absolutely! That's the thing. I talk to you confidentially about this, but I would never go and lecture on the theatre as a healing art, because it sounds terrible, and it can be horribly misused. But *that's* the function.' Ellen

'It's very powerful. Some of my last interviews became almost therapeutic in terms of what was revealed from them, and I was aware of the power of the relationship and what was happening. Some of them were healing for both sides, for me too, and yet in an academic setting if I stood up and talked about the healing properties of a research interview, they'd say "Evidence this." CB

'Yes! yes!' Ellen, theatre director, writer, teacher.

When Ellen says, '*it's the only thing worth aspiring to in live art, that experience of connection*', she describes that special communication wherein real understanding takes place. Maslow (1959) himself stressed the importance of unity and integration in the theory of creativeness:

'Resolving a dichotomy into a higher, more inclusive unity amounts to healing a split in the person and making him more unified.' (Maslow, 1959, p. 93)

Ellen talks with some concern of the importance of live interaction between the art and the audience, and such concern matters no less in the issue of the traditional mentor relationship which is an art-form in itself. For humans to understand themselves requires human interaction. Ellen's description of human connection, enables an awareness of a much deeper level of communication than that of verbal communication alone.

Such deep communication is perhaps more easily accomplished by means of poetry, music or fine art, where words are used either to evoke an emotional response, or dispensed with altogether, as the paucity of verbal language becomes noticeable when attempting to translate such experience into terms acceptable for academic purposes. Yet if we are to attempt any understanding of what the traditional mentor relationship is about, then it is necessary to follow all paths and steal from other disciplines and traditions. And in justification it may be remembered that Hermes was not only the god of communication but also of pathways, and of theft. We have to ask ourselves what part if any, such level of communication plays in the mentor relationship, and even whether the relationship could be conducted at a meaningful level if the two parties never actually met. What is the value of relationship in the age of technology?

Some approaches to mentor relationships have been via the technological route. In 1997 I gave a paper of some preliminary findings of this study at a conference to those working in the field of arts training (Bennetts, 1997b). Two other people spoke about their work in formal mentor programmes, both financed by European funds, one of which involved European partnerships and matched mentors and learners in formal evaluated programmes, and one of which matched mentors and learners via computer communication.

Not having any European links myself, I felt somewhat intimidated and wondered whether the audience would perceive any value in a low-profile own-funded study of relationships which had formed naturally and yet had been of benefit to artists. I need not have been concerned however, for at the end of the three presentations there was only time for one comment which I have reproduced here from notes and memory:

'If I understand this right, it seems to me that in real mentoring, the essence of what the first speaker [CB] is talking about is love. I think that's what people should all be aiming for and hoping for, that sort of relationship. It's obviously really the ultimate relationship.

But because those relationships might be rare, if they can't get that then they go along to what the second speaker talked about, and that is a dating agency, if you don't mind me calling it that, because that *is* what it seems to be.

Then if all else fails, if they get really desperate, then they do what the third speaker talked about and go on-line to a chat-line.' [audience laughter and nodding of heads] I wonder Chris, if you have considered continuing your research with people who have been linked to a mentor via a computer? (AMTF Conference 1997)

Such insight was interesting as I had never mentioned the word 'love' in my presentation, and although the reference to a dating agency and a chat-line might be seen as somewhat dismissive of the other speakers, as anything which promotes supportive human interaction is worthy of attempting, nevertheless the speaker has a valid point.

Technology has aided the production of some of the finest human achievements, but to use it in the hope that 'making contact' will make 'the human connection', is questionable. Although shyness and hesitancy are part of the human condition and, it could be argued, may become lessened by communication via a machine, such methods of communication are somewhat limited and lack warmth. To understand the nature of human 'Being' requires direct interaction with the world and with those who inhabit that world. And as those participants who took part in this study described a relationship of warmth, of vitality, and of the touch of that other person, such understanding may also require a tactile, or at least sensed, physical presence.

Although Murray (1997) paints a compelling picture of the bright future of narrative via the computer medium, her work also serves to reinforce the vision of the distancing of human beings from each other as they enter the seductive world of digital imagination and virtual reality. It would be interesting to explore whether the human connection is really achieved via computer mentoring, and also whether the communion spoken of by Ellen, is made apparent via this medium.

Is computer mentoring any more than simply passing on information, is it even relating, can it be termed mentoring? As this thesis has attempted to show, the authentic relationships referred to by Heidegger require genuine encounter with others. Is the nature of the computer assisted communication, genuine encounter?

A study into the part played by computers in mentor relationships might indeed shed some light on such areas, although at present I am inclined to surmise that although computers may be of help in initiating contacts, or maintaining contacts already made, they are merely tools which can assist in daily living, and are not 'living' itself.

Bruner (1986) recalls the creativity and humanity of a teacher who made a difference to his way of thinking:

'I recall a teacher, her name was Miss Orcutt, who made the statement in class, 'It is a very puzzling thing not that water turns to ice at 32 degrees Fahrenheit, but that it should change from a liquid into a solid.'" She then went on to give an intuitive account of Brownian movement and of molecules, expressing a sense of wonder that matched, indeed bettered, the sense of wonder that I felt at that age (around ten) about everything I turned my mind to, ....In effect, she was inviting me to extend *my* world of wonder to encompass *hers*. She was not just *informing* me. She was, rather, negotiating the world of wonder and possibility. Molecules, solids, liquids, movement were not facts; they were to be used in pondering and imagining. Miss Orcutt was the rarity. She was a human event, not a transmission device.' (Bruner, 1986, p.126)

To take a stance for the human connection may be seen at best as being behind the times, and at worst the action of a Luddite. I maintain that it is neither, but that to take a stance for live human interaction with all its ensuing risk and reward, is an act which is in keeping with the philosophy of this thesis. It is an act of creative encounter with the world. Dreyfus states:

'...we must foster human receptivity and preserved the endangered species of pretechnological practices that remain in our culture, in the hope that one day they will be pulled together in a new paradigm, rich enough and resistant enough to give a new meaningful direction to our lives.' (Dreyfus, 1993, p.311)

I also maintain that the hermeneutical researcher when engaged in honest and open dialogue with participants, unafraid of appearing to have views and opinions, may also encounter and understand the act of communion, that '*meeting*' referred to by Buber (1958), whereby in the propagation of values, the whole person is involved in a process of education, and that it is not a one-sided learning, but a mutual encounter in which both parties grow and develop. Such engagement goes beyond that of Rogers' counselling process; it goes beyond the accepted interview process in research; it requires a willingness to be as open as we would wish our participants to be. Lincoln and Guba note that:

**'Trust between mature adults is built over time, a process complicated by the very human need to present the self at its best. Achieving trust demands forthrightness, clear and fair explication of the purposes of the research, and authentic presentation of the researcher's self.'** (Lincoln and Guba, 1985b, p. 233).

I would add that trust can also develop out of a clear right-brain perception of the other person in a very short space of time providing that, like the mentor relationship, the interview takes on a conversational mutuality whilst remaining firmly in touch with the phenomena to be explored.

From past experience in counselling situations, I have come to conclude that emotional security in one to one situations is vital in attempting to reveal the previously 'unsaid' content of the conversation. Whilst the conditions of empathy, genuineness and positive regard are skills which can be learned and worn by counsellors like a uniform, appearing almost seamless until challenged by a difficult situation, there is no substitute for authentic relating, that is relating totally at one's own human level without pretence or disguise.

The role of counsellor has been lampooned by the media on many occasions, but perhaps this is because so many counsellors parody the role by taking themselves so seriously. When counsellors freely risk themselves, and are willing to get it wrong from time to time, clients are able to relate more to counsellors as human, with human weakness and foibles, and are more willing to enter into the relationship. In counselling, it seems to be that it is more the therapeutic relationship itself which enables change and growth, than the therapeutic orientation of the counsellor.

Similarly the role of researcher is a compelling disguise, as it can allow questions to be asked 'merely in the interests of research', and demands no real communication and insight into what the researcher might feel or think. The emphasis placed by hermeneutical scholars (Kvale, 1983, p. 188) upon foreknowledge of the issue under investigation, allows for a depth and level of relating which, undertaken with an awareness of risk and responsibility, may lead to the ability to state that which Ellen talks about as being important for us to learn to articulate; that which is experienced and felt; the experience of *authentic* relationship. Fiumara (1990) notes:

**'Human beings are ever more trying to put into words whatever they believe is hidden or absent in their culture. At the same time they are attempting, as never before, to give voice to that which is inexpressible or blocked in their hidden world.'** (Fiumara, 1990, p. 30)

Attempting to say the unsayable, and voice the ineffable calls for an emotional security which is the result of communicating the self, the essence of who one is, to the one we are in communication with. It is the connection of Being with Being, requiring nothing but a willingness to be, unafraid and unencumbered by disguise, and posing no methodological difficulties, as it is in the service of understanding the meaning of human Being. Therefore biased opinion, as long as it is reported as such, should not detract from the validity of the subsequent revealing of hidden experience.

My experience of connection with participants, took place under the conditions of 'no disguise', and indeed did not happen on every occasion or with every participant, but happened most noticeably when I felt completely at ease with the artist and was thereforeless inclined to take on the role of researcher than that of myself.

That this connection did occur however, indicates that such depth of relating within interviews is achievable. Whether or not it is desirable, is for others to decide. However Ellen raises another important issue in human relating, and that is of the transformative and healing power of real communication. And in defence of such an open stance, I have to recognise that during the hermeneutic interview process I learned more about myself, why I am the way I am, my creative process and how I relate to others, than I ever knew before.

The participants appeared similarly enlightened, and for many of those interviewed the benefit of discussing their relationships and their lives was revealing. Michael writes:

'Thank you again for involving me in your research which has brought me the gift of reflection about important areas of my life, and for which I usually have to pay £15.00 per hour!!' Martin, painter.

Andrew recalled that the difficult time he had with one mentor was now in the past, and remarked how it felt to discuss his low times.

'It's actually meant quite a lot. It made me think about L [one mentor] and the disturbing thing that had happened, and it was interesting that a few ghosts were laid to rest. Again this one we've had today [3rd interview], it's an area which one doesn't often talk about because people don't want to know about madness because it is frightening. ...I couldn't have done this before, it is good to talk about these things.' Andrew, painter.

Karen found that some of the initial interview touched on aspects of her relationship which were normally disturbing to consider and voice:

To what extent does the love you feel play a part in the creative art? To what extent is it fuelled by this relationship?' CB

'I wonder whether it's now at a point where one won't happen without the other. If we suddenly didn't have each other, if that love wasn't there, then that creativity would also not be there', (looks concerned). Karen

'Is this the first time you've thought about that?' CB

'Yes' (looks nervous). Karen

'Is that quite frightening?' CB

'Some of this is actually quite frightening Chris, because we're talking about things that I can't discuss with others, (smiles). But some of these things are just there and they exist, and they are a whole part of my being and his as well. That's probably why you don't ever question them, because they are just there. If I hadn't met him at the point when I did I feel sure that I would never have really grown. I'd have been creative, but that would have been it and I would have probably led in some ways quite a 'normal' existence.' Karen, photographer, fine artist.

And Edward, who for years had felt guilty about leaving a big city in order to teach others said:

I've found that it's been helpful for me because it's sorted my mind out, because you don't ask yourself these sort of questions, only mad people like you ask questions like this! I've come down here from business and lived with the guilt for twenty-odd years of teaching, of not being in business. Because I've been socialised to feel that I ought to be on the leading edge of design business and be in high profile, and all that sort of thing.

And in a way, this business of what has happened to you in the past, you tend to do to other people don't you, like a kid being beaten? And I've suddenly realised that in fact this is possibly what happened to me [had good mentor relationship in childhood/youth], and in a way because this has happened to me, I've got to do it to others. So it's made sense of what I have done.' Edward

'It's made sense of your life?' CB

'Yes, yes it has.' Edward

'It's very encouraging for me to hear that.' CB

'(Laughing) You've psychoanalysed me.' Edward, ceramicist.

Kate's move into the art world came about after a career change, and an illness brought about by the death of a difficult client coupled with her stressful job. She has now decided to use her experience of the life-death continuum within her work by designing and making ceramic funeral urns with individuals who are still alive, thus allowing people to make meaning of their life and inevitable death by incorporating personal decorative elements on the urns.

This is no morbid activity, but both serious and humorous as she envisages the urns being used as biscuit barrels or toffee containers until needed. For those people who wish to have the urns eventually interred, Kate will make them in unfired clay, so that the pots will return to the earth from which they came. For those who simply want to have their ashes scattered, she will glaze the urns and they will be a reminder to those left behind of the unique personality of that person. Such a creative approach to death is both healthy and much needed in a society which hands its dead over to funeral parlours with somewhat indecent haste. In our final interview she said:

'For me it's been very important because I've been able to make links with how I've ended up here, and why. If somebody had said to me I would meet you while I was at college and you would be doing this, I wouldn't believe it because it's exactly what I needed. It's cos there's still a huge part of me, and I know it's my upbringing, which actually doesn't really value what I'm doing, and it's really difficult to work against. So it's been very, very important.' Kate, fine artist.

Whilst the research interview should not be entered into as a therapeutic device, it is important to understand and be aware of the fact that as most people never give themselves the time to reflect on life and its meaning, then the research interview may well be the first time such contemplation has occurred. To ignore this as a possibility would be unethical and previous experience had prepared me for such occurrences. The value of the hermeneutical circle was that it left space not only within the interview for introspection, but allowed space and time between interviews for deeper thought. Ellis (1991b) has highlighted how emotions frequently elude both the researcher and the participant:

'It is difficult to get information about emotions. Often people are unwilling to admit to, or simply unaware of, what they are feeling unless they are in a context perceived as a safe place for exploration. That emotions are complex and experienced as process - continually fluctuating and changing - adds to the confusion.' (Ellis, 1991b, p. 33)

It is this processual nature of emotion that frequently led to participants reconstructing meaning about events which they had experienced, and Bruner (1990, p. 33) has noted that the autobiographies carried in our minds are rough and perpetually changing. The participants' memory of events was remarkably clear, and the accounts of the learning which had resulted, remained fixed. However what was fluid and occasionally altered over time, was the meaning of the event in the here and now compared with the meaning of the event at the time it happened. As Strongman (1996) has noted, '*emotion always involves a qualitative transformation of the world*'. Meanings were often constructed in relation to the mood the participant was in at the time of the occurrence, but was also affected by how the individual intellectualised and rationalised his or her emotional response to the event in the here and now.



Such intellectualisation is a common occurrence in counselling, and counsellors frequently devise strategies for shifting the client from such left brain thinking to right brain feeling, and vice versa in order to access and verbalise the emotion. Whilst the cognitive aspect obviously has its place, care needs to be taken to ensure that how someone thinks does not conceal how someone feels, when attempting to access meaning. Warnock, in discussing the importance of mood in Heideggerian hermeneutics states:

'We can discover the meaning of our situation only by considering the way in which we are, as it were, attuned to the situation.' (Warnock, 1996, p. 56)

Attention to mood and emotion is therefore, an integral part of attempting to understand the meaning of human Being, and should not be seen in isolation from how we think and act. However what is not always recognised by counsellors, is that their own difficulties with accessing emotion may shine bright and clear within the alliance, and may effectively disable clients from revealing their feelings.

Counsellors who are able to reveal in an appropriate manner their own ability with both emotional and cognitive discourse will enable clients to do likewise. Such mutuality is important as Dass (1985) has highlighted in his work on helping relationships:

'We are sharing the experience of unity. We are walking each other home.'  
(Dass, 1985, p. 236)

This mutuality should be no less for the hermeneutical researcher, and familiarity and a degree of comfort with emotional and intellectual expression are, I would argue, essential qualities for mutually enlightening relationships with participants. As Denzin (1984) has stated:

'Emotionality and its reflections give the everyday world and the ordinary people who live in that world a sense of joy, bewilderment, pain, confusion, satisfaction and pleasure that no other form of conduct can. For this reason emotionality and its investigation must lie at the heart of the human disciplines; for to understand and reflect on how this being called human is, and how it becomes what it is, it is necessary to understand how emotionality as a form of consciousness is lived, experienced, articulated, and felt by persons'. (Denzin, 1984, p. 278.)

### **Hermeneutical Issues**

In Chapter Four it was noted that Collin and Young (1988b) identify six issues of significance of the hermeneutical researcher. These are subjectivity; reliability; validity; accessibility; feasibility; and confidentiality.

Although such issues have been incorporated into the main body of the text I will also attempt to reiterate them here in a justification of the thesis, but not necessarily as separate entities, more as an overview of how they may be seen within the study.

When faced with problems, or hidden aspects of both myself and participants in the interviews, I often returned to the written transcripts, or the tape recordings. Recalling how the work with the teachers had taken on the quality of connection, I replayed a tape of the last session spent with the teachers in November 1997 (see Appendix I for a complete description of this work). We were discussing what we had experienced and surmising why it had worked for us all. One participant said:

'I know you say you [CB] didn't do it, but it was you who put together the exercises.' Teacher

'Yes, but we all took part and I had the same experience. I was just so amazed, you were all so open with each other. That wouldn't have been unusual in a setting where you were all strangers and had nothing to lose, but to do it in a setting where you see each other every day is very unusual and very brave.' CB

'But you did that for us. By being *your* self, by being completely open, you allowed us to be *our* selves. You allowed us to *be*. And *that's* why it worked.' Teacher

Although that specific course was designed to reconstruct the conditions which had shown themselves to be inherent in the mentor relationship in my 1994 study, and had deliberately switched back and forth between left brain cognitive thinking and interpretation, to right brain feeling and intuition, I am now more able to understand why it worked so well. In deciding to take an active part in the exercises instead of simply facilitating the work for others, it appears that I had given the group more of myself than they expected, and they in turn reciprocated. In short, just by being ourselves and taking the risk that the exercises would enable some personal insights, we increased our chances of success and recreated the mentor phenomena within the whole group.

