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Core Conversations For The Greater Good: An Exploration Of Intrapersonal Communication As A Self-Leadership Strategy In Social Entrepreneurs

William L. Cowen IV
University of New England

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CORE CONVERSATIONS FOR THE GREATER GOOD:

AN EXPLORATION OF INTRAPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AS A
SELF-LEADERSHIP STRATEGY IN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

By

William L. Cowen IV

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Abstract

Social entrepreneurs actively create and apply business and communication strategies to support societal causes. They face many leadership and logistics challenges including the need to balance simultaneously mission advocacy and enterprise administration. This qualitative, phenomenological study examines how social entrepreneurs experience intrapersonal communication, conversations within oneself, as a self-leadership strategy that impacts mission and constituents. Within the vast intrapersonal communication field, this study specifically explored the concepts of self-talk, inner voice and inner dialogue, as well as imagined interactions, where conversations are rehearsed or replayed for perceived strategic advantage. The literature examined showed intrapersonal communication, self-leadership and social entrepreneurship all to be in states of their own development, which offered opportunity for the study to contribute to the evolving knowledge in each of these areas. To understand this phenomenon, face-to-face, in-depth interviews were conducted with 12 social entrepreneur participants. Major findings included descriptions of the experience of intrapersonal communication for strategy and planning; reflection and learning opportunities; specific communication scenario preparation and post-analysis; and self-regulation. This study provides valuable insight to social entrepreneurs, signifying intrapersonal communication as a powerful tool to engage in their respective leadership roles.

University of New England

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This dissertation was presented

by

William L. Cowen IV

It was presented on

March 16, 2015

and approved by:

Carol Holmquist, Committee Chair

University of New England

Michelle Collay, Committee Member

University of New England

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Somewhere out there, at this very moment, someone is living a raw reality. A woman

hears her husband come home late. He is drunk again. She is fearful again, and immediately

hides in the darkness. She quietly prays to herself for her peace and safety. In an instant her

prayers are ripped from her and she is abused… yet again. She is a sad statistic; and worse, she is

not alone. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV), one in

every four women will experience some type of domestic violence in her lifetime, and an

estimated average of 1.3 million women are victims of physical assault by an intimate partner

each year (NCADV, 2014).

Somewhere out there, at this very moment, someone is living a raw reality. A little

brown-eyed dog lies chained to a fence, shivering in the cold for days without food or water. He

struggles to survive and thinks to himself about how he will communicate his love to the kind

soul who finds him. Just as he settles in that thought, nature takes its course and the final breath

of what could have been a grateful family pet floats off into the night. He is a sad statistic; and

worse, he is not alone. Even if he made it into the system, the story is not good. In addition to

thousands who die by abuse and neglect, the Humane Society of the United States estimates

upwards of 4 million animals in shelters are euthanized every year (HSUS, 2014).

Somewhere out there, at this very moment, someone is living a raw reality. Teenagers

shake in fear as they get off the school bus. Their inner voices beg them to avoid the bullies

today at all costs. As lesbian-gay-bisexual-transsexual (LGBT) students, they know they often

have no escape from confrontation. In what seems like a blink, and yet in slow motion, a corner

of a locker room bears witness to merciless violence amidst bystander apathy and laughter. Distraught, the teens go home, and instead of a greeting from supportive parents, they find a pistol. The pain is over. They are a sad statistic; and worse, they are not alone. The National Youth Association (NYA) reports that 9 out of 10 LGBT students have experienced harassment at school due to their sexual orientation, and more than one-third of them have attempted suicide, and are four times more likely to commit suicide than their straight peers (NYA, 2014).

These cases make it clear that there is a limitless need for social support of many within our world. Because of the pain, fear, and that raw reality, thankfully there are those who want to help. In fact, volunteerism enjoys strong patronage nationally. Research from government organization the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) shows that on average about 25% of the population is actively involved in some type of service program. These volunteers, about 64.5 million nationally, represent annually about 7.9 billion service hours (CNCS, 2014).

While these statistics seem promising, challenges still remain. When it comes to addressing social justice issues, how does society maximize effect? There is both a need and desire to help with causes that can no longer be ignored by those who can improve the conditions of others. There are helping hands prepared for action. But how can these statistics take a brighter turn? What is that social spark that ignites a revolution of evolution? Where are the architects of a better humanity? Who is the catalyst to connect expertly these two worlds of the needy and the ready?

One answer to these questions is the change agent known as the social entrepreneur. These individuals, who often build and lead issue-driven, mission-based businesses, projects, or initiatives, successfully integrate "commercial enterprises with social impacts" (Alvord, Letts, &

Brown, 2004, p. 260). They are activists who use business action to create social action. According to Ashoka, the leading global social entrepreneurship think tank, they are quite simply "innovators for the public good":

> Just as entrepreneurs change the face of business, social entrepreneurs act as the change agents for society, seizing opportunities others miss to improve systems, invent new approaches, and create solutions to change society for the better. While a business entrepreneur might create entirely new industries, a social entrepreneur develops innovative solutions to social problems and then implements them on a large scale. (Ashoka, 2014, para. 6)

Ashoka's fellowship program alone has over 1,600 members in 60 countries representing active nonprofits (Ashoka, 2014). In academia, Milway and Goulay (2013) stated in the *Harvard Business Review* that in major business schools, specifically MBA programs, between 2003 and 2009 alone, "social benefit content" in courses rose 110%. With this expansion in both practice and academia, it can be asserted that social entrepreneurship is growing in presence and capacity.

Along with expansion in the number of practitioners, it can be surmised by the nature of their work that social entrepreneurs believe that help and hope can improve the lives of others. But as a researcher, I ask: who helps the social entrepreneurs? How do they successfully lead their missions and constituents? For that matter, how do they self-lead? And prior to any "leadership" at all, what internal processes do they utilize?