Quite how successfully this event could be replicated can only be speculative; but it appears to underline the importance of the immediacy of human communication, and explains the experience of connection which occurred during some interviews. The gap between myself and others diminished, and I became the same as them, neither observing nor observed, but part of that unending hermeneutical spiral. Although it could be tempting to argue the case for a subjective stance within this study, based on my knowledge that it is a requirement of the hermeneutic approach, my argument rests also on the issue that it should be a requirement for any learning relationship of value, as it forms the keystone of understanding the human condition.

Within this work the views of participants have been taken into account during each of the processual steps. My bias has been made apparent within this work, and on occasion, to participants. However the nature of the hermeneutic stance in giving participants access to the written material, and permission to change it, accords with Collin and Young's (1988b) argument that such access may help nullify charges of interpreter distortion. Eisner (1981), asks if such bias has a place in artistic research, and concludes:

'We expect inventiveness and personal interpretation in the arts. We expect the artist to take liberties in order to drive home the point he or she wishes to make. These liberties - what we refer to as artistic licence - are not intended to distract from artistic validity but to render more incisively and persuasively what has been learned.' (Eisner, 1981, p. 8)

In Chapter Four, the issue of catalytic validity was discussed, and it may be remembered that this was the name given by Lather (1991) to the process which moves those being studied towards a deeper understanding of their world and their place within it.

Lather maintains that those studies which possess catalytic validity will display both the reality altering impact of the inquiry process, and also direct that impact to enable those under study to gain self-understanding and self-direction.

That those within this study have learned more about themselves has been highlighted throughout this thesis, and that they have gained some direction from the process has, I believe also been demonstrated. I would also maintain that to some extent the critical theorist approach has shown itself to be a part of this work in as much as participants recognise how culture, and gender and class have affected their relationships; how social custom and mores may continue to constrain their lives and relationships; and how, as a result of their understanding, some individuals have made physical and psychological changes.

As such, it is my view that reliability has been conferred by participants as an '*earned right*' (Egan, 1988), by their acceptance of the material, by their verbal and written communications, and by their acceptance of me as empathic within the field of creative art. Collin and Young (1988b) suggest that one way to audit the study is to repeat it and achieve a '*recognition of the multiple versions of the world*' (p.198). In as much as this study attempted to gain insight into traditional mentoring, and to a certain extent repeated some of the 1994 inquiries, I would argue that the research has proved itself to be trustworthy in that the conditions of the relationship have been shown to be transferable to other settings which Merriam (1988 p.173) notes is necessary for the claim of external validity.

However the fact that this study has produced added insight to the first work and is thus also somewhat different does not discredit the original study, (Merriam, 1988, p. 172), but simply produces what she too calls multiple representations, where work is open to further interpretations.

Richardson (1994) suggests that a central image for validity in texts which draw from a wide variety of literary, scientific and artistic sources, should be the crystal instead of the triangle. Such imagery, she maintains, encompasses symmetry and substance with:

'an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multi-dimensionality, and angles of approach. ...What we see depends on our angle of repose.' (Richardson, 1994, p. 522)

We know more, Richardson maintains, but paradoxically we also doubt what we know.

To what extent this thesis presents a research study which is replicable by others is debatable. Although I have documented my reading, my thinking, my visits, and my contacts, any other researcher would not be who I am, and would bring a different personal history and perspective to the work.

As noted in Chapter Four, Lincoln and Guba (1985), suggest that the issue of trustworthiness is more appropriate to qualitative studies than the positivist notion of reliability, which in this case would assume a position that identical and replicable human behaviour by other researchers or by other participants is both desirable and possible.

They note that the three activities of prolonged engagement, persistent observation and triangulation increase the probability that credible findings and interpretations will be produced by the researcher (Lincoln and Guba, p. 301). It has been shown within this work that the engagement of myself and participants involved long in-depth interviews, and that the collection and interpretation of material involved total immersion in, and observation of, the phenomena under study. The triangulation techniques have been documented thoroughly in Chapter Four, and I maintain that these three activities, together with a discussion of a negative finding, i.e. the issue of power misuse, (Chapter Seven), indicate that the findings from this study are both trustworthy and transferable.

The study was feasible and within my range of experience, and any problems which occurred in the initial accessing of student participants were neither insurmountable, nor surprising. I was fully prepared for the time which would be needed to complete the work, and although participants were perhaps not aware that they would want to give so much time to the study, that time was given willingly, and on occasion it was they who sought me out.

I was unprepared however for the realisation that I was interviewing people who were like me, and that to some extent I was interpreting my own life. I was also unprepared for the learning and shift in perception, which took place for me in terms of how I present myself when I work with students. Although my previous work had left me with the feeling that at times it was hard to establish '*who was learning from whom*' (Bennetts, 1994, p. 24), and I had noted that this became part of the process which Schon (1987) refers to as '*reflection-in action*', nothing could have prepared me for the enlightenment which took place whilst undertaking this study and which gave me so much insight into the way I teach.

Such feedback from participants and teachers has given me the confidence to continue to work creatively with others, in the knowledge that right-brain feeling and left-brain thinking can be combined to good effect in terms of mentor skills training.

Although I have always worked in such a way with sexual health issues, I had not fully appreciated that this experiential method of teaching would be a useful way to work on more general matters such as mentoring. Nor had I realised that it was my natural style. Having said that, I now understand more fully why the courses which I have run on evaluation always work well, and so perhaps what I am trying to say here, is that I have gained some real insight into my own teaching style and practice. Therefore although my initial reasons for undertaking an M.Ed. were to find out if I was doing my job the way that experts thought it should be done, what I actually learned from my Master's process was that I was able to learn, and that I liked research. However it has been via the Ph.D. process that I have discovered why my teaching practice seems to help students, and why I enjoy it so much.

As much of the material as possible has been made accessible to the reader. Even so, this thesis could have been longer, and there is a vast amount of material still unused. Quantity in such matters can help to achieve trustworthiness in as much as it can be shown that several people said the same things. However the quality of the work would have suffered somewhat in that the thesis could easily have been rendered repetitive without providing any more insight.

Accessibility to my own thought-patterns and line of argument is also available within the text, and the Bibliography section lists books and articles which have informed my work. From this it is hoped that the reader will have enough material, together with that from participants, to make further or alternative interpretations which may add a new or different perspective to the interpretations offered, but which, it should be recognised, will not have the benefit of the participants' own approval.

Protecting the confidentiality of participants has always been uppermost in my mind, and yet as some people involved their friends in the study by means of the grapevine, those participants could conceivably identify others by reading the direct quotes. Although this concerned me initially, it never concerned the participants and though there were one or two guessing games, when individuals would say that they recognised someone they knew, they were in fact invariably wrong. Although the Principal at Falmouth College of Arts has not asked to see the findings, as students want this thesis to be placed in their library, then there is a chance that some students will be recognised and identified. However I made this clear when checking if students objected to the thesis being openly available, and the essence of their replies seemed to be that they had no objection, and that there were issues which needed to be both stated and read.

Yet the researcher must be sensitive to issues of confidentiality even with those who profess for it not to matter. Andrew during one interview, said that it was '*a shame that it has to be confidential*', and yet I inadvertently caused Andrew some disquiet in a draft of an early paper from this work (Bennetts, 1997a), when I referred to a gift which one of his mentors had once given to him, and which Andrew felt might lead to his identification (see Chapter Four).

Although this was easily resolved, had I not sent Andrew the draft for his approval, then our relationship might have suffered, and a participant might have felt misused. Lincoln and Guba (1985) are clear in their concerns for an ethical stance in relation to participants:

'We are now prepared to state unequivocally that, as an ethical concern, co-operation and negotiation between researcher and respondents/participants are essential both to maintain research authenticity and to fulfil the criterion of safeguarding human dignity. When participants do not 'own' the data they have furnished about themselves, they have been robbed of some essential element of dignity, in addition to having been abandoned in harm's way.

If they are accorded the dignity of ownership, they have the right to shape that information's use and to assist in formulating the purposes to which they will lend their names and information. To do less is to violate, to intrude, and to condemn to indignity.' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 236)

To what extent the participants' stories about themselves and their mentors are accurate or 'true' obviously cannot be verified. Our memory can be selective, can protect us from that which we are unable to accommodate, and can glamourise the past, leaving us nostalgic for that which never existed. Such stories however are not rendered any less meaningful because we are not in a position to verify them. Bruner (1990) notes:

'It does not matter whether the account conforms to what others might say, who were witnesses, nor are we in pursuit of such ontologically obscure issues as whether the account is 'self-deceptive' or 'true'. Our interest, rather, is only what the person thought he did, what he thought he was doing it for, what kinds of plights he thought he was in, and so on.' (Bruner, 1990, p. 120)

What is important are the meanings, values, and emotions which are attached to those memories and experiences. But if, as Jaffe (1970) in her exposition of Jungian psychology maintains:

'Every statement about meaning, whether it be a hypothesis or a confession of faith, is a myth, a product partly of consciousness and partly of the unconscious.' (Jaffe, 1970, p. 148)

Then the fact that so many participants told a similar story in so many different ways is enough in itself, and indicates that even if none of the accounts are entirely accurate, these accounts are what people would have liked to have had happen, and infer a desire for the kind of relationship described.

### **Research Issues**

This study has been an attempt to discover the meaning and significance of the mentor in the life of the creative artist. As such interpretation is unending, this account can be seen only as a snapshot of how the events appeared to myself and the participants at the time of the inquiry, and so to make recommendations for the practice of mentoring, or the education of the creative person based on a profile which may change, could therefore be seen as unwise or ill-judged.

There is also another issue here and that is that what originated for me as an intellectual account of a hermeneutical philosophical approach, became an experientially apprehended philosophy, and therefore became felt and understood at a deeper level. Whilst this experience has been personally enlightening, the danger is that one can get the impression that it is truth, or at the very least, reality. In defence of such a suspect stance, perhaps it is best for me to acknowledge that difficulty and to note that although my world-view has been affected by this study, that nothing is fixed and my education will continue its course of inquiry.

Nonetheless there are issues which have arisen within the study which appear to be of such significance to the education of the creative person that they are deserving of reiteration here. Possibly the most important of these issues is that very few artists interviewed were aware of the nature of the creative cycle, and took their world-view of their mood changes and ways of relating, from the opinion of how others perceived them.

In other words they viewed themselves as outsiders, not quite fitting in with the way others thought they should be.

Yet what was clear from the outset of the study, was that they all had great similarities, and whilst aware that they might work in a non-conventional way, were also aware of the need to balance their creative output with their other relationships. Within the mentor relationship they enjoyed complete acceptance from one whom they respected and valued, and who understood not simply *who* they were, but *why* they were.

In general terms the overall lack of support for the creative child and teenager is somewhat disturbing, and there seemed to be little insight and understanding of the importance of the creative arts within the public and state school systems.

The few teachers who were able to offer support to artistically able children also appeared to be isolated within those systems, and to a great extent both mentor and pupil supported each other. Whilst recognising that school needs to prepare young people for earning a living, and that it is difficult to earn consistently in the art world, nonetheless it must be recognised also that a society which undervalues and sidelines artistic endeavour also marginalises creative imagination.

And an education system which teaches art as history instead of art as both encounter and history, is failing. Dewey asks:

'How shall the young become acquainted with the past in such a way that the acquaintance is a potent agent in appreciation of the living present?'  
(Dewey, 1963, p.23)

I would reply that this task of generativity (Erikson, Chapter Six), falls to the mentor, who in carrying what Andrew calls '*the tremendous responsibility*' of the '*grandeur of real human values*' enables the creative person to encounter art and to create their own gifts to the world.

In January 1998 I decided to re-visit the database at The University of Georgia for current work in the field. Via the Internet I logged into the The College of Education's holdings on **ericdb**. Of the 89 articles identified only one bore any relevance to this study. Polaine's (1995) article considers forces which crush creativity in teenagers. Polaine notes that teenagers whose creativity has been crushed will humiliate and crush the creativity of others and she sees mentoring as a constructive intervention.



It has been clear from my research that those who have had mentors are willing and able to act as mentors to others, and yet not many participants had access to helpful mentoring at school. Polaine's observations show a glimpse of possible consequential action of young people who have not been supported, and reinforce the need for more understanding of the creative person at a crucial time of transition.

## **Making Meaning**

Shaughnessy believes that:

'The creative power in writing is that it speaks to our humanity; it creatively contacts our soul, touches our spirit, rekindles our humanness, and satiates our thirst for meaning.' (Shaughnessy, 1983, p. 21)

Whilst this may be the case for poetry, and for some prose, it is difficult to use words creatively within a document which is open to academic critique, and so if the full power of the traditional mentor relationship is not conveyed clearly and sensitively within this thesis, then the reader will appreciate that this is due more to my inadequacy with words than to a lack of insight into the phenomenon. However Waterhouse (1991) urges us never to forget that:

'...every piece of writing, however lofty its intention, is but the sound of one person talking to another.' (Waterhouse, 1991, p. 142)

And Eisner (1981) has stated that:

'Artistic approaches to research are less concerned with the discovery of truth than with the creation of meaning. What art seeks is not the discovery of laws of nature about which true statements or explanations can be given, but rather the creation of images that people will find meaningful and from which their fallible and tentative views of the world can be altered, rejected, or made more secure.' (Eisner, 1981, p. 9)

In attempting a study which had as its primary aim a notion to provide an insight into the meaning of the mentor relationship in the life of the creative person, I have to admit to some vagueness about my concept of meaning, but I had hoped somewhat naively, that this would be so obvious by the end of the study that I would simply state it concisely.

However as the study progressed I came to realise that meaning was subject to emotion and time, as well as to cognition and behaviour, and that therefore self was also in constant flux and change. Kearney (1994) has remarked:

**'The narrative self is not some permanently subsisting substance (*idem*). It is to be understood rather as a perpetually, self-rectifying identity (*ipse*) which knows that its story, like that of the imagination which narrates it, is never complete.'** (Kearney, 1994, p. 395)

**In this realisation I concluded that all of the meanings throughout the life of the artist were as valid, and yet as ephemeral as summer morning mist. But such a comment is hardly helpful and it was in returning to my theme of the mentor relationship as an art form which finally helped me to clarify my thoughts and understanding. Although I have referred to the mentor relationship as an art form throughout the latter part of this work, what exactly do I mean by it; that it has beauty and form, or that it is crafted by artisans?**

**Sometimes in order to see that which is not immediately obvious, it is necessary to alter our vision. The old art of scrying, foretelling future possibilities, required dimmed lights, and a bowl of water or black concave mirror. Some called this witchcraft. These days psychologists can produce similar effects of right brain perception by getting people to listen to 'white noise', bombarding the thinking brain with meaningless sound, or reversely by reducing external sensory stimulus in a darkened room. Less subtle techniques of accessing right-brain perception have also entered the world of commerce in the form of brain-storming and lateral thinking.**

**Watts (1990) quotes the sage Lao-tzu as saying:**

**'The five colours will blind a man's sight.  
The five sounds will deaden a man's hearing.  
The five tastes will spoil a man's palate.'** (Watts, 1990, p. 46)

**This does not imply a dislike of the sensual, but implies that limiting our notions to a fixed vision and naming of only five colours, sounds and tastes, deprives us from experiencing the nuances and subtleties of shade, blend and flavour. To name something can fix it too firmly, can tighten its boundaries and limit the perception, all of which hinder the apprehension of the experience.**

**In a similar way an art work which says too much, which is too obvious, and which leaves no room for further meaning, holds little appeal beyond the decorative or utilitarian. Although I have a number of art-works in my home, there are some to which I attach more significance than others. This significance is not one which is influenced by the opinion of other people, but instead depends on more than is immediately apparent to the eye, and involves a relationship with the work which demands an emotional and an intellectual response.**

There is a sense of awe at the artist's skill of portraying a concept or a state of emotion, but there is also an ever-present newness of perception regardless of how well-known the piece is to me. Each time I read the poetry, hear the underlying theme of the music, view the picture, or trace the line of the sculpture, there is a new meaning, a fresh insight, and a sense that there is still more to come, that I have not yet grasped the whole, and that my learning and my appreciation will continue. There is space for listening between the notes, reading between the lines, perceiving that which has not been painted.

That is the art of the craft; the ability of artists to engage another in comprehending an ever-new vision of what they themselves perceive, coupled with enough space and stillness to enjoy personal perspectives.

The mentor relationship endures in the heart and mind of the artist for exactly the same reasons. It engages the intellect and the emotion, and provides just the stimulus necessary to support cherished dreams and promote new ideas.

It allows debate and argument, but is not a purveyor of absolutes, and so there is always space in which the imagination can dance. Like the icons which are painted according to formal conventions to allow the viewer to directly apprehend the mystery of God (Kearney, 1994, p. 135), the authenticity of the mentor relationship allows a direct apprehension of the power of human imagination. As with the relationship of art to the one who engages with it, so too the mentor relationship is one which involves personal values and experience, and therefore cannot be prescriptive. Field (1950) says:

'Art is not only a created fusion between what is and what might be; it is also a created way of giving the inner subjective reality of feeling an outer form, in order that it may be shared, and so also tested and verified; it is a making of new bottles for the continually distilled new wine of developing experience.' (Field, 1950, p. 155)

But can there be said to be any meaning in the mentor relationship? It is certain that each relationship is deemed to have some significance in the life of the artist, as can be seen from the participants quoted in Chapter Five and again here:

'Those three people probably mean more than any three. If one looks back they mark some pivotal turning points.' Andrew, painter.

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'I've got a better quality of life through her, and through the fact that we do share things, and we share problems.' Edward, ceramicist.

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'He opened my mind to the existence of a whole world beyond what I had personally experienced in this very narrow suburban environment.' Keith, painter, writer.

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'It's communication of a meaningful kind. ...Somebody there holding a light for me.' Kate, ceramicist.

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'I think most artists have a desperate need to keep moving, to keep learning. That you have to feel like you're constantly developing, you really have to. The mentors in my life have generated that sense of something changing.'  
Kerri,

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However although it can be clearly seen that the mentor is meaningful in the life of the artist, is it yet possible to state what that meaning might be? As discussed in Chapter Six, humans develop a sense of self out of an interaction with the environment, and this interaction can be seen as a creative act. But to what extent the self continues to grow into its potentialities, depends a great deal on self-worth, nurturing, and opportunity. Vaillant (1977) contends:

'...it is not the isolated traumas of childhood that shape our future, but the quality of sustained relationships with important people.' (Vaillant, 1977, p. 29)

All of those interviewed in this study were assisted at some time in their development by a mentor figure. Those whose upbringing had been somewhat deprived, made up for much lost time whilst in a mentor relationship. Those who had enjoyed positive childhood experiences found that mentor relationships enhanced and continued their creative development. In all instances mentors fulfilled a need, and that need was the desire to become who they were meant to be. The mentors acted as catalysts for creativity. But they did more than that. They also achieved the ultimate creative act, the '*miracle of integration*' (Read, 1960, p. 104):

'In order to 'realise' other people, make them and their uniqueness fully real to oneself, one has in a sense to put oneself into the other, one has temporarily to undo that separation of self and other which one had so laboriously achieved. ...But to do this and yet maintain one's integrity, neither to go wholly over to the opponent's side, nor yet retreat into armoured assertion of one's view-point, that is the task demanded. To be able to break down the barrier of space between self and other, yet at the same time to be able to maintain it, this seems to be the paradox of creativity.' (Field, 1950, p. 165).

Although Field describes it as a *'task'*, it appears that the communion between mentor and artist is not one which is planned, or which is seen as a goal to achieve. Read's *'miracle of integration'* is one which happens as a result of letting go of conscious control, rather than one of retaining control. It is an act of trust, which is reciprocated surely, but which is not premeditated nor calculated. The mentor is not simply one who enables the creative artist to live in a practical sense, although this is obviously of enormous significance to the artist, and without such support creativity would take second place to survival. The mentor also nurtures and develops the creative spirit in the artist, who in finding avenues of opportunity for this creative spirit, makes life meaningful. The meaning of the mentor in the life of the artist appears to be that the mentor enables life itself to be made meaningful, and in doing that, provides chances for living the authentic life, chances of achieving self-actualisation.

My 1994 study showed that an adult appears to achieve a greater level of self-actualisation when acting in the role of the mentor. Life tends to become more significant when it becomes significant in the life of another person, and assumes a meaning not previously realised. The continued mutuality of benefit in the traditional mentor/learner alliance seems to pivot on the meaning each affords the other.

However perhaps there is still more to the relationship than can be accessed by meaning alone, as it has already been shown that there is a more direct apprehension which each has for the other, and that it is this experience which gives the mentor relationship special significance in the life of the artist.

This is the spirit of the alliance, the sense of unity which exists for the two separate identities, the self-transcendence which paradoxically leads to the actualisation of self.

It may be that in looking for description, the significance of the relationship will never be revealed; and if we take the analogy of the art-form further we may begin to understand the inability of the artists to put the meaning of the relationship into words. Art conveys the unsayable, and presents itself to be experienced and felt.

Sontag (1967) has argued eloquently against the interpretation of art, and suggests that what is needed instead is *'an erotics of art'*, sensed, felt, and therefore understood. She says:

'Our task is not to find the maximum amount of content in a work of art, much less to squeeze more content out of the work than is already there. Our task is to cut back content so that we can see the thing at all.' (Sontag, 1967, p. 14)

In order 'to see the thing at all' we need to see the whole of it. The mentor relationship symbolises a unity of intellect and emotion, clear thinking and passion, dreams and action. De Botton (1997, p. A12) in describing Nietzsche's views on art, talks of the state of elation, and the cool ordered approach and says:

'The miracle of art was to be able to hold these two elements together, to unite order and intoxication.' (De Botton, 1997, )

I would argue that the traditional mentor relationship too is one which needs to be understood holistically, as more than just the sum of its parts, and that any attempt to identify its essence by reducing it to those parts will not produce the spirit which is present in the shared encounter.

Analysis allows access to certain components of the traditional relationship, and these may be applicable in attempting to train prospective mentors in the interpersonal skills of mentoring (Bennetts, 1994), but this is merely perceiving the craft of the alliance. In order to appreciate and perceive the artistry of the traditional mentor relationship it is essential to perceive and sense the whole.

Flaherty (1992) suggests that in our concern with recognising the meaning of art, we have lost sight of its primary significance as a '*feast for the senses*'. This study indicates that traditional mentor relationships, like original art-works, are unique and offer similar 'feasts for the senses', whilst supporting instrumental functions and major developmental transitions. They should be seen as valid and vital channels of continuing education and development for those who make their lives in the creative arts.

Truth cannot be postulated in respect of the aesthetic, nor can any proposition in poetics be disputed (Steiner, 1989, p. 68). Hermeneutic propositions are not, he says, candidates for the truth-values of logicians. What message then, does this thesis contain, and what is its value?

Heidegger in his seminal work on language, is adamant that we are always '*on the way*' to apprehending the message, and may be better served by attempting to understand '*the veiled hint*' of dialogue, which '*says*' by not speaking aloud (1971). It is in keeping with this concern that I have attempted to present the metaphysics of the mentor relationship by encouraging the reader to read between the written lines, and thereby see that the silences are not quiet, and the spaces are not empty.

This work is offered as a step toward an aesthetic understanding of the traditional mentor relationship.

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# Appendix I

## Modules of Advanced Professional Study

## **Putting Research into Practice**

'Art is the imposing of a pattern on experience, and our aesthetic enjoyment is recognition of the pattern.' Alfred North Whitehead, Dialogues, 10th June 1943.

To evoke in oneself a feeling one has once experienced and having evoked it in oneself then by means of movements, lines, colours, sounds, or forms expressed in words, so to transmit that feeling - this is the activity of art. Art is a human activity consisting in this, that one man consciously by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that others are infected by these feelings and also experience them.' Tolstoy, 'What is Art?' 1898.

'Creative minds always have been known to survive any kind of bad training.' Anna Freud, 1968 Annual Freud Lecture, New York Psychoanalytical Society.

### **Background to the Teaching Programme**

Shortly after completing the M.Ed. in October 1994, I visited the Continuous Professional Development Unit of the University College of St. Mark and St. John in Plymouth (Marjon's), to discuss plans that I had for delivering a programme based on my research. The Head of Department described to me the required format for the design of short courses for adult teachers and it appeared that the Module of Advanced Professional Study (MAPS) would be the most appropriate and practical method of delivering such work.

The MAPS consisted of 20 hours taught study, and 20 hours directed study, plus a written assignment of 4,000 thousand words, and carried a 20 credit M level status. Successful completion of this module would enable students to gain remission of one term from an M.Ed. degree. It was suggested that the design and facilitation of a MAPS based on my mentor research would be welcomed.

I have established good working links with most schools in Cornwall, but over the years had come to regard one particular school as outstanding in its commitment to both pupil and teacher welfare, and also the wider community. In the last seven years I had facilitated education sessions there with both pupils and teachers, but latterly had concentrated on delivering workshops and longer training courses to staff on sexual health and personal and social education. These sessions were always well attended and I viewed the school as a venue for experimenting with difficult issues within a mutually supportive setting.

As the nature of the mentor relationship appeared to consist of skills in which I had some teaching experience I decided to approach the Deputy Head, who was in charge of Personal and Social Education within the school, to see whether the proposed course would be seen to have educational value for staff who worked there.

The timing was fortuitous as the school was in the process of working towards Investors in People, a prestigious award given to organisations who are able to demonstrate commitment and excellence in staff development. The Head had read my Master's dissertation, and both he and his Deputy were agreeable to me facilitating a MAPS course for staff, on the interpersonal skills of mentor relationships. The charge per student by Marjons was heavily subsidised and was only £40.00, but the Head offered to pay this charge for any staff member who wished to attend. The Head also offered to allow the course to be taught on the school premises between 4.00 pm and 6.30 pm every week for 8 weeks, and to provide all audio visual aid equipment, and refreshments.

Marjons is affiliated to the University of Exeter and to be eligible to register for a MAPS, requires that applicants must:

- a) be qualified teachers, or
- b) hold relevant professional qualifications, or
- c) possess a degree or appropriate qualifying certificate which enables them to do the work, or
- d) have experience of a least three years working in an educational or training setting and show evidence of a standard of written work appropriate to the course. Such written work must be in the form of a coherent assignment of at least 2,000 words and written within the last three years.

The MAPS administrator, or the MAPS co-ordinator, then makes a recommendation to the Director of CPD to decide whether the written work is of sufficient standard before a decision is made regarding the offer of a place.

After some discussion with the Deputy Head-teacher, it was decided that the course should be advertised within the school and that prospective students should be aware of the nature of the MAPS, inasmuch as it would place a high level of personal commitment on them as regards a willingness to take part in all aspects of the learning. The aims and objectives of the course were made available, and a reading list was suggested. I sent an introductory flyer to the school billing the course as 'serious fun' and saying that it was due to commence in the January of the winter term of 1996 and end in March the same year. Three external students, two of whom were youth workers, and one who was a health promotion officer, joined the 14 teachers who formed the cohort of 17.

## **Maps Outline**

The course title, aim, rationale, objectives, intended content, and assignment, as written in the Validation Proposal Form are listed here.

<b>Title of MAPS:</b>	<b>Mentor Relationships in Educational Settings</b>
<b>Aim</b>	To provide an opportunity for educationalists to explore the interpersonal dynamics of mentor relationships in their professional and personal settings, from the perspective of mentor and learner, via experiential learning.
<b>Rationale</b>	Educationalists are frequently required to work as mentors with peers and students, but it is noted that mentoring is increasingly becoming confused with supervision or coaching. This course defines mentoring and highlights the importance of process in the relationship. Based on empirical evidence, it identifies and explains the interpersonal dynamics inherent in this reflective relationship.
<b>Objectives</b>	By the end of this MAPS participants will be able to :  *demonstrate practical insight and understanding of the importance of interpersonal skills in relationships *identify desirable mentor and learner qualities, skills and behaviours *debate and compare the issues surrounding workplace, professional and personal mentoring from the perspective of reflective practitioners *facilitate effective guidance and support in mentor initiatives based on experiential learning and theoretical knowledge

## **Proposed Content**

- 1) The mentor concept: what, when, where, who?
- 2) Relationships and interpersonal style
- 3) Interpersonal communication; verbal and non-verbal, self-disclosure
- 4) Models and theories of formal mentoring; ethical issues
- 5) Adult learning styles; theories, preferences, reflective practice
- 6) Mentor research; presentation and debate, informal mentor concepts
- 7) Gender, sexuality, age and values; relevance and practice
- 8) Mentoring children, young people, adults; how, what, when? Best practice for the future

## **Assessment**

Students will be expected to produce a 4,000 word assignment on the general theme of:

**'Supporting Informal Mentor Relationships within Formal Work Settings'**

or

**'Mentoring as a Tool for Continuous Professional Development; Problems, Pitfalls and Strategies for Success'**

Students will be expected to keep reflective learning journals for the duration of the course. These will be the property of the students, unless they choose to share their reflections with their peers. Students will be expected to participate fully in the group, and to act in constructive ways to facilitate their own, and others, learning processes.

## **Course Content**

The complete weekly course input has been laid out here in lesson plan format, so that the reader can become familiar with the direction of the whole programme, and have greater understanding of the process. The format is self-explanatory and is divided up into the planned exercises, the reasoning behind such exercises, the aimed for outcome, and the approximate weekly time scale. Certain exercises used questions and prompt sheets, and they can be found at the end of this Appendix.

### **Week One Input**

Introduction of tutor, work, and background. Statement of ground rules and invitation to discuss.

Group introductions to tutor.

Ask individuals to write down what, in their opinion, makes a good mentor.

Give out envelopes and ask them to seal information into envelopes with own mark.

Collect envelopes which will be opened by individuals at end of course.

Divide group into 2 and discuss:

1) What each expects from this course?

2) What each will contribute to the course?

Feedback to main group.

Explanation of how course will proceed and will be assessed. Give out learning logs.

Ask group to brainstorm the word MENTOR

### **Rationale**

To inform the group of tutor's approach and background.

To inform tutor of individual backgrounds.

To see whether individuals change their view of a mentor in the 8 weeks of the course. If so, then why?

To establish that the learning process is two way.

To provide understanding to the group that in the main, the group will work in a participatory and experiential learning style. To justify the value of the learning log.

To introduce new concepts of mentoring to the group.

### **Outcome**

Individual understanding of tutor's value base for course.

Tutor's understanding of their personal value base and organisational culture will be clearer.

Tutor and group will be able to assess what effect the course has had on view of a mentor.

Agenda of group is stated explicitly and written up by tutor. Group begins to work together.

The value base of the tutor with regard to style of teaching and assessing reflective practitioners is stated. The learning logs will belong to participants.

The group will have a broader vision of the mentor role.

**Week One Input**

Ask individuals to work alone and think of those who have been instrumental in helping them to develop their potential as people.

Ask them to consider in particular:

How they met?

Who chose whom?

What were their qualities/skills?

Then ask everyone to choose a partner and share this information. Partners must listen and ask for clarification where necessary.

Feedback to group at the end and compile lists of qualities and skills.

Close workshop by asking for comments so far. Give own feedback to group.

**Week Two Input**

Round of group with name game as ice-breaker.

Tutor input on 'B' and 'D' types (Maslow) and 'M' types (Egan)

**Rationale**

To enable participants to reflect on past important learning, and those who facilitated that learning.

To develop an understanding of the value of others in our lives.

Enables group to assess initial session, and allows tutor to assess commitment.

**Rationale**

To remind everyone of names.

To provide and understanding of areas of growth and growth needs.

**Outcome**

Participants will have made a start of information retrieval for their learning logs, and will, by beginning to relive those relationships, understand their value.

Individuals will also have begun to practice listening and responding skills, coupled with the micro-skills of probing and clarifying, in a person-centred way.

Demonstration of two-way feedback process, and joint ownership of course.

**Outcome**

Restored group cohesion.

Insight into individual needs and types.

## **Week Two Input**

Give handouts of questions related to interpersonal style. ask group to work through list in privacy and plot graph to highlight 'hills and valleys'.

Ask if any themes emerge. Are you too hard on yourself? Can any identified strengths help with weak areas? Are there any significant issues of your style not alluded to here?

Give handouts of interpersonal styles. Ask group to write one page describing their present interpersonal style, using the handouts as a guide. Feed back individually.

Ask group to consider **RELATIONSHIPS** as a concept. Ask them to work in pairs to discuss what is meant by **establishing a relationship**. What has been the experience of participants in establishing close relationships? Feedback to group.

Tutor input on 'investing' in others with regard to relationships.  
Close and questions.

## **Rationale**

To highlight the dimensions and categories of relating to others.

To allow people to state how and with whom they relate best.

To promote a broader thought pattern of how relationships begin and are maintained.

To promote thought on purposeful, but no less real, relationships.  
To tie up loose ends.

## **Outcome**

Participants will have established their own agenda for growth which can be addressed in reflective logs.

Reflection on personal style will have taken place.

A list of behaviours which take place between two people in day today relationships.

The validity of 'engineered' relationships will have been considered.  
To place participants back into the present.



### **Week Three Input**

Tutor input on Rogers' 'core conditions' for learning. Relate to research on mentor relationships with examples.

Ask group how we know when someone is really listening to us. Write up on flip-chart. Give input on listening and attending.

Tutor input on identifying feelings in relation to content of message. Give examples on OHP. 'You feel (name emotion) because (name behaviour).'

Ask group about honesty in relating. Should we always be honest? Are there times when it is unwise? If so, why? What about disclosing personal details to others? Discuss Jourard's view that self-disclosure = healthy personalities.

Ask group what might bar self-disclosure?

**Outside influences** (culture, family background)

**Self-influences** (flight from self-knowledge, flight from responsibility and change, fear of intimacy, reverse halo effect).

### **Rationale**

To demonstrate to group that these conditions are relevant to learning relationships.

To develop insight into the importance of 'being with' people who wish to talk.

To show how emotion can affect thinking and behaviour.