Given these questions and reflecting on the origin of this study, its development was an interesting and evolutionary process. The first consideration about entrepreneurial support led organically back to the area of "self-leadership." I was involved in a professional consulting project at a major international sporting event where I observed the athletes and found their

evident inner dialogue (and complementary vocal self-talk) quite remarkable. This experience anecdotally demonstrated that even if one is "led" or "coached," (athlete, teacher, student, businessperson or otherwise), a solo act or part of a team, there will always be make-or-break moments where one must decide and act, or "self-lead". In the initial review of this literature, it was discovered that self-leadership was a developing area of scholarship that held the potential to provide both context and opportunity for this study. With self-leadership now positioned from the perspective of social entrepreneurs, the problem and core focus of the study, is introduced.

Problem Statement

Social entrepreneurs constantly face the extensive dual challenges of promoting a mission while running a business, and need to actively engage self-leadership in order to tackle these difficulties and best serve their constituents (Brouard, Larivet, & Sakka, 2012; Lasprogata & Cotten, 2003; Rajendhiran & Silambarasan, 2012). This self-leadership may initially activate as intrapersonal communication, conversations within oneself, as a logical foundation to subsequent outward communication and leadership.

From the onset of planning, this study has sought to engage a unique approach and audience to explore the subject of self-leadership that would serve me both academically and professionally. Some initial study considerations included looking at self-leadership by:

- Comparing self-leadership in entrepreneurial archetypes to determine possible disparities and/or "optimal" approach.
- Contrasting self-leadership in profit versus non-profit entrepreneurial contexts.
- Analyzing self-leadership in a specific type of entrepreneur in a variety of industry subsets.

At that point, having initially established an interest in a framework for examining the self-leadership concept, the literature review process continued to explore other potential facets and components of the study. Through a preliminary assessment of research about "inner dialogue" a broader scope of its role as a component of "intrapersonal communication" was uncovered. As a longtime scholar-practitioner in the field of Communication, I found the connections between these concepts compelling and subsequently established the study on them.

Conceptual Framework

With the concepts of self-leadership, social entrepreneurship, and intrapersonal communication in place, considering that this study at its core sought to explore an area of Communication, its guiding paradigm came from that discipline, and crystallized the subsequent inquiry and approach. Foss and Foss (2011) asserted,

> A growing number of activists have come to understand the importance of self-change for creating larger societal change. From this viewpoint, those who wish to be agents of social change first must exhibit the desired changes themselves; otherwise, they cannot hope to create such changes in the external world. (p. 224)

This guiding paradigm suggested that proactive individual and subsequent social transformation progressed from the inside outward.

This concept, that Foss and Foss (2011) introduced as "constructed potentiality" (p. 205), directly and concretely supported the study premise and argument in the context of individual evolution via communication within social entrepreneurs to better support their missions. To that end, Foss and Foss (2011) argued that Communication was the most effective discipline for social justice as the primary route to change was through a focus on the unlimited symbolic resources constructed by change agents:

The communication discipline offers a variety of communication mechanisms for addressing exigencies and thus alleviating the negative feelings that accompany them. They range from techniques of argumentation . . . to interpersonal theories such as compliance gaining . . . to theories of persuasion . . . to critical theories that facilitate emancipation by uncovering oppressive power arrangements. Although marked by surface variability, these theories and strategies share an underlying unity: They embody one perspective on change–one conception of the process by which change occurs–and a particular set of options for producing change. (p. 206)

Complementary to the constructed potentiality paradigm in the context of social justice was the concept of "joyful commitment" put forth by Communication scholar and activist Hartnett (2010), where he argued that "the discipline of communication can be enriched intellectually and made more politically relevant by turning our efforts toward community service, problem-based learning, and new means of collective scholarly production" (p. 68). Hartnett also noted that, while advocating for social justice, the leader's happiness was not bound in a hero narrative of triumph over evil, but in the simple joy of "working with fellow activists to try to create a culture where our days are full of community, shared projects, and a sense of purpose and hope" (p. 85). To exemplify this stance, in a direct and arguably pointed commentary to those who are solely scholars he further asserted:

The more time and effort you spend on social justice work, then the more people you will meet who are not professors, lawyers, doctors, or other white-collar elites, thus expanding your social world, making you a more diverse and complicated person who is less judgmental and more patient. (p. 84)

The Hartnett (2010) stance underscored my ongoing, dedicated background to equal value of both thoughtful scholarship in conjunction with committed practice, and thus conceptually supported the study.

As a researcher, my initial study focused on the self-leadership concept. While reviewing this literature, I asked myself where self-leadership could directly connect into my longtime area of study and practice, Communication. The area of intrapersonal communication parallels self-leadership with its internal focus. As a result of this discovery, the alignment of the concepts brought further clarity that Communication would definitely be the center point for the study. Based on my background as both a scholar and practitioner in the discipline, quite frankly, that was where the heart of the learning should in fact live, serving as a collective purpose of the inquiry. As such, intrapersonal communication was viewed and engaged as a tool for self-leadership, and both concepts framing the purpose of the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose statement, as guided by Creswell (2013, p. 135), built upon this study's conceptual foundation: The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore the presence of intrapersonal communication as a self-leadership strategy in social entrepreneurs.

Research Questions

The research questions, examined through the lens of the constructed potentiality paradigm, are:

1. How did social entrepreneurs in this study describe their intrapersonal communication experience in the context of self-leadership as it impacts mission and constituents?

2. What intrapersonal communication strategy did social entrepreneurs in this study utilize, either organically or proactively?

3. Did social entrepreneurs in this study report that intrapersonal communication strategies influence self-leadership?

4. Did the social entrepreneurs in this study indicate that improved self-leadership via intrapersonal communication strategy affects mission and constituents?

For reference, the intrapersonal communication area can include instinctual or purposeful practices and actionable subsets such as inner voice, inner dialogue, mindfulness, positive envisioning, mantras, affirmations, daydreaming, imagined interactions, solo journaling, and vocal self-talk. For purposes of this study, I focused primarily on two specific areas: inner voice/dialogue/self-talk and imagined interactions.

Rationale for the Study

In a world becoming more chaotic by the day, and given their crucial role in society, one could surmise that social entrepreneurs would surely use all the personal and leadership support they could acquire. While this group gifts the globe through its leadership, they may themselves be undersupported. This study examines the ways social entrepreneurs experience a powerful strategic tool, through intrapersonal communication, to support themselves and those they serve. To that end, this study considered both the perceived urgency and reality of social entrepreneurs' own needs, and a potential value to helping those who possess the skill and expertise to most effectively and positively impact the lives of others. This assertion presented not only a clear and valid need, but genuine opportunity, for this study. To further detail this opportunity, it is noted that:

1. Participating in the study illuminated the ways the social entrepreneurs already used intrapersonal communication and that would be a powerful leaning opportunity for them.

2. Social entrepreneurs make important contributions to society, and they needed tools to sustain themselves and fully understand how they make meaning of their role in society.

3. Social entrepreneurs contributed to social equity and value by using their self-dialogue to identify needs and take action.

Recognizing the potential value of study involvement for social entrepreneurs directed me to the specific participants. While considering many publics who could engage intrapersonal communication as a self-leadership strategy, the societal benefits provided by social entrepreneurship compelled further examination. My interest was specifically created by the industry's evident layered challenges of championing social justice issues via advocacy (Rajendhiran & Silambarasan, 2012), the managing of crucial business and legal issues (Lasprogata & Cotten, 2003), and need for a summative, impediment cognizant yet motivational view (Brouard et al., 2012). Themes highlighted in these three studies included questioning accepted norms, advocating for social change, getting support from others, handling life issues, creating visibility, navigating taxation and non-profit legalities, procuring funds, and legitimizing businesses and innovation.

A guiding premise assumed that social entrepreneurs were leaders who were often activists. Research has expressed the connection to this concept further, detailing reciprocity. As Collay (2010) noted, "leaders who are activists are also activists who are leaders" (p. 231), which supported the relationship of these concepts for the study. For example, this study examined perceptions of those leaders who purposefully chose to create and guide a non-profit organization, or similar initiative or project, where quality of life, and often lives themselves, were at stake. In addition, social entrepreneurs must also successfully run businesses. Both of

these focuses, concerning one's self with others' quality of life and running a business, can become overwhelming. This researcher suggests that balancing two large challenges like these can take quite a toll on the social entrepreneurs individually, and subsequently, their missions and constituents.

As a researcher and practitioner, I felt strongly that social entrepreneurs would readily welcome and engage a unique and viable self-leadership and intrapersonal communication strategy examined in this study. They may also appreciate their role in advancing this research. In fact, both of these expectations proved to be true. Within this specific rationale, there were some assumptions about the participants' role in the study.

Assumptions

Considering the purpose of the study, it was assumed that social entrepreneurs engaged and experienced some form of intrapersonal communication as they make meaning of their leadership roles. Beyond this core belief, it was further assumed that they were able to articulate this internally-held phenomenon externally, that is, to describe it to others. Participants who were able to express the ways they engage intrapersonal communication were selected, as explained in the methodology section.

Significance of the Study

Findings from the study will support the scholar and practitioner areas in transforming both my organizations (the academic program at the University and the PR agency). There were two main goals for the study. First, I sought to learn as much as possible about the intrapersonal communication area. This component is not offered in my academic program, and I envisioned that the findings from this study would inform development of a new course and eventually a full area offering in this part of the discipline. Second, this study also sought to document the self-

leading inner-workings of social entrepreneurs as I will explicate further at the completion of this study. My agency has successfully served many non-profits, but I genuinely sought a deeper presence in support of personal, social justice missions. The business plan included the creation of an organization in the form of a new company division solely devoted to strategic communication and public relations for social causes.

This study is grounded in three unique concepts, including intrapersonal communication, self-leadership and social entrepreneurship. This unification of concepts presented a winning scenario for all involved. The social entrepreneur research participants could "win" and benefit from improved intrapersonal reflection and self-leadership. With this advanced self-leadership focus one could assume that external leadership by the participants may also advance, thus providing a "win" for constituents they serve. If ultimately, their causes were better championed and lives improved, then that would be a "win" for both Communication research that supports societal improvement and for me as the investigator, a longtime change agent.

Definitions

For specific purposes of this study, the key concepts were defined as such:

- Activist–one who supports or leads social struggles, and demonstrates an open-ended process focusing on the role of investigation in relation to "practices within the social situations to which activism addresses itself" (Svirsky, 2010, p. 163).

- Constructed Potentiality–an overarching and guiding communication paradigm that highlights the importance of self-change in creating larger societal change, such that "agents of social change first must exhibit the desired changes themselves; otherwise, they cannot hope to create such changes in the external world" (Foss & Foss, 2011, p. 224).

- Imagined Interactions–a component of Intrapersonal Communication, is "social cognition where individuals imagine anticipated or prior communication encounters with others" (Honeycutt, 2003, p. 157) in order to focus thoughts "before or after an interaction, serving as a way to plan upcoming talk and/or replay previous conversations in an effort to improve effectiveness" (Honeycutt, 2008, p. 77).

- Intrapersonal Communication–conversations inside oneself, a "unique process" of proactive and/or organic "message exchange and information transformation within the individual" (Cunningham, 1992, p. 597).

- Mission–the Ashridge Mission Model defines this as the purpose, essentially the "why" and "how" of an organization, by equally combining both "strategy" for the business component and "culture" for the social component (Azaddin, 2012; Campbell & Yeung, 1991).

- Self-Leadership–a practice by which individuals "refine and focus…work-related cognitive processes and causal reasoning, leading to improved work behaviors" (Brown & Fields, 2011, p. 275; Manz 1983, 1986); and in the context of this study, how social entrepreneurs self-motivate, criticize, inform, persuade and the like, in order to better themselves, and consequently their external leadership, in ultimate advancement of their constituents' and stakeholders' needs and fulfillment of their organizations' missions.

- Self-Talk–a component of Intrapersonal Communication, also known as inner voice or inner dialogue, is a process to use one's unique private thoughts to "increase . . . self-awareness and influence one to move forward and change or to pull one back to stand still" (Cooley, 2008, p. 1).