To promote thought on self-disclosure and its relevance to mentor relationships.

To discuss factors which might inhibit disclosure.

### **Outcome**

Participants will be more aware of how these conditions affect mentor relationships.

Participants will have identified what might detract from a good relationship, and what might improve it.

Participants will have insight into the meaning behind language in relationships.

The group will have considered in general, the issue of self-disclosure in relationships.

Insight into inhibiting factors which influence individual ability to disclose appropriately.

**Week Three Input**

Tutor input on Egan's criteria for assessing appropriate self-disclosure. Use OHP's. Discuss modes of self-disclosure:

- \*verbal , \*non-verbal,
- \*behavioural

Are there ever conflicting messages between these three modes?

Hand out incomplete sentence list and ask group to complete sentences on their own, being as honest as possible. Circle those most important statements. Chose two each to share with group.

Ask the group to read out their two statements to give others some insight into their lives.

**Week Four Input**

Ask participants to think about the nature of the mentor relationship and its implications for confidentiality. To whom does the mentor owe loyalty regarding confidential information acquired in the course of the relationship? In two groups discuss and feedback.

**Rationale**

To evaluate when disclosure is being used appropriately and to identify how it is conveyed.

To enable participants to consider their own lives and feelings.

To allow participants to have responsibility for what they choose to disclose.

**Rationale**

To address the ethics of the relationship when faced with personal and organisational loyalty.

**Outcome**

The group will have more understanding of the importance of appropriate self-disclosure and its effect on relationships.

Participants will have learned more about themselves in a safe environment.

Participants will have had the opportunity to tell the group more about themselves, and will have learned more about others.

**Outcome**

Personal values will be considered by participants who will be able to formulate their own moral stance to the issue of whether learners can expect their confidences to be honoured.

**Week Four Input**

Ask participants to consider instances where confidentiality has been an issue for them at work. Ask them to form into 4's and discuss their feelings about broken confidences.  
Feedback

Ask participants to consider in two groups the role of the mentor from the point of view of:

\*the aim/objectives of setting up a mentor programme

\*the role of mentor/learner and what is expected of them.

Feedback findings and rational for recommendations.

Input of the stages of formal mentor/learner relationships with handouts.

Feedback and questions.

**Rationale**

To highlight the importance of trusting relationships and how the betrayal of trust can affect our working lives.

To promote debate and discussion on what on reasonably be expected from mentors and learners in formal settings.

To highlight the transitory phases of the relationship.

Clarification of issues.

**Outcome**

A sensitivity to the difference between secrecy and confidentiality.

A clearer picture of the issues which must be addressed when attempting to implement formal mentoring in the workplace.

Participants will have insight into the dynamics of the dyad.

Understanding of the psychology of the relationship.

**Week Five Input**

Introduce the idea to the group of exploring how adults learn.

Ask them to write down three things which they learned in the last 2 years.

Then ask them to note the reason they learned them, and how they learned them.

Is there a pattern to their learning?

Do they seem to learn best by:

motivation

reward

support

having fun

one step at a time?

Do they choose to learn by:

trial and error

observing

imitating

finding a good teacher?

**Rationale**

To enable participants to reflect on their learning style and preference.

**Outcome**

Individuals will have identified own patterns of learning.

**Week Five Input**

Show Kolb's experiential learning cycle on OHP.

Explain that experience does not equate with learning, but is a potential for learning. Learning depends on desire and ability to change.

Show Blooms taxonomy of learning.

It has implications in that different types of learning are best achieved by a variety of methods.

Learning strategies are how people learn to learn.

Mastery

+application=learning potential being achieved.

Give out Honey and Mumford's questionnaire.

Tutor input on OHP of learning theories. Behaviourist, Cognitive, Humanist.

Ask group, in terms of M/L relationship, to justify which is the most useful approach to adopt.

**Rationale**

To enable theory and practice to be integrated.

To provide theoretical background to mentor practice.

**Outcome**

Individuals will have identified their preferred style/s

Individuals will have insight into why they learn best with certain methods.

**Week Five Input**

Ask group to work individually for 5 mins., reflecting on the learning that took place with their mentors.

Ask them to note:

How they learned?

What they learned at the time?

What they learned on reflection?

Ask them to spend 10 mins. sharing this with a partner.

Close after feedback.

**Rationale**

To enable reflection of previous learning relationships.

**Outcome**

Identification of what was learned at the time, and what has since been understood by that experience.

To allow issues to be raised and cleared.

Evaluation of past learning.

**Week Six Input**

Presentation of mentor research of OHP and discussion.

**Rationale**

To provide insight into research findings, and invite comparison with own relationships.

**Outcome**

Participants will have a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the relationship

Ask group to work in small units to discuss relevance and implications of findings to formal mentor initiatives.

To enable reflection on the traditional relationship and allow participants to debate issues.

Participants will have produced workable strategies for action in formal settings.

Ask them to make notes of issues raised and strategies for coping with these issues. Feedback by units to group.

Show Torrance's model of creative learning and teaching - Incubation model.

Take feedback and write up on chart.

To produce list of group ideas

Each person will have complete list for assignment.

**Week Seven Input**

Introduce group to idea of role models and heroes. Ask them to work in 2 groups to produce a list of how role models, heroes and mentors are similar, and how they differ. Feedback to whole group.

Divide group into five small units. Ask them to formulate ways in which the mentor can help the learner in the following age groups:  
adult mentor/primary aged child  
adult mentor/junior aged child  
adult mentor/late teenager  
adult mentor/ adult learner in different profession  
peer mentor (same profession)/same age learner  
Feedback.

Open discussion of barriers in mentor relationships. How can they be managed? What about distance?

List issues to carry forward on flip chart.

**Rationale**

To debate the influence of other factors in the creative process of learning.

To encourage participants to assess different needs which may be age appropriate.

To assess difficulties in relationship in terms of positive action.

To keep any arising issues on agenda for week 8.

**Outcome**

Participants will have considered and compared all 3 influences, and be aware of their limitations and role.

Participants will have produced useful list of mentor interventions suitable for each age group.

Participants will have developed strategies for coping with problems.

Participants will have a checklist for reference.

## **Week Eight Input**

Introduce last week as one which will address mutuality of benefit, develop plans for formal initiatives, and look at measuring outcomes.

Ask group to work in 2 small groups.

Ask one group to develop a list of mentor benefits from the relationship, and the other to develop a list of learner benefits.

Who gets the best deal?

Divide group into 4 units and ask them to plan a mentor initiative. They must produce:

aim, objectives, details of training, details of how they will measure effectiveness. Feedback. Clarify as necessary. Show mentor video.

Tutor input on process and content measures.

Give out envelopes from week one.

Tutor discussion of assignments, timing of work. Close and thanks.

## **Rationale**

To remind group of focus of the course, and that this is the last session prior to the assignment.

To allow group to consider the mutuality of the mentor/learner alliance and its outcomes.

To enable group to consider best practice for future.

To provide basis for measuring outcomes.

To see if participants still agree with what they wrote, or if they want to change it.

To provide guidance for those going forward for MAPS accreditation.

## **Outcome**

Participants will focus on addressing the future.

Participants will realise the extent of the benefits to the mentor as well as to the learner.

Group will have produced workable structures for success in mentoring initiatives.

An understanding by the group of the need to justify programmes in formal settings, and how to do it.

A more complete definition of a mentor.

Participants will understand what is required of them and when.



## **Course Process**

This section will address the course process rather than the theoretical content, and will refer to the input as 'Week 1', 'Week 2' and so on. Where relevant, some group sessions will also be related in more detail here.

The underlying purpose of this course was to provide not only appropriate and useful educational sessions for participants, but to attempt to see whether the characteristics of the mentors who had facilitated their development, matched those from my 1994 study. I reasoned that if this was so, and I could somehow get the group to 'connect' once more with their experience, then therein lay the possibility of a true experiential learning programme. If however their experiences had been different from my study cohort, then my Ph.D. study plans would need re-thinking. Whatever their experiences, the course was planned to enable deep personal insight into themselves, and how they each best related to and learned from, others. There was therefore something of a risk, both in terms of my study and in terms of working in such a way with more than one person at once.

The course was based on findings from my Master's study and designed to examine the validity of issues raised in that work via reflective exercises. As well as wanting to recreate the mentor phenomenon within the group, I also wanted to discover whether the skills, qualities and general approach of the traditional mentor, could be usefully transferred to a more formal setting. And more than that I wished to discover whether individuals thought that the approach was ethical, and had value as a means of continuing education. The theoretical material for the course was gleaned and adapted from more than one source including the Master's degree course work at The University of Sheffield, and the City and Guilds 725 course.

As discussed in Chapter One, one of the major influences in my working life has been the contribution made by Dr. Gerard Egan to the practical aspects of human relationships. As such, much of this course and the value base it follows, is taken from Egan's approach to human relations training and the assumptions he makes when working with such groups (Egan, 1976). The skills required for facilitating this course were learned via Gerard Egan when I was initially a student at the summer school held each year at York, and later as a trainer there, and those skills have been honed by participants on courses I have facilitated since then.

Within my Master's study, it had been shown that reflection on such meaningful relationships could cause both deep happiness and sadness. I was not sure how each person would react when facing such reflection within a group setting.

Although reasonably confident in working with groups on sensitive issues, I did have some concerns about the work and what it might mean for participants. When training, I have a rule that I only use exercises that I have experienced myself. Although I had experience of the mentor relationship, there were some exercises within the course which were new to me, and it seemed essential that I should be involved with the group in those tasks, in order to test their value at a different level to that of the cognitive.

The group met at 4.00 pm. after a working day and worked with a tea break of 15 to 20 minutes, until 6.30 pm. each week. Such conditions were not ideal, as the group was tired, but as this course was viewed as having relevance to their professional and personal lives, was more acceptable than an evening or weekend time-slot. The room in which the course took place was comfortable, carpeted and warm, and had easy chairs, all of which helped to establish a reasonably relaxed atmosphere. Main group work took place in a circle with low coffee tables in the centre of the circle, for papers and refreshments. The purpose of this arrangement was to enable everyone to see the other people, and any audio-visual aids, without barriers. I do not subscribe to the pretence that the role of facilitator becomes less obvious with such a seating plan, as this is simply not so, but I have found in the past, that communication amongst all group members occurs much more readily within a circle.

As three of the group were not members of the school staff, initial introductions were helpful in putting names to faces. Some of the staff on this course were also new to me, despite my many visits to the school. However all of the group were there voluntarily and this is always a bonus to anyone in a facilitation capacity, as it tends to ensure much more co-operation in working together.

It was important to me from the outset that we should work within agreed boundaries as this course was based on research material which had been gained in a one to one setting, and which had relied heavily on person-centred techniques which bordered on counselling. As such, mutual support, trust and respect were uppermost in my mind when considering the ground rules of the course for discussion with the group. Had I followed the usual training approach of allowing the group to work out its own ground rules for discussion, it is unlikely that they would have placed much emphasis on values but instead might have concentrated on the minutiae of group functioning, such as the right to take time out of the room for a cigarette.

However bearing in mind just how important time out can be, I informed the group that as adults they were entitled to leave the course, the group, and the room at any time they wished, and that we would not waste time sitting in groups negotiating back our basic human rights.

This blunt but open statement caused general relief, and meant that we were able to concentrate right from the start on the nature of this quite intensive course. It was agreed that the group would aim to work together within a framework of confidentiality, appropriate self-disclosure and with a mutual respect for different viewpoints. The following value base of the course was introduced to the group for discussion.

### **Value Assumptions of This Course: (Adapted from Egan, 1976)**

That it is 'good'

- \*to develop a wide range of interpersonal skills
- \*to communicate empathic understanding to others
- \*to develop ways to show respect for others
- \*to be open and self-disclosing in appropriate ways
- \*to develop behavioural ways to show genuineness in interpersonal relationships
- \*to challenge others to do what they say they want to do - especially in terms of interpersonal style

This list promoted general debate and one participant asked if there were any written rules for appropriate self-disclosure. I replied that personal rules should be set by each individual but that there were some guidelines on this area which we would be addressing as the course progressed. Meanwhile I iterated that it should be borne in mind that a course which was about relationships, was also about personal responsibility, and therefore participants should think about what they wanted to disclose, before actually doing it, as confidentiality, albeit agreed, could never be guaranteed.

The group devised a list of expectations from the course and contributions they would give to the others. The most common expectations were that they would learn listening skills, relationship skills and practical skills for use in school. Interestingly they also noted that they hoped that the course would validate their own mentor experiences. The most common contributions were those of willingness to give commitment and enthusiasm; support others; share experiences; and be honest. Having checked my initial course objectives against their expectations I found only one slight discrepancy, and that was in the area of counselling.

The course was not a counselling course, it was an interpersonal skills course and so I explained that although we would be using skills which were similar to those used in counselling, the course would not be aiming to address how to work on psychotherapeutic issues.

What we would be addressing, were our own interpersonal responses and styles which reputable counselling training courses covered as necessities. There would be similarities, but instead of working on how other people relate to each other, we would be working on ourselves, using the skills and micro-skills often used in counselling practice.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, I had been aware when planning the course that the seemingly innocuous sessions were going to demand much of participants. However it would not have been useful to labour the point and I had to allow participants to reach that level of understanding on their own, and to see that the first step in working with others is to have some personal insight. Human relations training is risky, and the facilitator walks a very fine line between protecting participants, and allowing them to be responsible for what they do and say within the group. But to know others well, it is also important to know personal limitations and strengths, and there are no short cuts to such knowledge.

The last exercise of the first day was based directly on the interviews I had undertaken for my initial mentor study (Bennetts, 1994), and began the learning process of each participant. My intention was to re-connect participants with their positive learning experiences because as Reason (1993) postulates:

'We cannot express experience directly, even to ourselves. Once the immediacy of the moment has passed we need to re-member it for ourselves, and to re-present it in some form if we wish to communicate with others.' (Reason, 1993, p. 279)

Within 20 minutes one woman in her fifties asked to speak to me and was close to tears. We went out of the room and she told me that she had just realised that there had only ever been one person in her life who had valued her, and that was a head teacher when she was a child. This realisation had caused her to admit that the course might be quite emotional for her, and she was not sure if she could handle such feelings nor the academic content of the course.

I asked her about this man and what she felt he had seen in her. She said that he had believed in her ability, but quickly justified this by saying that he had probably simply felt sorry for her. I had not met the woman before that afternoon, but after a few moments of listening to what she was saying, knew that I had to take a chance. I asked her what she thought he might say if he were listening now to her concerns about remaining with the course. After reflection she said that he would encourage her to just get on with it. So I suggested that she might like to listen to what he would say, but to feel free to leave now if that was what she really wanted to do. She decided to go straight back in and join the others.

It is perhaps worth saying here, that this participant did not miss one session, was the first to submit her assignment for which she gained the equivalent of an 'A' grade, and subsequently began an M.Ed. During the course her confidence blossomed and she participated fully in every exercise.

The list of skills and qualities which the group produced during the Week 1 session, was very similar to those produced in my first study. Mentors should be, they stated:

Respected	Responsible
Good communicators	Door openers concerning career opportunities
Good listeners	Advocates
Empathic	Teachers of self-reliance
Challenging	Practical
Confidence Builders	Inspirational
Critics	Friends
Hand-holders	Intellectual
Guides	Sounding Posts
Confidantes	Learners
Radical	Altruistic
Charismatic	Exemplars
Non-judgemental	Interesting
Honest	Loving
Fun	Available

They also proposed that mentors should be perceived to have:

Humanity	Ability to give praise
Passion	Self-respect
Spirituality	Understanding

This lent some weight to my argument that traditional mentor relationships share commonalities. However although I felt a certain relief at this point, I was also aware that there was still a considerable way to go before I could assess whether the base from which I was working, matched their experience of a mentor. Although most of those attending the course were from the same establishment, it should not be assumed that they knew each other all that well. They were busy people who, other than taking coffee breaks in the staff-room, would not normally have time to form very deep relationships in school.

However during the first half of the second week, when the group had become reasonably relaxed with each other, we began to consider interpersonal styles of relating in order to identify areas where individuals may like to see some change. The questionnaire and prompt sheet used in this exercise can be found in Appendix II. This, and the following exercise caused some good-humoured moans and groans amongst the participants as they started to recognise and address parts of their personal make-up which were usually ignored.

By the time that each person read out their description of their present style of relating, with some very honest statements, the group was interjecting with supportive and humorous responses which showed that their level of understanding of themselves and each other was beginning to increase.

It is always fascinating to see a set of quite disparate individuals forming strong bonds, and to recognise that those bonds are seemingly caused by the same conditions of trust, genuineness, and regard, that exist in traditional mentor relationships. It can also be seen that in order to establish this bond, there has to be a willingness to take a risk of being quite open, and to be simply who we are. Whilst accepting that emotional experiences tend to be heightened within well-formed groups, there was a mutual recognition at this point of the course, that a major step forward had taken place.

Such times are rewarding for the facilitator, but caution should always be on the agenda as it is at this point that group members often want to relate more details of themselves than might be prudent. I had to bear in mind that especially for those people who worked together on a daily basis, too much disclosure at this point could actually jeopardise and inhibit future relationships within the working environment. To this end it was important to begin to look at past relationships and how people within alliances behave, and also at the validity and worth of relationships which are planned, such as formal mentoring.

Such discussion would enable the group to engage with their personal and professional practice, and perhaps recognise where boundaries might be viewed as necessary safety precautions. At a future date nobody would thank me for a course which felt in retrospect emotionally exploitative, and although it would have been easy to allow the group to have emotional free rein, it remained prudent to proceed with cautious optimism.

During the Week 3 input we examined the links between emotion and circumstance by addressing basic listening and attending skills, and looking at primary level empathy. One of Egan's most important contributions to counselling practice is that he moved on from Roger's rather flat practice of simply identifying the emotion within the other person, to linking it in a more practical way to behaviour, circumstances, and change.

It is possible in much of human relating, to say one thing and mean another. Unless individuals have an understanding of how words can affect emotions, and equally importantly, how incongruence of words and actions can confuse others, we are unlikely to experience many helpful interactions. Alongside this issue we examined the issue of attending in relationships, that is, actively 'being with' someone as opposed to just 'being there', and discussed the following:

### **Attending - 'Being With'**

More than a physical presence

- a psychological presence
- an intensity of presence

Mehrabian found that of total liking for another:

55% was facial liking (i.e. expression)

38% was vocal liking (i.e. tone/expression)

7% was verbal liking (i.e. what was said) (Mehrabian, 1971, p. 43)

This gentle start to Week 3 helped pave the way for the issue of self-disclosure, as the willingness to risk appropriate self-disclosure is important to relationships (Jourard 1971). The criteria for determining appropriate self-disclosure in general, and in regard to the course in particular are shown here.

### **Criteria for Determining Appropriate Self-Disclosure (Adapted from Egan, 1976)**

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>* Breadth</b>       | the amount of information disclosed                     |
| <b>* Depth</b>         | the intimacy of the information disclosed               |
| <b>* Duration</b>      | the amount of time spent in disclosing oneself          |
| <b>* Target Person</b> | the person or persons, to whom information is disclosed |

**\* The Nature of the Relationship** intimate friends, close friends, acquaintances, work colleagues etc.

**\* Situation** the conditions under which the disclosure is made

### **Working Criteria For This Course (adapted from Egan, 1976)**

**\* Goal directed** The course is about relationships, stay tuned to this goal

**\* Keep it in proportion** Determine for yourselves how much, and at what level, you disclose within the group

**\* Respect and care** Self-sharing should be a sign of respect for each other

**\* Quality of relationship** Continuity of association with target persons rather than a random act. In a group the mutual trust can lead to deeper disclosures than with everyday contacts

**\* Mutuality** If you reveal aspects of yourself, others tend to reciprocate. If mutuality does not develop, self-disclosure is not appropriate

**\* Timing** Disclosure should emerge from, and relate to, the group experience

**\* Here and Now** Relate self-disclosure to group process at present



The criteria for the course are adapted from those used by most counsellors within a therapeutic setting where counsellor disclosure, used appropriately, can be of great benefit to the client. The general group discussion which followed, was in regard to honesty in relationships, and barriers to self-disclosure, and allowed the participants to share their own reasons for and against disclosure of personal information. This was a particularly poignant time for one or two participants, who began to connect their upbringing with their behaviour patterns today, and realised that some of their early learning messages from parents had not been helpful.

We sometimes think we live in the present, when we are in fact simply repeating old habits from the past. Although this is a fairly common mode of behaviour, it can be broken away from by understanding at a cognitive and emotive level that change is always possible, even if it is just a change in attitude. The work which took place on verbal and non-verbal disclosure and communication prompted much discussion about students, children, partners and friends. We examined differing modes of self-disclosure with regard to the following issues.

### **Modes of Self-Disclosure (Adapted from Egan 1976)**

- |  |      |   |
|--|------|---|
| <b>1) Verbal</b>                           | e.g. | 'I'm rather shy in groups.'<br>'I daydream about being a successful photographer.'  |
| <b>2) Non-Verbal</b>                       | e.g. | Speed<br>Tone<br>Intensity<br>Emotional colour of voice<br>PLUS<br>Eye contact<br>Body stance<br>Facial expression<br>Gestures  |
| <b>3) Self-disclosure through actions.</b> | e.g. | How I dress<br>The kinds of friends I have<br>The kind of work I do<br>The quality of my work<br>What I do in my free time<br>What I read<br>How I relate one-to-one/in groups<br>The learning experiences I pursue |

From there it was a smooth transition to the next exercises of the day which addressed personal insight and self-disclosure. The Incomplete Sentence List exercise was less easy than it appeared as it demanded a certain honesty and for some people, asked questions which had never been considered before. However it seemed to provide much stimulus for everyone and the resultant group round of shared statements enabled some individuals to talk very openly about the usually hidden aspects of their personality, and their desire for change in those areas.

The blend of continual mixing of the personal issues with the professional, and the emotional with the cognitive, appeared to be paying dividends, and in Week 4 we proceeded to address organisational mentoring in terms of confidentiality and loyalty. Although organisations are collections of individuals, sometimes individual needs can be lost within the larger organisational vision.

The group were working together so well at this point that they continued to work in small groups whilst having their tea break, and had identified with the mentor relationship from the point of view of all of the parties involved, which in any formal model of mentoring, must include the organisation as a third party.

Whilst recognising that there would be difficulties in transferring their own experiences of mentoring into a formal setting, all of the group felt that it should be possible to remain person-centred whilst also helping the organisation to grow and develop. One sub-group spent some time debating whether the aim of a programme within school should be the growth and development of the establishment through the individual, or the growth and development of the individual in order to contribute to the well-being of the establishment.

One of the most frequent problems for those working in formal mentor programmes within organisations, is the issue of confidentiality. These particular exercises were designed to allow individuals to reflect on times when their own confidences had been broken, and how they both thought and felt at such times. I reasoned that these particular exercises were a critical part of the course, and that from such a standpoint, participants could then address how the issue of confidentiality could be most usefully incorporated into a setting where it might not always be practical, wise or legal, to promise complete confidentiality to the learner.

Although we were not working with any particular type of future mentor programme in mind, it was important to recognise that an adult/child relationship within a school could have ethical and legal implications that an adult/adult relationship within the same school would not encounter.

It was also important that the group considered just who the mentor relationship was there for, or in other words, who was to benefit from the programme. From the perspective of organisation, mentor, and learner, there are certain aspects to confidentiality that must be dealt with before a programme is in place, in order to establish some kind of guidelines rather than rules. This of course is not normally a requirement of traditional relationships, but having accepted that such alliances may take place in formal settings, it is still worthy of consideration.

The working sub-groups decided that the reaction to a broken confidence could be either negative or positive, depending on the nature of the disclosure. For example a teacher on the point of a stress-related illness might actually benefit from having a head teacher intervene and suggest ways of rearranging the workload. However there was general agreement that the needs of all the three parties involved in the mentor programme should be taken into account when drawing up clear guidelines and a value base for ethical practice. Both groups produced a list of feelings which had arisen from their own experiences of broken confidences throughout their lives, and which are combined here.

<b>EMOTIONAL RESULT OF BROKEN CONFIDENCES AT WORK</b>		
Anger	Betrayal	Hurt
Sadness	Confusion	Embarrassment
Guilt	Humiliation	Contempt
Cheated	Disappointed	Disgust

The two groups agreed that the person whose confidence had been broken could lose their self-esteem and confidence, and would cease to respect and trust the other. They also proposed that this would lead to a loss of intimacy between the two, and would constitute the irrevocable end of both their personal and professional relationship.

Having spent a great deal of time examining papers and articles on formal mentor programmes which had not been successful because they had not been well thought through, it was encouraging to see the students' concerted attempts both to understand the mentor dynamic, and to examine areas of opportunity and difficulty. They were unanimous in deciding that a mentor scheme within school should be a possibility for the future, despite inherent difficulties.

Week 5 focussed on the reflective learning experiences of participants and linked their learning styles to their mentor experiences. Although my personal view of the Learning Styles questionnaire (Honey and Mumford, 1986) is that it is somewhat prescriptive, it has some use in promoting debate about matching types when addressing formal mentor programmes. It can be used as a tool for examining whether personal development is learned via a different style to professional development, as most people are a mix of style, and this can be dependent on what it is that they are learning at the time.

Only five weeks had gone by, but it was when driving home that evening that I realised that this group were working at a level beyond the ordinary. Instead of feeling tired I was exhilarated by the group energy, but put it down to my pleasure at working within that particular school.

It was soon made clear to me the following week, that course participants were also experiencing levels of energy and enthusiasm which they found were continuing throughout the evening and, for some, much of the night. One woman told me somewhat diffidently that she felt this was like being in love, or like a religious experience, and that she and others, looked forward to Thursdays as the high spot of the week. I had facilitated many courses over the years and had never heard feedback like this before, but recognised what she was saying as being similar to the kind of mental 'high' produced by the intensive week course on Egan's work at the York Summer School.

I too looked forward to the mentor course more than any other piece of work in which I was involved, but again had rationalised this by thinking that this was because I was working on research related issues, whereas work in my full-time employment had ceased to offer me any creative challenge. Reflecting on the group process, it also appeared reminiscent of the learning process which had taken place within interviews for my 1994 study, but because more time was being devoted to the issues, the process was being experienced as so much more intense.

Until Week 6 the group had not known very much about my 1994 study. We had compared lists of mentor qualities in the initial stages of the course, but had done no more than that because of working on issues raised by their own mentoring and learning experiences. Although I had been prepared for a reasonable amount of discussion after I had given a presentation of my work and the subsequent findings, I was unprepared for the length of time required to answer all of the questions, and found that I had greatly misjudged how much we could get through that week.

Many of the comments were related to their personal mentor experiences, and as a result some work planned for Week 6 was carried over to the following session. However as I had also overestimated the length of time needed for the first exercise of Week 7, this did not prove to be a difficulty.

The research was well received, although I did have some participants saying that they would have liked to have had that input right at the start of the course. Had I done this then I am not sure to what extent their initial group work might have been biased, and on reflection still think that the input came at the right time.

The course progressed and started to become more task focussed in terms of using their new knowledge in practical ways. Some participants intended to gain the MAPS qualification and write a formal assignment, whilst others were intending to gain working knowledge for use in school.

The course content aimed to cover all needs, including examining workable structures for possible mentor initiatives within the school. Some participants were already working on first drafts of their assignments, and it was encouraging to observe how much thought was being given to combining their knowledge of personal developmental needs in a mentor relationship, within a school, in a formal framework.

Whilst these individual initiatives would most likely never be put into practice, participants were nonetheless thinking very deeply about the management of any such programme. My experience at the school had always been that of staff willingness to work hard at improving existing frameworks for professional practice, and I had little doubt that some action would come from the course.

By the final session the group was functioning so smoothly that my presence was hardly necessary. Having said that there were still some difficulties in winding up the process and saying farewells. It was suggested that I continued with the course every week because it had been so enjoyable, and so that we could address all of the issues in so much more detail. However knowing when to leave is important, and although I too had found the whole experience exciting, I knew that the group did not need to have me there in order to continue with their process. I knew that we had been pressed for time on occasions but that some of the topics were ones which could never be discussed enough.

It was agreed that a follow-up course would be offered to the school, to look at the practicalities of putting a mentor initiative in place within school, using an organisational model of change. However due to my health difficulties, this course was not offered until a year and a half later, and is described later in this chapter.

All of those who went forward for MAPS accreditation gained that award, and two people then decided to take advantage of the remission scheme of a term off an M.Ed., and began a Master's degree. One participant was approached by the editor of the Marjon's CPD magazine and asked if she would give permission for part of her assignment to be published as a model of excellence.

I was told later by the second marker, a staff member of the CPD Department at Marjons, that the course had received the highest evaluation ever given. Copies of these evaluation forms have been seen by my supervisor. Only one participant did not finish the course and that was due to serious ill-health in the family. Another participant wrote to me only a few weeks later and an excerpt from that letter is reproduced here:

'I have this evening filled in my application form to study an M.Ed. part-time - (evenings and weekends). I am looking forward to the challenge, but also to the doors opening. I have felt for a long time both personal and professional frustration. I know I must look inside myself to solve - but I believe also I need to widen my somewhat blinkered perspective and in so doing create opportunity to grow.

I loved your course at [school name deleted]. You awakened my inquiring mind again and set me on the road I know I must pursue. More than that you gave me the confidence and self-belief to trust my heart and intuition again....something I have kept under lock and key for several years because it felt safer that way. The very reason for my frustration I hear you say!!

Thank you. You cannot possibly know how instrumental you have been in my life over the last few months. I wish you well in mind, body, heart and soul. With love and prayers.'

(original letter seen by supervisor)

A few weeks later I received a letter from the College asking that I give a reference for this student. When acting as first marker for the assignments, one piece of work in particular stood out as excellent. It was a piece of work which seemed to sing, and as it had been written by this same woman I was delighted to provide her with a reference. I concluded that the course had in the main, been successful, and that despite the lack of time, and the risks which had been taken in terms of working on interpersonal issues without a co-facilitator, much had been achieved by the group, both personally and professionally.

I had been impressed by the participants' willingness to share so much of themselves with each other, because although personal disclosure is relatively easy with strangers whom one may never meet again, it is not normally so easy for those who work side by side every day.

I had also been pleased that the men on the course though greatly out-numbered, had been honest in admitting that although they had found some personal exercises quite demanding, they had really enjoyed the course and learned a good deal.

My personal difficulty had been that I found it somewhat disconcerting to be held in such high esteem by so many individuals over such a long period of time, as throughout the course I was aware that I was taking risks by working as a lone facilitator. The content of the course was much more responsible for the aura of well-being which the participants felt, than anything which I had done personally, and that content had been based on the experiences of those individuals who had given so much of themselves during my initial research. Having said that, I am aware that I derive great pleasure from working with adult learners and I tend to give my best simply because they bring so much to any programme.

It is sometimes tempting to leave a course at this point and do no more evaluation, but I was interested in understanding how time would affect what participants thought they had learned, and so I sent out a questionnaire some eight months later. Some staff had by this time taken retirement and some participants had moved away. The following responses are from only 50% of those who attended but help to give an indication of the effect of the course overall. To avoid repetition as some responses were identical, I have only reproduced here those replies which differ.

### **Follow-up MAPS Questionnaire Responses**

What were your reasons for attending the mentor course?

Hoped it would help in my everyday dealings with both staff and others, - pupils.

Be able to understand better/relate to colleagues and students.

Learn new methods of dealing with people in different situations.

The course sounded interesting.

Personal interest and learning.

I was interested to learn more about mentoring.

I was already supporting pupils with special educational needs and pastoral work as tutor. Wanted to find out more with the hope that it might make me more effective.

What appealed to you about the course content prior to attending the course?

The range of content.

To actually make time to do something I am interested in, and to enhance professional expertise.

Possibility of leading to MAPS, although as it happened didn't do essay due to situation at home.

It seemed to cover a range of topics related to working relationships.

Not sure, but had met the tutor and felt that I could cope with it.

I felt it might help me with the counselling side of my job.

What aspects of the course did you find most challenging?

Self-disclosure.

Self-assessment, I felt inadequate, I have very low self-esteem and tend to undervalue my achievements.

Writing the 4,000 word essay, I wanted it to be good, satisfactory is never good enough for me ( it's OK for others), consequently it took more of my time and my tutor's than it should have. Otherwise I was pleased with the result.

Expressing my own thoughts and feelings to other people whom I work with everyday. This did get easier as we went through the course.

Looking at myself!

What aspects of the course did you find most enjoyable?

It was good to talk openly with a group of people who are so different as individuals, but share so many similar anxieties, strengths, feelings etc.

All of it. I enjoyed the whole thing a great deal, but if I have to identify one aspect, it was listening to the views of my colleagues.

Different approaches.

Relaxed atmosphere

Time to get to know colleagues better.

Group work, and discussions with colleagues.

Hearing about your work Chris, I found that most interesting; for me it would have been more beneficial to hear that earlier on in the course, as it was only then that everything else really fell into place.

Working with others, and having the time to talk with colleagues while discussing various aspects of the mentor concept. I also enjoyed the challenge of being a student again, making time to do additional research, and then trying to marshal my thoughts into some order for writing the essay.

Learning styles.

How has this course affected your practice as an educator?

Increased awareness of others and different situations.



**It has made me more aware of some of the difficulties youngsters have in achieving their full potential, and that with the right mentor guidance, how much they could go on to do if the opportunities were created. And how good they could feel about themselves and their achievement.**

**It has made me more thoughtful about the way that I approach/speak to/follow up conversations with people I work with.**

**Yes, look at situations differently now and approach them differently.**

**Raised my awareness.**

**Yes it has, my approach to colleagues is more sympathetic (I believe!).**

**How has this course affected you as an individual?**

**I am more aware of relationships between individuals.**

**Made me more aware of people and their 'hangups'.**

**Made me more aware of other colleagues, their ideas and values.**

**It made me really think - about myself, my job, my role both at home and in life.**

**It made me feel sad and lonely at the start. There are things which I still have to do and would like to achieve. The course raised my self-esteem for a while, but I'm not sure that it will last.**

**It gave me the chance to reflect, - how I had got to where I am now, and think about the future.**

**What do you think is the most important aspect of a mentor relationship from the perspective of a) the mentor b) the learner?**

**a) A good listener**

**a) That the mentor cares for the learner, is 100% trustworthy, and wants the best for the learner.**

**a) Has the time and the commitment to devote to the relationship in order to make things happen.**

**a) Chance to help someone develop as a person.**

**a) Should be able to listen and never be judgemental.**

**a) Appreciation of learner's expertise and effort.**

**a) I feel it has to be an open an honest relationship between the two.**

**a) That there is empathy with the learner.**

**b) Respect, and acceptance of constructive criticism.**

**b) Communication skills.**

**b) Understanding it's a two-way learning process.**

- b) Chance to absorb knowledge/experience from someone you can really trust, who is a real friend.
- b) That the learner is prepared to trust their mentor.
- b) That the learner is receptive and willing to allow the relationship to develop.