- Social Entrepreneur(ship) –founding leaders of a stratified selection of issue-driven, mission-based businesses and/or initiatives who successfully integrate "commercial enterprises with social impacts" (Alvord et al., 2004, p. 260), those who are engaged in advocacy of social justice, as well as the organizations themselves.

- Social Justice–a condition of societal inclusion where there is nondiscriminatory distribution of both benefits and challenges within all community members; its attributes include "fairness; equity in the distribution of power, resources, and processes that affect the sufficiency of the social determinants of health; just institutions, systems, structures, policies, and processes; equity in human development, rights, and sustainability; and sufficiency of well-being" (Buettner-Schmidt & Lobo, 2012, p. 948).

Conclusion

Chapter 1 has introduced the study, including the origin and evolution of the topic; its defined core concepts and structural framework; rationale and focus; purpose; assumptions; research questions; as well as significance and goals of the inquiry.

To further this effort of discovery and reach these goals, Chapter 2, Literature Review, details applicable works and concepts within them. Subsequent chapters include: Chapter 3, Methodology, a qualitative, phenomenological study, as grounded in the literature, to discover the essence of the intrapersonal communication experience in social entrepreneurs; Chapter 4, provides the data findings; and Chapter 5, provides the discussion and conclusion as well as suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

To support this study, the literature exploration focused on the three primary areas informing the conceptual framework. These included intrapersonal communication, self-leadership and social entrepreneurship, as well as select contributing and influencing components. When comparing all three of these primary literature areas in the research, they were each found to be in a state of their own development, some more robustly developed than others, and there were numerous approaches utilized by researchers to understand and define them. Comparing and contrasting the concepts provided immediate value to this study as no one conceptual area seemed more established than another such that it would potentially, organically dominate the study. As such, the literature about the concepts appeared to be on a reasonably equal footing that provided a solid, equitable baseline for merging these areas.

With this balance in mind, researchers in these fields did not immediately offer one accepted seminal viewpoint; however, this observation further motivated my research. Each of these conceptual areas presented an apparent background but none that this researcher felt could necessarily be classified per se as a definitive, deeply universal history. This apparent lack of evident groundwork pieces in these knowledge areas brought both challenge and opportunity in framing the exploration. The first step was identifying prevalent works and fusing them in order to generalize concepts in the context of the study. With this approach, the study presented a unique and productive opportunity to contribute to core thought leadership in all three of these areas.

A helpful lens used to review these sub-headings in the literature review, was to consider the inquiry engaged intrapersonal communication in a broader context, while utilizing

specifically identified sub-areas within that field. With that organization in place, I further focused the investigation lens and utilized complementary viewpoints of self-leadership and social entrepreneurship, providing a more defined and finite perspective for each.

At its core, this study focused on the Communication discipline in an area that is arguably less developed than other scholarly areas well known within the field, that of intrapersonal communication. However, significant literature was discovered to support well the needs of this study.

Intrapersonal Communication

Intrapersonal Communication is a messaging loop that takes place entirely within a person. Of the literature in this area, Cunningham (1992) provided a foundation or collective introductory work where he defined the discipline as a "unique process of message exchange and information transformation within the individual" (p. 597). Cunningham also asserted that "one of the strongest claims made repeatedly is that intrapersonal communication is the basis and foundation of <u>all</u> other forms of communication . . . and has become an accepted model in communication theory" (p. 597). The study also cited potential disciplinary overlaps in the study of intrapersonal communication and stated "its theorists assume intrapersonal communication, either as a reality or as a powerful model, comprises a range of functions, and that it augments our understanding of both what communication is and what it means to be a human being." In addition, "many theorists refer to the work of psychologists . . . to reinforce their point that intrapersonal communication comprises a number of intrapersonal processes" (p. 598).

Another core piece of literature discovered was that of Roberts and Watson (1989), a volume that highlighted various scholarly essays on intrapersonal communication. Within these multi-perspective writings, a definitive and collective viewpoint in an essay from Apple (1989)

described intrapersonal communication from a somewhat methodic standpoint and noted that internal communication's informational pieces are not only built, but "exchanged and implemented" (p. 323). This process implied a role of self-talk in defining the concept of intrapersonal communication, which was supportive to this study.

Overall, when analyzing the intrapersonal communication literature engaged it was revealed that the strongest contribution it made was to defining and synthesizing the concept for this study, which found the noted authors to be in agreement with what intrapersonal communication is and its function. Beyond this foundation, more literature was uncovered on specific components of intrapersonal communication, and two in particular were selected for this study. The first is imagined interactions.

Imagined Interactions

As an integral component of this study, also originating within the intrapersonal communication area (interaction within oneself), and bordering on interpersonal (interaction between two parties), a contemporary subset of the literature highlighted the concept of imagined interactions. Bodie, Honeycutt, and Vickery (2013) offered that "imagined interaction . . . theory has been productive for communication and social cognition scholarship . . . but . . . there is little research exploring the multidimensional nature of functions and attributes" (p. 157). Referencing Honeycutt (2003), "imagined interactions . . . are a type of social cognition where individuals imagine anticipated or prior communication encounters with others" (p. 157) to focus thoughts "before or after an interaction, serving as a way to plan upcoming talk and/or replay previous conversations in an effort to improve effectiveness" (Honeycutt, 2008, p. 157).

Honeycutt (2003) also reported that imagined interactions could be valuable in the assumption that "planning for certain conversations is helpful in achieving goals" (p. 133).

Referencing foundational work by Allen and Edwards (1991), Honeycutt explained that "participants who reported a high tendency to rehearse mentally . . . used more message strategies during the actual conversation compared with individuals who reported a low tendency to rehearse mentally" (p. 133). This finding seemed to produce both success and value for participants. Since the collective research agreed that the imagined interactions area served a variety of strategic and self-productive communication functions within the individual, it was a solid concept to inform this study.