It was particularly interesting for me to note how many of the respondents found that the most difficult part of the course was the aspect of self-disclosure and self-assessment, and yet it was not surprising.

It seems that as individuals working in learning situations with others, we have little time, opportunity, or indeed, inclination, to delve too deeply into who we are, what we can offer, and how we relate. Yet it was also apparent from the feedback, that such self-sharing was really valued by all of the respondents, and has had an influence on how they now relate to each other within the school.

For such a course to have long-term value however, it is probable that 'top-up' work should take place. Having said that, the whole ethos of my work is that it is about personal responsibility, and should therefore be able to be continued by individuals to suit their own needs when it is most timely. For those seriously interested in developing fully, outside intervention is not always necessary. By working on exercises which examined and developed the skills and qualities which had been identified by my 1994 study, I concluded that the group had been given plentiful opportunities to consider how these skills and qualities matched those of their own learning experiences, and had been able to assess their value in terms of the mentor/learner alliance. However to what extent the course could be reproduced by another facilitator in another setting remains unknown.

## **Second MAPS Course**

In September 1997 a second MAPS course was held at the school, with a small working party of seven staff who wished to set up a mentor project in school. All except one of these teachers had attended the first course. Some of the original group members had retired and others were working to prepare for an impending OFSTED inspection. The seven teachers had no prepared idea for taking forward a mentor programme but were enthusiastic and convinced that it would be worth the effort. The course details were as follows:

### **Title of MAPS**

Organising and managing a mentor programme in school; a creative approach

## **Aim**

To enable teachers to use a practical model of change, and apply theoretical knowledge to the issues involved in establishing a school mentor programme.

## **Objectives**

By the end of this MAPS, the participants will be able to :

Utilise a recognised model of organisational change.

Develop an action plan for a school mentor programme.

Identify issues of importance which arise from the programme.

Produce strategies for change which will increase the chance of a successful mentor programme.

## **Course Content**

The current scenario: assessing problems and opportunities

Developing new perspectives and searching for possibilities

Identifying a viable agenda

Linking the agenda to action

Developing and choosing strategies

Formulating plans and making the transition

Identifying problems and choosing alternative strategies

Developing a plan and a timetable for action

## **MAPS assignment titles**

'Establishing an Effective Mentor Programme in School'

or

'The Value to the Community of a School Mentor Programme'.

## **Course Process**

As before, the group met after school hours for a two and a half hour session. In considering how to address this very practical programme I planned to use Egan's (1988a/b) 'Model for Organisational Change' which is derived from his 'Skilled Helper Model', and combine it with De Bono's (1990) 'Six Thinking Hats' model of creative thinking. Egan's very practical model combines lateral thinking with practical activity, and is action driven. As the group had little free time outside our planned sessions, it was important to remain focussed on achieving the aim rather than only attempting to absorb organisational theory.

Because of the nature of the change model it was neither practical nor possible to formulate detailed lesson plans, as each session would produce the following week's agenda. Having said that, the sessions were all structured around the part of the model in which the group were working at the time, but the content of the sessions was flexible and immediate.

De Bono's (1990) model uses the concept of hats to encourage effective thinking. In brief, there are six hats in six colours; each colour relating to the hat's specific function, i.e.

### **White Hat Thinking**

White is neutral and objective, like a computer. The white hat is concerned with facts and figures. It does not offer interpretations or opinions.

### **Red Hat Thinking**

The red hat gives the emotional view, and legitimises hunches, intuition and feelings in decision making. It does not have to justify its stance.

### **Black hat Thinking**

Black hat thinking is concerned with negative assessment from the viewpoint of accepted knowledge or experience. Black hat thinking points out errors, but not negative feelings. It plays Devil's Advocate.

### **Green Hat Thinking**

The green hat indicates fertile growth. It is the hat of creative thinking. It is used to generate new concepts and perceptions. It can make leaps in thinking and go beyond the known.

### **Yellow Hat Thinking**

The yellow hat symbolises sunshine and optimism. It is concerned with positive assessment. Its aim is effectiveness and making things happen. It is not concerned with positive euphoria (red hat) or new ideas (green hat), but is about constructive thinking and builds on hopes and dreams.

### **Blue Hat Thinking**

The blue hat is the control hat. Blue hat thinking, concerns itself with thinking about the thinking necessary to explore the problem. It enforces the discipline of thinking, and summarises and concludes the process.

Although there are six hats, and six different ways of thinking about issues; all are pointing in the same direction, and therefore the thinking which takes place is not divergent, but runs along parallel lines toward the same goal. Some years ago when I first read of De Bono's hats, I decided to develop the idea into a more visual format. De Bono uses the hats conceptually, but I wanted to devise six hats which were visually exciting and stimulating, yet which provided instant information about the type of thinking required from wearing each hat.

I contacted a theatre company and found a milliner willing to turn my written ideas into bright sturdy papier-mache hats, and some weeks later my hats were ready.

The white hat is a white academic mortar-board, complete with tassel and symbolises pure fact. The red hat is a bright red wizard's hat, with embossed stars, suns and moons and symbolises intangibles and ephemerals. The black hat is an undertaker's top hat complete with ribbons at the back, and symbolises solemn and sincere negativity.

The green hat is a lime green leprechaun's hat with sprouting flowers and grass, symbolising fresh new growth. The yellow hat is a yellow construction worker's hat complete with a rising sun, a rainbow, and a pot of gold, symbolising hope. The blue hat is a sky-blue airline pilot's hat, with a tiny orchestra conductor holding a baton on the top, and symbolises both the overview and the co-ordination of the thinking process.

Having the hats in such tangible form enables participants to realise more clearly the concepts behind De Bono's thinking, and adds an element of fun to the task of thinking hard. All of the types of thinking espoused by De Bono are incorporated into Egan's model of change, and could be referred to both verbally and visually by participants throughout the complete course. As organisational change can be a somewhat dry and tiring procedure, the hats served as useful reminders that the group was also there to enjoy the process of thinking and working practically.

The rest of this chapter will describe the process of change without dwelling on specific exercises or content, as it is the awareness of the change process itself which was important for the group, and for mentoring. Initially the group identified existing structures within the school which served some of the functions of mentor support. This served to highlight more clearly the areas where the school was meeting needs, and where opportunities for development lay. From here the teachers progressed to formulating their ideas of the strengths and weaknesses of both the school, and its existing programmes. This in turn led to a decision being taken to focus on the perceived support needs of teacher mentors, as opposed to those of pupils.

This decision was interesting as it highlighted the reflected needs of those in the group. The previous OFSTED report had placed the school in a very prominent position with an extremely high rating. The impending new appraisal meant that previously recognised standards needed to be met, if not raised, and the resulting stress was taking its toll amongst staff.

The group felt that the camaraderie of the previous course had helped their professional practice, but now they were also saying that it had made them 'nicer people', in as much as they had more time for each other for a while, and not only wanted to get back to that feeling, but wanted this time to keep it. They suggested that as the previous course had produced the 'mentor effect', then maybe they could introduce a similar group in the school which could meet to maintain that effect.

However as all their plans eventually needed to take place in the real world, as opposed to the theoretical classroom world, they were concerned about how to introduce their ideas to the disillusioned, disaffected and generally tired teaching staff. Yet because they believed so much in the benefit of what they had experienced, they were willing to try and win over those who might be less enthusiastic about joining anything to do with work.

As they moved stage by stage through the model it was interesting to observe how they progressed from enthusiasm, to despair, and back again, within the space of two and a half hours, as they tested the reality against the ideas, and together with the hats explored all the possibilities of success and failure.

Shortly before the third session of the course it became clear that the group were having some problems in defining clearly just what they were aiming for. They had commitment, but could not decide exactly what they were committed to. This is a normal part of the change process, and has to be cornered and named before any action can be taken.

The whole of one session was taken up in formulating the following simple statement of intent:

To establish a staff group which will encourage and support personal development through interpersonal skills and relationships

However this was not time wasted, but time in which a lot of redundant matter was disposed of, and was a watershed in as much as it provided focus and unity within the group, and a move away from individual issues.

From then on the sessions moved forward faster, and were more vital, whereas the initial sessions had been somewhat nostalgic and reflective. The group wanted to provide more than a formal mentor scheme which they did not really consider to be mentoring; they wanted to provide a space where they could develop friendships, alliances and confidantes, within a mutually supportive forum. They wanted to recreate the mutuality which arose during the first MAPS course within an informal arena.

As part of their strategy for making their intent known in school, the group decided that they would firstly attempt a subtle approach by means of flyers in staff pigeon holes during a 'Baker' training day, combined with inviting staff to share their ideas of mentoring via a notice board, and perhaps following up with some planned 'informal' chat about mentoring over lunch. In the event and despite all their hard work, this strategy was in fact too subtle and produced no results at all. Nobody mentioned the flyers, nobody wrote on the board, and nobody wanted to talk at lunch time.

Far from demoralising the group, this prompted them into direct face to face action, and they secured time on the agenda to speak at the next staff meeting. They felt that the idea of a mentor group for themselves had paid dividends, and intended to tell others about those dividends.

Most importantly, they felt that even if there no new members came forward at that time, then the group would meet regularly and continue to support each other. Below is a short extract from one of the three members of staff who chose to speak at that meeting.

'A small group of us has been meeting on a regular basis and have in a way developed into what you might call a mutual support group. It is us who gave out the flyers and asked for your thoughts on mentoring. Our group is a complete mix of people, with little evidently in common. We are all from different faculties, both genders, encompass most of the pay scale, and probably have different social lives and responsibilities. Yet we all set by time to meet, and go home invigorated.

In sending our flyers we were trying to raise your awareness and hopefully start you talking about mentoring. However I think we were rather too subtle or obscure in our approach and we wish to take the next few minutes to try and explain ourselves more fully.

In our group we have talked about many things, learned a great deal about ourselves, gained a clearer understanding of others and how to communicate more effectively. Support in all manner of areas has been enhanced.

I have found people that I can talk to in complete confidence, and can truly be myself with. I have thought about things that have never crossed my mind before, and at times, surprised myself by putting very personal thoughts into words, or sometimes just clarified feelings which I hadn't given time to before.

All this has been achieved without increasing my workload, and no demands have been made on me. I genuinely feel that I have found an island where I am not "Miss" or "Mum" or "wife", but just me.

None of us are experts, and don't pretend to be, but what we would like is to share with more members of staff. Tim will now tell you why he has made the time to come to these meetings'. (Annie, teacher)

That this teacher felt able to stand up in front of her peers and make such a personal statement was, I felt, remarkable when two years previously she would have felt unable to share her need for such a group to anyone outside that group. She and the others have an alliance which is strong, and is based on trust.

They are confident that they will recruit others, but now have a realistic view that it will need time, and a commitment on their part to invite new members along on a personal basis. They planned to meet once a fortnight after school, and unwind over coffee and cake. Meanwhile two of the group have decided to look at the possibility of trading in their two MAPS awards for two terms remission off an M.Ed., one member is still completing her M.Ed., and another is about to complete her M.Ed. and is now inquiring about continuing her studies via a full-time Ph.D. They are remarkable and yet very ordinary people who work hard and who are applying their skills to their practice. One teacher said:

'For me what stuck with me was unconditional positive regard. When I started applying that to everybody, even the ones I wasn't so sure about, I found I could work better with them. It's helped in all my work, and relationships. On this course I found the hats really something. I hadn't realised how I tended to think, and then it was interesting to see that although I thought I thought in one way, others thought I thought in another way. So it's helped me see myself as they see me. I've enjoyed every minute.' Tim

What was particularly interesting was that although the group initially had wanted others to ask them about their meetings by means of subtle, non-direct means, they eventually took the risk of initiating the face to face contact and disclosure which Jourard (1971) had deemed was necessary in enabling any real relating to begin, and which had formed part of the original course content. This action produced its own rewards and some four weeks after the last session, I received an update from one of the group. I have reproduced part of that letter here:

'The presentation went well. Annie and Tim [names changed] did a good job. Obviously there were one or two sceptics, you could see it written all over their faces, but the 99% were attentive and listening. One said she would join us as long as there was some walnut cake, so there is one, with encouragement it may escalate. (Probably more so after OFSTED!) It does not matter if it doesn't as the group is much closer, we actually all make a point of stopping and having a few minutes conversation, and we recognise dejection in others much more readily and try to do something about it. That is success I think. I think it has had a humanising effect on us.' (original letter seen by supervisor).



Written on the back of this letter was a long postscript:

'Had another meeting last night. Two other staff members joined us, chatted, and took away the learning styles sheets to do. They're going to come again. We have also set a date for the New Year Jan. 15th (Thurs.). We thought it might be needed just prior to OFSTED - we'll probably need one right after as well.

It was a good meeting and although we planned to finish at 4.30 it went on until 5.15pm. I think for one new member it is going to be a 'life-saver'. So - success - a small one but I do believe it will 'snowball'. I know of another one who wants to come along but tonight was impossible for her.

We'll have a great Christmas and a good new year, maybe you'd like to join us again sometime - you'd be very welcome.'

This teacher was the one who was unsure about her abilities to handle the first MAPS course. The rest of her letter referred to her plans for the assignment and also said:

'I shall soon have my Post Graduate Diploma and plans for the dissertation [M.Ed.] are underway. I am much more positive about my capabilities now, have you noticed?'

## **Interpersonal Style Prompt Sheet for Week 2 (adapted from Egan, 1976)**

**Extensiveness:** How extensive is my personal life? How much of my day is spent with people? Do I seek out opportunities for being with people? Do I have many friends and acquaintances or few? Are my contacts with others planned, or left up to chance? Is my life too crowded with people? Are there too few people in my life? Do I prefer smaller gatherings or large groups? Do I have a need for quiet time away from people? Am I outgoing, or introverted, or somewhere in between?

**Needs and wants:** What are my interpersonal needs and wants? How do I express them? Directly? Indirectly? Do I like to be challenged? Complimented? Reassured? Left alone treated like a child? Like a parent? Do I like to be responsible and assertive? Do I want others to control me? With what kind of people do I associate? Are they like me? By what criteria do I choose my friends and acquaintances: chance, intelligence, physical attractiveness, good-naturedness, values, social position?

**Caring:** How caring am I in my interactions with others? Do others know that I care? Is it obvious in my behaviour? Do I sometimes wonder whether I care at all? Do I take others for granted? Who really cares for me? How do I show care? How is care shown to me? In what ways am I self-centred? Am I a generous person? How do I express my generosity?

**Competence:** What are my interpersonal skills? Am I good at communicating understanding to others? Am I appropriately warm? Do I communicate to others that I respect them? Am I my real self with others i.e. do I communicate genuineness? Am I open, willing to talk about myself appropriately? Can I challenge others and invite them to explore their behaviour without being accusatory or punitive? How effective am I in exploring my relationships with others? What skills do I want to acquire? How well do I meet strangers? Am I awkward, embarrassed, resentful; or enthusiastic, poised, confident?

**Emotions:** What do I do with my emotions in interpersonal situations? Do I swallow them? Or some of them? Do I wear my emotions on my sleeve? Is it easy for others to judge what I am feeling? Am I moody? To what extent am I ruled by my emotions? How do I make my emotions public? How do I feel about being emotional in interpersonal situations? How perceptive am I of the emotional states of others? How do I react to others when they are emotional?

What emotions do I enjoy in others? What ones do I fear? What do I do when others keep their emotions to themselves?

**Rejection and alienation:** Is loneliness ever a problem for me? If so, how do I handle it? Do others see me as lonely at times? if so, how do they react to me? What do I do when I see that others are lonely. Am I easily threatened by others? How do I react when I am threatened? What threatens me in interpersonal situations? Have I experienced rejection? how do I handle being ignored, or left out, or rejected? Do I ignore or reject others? How do I handle the problem of not wanting to relate to people who want to relate to me?

**Interpersonal influence:** What demands do I place on my friends and/or acquaintances? Am I manipulative in my dealings with others? if so with whom and how? Do others try to manipulate me? Who and how? What demands do my friends place on me? Do I tell others explicitly what I expect from them, or do I assume that they know what I want? Do I see that giving and receiving influence can be proper and helpful in my interpersonal life? If so under what conditions? Am I either dominant or submissive in my relationship to others? When and under what conditions?

**Mutuality:** Do I allow for give and take in my relationships with others? Am I authoritarian or parental? Am I democratic? Am I laissez-faire? Am I willing to compromise? Do I take responsibility for what happens in my relationships, or do I 'let things take their course'? Do I encourage mutuality in decision making? Do I encourage dialogue? Do I expect to be treated as an equal? Do my relationships involve mutual responsibilities?