To complement the use of intrapersonal communication to plan conversations in advance, those engaged in imagined interactions sometimes also review conversations after they have actually happened, that represents another approach to the action. This concept, which the author classified as "retroactivity," allows individuals to replay both positive and negative experience and messaging to analyze them for a current learning and benefit, as well as a future strategic conversational consideration (Honeycutt, 2013, p. 19-20).

Another key concept and corresponding study was the Honeycutt (2003) assessment of imagined interaction strategy relating to interpersonal conflict, as it is a prevalent condition of human existence. While detailing this experience the author offered imagined interaction conflict-linkage theory to explain "how conflict persists in interpersonal communication through mental imagery and imagined interactions . . . covert dialogues that people have in which they relive prior conversations while anticipating new encounters" (p. 3). To effectively process conflict and feelings about interactions, Honeycutt studied the concept that "conflict is kept alive in the human mind through recalling prior arguments while anticipating what may be said at future meetings" (p. 3). Within this study, Honeycutt further detailed that "Imagined interactions conflict-linkage theory provides an explanatory mechanism for why conflict is enduring,

maintained, may be constructive or destructive, and can erupt anytime in interpersonal relationships" and noted the theory is constructed of three axioms and nine theorems that "explain how interpersonal conflict endures and is managed" (p. 3).

Honeycutt's Axioms and Theorems of Imagined Interactions (II) Conflict-Linkage Theory (2003)

- Axiom 1: Interpersonal relationships exist through intrapersonal communication as imagined interactions involving the relational partner outside of actual interaction.

- Axiom 2: An interpersonal relationship is maintained and developed through thinking and dwelling on a relational partner.

- Axiom 3: A major theme of interpersonal relationships is conflict management (e.g., cooperation-competition). Managing conflict begins at the intrapersonal level of communication in terms of IIs.

- Theorem 1: Recurring conflict is kept alive through retro and proactive IIs.

- Theorem 2: The current mood of individuals is associated with whether or not their IIs are positive or negative. The better a person's mood, the more positive their IIs will be, as well as the inverse.

- Theorem 3: When an individual attempts to purposely create positive IIs (e.g., as therapy for a poor marriage), negative, intrusive IIs will frequently occur, in many cases with effects that undermine the therapy or positive intent.

- Theorem 4: Suppressed rage is a result of the lack of opportunity or inability to articulate arguments with the target of conflict.

- Theorem 5: Thinking about conflict may be facilitated through exposure to contextual cues including music, substance abuse, and media (TV shows and movies).

- Theorem 6: Recurring conflict is a function of brain, neurotransmitter activity in which neurons are stimulated.

- Theorem 7: In order to enhance constructive conflict, individuals need to imagine positive interactions and outcomes.

- Theorem 8: Conflict-linkage has the potential of distorting reality because conflict is kept alive in a person's mind and facilitates anticipating a conversation that most likely will be discrepant from reality since the actual interaction will not occur as planned.

- Theorem 9: People use IIs as a mechanism for escape from societal norms. For example, a person may be expected to talk a certain way with their boss in real life, but in their IIs, the persons can be considerably more bold or liberated. (p. 6)

These theorems offer a view into conflict, a prevalent concept within imagined interactions. Further studies have discovered additional usages. Honeycutt et al. (2014), to further contemporize the dialogue surrounding imagined interactions, discovered specific features within their use, via a study where participants kept journals relating to their intrapersonal communication experience. The majority of participants in the research reported engaging imagined interactions specifically for purposes of rehearsal, proactivity and catharsis (p. 21).

The literature in the imagined interactions component of intrapersonal communication was dominated by the work of Honeycutt in various forms and studies over many years. This fact alone demonstrated much synergy and agreement within these works noted. This alignment was particularly valuable to this study as it offered a solid area of inquiry that was conceptually well defined and supported in the literature.

To complement the imagined interactions literature, the other area of focus within intrapersonal communication was that of self-talk, inner voice and inner dialogue, which offered a variety of scholarly viewpoints from which to choose for the study.

Self-Talk, Inner Voice, Inner Dialogue

As explored in this study, in addition to the corresponding influencing concept of imagined interactions, Cooley (2008) provided insight into another subset resource in the context of self-leadership: specific use of inner voice, calling it "highly personal in that one's private thoughts are unique. The inner voice can increase one's self-awareness and influence one to move forward and change or to pull one back to stand still" (p. 1). The study described how leaders involved self-leadership through their cognizance of inner voice, then used that understanding to lead. As a result, such leaders "transform their lives and potentially the lives of those around them." Within this study, inner voice was defined as "an awareness of self that comes from the interaction with, and internalization of, the influences of others and the environment" (p. 1). What was evident is that inner voice, as affected by various factors, often subsequently influenced the individual in leadership decisions, and therefore was a valid concept to include in this study.

In 2012, Morin and Hamper examined self-talk from a psychological perspective. Their findings highlighted that humans (as opposed to other living creatures) have both the language and capacity to actively participate in self-talk, and that "this ability to verbally communicate with the self in turn is assumed to lead to increased cognitive complexity which includes deeper self-referential processing . . . suggesting that inner speech is often used by participants working on various self-reflection tasks" (p. 85). This observation, from an empirically quantitative, clinical perspective, had a multitude of potential qualitative applications, including this study.

Moving from a self-reflective capacity, self-talk and learning progress had valuable connections and implications for education. Lepadatu (2011), when working with students, noted "spectacular progress is observed due to motivational self-talking, transferable to other areas of the participants' activity" (p. 286). The study concluded that:

Self-talking is an interpretative and educational instrument. Learning to learn is a very important skill, and self-talking focuses on product and process. Learning requires communication, resonance and guidance in finding personal strategies to use words, thoughts and body to understand and make sense of information, to achieve personal objectives. (p. 287)

Connecting to Lepadatu (2011) is another prominent study that analyzed the concept of self-talk in adults. Brinthaupt, Hein, and Kramer (2009) discovered that this intrapersonal communication technique could have a measurable and often direct impact upon the self-value and perceivably the inner and outer leadership capabilities of individuals. They noted that those who reported high instance of using self-talk for personal criticism and negative reflective views often aligned with lower reported self-esteem. Conversely, those who used self-talk positively or for self-reinforcement as a result demonstrated higher levels of self-esteem (p. 90).

Additionally, while noting that the consistent capacity for engagement of self-talk may potentially signal both the presence, or absence, of intellectual activity, including conditions such as obsessive-compulsive disorder, the study also discovered that self-talk operated on behalf of a multitude of functions within the individual. The authors observed that "increases in social-assessing and self-critical self-talk could lead to decreased mood and increased goal conflict" and that "people might use reinforcing self-talk to elevate their mood and neutralize negative events, or their self-talk might reflect that they are in a positive mood or that good things have

already happened to them" (Brinthaupt et al., 2009, p. 90). For this study, this description was important since it demonstrated that individuals used self-talk as a mirror influence to create or support perceptions of their mental and emotional state, both of which can affect leadership.

Collectively, from the literature selection and synthesis, self-talk is an area that offers a variety of viewpoints, both from a communication and psychological lens. Despite this assortment, the authors noted seemed to align in that there were many areas of complement via varied perspective, but none of which appeared to contradict directly one another. This reasonable, mutual support allowed this study the distinct opportunity to choose among these perspectives the optimal components to support the research.

On the whole, there is continual discussion, constant analysis and steady progression of the study of intrapersonal communication. These themes provided some insight about the topic while moving the study forward. Both Cunningham (1992) and Roberts and Watson (1989) described the foundational elements of the field. Upon further review, Bodie et al. (2013) and Cooley (2008) affirmed the knowledge area through their respective works, by offering a modern lens of specific examples and techniques in sub-areas that appear to have some longitudinal depth through the studies of Honeycutt (2003, 2008) as well as others.

Intrapersonal communication in a variety of specifically selected forms from the literature as discussed, provided the individual a starting point for internal conversations and subsequent leadership actions. This deliberation connecting these conversations and actions is found in the process of self-leadership, another component of the study.

Self-Leadership

Self-leadership is the process by which individuals internally deliberate and decide upon best personal strategic actions. Neck and Houghton (2006) sought to focus and define "self-

leadership" through an overview of prior studies and then-current activities, as well as offered a glimpse of expectations of the thought area for the future. This conceptual paper was a collection of various supportive information areas, and accordingly it did not include an original study that directly drove the piece. (In the Communication industry, these are called "round-up" features that offer multiple viewpoints.) While arguing the case for self-leadership to stand on its merit theoretically despite limited empirical data, corresponding areas such as self-management, self-control, and intrinsic motivation were introduced along with the distinction of these concepts to self-leadership.

While focusing on transitioning the notion of self-influence into a broader one of self-leadership, Manz (1986) noted that theoretically, self-influence is presented as a process that is not internally motivated, but heavily influenced by outside considerations. Self-leadership, as applied, had more internal motivation components that translated into direct and specific leadership strategy and action. This general observation traced the arrival of self-leadership as a discipline. As such, it was considered a foundational piece upon which further studies were based, since the work went back many years but still applied to more contemporary discussions, including this study.

Brown and Fields (2011) then extended the Manz study by building upon earlier work (Manz 1983, 1986) that offered a model "in which use of strategies of self-leadership refine and focus individual work-related cognitive processes and causal reasoning, leading to improved work behaviors" (p. 275). The study examined the self-leadership strategies of "behavior-focused, natural reward, and constructive thought" and discovered that leaders who engage in consistent self-leadership strategy are deemed effective by stakeholders (p. 285). To further

exemplify this positioning of self-leadership as self-influence for specific outcomes, another recent study targeted an aligned, and more intangible internal component.

Furtner, Ruthmann, and Sachse (2010) discovered that leaders combine self-leadership and emotional intelligence in a hypothetical self-regulatory capacity. In other words, they could often be in control of their emotions. This study asserted that self-leadership is comprised of three strategy areas–behavior, reward and vision–and further explained that self-talk (like inner dialogue) can be a powerful exercise in self-leadership.

To complement Furtner's "behavior, reward and vision" concept, intrinsic motivation and personal empowerment as it informs self-leadership was examined further. Politis (2006) stated that self-leadership could help create job satisfaction which was rooted in theories of motivation. In fact, this study described a direct link between intrinsic motivation, resultant job satisfaction, and ultimately, the impact and performance of the individual's team (p. 209). To supplement the significance to the study of the idea of internal motivation, additional work about inductive action was the connector of this inner influence to job satisfaction and team impact.

Within this literature, the notation of motivation via incentive also appeared. When considering self-leadership, Stewart, Courtright, and Manz (2011) commented that individuals "can purposely focus thinking on the natural rewards that are part of task performance and thereby cognitively experience intrinsic motivation without necessarily altering the physical nature of tasks" . . . and, as such, "by embedding tasks with natural rewards, individuals are argued to experience greater perceptions of control over their work" (p. 197).

To further explicate the concept of self-leadership, entrepreneurial motivation was also detailed by the work of Estay, Durrieu, and Akhter (2013) with a central adaptation of a seminal piece by Louart (1997), where

motivation is shown as a link between the activation of internal energy and its

channeling towards business creation. It is the result of personal and environmental

determinants that are more or less conscious and direct the subject to create a business

that is formed from representations and challenges that he sees for himself. (p. 247)

Another prevalent concept was documented by Steel and König (2006), that

demonstrated a core source of motivation was the clear necessity for something, and introduced

temporal motivational theory, that is anchored by four main components: value, expectations,

time, and perceptions of profits and losses (p. 247).

Estay et al. (2013) shared that motivational theory "argues that to determine the value

concerning a specific individual and choice, it is necessary to understand the need and measure

the relative satisfaction perceived. This approach showed that needs occupy the central place in

the identification of the origins of motivation" (p. 247).