**Values:** What are my principle interpersonal values? Caring? Self-interest? Solid work relationships? How open to interpersonal growth am I? What am I willing to risk with others? In what areas am I willing to take risks? Do I allow ambiguity and uncertainty in my interpersonal life? Am I tolerant of those whose opinions differ from mine? What are my prejudices? Am I willing to change my own values, beliefs, and behaviours when, in my dealings with others, it seems appropriate to do so? How rigid or flexible am I in my relationships with others? Do I seek out ways to grow with others? Do I share my values with others? Can I put my interpersonal relationships into perspective by putting them into the wider context of work, world conditions and so on?

# **Statements of Interpersonal Style**

## **Week 2 (adapted Egan 1976)**

Read each pair of statements and circle the letters a) or b) depending on which single statement you most agree with. Although these statements are extremes, this is allowed for when scoring. Try and do this as quickly as possible in order to record your first impression.

- 1 a) I'm shy. My shyness takes the form of fear of meeting new people and of revealing myself to the friends that I have.  
b) I'm an outgoing person and seek opportunities to meet new people.
- 2 a) I'm not assertive enough; others can run roughshod over me and I just take it.  
b) I stand up for my rights quite well. I'm kind to others but I don't let them manipulate me.
- 3 a) I get angry very easily, and let my anger spill out on others in ways that are sometimes irresponsible. I think my anger is often linked to me not getting my own way.  
b) Although I become angry at times I rarely lose control. When I'm angry I tend to seek out others and try to settle what's bothering me.
- 4 a) I'm a lazy person. I find it especially difficult to expend the necessary energy to listen and get involved with others.  
b) I'm a very energetic person. I like listening to and getting involved with others.
- 5 a) I'm somewhat nervous of the opposite sex, especially if I get the feeling that they want some kind of intimacy with me. I get nervous and tongue-tied.  
b) I get along well with the opposite sex and regard them as individuals not objects. I can relate to them at different levels, ranging from 'casual' to 'good friends' to 'intimate'.
- 6 a) I'm a rather insensitive person. I find it hard to know what others are feeling. I'm the bull in the china shop type.  
b) I'm usually aware of what others are feeling. Often I find myself experiencing something of the same emotion as someone else just by listening to them.

- 7 a) I'm very well controlled. I don't let my emotions show at all if possible, sometimes not even to myself.  
b) I express my emotions well. I don't dump them on to others but neither do I hide them. People usually know what I am feeling.
- 8 a) I like to control others but I do so in subtle ways. I want to stay in charge of interpersonal relations at all times.  
b) There is a great deal of mutuality in my relationships. I don't let others control me, neither do I need to be in charge. There is a lot of give and take in my relationships.
- 9 a) I seldom do anything that will offend others, because I have a need to be liked.  
b) Whether or not I am liked by others is important to me, but it doesn't get in the way of my doing what I think is right for me. I don't like to offend others but I don't feel the need for other's approval.
- 10 a) I never stop to examine my own values and I think I hold some conflicting ones. I'm not even sure that I'm interested in relating deeply to people.  
b) I frequently examine my own value system and when I find that my values are in conflict I try to determine my priorities. Relating well with others is important to me.
- 11 a) I feel almost compelled to help others, and people with problems are almost necessary for me.  
b) I suppose I get some personal satisfaction out of being altruistic, but I don't thrive on people's problems.
- 12 a) I'm very sensitive and easily hurt. I send out messages to others that say 'be careful of me'.  
b) I'm an easy-going person. I'm not oversensitive and can laugh at myself. Other people know that they can relax with me.
- 13 a) I always have to show others that I'm a free individual person in my own right, and I find it difficult to get along with authority figures.  
b) Although being an individual is of value to me I find it important to let others have an influence on me. My friends and I influence each other because we want to.

- 14 a) I get very anxious in interpersonal relationships but I don't know why.  
b) Although I do get anxious at times, being relaxed in interpersonal relationships is more characteristic of me.
- 15 a) I am a fairly uninteresting person and I assume that others get bored with me.  
b) I am an interesting person and others enjoy my company at gatherings.
- 16) a) I take risks in interpersonal relations. I lack adequate self-control.  
b) I risk myself to some degree in interpersonal relations but I exhibit adequate self-control.
- 17 a) I'm stubborn and opinionated and will argue with anyone on anything. This characteristic puts people off.  
b) I have ideas and views of my own which I enjoy sharing but I don't go looking for arguments.
- 18 a) I seduce people in various ways (not necessarily sexual) by my charm. I get them to do what I want.  
b) I'm direct in my relationships with others. If I want something from them I will ask for it.
- 19 a) I'm selfish in my interactions. I put my own needs above those of others.  
b) I'm capable of self-sacrifice and discipline, but without being a martyr I can put the needs of others above my own comfort.
- 20 a) I'm socially inept at times. I sometimes don't notice when others are suffering and as a result can seem callous and inhuman.  
b) I'm socially adept most of the time, and can respond to what those around me are feeling in a human way.
- 21 a) I'm a lonely person and I don't think that others like me, so I spend time feeling quite sorry for myself.  
b) Occasionally I experience loneliness but I can keep things in their proper perspective and I seldom feel disliked or sorry for myself.
- 22 a) I'm mean with money and time, and I don't want to share what I have.  
b) I'm generous and like to share what I have with others, be it time, possessions or feelings. I like to have others share with me as well.

- 23 a) I've lived a sheltered life and sometimes feel out of it when others talk about their experiences. I find it hard to understand and relate to what they mean.  
b) I'm socially aware and I've been around. I don't get embarrassed when people talk about their experiences, because I have experiences to share as well.
- 24 a) I'm a bit of a coward and find it hard to stand up for what I believe in when I'm opposed. It's easy to get me to retreat on my views.  
b) I'm courageous and unafraid to stand up for what I believe. I often confront my beliefs and values, and therefore don't have difficulty when others confront me.
- 25 a) I find it hard to confront others or have them confront me. I like peace at any price.  
b) If confrontation is inevitable I don't back out because I don't like to pretend that issues don't exist.
- 26 a) When I'm confronted I tend to attack my confronters and respond in defensive ways.  
b) When I'm confronted I like to listen to what's being said and think about its validity from both points of view before responding in a non-defensive way.

**Rating Sheet for Interpersonal Style Questionnaire Week 2**

	<b>Very much like a</b>	<b>Fairly much like a</b>	<b>A bit like a</b>	<b>A bit like b</b>	<b>Fairly much like b</b>	<b>Very much like b</b>	
<b>1a</b>							<b>1b</b>
<b>2a</b>							<b>2b</b>
<b>3a</b>							<b>3b</b>
<b>4a</b>							<b>4b</b>
<b>5a</b>							<b>5b</b>
<b>6a</b>							<b>6b</b>
<b>7a</b>							<b>7b</b>
<b>8a</b>							<b>8b</b>
<b>9a</b>							<b>9b</b>
<b>10a</b>							<b>10b</b>
<b>11a</b>							<b>11b</b>
<b>12a</b>							<b>12b</b>
<b>13a</b>							<b>13b</b>
<b>14a</b>							<b>14b</b>
<b>15a</b>							<b>15b</b>
<b>16a</b>							<b>16b</b>
<b>17a</b>							<b>17b</b>
<b>18a</b>							<b>18b</b>
<b>19a</b>							<b>19b</b>
<b>20a</b>							<b>20b</b>
<b>21a</b>							<b>21b</b>
<b>22a</b>							<b>22b</b>
<b>23a</b>							<b>23b</b>
<b>24a</b>							<b>24b</b>
<b>25a</b>							<b>25b</b>
<b>26a</b>							<b>26b</b>



# **Incomplete Sentence List**

# **Week 3**

**(adapted from Egan 1976)**

Complete the following questions as quickly as possible without first reading through the list. Then circle those sentences which are of most importance to you, and chose two sentences to share with the group.

People who love me.....

One thing I really dislike about myself is.....

I dislike people who.....

When people ignore me I.....

The way I express my generosity to others is.....

When someone praises me I.....

When I relate to people I.....

When I don't like someone who likes me I.....

Those who really know me.....

When I let someone know something about my 'shadow side'.....

My mother.....

My moods.....

I am at my best with people when.....

When I am in a group of strangers I.....

I feel lonely when.....

I envy.....

When someone is affectionate with me I.....

The way I handle jealousy is.....

I think I have hurt others by.....

Those who don't know me well.....

The person who know me best.....

An important interpersonal value for me is.....

What I am really looking for in my relationships is.....

I like people who.....

When someone gets angry with me I

When I think of intimacy I think of.....

When I meet someone who is very assertive I.....

One thing that I really dislike about myself is.....

When I am with a group of friends I....

What I distrust is.....

One thing that makes me nervous in interpersonal relations is.....

When I feel really good about myself I.....

When others put me down I.....

Others like it when I.....

I feel awkward with others when.....

The thing that holds me back in my relationships with others is.....

In interpersonal relationships what I run away from most is.....

# Appendix II

## Data from Initial Study

## **Figure 1**

### **BEHAVIOURS OF MENTORS**

#### **Initiation of Relationship:**

Establishes a connection/develops a rapport with learner  
Is interested in learner as a person, not just as pupil  
Appreciates learner's worth  
Provides a 'cocktail' of encouragement and nurturing  
Acknowledges and validates learner's feelings  
Recognises elements of self in learner  
Picks learner to take on mantle  
Shares personal information with learner

#### **Development of Relationship:**

Makes extra efforts to reward learner's extra efforts  
Works at establishing relationship rather than role  
Acts with equality of regard within relationship  
Exhibits personal vulnerability/takes risks  
Enjoys learner's company  
Is relaxed and fun  
Provides social grooming for learner  
Acts as signpost/ allows learner to choose own path  
Provides learning environment/new experiences  
Cares openly for learner  
Expects the highest standards from learner

#### **Maintenance of relationship:**

Demonstrates own philosophy/values by example  
Provides security/unconditional love  
Protects learner  
Provides an open door  
Is ambitious for learner  
Stays at learner's home  
Displays close/intimate behaviour  
Hands on a 'legacy' of knowledge  
Becomes friend/partner/lover

## **Figure 2**

### **BEHAVIOURS OF LEARNERS**

#### **Initiation of Relationship:**

Chooses non-threatening mentors  
Underestimates own ability and worth  
Has good eye contact with mentor  
Exhibits a searching attitude  
Works diligently  
Feels in awe of mentor  
Is reflective in thought and practice  
Feels safe in dropping defences

#### **Development of Relationship:**

Discloses personal information  
Shares mutual interests with mentor  
Displays warmth to mentor  
Has enthusiasm for life  
Meets socially with mentor  
Displays creative and innovative ideas  
Develops worth/self-esteem

#### **Maintenance of relationship:**

Becomes a friend of mentor  
Asks for advice from mentor  
Challenges mentor  
Writes to mentor when apart  
Is loyal to mentor/defends mentor  
Displays gratitude to mentor  
Teaches mentor unconsciously  
Shares deep emotions with mentor  
Admires /likes/loves mentor

### **Figure 3**

#### **MENTOR QUALITIES**

##### **As individual:**

Unpretentious  
Self-disciplined  
Intelligent  
Passionate  
Humorous

##### **As Professional:**

Skilled Practitioner \*  
Methodical \*  
Workophile  
Practical \*  
Good Manager \*

##### **In Interactions with others**

Caring/loving	Honourable
Respectful	Approachable
Good communicator *	Sensitive
Empathic *	Genuine
Astute	Generous
Non-threatening	Inspirational
Challenging	Humanitarian
Magnetic	Determined

The asterisks in Table (iii) denote qualities which can be taught.

**Figure 4**

**LEARNER QUALITIES**

**As Individual:**

Self-effacing	Unfulfilled potential
Intelligent	Well-organised
Humorous	Reflective
Under confident	Creative
Independent	Quiet

**As Professional:**

Drive	Talented
Perfectionist	Inquisitive

**In Interactions with Others:**

Caring	Insightful
Respectful	Honest
Genuine	Companionable
Trusting	Compassionate
Warm	Challenging
Interesting	Supportive
Surprising	Articulate

## **Figure 5**

### **Characteristics of Mentor in the Relationship**

**THE RELATIONSHIP IS CHARACTERISED BY THE MENTOR:**

- Believing in learner
- Respecting and valuing learner's individuality
- Recognising elements of self in learner/feeling an affinity
- Establishing and developing a rapport with learner
- Having drive and being ambitious for learner
- Being a perfectionist and expecting these standards from learner
- Recognising and rewarding the 'extra mile walked'
- Being committed to providing learning opportunities
- Being good company/surprising learner
- Being true to themselves/not suffering fools gladly
- Acting as catalyst for change in learner's life
- Combining an academic curiosity with a humanitarian approach
- Being disarming/down to earth/ and keeping promises

## **Figure 6**

### **Characteristics of Learner in the Relationship**

**THE RELATIONSHIP IS CHARACTERISED BY THE LEARNER:**

- Recognising the mentor's individuality
- Displaying a desire to learn/change
- Respecting and valuing the mentor
- Exhibiting sparkle and life
- Unconsciously acting as a 'mirror' for the mentor
- Wanting to live up to mentor expectations/repay mentor
- Sharing common interests and values
- Trusting mentor totally
- Wanting to emulate mentor
- Experiencing magical/mystical/special bond
- Being aware of receiving an inheritance



## **Figure 7**

### **Skills Required by Mentor for Transmission to Learner**

Communication skills(verbal and non-verbal)

Advising skills

Person-centred counselling skills

Pastoral caring skills (emotional, psychological, spiritual)

Nurturing skills

Facilitation skills

Social skills

Debating skills (reasoning, lateral thinking)

Reflective skills

Insight

Practitioner skills:to be good at own job (where relevant)

Time management skills (where relevant)

# Appendix III

## Sources and Parameters of Searches

# Search Data

## Parameters of the Searches

The earlier review which I undertook for my Master's degree (Bennetts, 1994) revealed a gap in the existing knowledge base on the interpersonal aspects of the mentor relationship and human development. Some work had been produced in the United States of America, especially in Doctoral dissertations, but much less in Britain, where only one Doctoral thesis was recorded (McLeod, 1988) in the database Index to Theses. When an abstract of this thesis was obtained it became clear that McLeod had only referred to mentors in terms of individuals acting in mentor roles for themselves, and this was not a thesis about mentoring as such. There had in essence, been little published empirical research in this specific area, on either side of the Atlantic.

I surmised at the time that perhaps American students had experience of formal mentor programmes, and wished to write about both the positive and the negative issues arising from such programmes. I also noted that in both countries there was a plethora of formal mentoring literature which was organisationally focussed but which was not research based, and which tended to ignore or negate the interpersonal aspects of the relationships, until such programmes failed. That being so I based my review at that time on a combination of available literature, and attempted to isolate the aspects of the personal from those of an organisational function, concentrating where possible, on self-actualisation in terms of naturally occurring mentor relationships.

In determining the adequacy of a literature search, Cooper (1989) recommends a multiple channel approach. Such an approach is one which recognises that a single channel search may only uncover documents which share a similar bias, and that a search of numerous different sources should make the overall conclusions of the study more easily replicable by other reviewers. However it must also be recognised that reviewers themselves are biased in as much as they define their review parameters to suit their own studies, as is the case in this review. To do otherwise would produce an exhaustive amount of irrelevant data, instead of a concentration of works more appropriate to the research topic in question.

This review draws on multiple sources from many disciplines, but its parameters are confined to the interpersonal aspects of mentor relationships in terms of **self-actualisation, human development and creativity**. These aspects include **power, intimacy, self-esteem, mental health, and the metaphysical within relationships**.

I have included some work in which the primary focus was formal, because experience has led me to find that frequently my primary area of interest, the interpersonal, is covered as a secondary or tertiary by-product of other authors' primary work.

Literature sources which are relevant to the thesis but which are primarily focussed on art, mental health, and the creative process, rather than mentoring, are listed here, but such literature is incorporated into the body of the text as necessary and is not included in this section.

### **Sources of Data**

The following is a comprehensive list of sources of data which I will discuss in order of listing.

#### **Computer Searches in the UK via The University of Sheffield Library**

ERIC ( Educational Resources Information Centre)

International ERIC

Social Science Index

British Education Index

Dissertation Abstracts International

Index to Theses

Current Research in Britain

As I had no access in Cornwall to these databases, the librarian in the Division of Adult Continuing Education undertook these initial searches, and mailed the printouts to me for further study. She was also extremely helpful in writing to me with details of studies which she had come across in the course of her normal working day and felt might be of interest. An initial search on **ERIC, International ERIC and Social Science Index** in September 1995, used the descriptor words:

Artists	Artisans
Artistic creation	Artistic influence
Creation	Creative ability
Influence	Inspiration
Protégé	Protégé/mentor relationship

This search produced limited relevant data. **Current Research in Britain** produced nothing at all. However a search on **Dissertation Abstracts International** in February 1997 using a variety of terms and combinations of:

Creative Ability	Empathy
Interpersonal relations	Mentoring
Mentors	Self-Actualisation
Self-Actualization	Social Networks
Well-being	

produced 741 items between the period of January 1993 to December 1996 on 'mentors', and 'mentoring' alone. Twenty five items were available on 'creative ability' but nothing was found when 'mentor', 'mentoring' and 'creative ability' were linked.

Interpersonal relations produced 154 hits, but linking this to 'mentoring' and 'mentor' produced only 5 options. 'Self-actualisation' (the English spelling), produced 3 items, and 'self-actualization' (the American spelling) produced 121. However a linking of 'mentor' with either spelling produced nothing at all. Of these items, many were not suitable matches for consideration, but the librarian sent a printout selection of 21 abstracts, of which 10 were of sufficient interest to include in this review. The British database **Index to Theses** produced nothing for this same period.