When comparing the emphasized components of self-leadership in the literature, this

represented another area where a multitude of viewpoints seemed to support, complement and

further each other. As selected, these themes provided a solid foundation for this study. The

Neck and Houghton (2006) overview served as a strong reference piece for further inquiry, while

the Manz (1986) piece offered the study a more finite and refined focus of self-leadership versus

a broader self-influence context. Brown and Fields' (2011) work demonstrated an emergent

theory and consistency within the area, providing both stability and validity that would enhance

this piece of the study. This effort also represented a combination of researchers from both

academia and industry, highlighting a unified interest and approach for scholar-practitioner

benefit through collaborative knowledge in self-leadership.

Of all these themes discussed, Furtner et al. (2010) connected directly into this study due to its specific Communication reference of self-talk, a clear and universally recognizable component of intrapersonal communication. Their specific theory offered the most viable application for the study moving forward.

To complete the review of the literature of the three main components merged in this study, the area of social entrepreneurship is explored.

Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship is the process by which individuals use business action to create social action via specific, manifested solutions delivered to those in need. When reviewing the literature in this area, the work of Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort (2006) called social entrepreneurship "an emerging area of investigation within . . . entrepreneurship and not-for-profit marketing" and tagged the literature as "fragmented" with "no coherent theoretical framework" (p. 21). The authors surmised that the individual environments in which social entrepreneurs operated must be considered and they did so via case studies of multiple individuals in the non-profit arena to begin to fill what they called a visible "research gap" (p. 21). This research offered multiple perspectives on defining social entrepreneurs and utilized these subject descriptors for its own study: (a) driven by social mission; (b) show a balanced judgment; (c) explore and recognize opportunities to create better social value for clients; and (d) innovative, proactive and risk-taking (p. 24).

The expansion of social entrepreneurship "driven by several changes occurring in the competitive environment" as emphasized by Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort (2006) was referenced by Oncer and Yildiz (2010), who offered that "entrepreneurship involves the identification, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities. In this sense, opportunities represent

occasions to bring new products or services into existence" (p. 222). The work also asserted that "social and traditional entrepreneurial opportunities differ because the two forms of entrepreneurship have different objectives" (p. 222). Social entrepreneurship was rooted in social change and not set to expand financial means for all audiences involved, but simply to better the world in some way.

Vision in entrepreneurship was addressed by Ruvio, Rosenblatt, and Hartz-Lazarowitz (2010) in the context of non-profit and for-profit ventures and their respective leadership. The research defined entrepreneurial vision, calling it a seminal concept in the literature that was prevalent across all leadership types. It also compared entrepreneurs versus non-entrepreneurs within this environment. In a demonstrated contrast of business and education entrepreneurs, the descriptors utilized (for example, "detailed," "focused," "inspirational," etc.) provided depth within the specific elements that comprised social entrepreneurship when viewed along with other entrepreneurial areas (p. 150).

Lewellyn Jones, Kiser, and Warner (2010), while communicating a brief history of the area, noted that "social entrepreneurship" was first referenced as a term and solitary concept body in the 1970s. While also offering a study on its fit into a university model (specifically whether it should be housed in a certain area or cross many thought lines like entrepreneurship programs, management curriculum, or the social science arena), their findings demonstrated that social entrepreneurship was best placed multi-disciplinarily.

To counterbalance the literature on the continued growth and prevalence of the field, other studies specifically addressed the risks and challenges involved in the proliferation of such programs. A recent study by Rajendhiran and Silambarasan (2012) aligned with other inquiries and definitions as it shared succinct descriptions of the macro role of the social entrepreneur:

What business entrepreneurs are to the economy, social entrepreneurs are to society. They may, like business entrepreneurs, be interested in profit, but their emphasis is on social change. They are often driven, creative individuals who exploit new opportunities, question accepted norms, and refuse to give up until they have remade the world for the better. Social entrepreneurs have the same core temperament as their business peers but use their talents to solve global social problems, such as why children are not learning, and why available technology is not widely used. William Drayton, founder of the world's first organization to promote social entrepreneurship, 'Ashoka', is credited with coining the phrase "Social Entrepreneur," to describe a person who recognizes logjams in society and finds ways to free them. (p. 188)

The authors noted, however, that despite all the global "good" this role could create, there were numerous potential societal challenges and obstacles for social entrepreneurs. These included concepts the study addressed, such as: getting expert assistance, family and friends' support, improving quality of life, maximizing social returns and promoting awareness (p. 189).

In addition to these societal challenges, legal and business logistics issues could arise for entrepreneurs. Lasprogata and Cotten (2003) called social entrepreneurship "non-profit organizations that apply entrepreneurial strategies to sustain themselves financially while having a greater impact on their social mission" (p. 69), and the process tended to focus primarily on the "social" component. To balance this observation, the authors stressed that "what business literature exists tends to treat the law as a technicality" and "the legal implications raised . . . should be central to management's decision making process" (p. 70). Issues highlighted include taxation, non-profit status and eligibility, securing funding, and business legitimacy (pp. 72-73).

Brouard et al. (2012) directly addressed these obstacles, but did so with a positive viewpoint while advocating for the concept that a stratified group of players would be fundamental to the progression of the practice. The researchers asserted succinctly and in summation that,

> social entrepreneurship has a great future. However, social entrepreneurs are facing many challenges deriving from their legal environment, support infrastructure, support for social innovation, financing, training, promotion, and assessment of practices. Therefore, there is a need to gather the key actors from the political, academic, university, and private spheres. They all have a role to play in the development of social entrepreneurship. (p. 17)

On the whole, these studies demonstrated the viability of social entrepreneurship despite the immensity of the potential challenges and obstacles that face those in this role. These issues were considered within the context of this study.

As such, in reviewing these themes, the Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort (2006) piece provided a substantive view of the evolution of the social entrepreneurship area. This offered this study a multitude of perspectives from which to choose in order to maximize the data and contribute to the field by bringing it yet another viewpoint and possibly additional direction as it grows. Oncer and Yildiz (2010) utilized this perceived prevalence of the social entrepreneurship movement and worked to further detail this purpose via a selected case and cast it in terms of the need to provide a specific value to society. Vision from Ruvio et al. (2010) presented this component of the study a valid inclusion. Because of my background in academia, Lewellyn Jones et al. (2010) provided an intelligible and relatable frame of reference. The various

components of the literature in social entrepreneurship offered a path to the approach of this study, which centered on social justice and business strategy to transform and change society.