**Computer searches in the USA via GALIN (Georgia Academic Library Information Network) and The Torrance Center for Creative Studies, The University of Georgia, April 1996.**

The following descriptor words were used:

Mentor/meaning	Mentor/well-being
Mentor/concept	Mentor/artists
Mentor/art	Mentor/creativity
Mentor/health	Mentor/spirituality
Mentor/spiritual	Mentor/emotion
Mentor/artists	Mentor/psychology
Mentor/dynamic	Mentor/natural
Mentor/traditional	

**ERIC** produced only 13 listings from a bank of 367 papers, and only 3 of these were broadly suitable matches.

**PsychInfo** This database on psychosocial issues held 493 listings for mentoring and looked promising, but a search produced nothing

**Academic American Encyclopaedia** This database had no listings for mentoring.

**GOLD (Combined Journal List of Georgia Libraries)** This held one listing for a book on mentoring in medical settings.

**Current Contents Plus** 250 listings on mentoring were available but a subsequent search using the descriptor words produced only 10 papers of which 5 were deemed suitable for the purposes of this study.

**Fine and Applied Arts** 17 listings were held on mentoring of which 4 seemed promising and were ordered via inter-library loan in Cornwall.

**University of Georgia Athens Libraries Catalog** This database held nothing on mentoring.

**Expanded Academic Index (GALILEO)** 58 titles with the word mentor in them were found, but only one entry was using the word in the text itself and that one was not relevant to my search.

**PsychLit** 96 entries were recorded with only 3 applicable to my search and these were dissertation abstracts. This led to the search in the UK mentioned earlier, of Dissertation Abstracts International.

**Manual Searches in bibliographies in the UK** This was somewhat disappointing as many of the bibliographies were listing the same authors who had been the primary source of mentor literature fifteen to twenty years ago. Although it is not disputed that such seminal studies are as valuable as modern writing, they have to be understood and interpreted in the cultural and political context of when they were written, and their relevance to the times we now live in. Sometimes an encompassing statement which was valid in its time, is now no longer held to fit the current body of knowledge.

It is perhaps timely that the authors most frequently quoted to have popularised the modern mentor concept, Levinson (1976, 1978), and Sheehy (1976), have both produced recent books updating their work and their concepts (Levinson 1996, Sheehy 1996). Levinson's new work now addresses adult development from a female perspective and affords fresh insights into the opportunities and difficulties which face women today. Sheehy's new work encompasses the three stages that she terms Provisional Adulthood (18 - 30 ), First Adulthood ( 30 - 45), and Second Adulthood (Age of Mastery 45 - 65), Age of Integrity (65 - 85), and includes findings from both American and British cohorts.

**Manual Searches in The Torrance Archive Collection, The University of Georgia, USA.** This collection of books and papers is held for reference only. Viewing may only take place by appointment, and a strict documentation process ensures that all visitors are traceable via home addresses and passport numbers. Visitors are only allowed paper and pencils in the archive. Photocopies can be made, but only by a staff member.

Time did not allow me to do justice to this vast collection as Torrance has published over 1800 papers and books in the last 45 years (Millar, 1995) and is still writing, but I took references by hand for those relevant papers which had been published, to be accessed later in the UK via inter-library loan. There was also a large quantity of unpublished work of other authors. The collection was particularly useful in holding a copy of Shostrom's (1966) Personal Orientation Inventory, a measurement device of self-actualisation used by Rawles (1980).

Rawles study on mentors and the self-actualisation of American scientists was the only one that I could find which addressed my own research area in 1994, and so despite the POI being bulky, I decided to purchase a photocopy of this instrument to add clarification to how Rawles had reached her conclusions.

The University of Georgia Library is so well-structured that it accepts travellers cheques and even gave me a pick-up time for the document in order that I could complete my searches in time for my flight back to the UK the next day.

**Manual Searches from the personal library of E. Paul Torrance, Georgia Studies of Creative Behaviour, Athens, Georgia, USA.** Paul Torrance, is the former Alumni Foundation Distinguished Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Georgia, and he had invited me to visit him at his home in Athens, Georgia on the morning of my three day visit. After general discussion about the conference in San Antonio, my paper, and the state of mentoring in the UK, he told me that he had 'a few papers for me to look at', and that I could take them back to the hotel and peruse them at leisure.

The cardboard box which he gave me was crammed with monographs, dissertations and theses, with much of it unpublished work and therefore not normally available through the usual routes. I spent the next two nights reading and taking notes from this collection, which contained some of Professor Torrance's ex-students' work, as well as the work of scholars in other countries. Together with Torrance's own papers and books, these studies have been of great importance to my work.

**Manual Searches at the Falmouth College of Art Library** Permission was granted by the Principal for me to have access to books on a reference basis only. This library was my main source of data on the psychology of art and the creative process.

**Truro Library, The University of Sheffield Library and The British Library** These libraries were my sources of inter Library loans, photocopies of papers, articles and previous reviews.

**Conferences in the UK and USA** provided papers and up-to-date articles prior to publication.

**Conferences in the UK and USA** also provided chances for informal conversations at conferences with scholars and practitioners

**Informal telephone conversations** with, and from, those researching in the field of mentoring, enabled me to check out the usefulness and relevance of my work to others, and kept me abreast of the latest research.

**Letters** soliciting information from academics and other writers provided generous amounts of papers and other help.

**Personal Library** resources were used to supplement the above, and include psychological, educational, organisational, philosophical and social, theory and text.



Appendix IV

Participant Release  
Agreement

## **Participation-Release Agreement**

I agree to participate in a research study of traditional mentor relationships in relation to creative individuals.

I understand that the study is of a qualitative design and will necessitate individual tape recorded interviews, a copy of which will be made available to me.

I grant permission for the data to be used in the process of completing a Ph.D. degree, and understand that this will include a thesis and future publications.

I understand that my name, and any other information which I may give, will not be used in a way which might identify me, nor those whom I discuss.

I give permission for direct quotations from the interview to be utilised within the thesis and future publications.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Research Participant

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Researcher

# Appendix V

## Academic and Practitioner Contacts

## Academic Contacts

These included:

**Professor E. Paul Torrance**, Former Alumni Foundation Distinguished Professor of Educational Psychology, The University of Georgia

**Dr. Audrey Collin** of the Department of Human Resource Management, De Montfort University

**Neil Blunt**, Programme Director of the Arts Training Programme, De Montfort University

**Brian Gay** of the Educational Initiatives Department, The University of the West of England and the International Mentoring Association

**Professor Michael West** of The Institute of Work Psychology, The University of Sheffield

**Joan Stephenson**, of the Education Department, De Montfort University

**Professor Alan Livingston**, Principal of Falmouth College of Arts.

Many were kind enough to send both personal correspondence and their own papers.

## Practitioners

Other contacts included those involved in mentoring in health, training or business settings namely:

**Dr. David Clutterbuck** of the European Mentoring Centre

**Jean Delahoy** of the National Mentor Association

**Tim Corbin** of North Nottingham Health Promotion Department

**Dr. David Levine**, Consultant Physician and Clinical Tutor of West Cornwall Hospital

**Brian Miller** of Cornwall College

**Katy Venner** of Arts Training South-West.

Contact with these individuals not only produced immediate feedback, but also led to invitations to present my findings at national, European and international conferences on mentoring.

Dr. David Clutterbuck invited me to present a preview session of the Channel 4 documentary film 'Consenting Adults', on mentoring in adult settings, to a gathering of social workers involved in mentor relationships in Cornwall and Devon. He has since asked me to sit on the review panel of the European Mentoring Centre as the specialist reviewer for books and articles related to mentoring in education.

Students and practitioners from other Universities, Colleges and organisations contacted me in turn for copies of my conference papers and my Master's dissertation, to use within their own research or practice. These included:

**Linda Reid** a Ph.D. student at the Centre for Academic Research in Education, The University of East Anglia, who facilitated mentor training courses with the police, and used papers of my work on the interpersonal aspects of mentoring to explore such issues in a safe environment.

**Richard Blackwell** of the Staff Development Unit, The University of Nottingham

**Hazel Fullerton** of The University of Plymouth

**Sharon Carter** an M. Ed. student from Derbyshire

**Bob Garvey** a Ph. D. student and lecturer at Durham University Business school

**Jeanette Mead**, a P. G. Diploma in Health Promotion student in the Faculty of Health and Social Care, The University of the West of England

**Dennis Brown**, Senior Business Consultant at Mid Kent College of Higher and Further Education.

**Coral Gardiner** of West Midlands Probation Service who was also studying for an M.Ed. at The University of Central England, and is now a Ph.D. student in the Business School there.

**Edward Kellow**, Training Officer of the Terrence Higgins Trust

**David Gaines**, Head of Personnel and Development, TRL Transport Research Laboratory

Combined with these, South West Arts Training Manager **Chris Butchers**, heard of my work via the 'arts grapevine' and invited me to present a half-day workshop to Senior Management staff who were considering using mentoring as a training tool.

**Colin Wilson** the writer, lives in Cornwall and in 1972 after knowing Maslow for a number of years, wrote a book about him, his psychology, and his search for meaning in life. I sent Wilson an early paper of my work (Bennetts, 1996e), and as a result of this he took time to meet me and was instrumental in pointing me in the direction of some relevant philosophers and important readings.

**Professor Paul Torrance** whose work on creativity and mentoring has spanned 30 years and who is now semi-retired, was helpful in mailing copies of his own papers from America, and in sending a continual stream of papers and monographs from his ex-students and colleagues. I had not read Torrance's work when reviewing the literature for my early research as I had been told by the British Library that his major work on mentoring was not available at the time that I requested it (Torrance, 1984).

When I eventually read a copy I was both delighted to find that my research supported his findings, and humbled that he had already discovered much of what I was assuming to be new. Personal correspondence with Professor Torrance resulted in a meeting with him in Georgia, U.S.A. some days after I presented a paper at an international conference in Texas.

This meeting led to access to his valuable and remarkable personal archive of mentor documentation, and to Professor Torrance supplementing my library with a signed copy of the book in question and other books which addressed creativity. Professor Torrance had already sent my dissertation to **Dr. Felice Kaufmann** of the University of New Orleans, and suggested that she consider using some of my interviewing procedures in her 30 year follow-up mentor study of the Presidential Scholars (letter seen by supervisor). Dr. Kaufmann's previous methodology involved a questionnaire survey of the 1964 -1968 Presidential Scholars (Kaufmann, 1981) which was an ongoing study of a representative sample of the 1964 -1968 Presidential Scholars, who were part of a national programme in America, set up to encourage and reward academic excellence in senior students in high schools.

As described in Chapter Three, the original sample of 604 students was taken from 14,000 students who had scored in the top 5% in the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Tests. The purpose of the study was to provide a description of the professional and educational histories of these students, but asked direct questions about mentor relationships in regard to their nature and influence. Initial and later findings had indicated the benefits of mentor relationships and Dr. Kaufmann was preparing to begin her new research on this cohort shortly. However it transpired that Dr. Kaufmann's heavy work commitments prevented her from continuing the follow-up study at the time of Professor Torrance's suggestion.

Whilst in Georgia visiting Professor Torrance I also undertook to visit the University of Georgia which housed the Torrance Center for Creative Studies headed by **Professor Mary Frasier**. Dr. Frasier enabled me to access the Torrance archive on campus and also to undertake many of the literature searches which are discussed in Chapter Three. I was also given the opportunity of addressing a multi-cultural Ph.D cohort on the issues involved in establishing a research question, and how I had initially come to conduct research in the area of mentoring. Despite some initial nervousness on my part at being asked to do this at short notice I found that the seminar was mutually enlightening and gave me insight into how Ph.D. students in one American University, think and work. Since my return to the UK, Professor Torrance has invited me to endorse for publicity purposes in the USA, his latest book on multi-cultural mentoring with disadvantaged youth (Torrance, Goff and Satterfield, 1998).

# Appendix VI

## Available Conference Feedback Sheets



## SPEAKER EVALUATION

**Question:** Which presentations do you consider to be the most effective? Please evaluate on a scale of 1-10 (where 10 is excellent).

<b>Chair:</b>	<b>David Clutterbuck, European Mentoring Centre; Mentoring Directors; The Item Group</b>	<b>7.05</b>
	<b>David Megginson, European Mentoring Centre; Mentoring Directors; The Item Group</b>	<b>7.01</b>

### Session 1

<b>Bob Garvey, Durham University Business School</b>	<b>7.22</b>
<b>Geof Alred &amp; Richard Smith, University of Durham</b>	<b>4.60</b>
<b>Liz Borredon, EDHEC</b>	<b>8.00</b>
<b>Brenda Hughes &amp; Jeff Gold, Leeds Metropolitan University</b>	<b>6.62</b>

### Session 2

<b>Caroline Egan Strang, Egan Strang Consulting &amp; Dr John Roscoe</b>	<b>7.33</b>
<b>Maureen Woodd, Suffolk College</b>	<b>6.33</b>
<b>Sol Davidson, Creative Learning Associates</b>	<b>4.57</b>
<b>Michael Green, Transitional Space</b>	<b>4.50</b>





### **Session 3**

<b>Chris Conway, Ashridge Management Research Group</b>	<b>7.71</b>
<b>Tony Mann, Resource Ltd</b>	<b>7.13</b>
<b>Julie Hay, AD International</b>	<b>7.11</b>
<b>Brian Gay, University of West of England</b>	<b>6.01</b>

### **Session 4**

<b>Maxine Edelstein, Maxine Edelstein Associates</b>	<b>5.50</b>
<b>Richard McBain &amp; Maureen George, Henley Management College</b>	<b>7.60</b>
<b>Chris Bennetts, Independent Researcher</b>	<b>7.75</b>
<b>Colin Palmer, Mentoring Directors</b>	<b>7.25</b>

### **Session 5**

<b>David Clutterbuck, Mentoring Directors, The Item Group</b>	<b>6.38</b>
<b>Jenny Sweeney, GHN Limited</b>	<b>7.00</b>
<b>Linda Holbeche, Roffey Park Management Institute Ltd</b>	<b>8.11</b>

# Inroads Evaluation Sheet

22 women attended the Inroads conference. 50% of the women completed the evaluation forms. 65% of these delegates were from organisations and 35% were individuals.

Most of the women found out about Inroads through the mail out or Amolfini.

**Main areas of interest** - \*Women in the arts \*Community art \*Fine art \*Funding  
\*Disability \*Art development \*Digital art.

## Structure

**How do you feel about the structure of the day?**

Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
1	8	2	0

## Content

**How do you feel about the content of the day?**

Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
1	8	2	0

## Comments

"Well structured with the short inputs in the morning and longer seminars in the afternoon."  
"A good mixture of input, discussion and advice."  
"Very useful especially Mentoring."  
"From brilliance (Mentoring) to waffle (Art and Technology)."  
"The technology session was ill prepared."  
"Well organised but Mike didn't really have his talk focused right."  
"A good mixture of input, discussion and advice."  
"Very useful especially Mentoring."  
"Time keeping poor which shortened talks on LETS and skill sharing."  
"Fifteen minute time slots (in the advice surgeries) unrealistic."  
"Sometimes felt a bit rushed."

## Improvements

"Knowing who was who....would be good to have the delegate list in advance."  
"Shorten the afternoon workshops."  
"Clarity of objectives needed especially in Art and Technology."  
"Would have liked booking confirmation."  
"Did not like name tags."  
"Open doors earlier."  
"More about existing systems than setting up alternatives."

## Recommendations

All speakers to provide papers in advance to Amolfini.

Front of house to confirm bookings by telephone/post with tickets sent out.

Front of house to open 5/10 minutes earlier than registration time.

Amolfini will endeavour to send out delegate list in advance bearing in mind some people book at the last minute.

Ensure speakers keep to time slots as running over shortens next speakers time.

# ***DIVERSITY IN MENTORING***

**San Antonio, Texas**

**April 11-13, 1996**

## **SESSION EVALUATION**

To help us with planning for future conferences, please complete one of these forms for each session you attend. It is important that you fill in the requested identifying information. Please turn completed forms in to the registration desk. Thank you.

Session Title Aspects of Love and Spirituality in the Search for Self-

Actualization: Recent Research Perspectives on the Traditional Mentor Relationships

Presenter Chris Bennetts

Day Saturday Time 8:45 - 9:45 a.m.

### Usefulness of Content

Excellent	16	Good	5	Fair	1	Poor	0
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### Quality of Speaker(s)

Excellent	16	Good	5	Fair	0	Poor	0
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### Comments:

- Wonderful presentation!
- The most valuable workshop of the conference!
- Good research, well presented!
- Anxious to learn the results of Chris' current study. Ask her back again!! Excellent presentation!
- Interesting! Insightful! Thank You!
- Informative. Limited audience participation.
- Good.
- Excellent!!!
- Good info in general. Would have found it more useful if provided mechanism/bridge to organizational/higher ed. mentor programs.
- It was refreshing to listen to someone who has done scholarly research on the relationship between mentor and learner--especially one that was examined in another cultural environment (England). Not enough time to cover all the materials and ask questions.
- It was good to see research presented. Hearing the international perspective was good. We need to hear more of what is going on in mentoring outside the USA.