There appears to be much agreement between the authors within these studies when concretely defining the notion of social entrepreneurship and the role of the social entrepreneurs themselves. This conceptual alignment, bolstered by the supportive component concepts put forth, provided this study with both depth and opportunity to contribute the literature.

Conceptual Framework

Inclusively, the three major focus areas of the study showed where the literature collaborated from an internal perspective (intrapersonal communication, self-leadership) and could be a valuable strategic tool for the audience in this study (social entrepreneurs). This perspective drove the overall structure of this study. To support this perspective, the literature review detailed these three themes: intrapersonal communication, self-leadership and social entrepreneurship. This study was based on a framework that appeared to be the very first intersection of these three concepts. As such, I found no direct inquiries that drew from the three themes. However, as a researcher I looked at scholars and organizations involved in ongoing studies related to these concepts as they contributed to the overall conceptual framework and research perspective. These included, but were not limited to, Cooley (2008) in self-talk, Honeycutt (2003, 2008) and Honeycutt et al. (2014) in imagined interactions, Neck (2006) in self-leadership, Foss and Foss (2011) in the model of constructed potentiality, Hartnett (2010) in joyful commitment as well as ongoing work by organizations such as Ashoka (2014) in social entrepreneurship.

Overall, this study merged the internal dialogue of the social entrepreneur, with a focus on the notion that social change must first start within, to assess its effect on self-leadership and subsequent external influence.

Conclusion

Exploring and selectively synthesizing the literature in the three primary areas of the study, intrapersonal communication, self-leadership, and social entrepreneurship, provided an abundance of perspectives and balance where all concepts would work in synergy with each other and no one in particular would dominate the study.

This stratified plethora of literature in these areas built a formidable conceptual foundation. A scholarly groundwork well underpinned the study, and it was envisioned this resultant knowledge would be of potential, applicable interest to a stratified assortment of industry audiences. The participants co-constructed meaning about intrapersonal communication, and when packaged in a variety of ways, the study findings could be expressed in both a scholar and practitioner manner, anything from academic journal articles to contemporary "Ted" type talks.

This study offered a valuable knowledge opportunity to connective audiences including academia and practice in Non-Profit, Social Entrepreneurship, Communication, Leadership and Coaching, Business, Psychology and Health and Wellness. Each group may process and apply the information differently, but all have the potential to better inform their fields of study. Specific research outcomes will be more or less pertinent depending on the audience and context that is utilized. A general aspiration of the study was that it would serve as a connecting point for these audiences and a catalyst for both future inquiry and collective benefit.

Communally, this study also served to contribute considerably and valuably to both academia and profession by increasing the knowledge base within all three of its main concepts: intrapersonal communication, self-leadership and social entrepreneurship. These areas, sometimes with little evident seminal offerings, all continued individually to evolve in both their own thought and application. This study offered much content to these conversations, but most importantly, supported social entrepreneurs and those they serve in their own worthy journeys.

With both the introduction and literature now present, Chapter 3 details the "how," or Methodology, of the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore the presence of intrapersonal communication as a self-leadership strategy in social entrepreneurs. To support this aim, the following chapter details the methodology and its selection rationale, participants, data collection, and analysis.

Research Approach Rationale

For methodology consideration, of particular interest to the study was the concept of the parsimony principal, also known as Occam's razor, where according to an adaptation by Wimmer and Dominick (1997), "the simplest research approach is always the most efficient" (p. 24). Given this concept, I sought to identify intrapersonal communication as a phenomenon within a select sample of social entrepreneurs. Bolstered by specific methodological literature connections to key concepts in the study, this research employed a phenomenological design to capture the lived experiences of social entrepreneurs utilizing intrapersonal communication as a self-leadership strategy.

Within this approach, data was collected as Creswell (2013) suggests, via interviews of social entrepreneurs who have experienced the phenomenon (p. 79). This method was both contemporary and appropriate, as according to Creswell, phenomenology is "popular" in both psychology and education academia (p. 77).

Another direct and strong argument for use of phenomenology for this study was found within the intrapersonal communication area. As a well-developed component of intrapersonal, imagined interactions were borne of this methodology. Honeycutt (2003) proclaimed that

"imagined interactions have their theoretical foundation in the work of . . . phenomenologists" (p. 3). This directly connected the method to the study focus.

In addition, for the social entrepreneurship participants, a fresh perspective was discovered that now considers phenomenology and its philosophical foundations as a robust approach to studies in that field. Seymour (2006) contended that researchers of entrepreneurship in general had previously avoided philosophical considerations, and without these the quality and validity of entrepreneurial research is undermined. Bann (2009) used phenomenology to understand how "entrepreneurs interpret, perceive and describe their lived experience in an entrepreneurial venture" (p. 62). She contended the best approach to prospective discovery is phenomenology as it "allows the ability to listen to the individual entrepreneur describe his or her knowledge, awareness and understanding . . . of a phenomenon" (p. 65). This served as a direct and realistic parallel to the study, and the collective, specific concept supportive evidence directly grounded the methodology.

Research Design

As a result of the support from these various studies in the contemporary literature, my research used a qualitative, phenomenological approach with its social entrepreneur participants to "elicit a specific experience" that was "turned into anecdotes" (Van Manen, 2014, pp. 299-300) and to further explore their "essence of the experience . . . incorporating *what* they have experienced and *how* they experienced it" (Creswell, 2013, p. 79).

Van Manen (1990) stated that phenomenology studies lived experience; explains phenomena as they consciously emerge; examines essences; creates experiential meaning; is human scientific; practices thoughtfulness; explores what it means to be human; and is a lyrical process (p. 9-13). To further explain this "lived experience," Van Manen (2014) also noted its

special significance as a concept, since "human experience is the main epistemological basis for qualitative research" (p. 39).

In alignment with Van Manen (1990, 2014), Creswell (2013) encapsulated phenomenology as "understanding the essence of the experience" (p. 2). This is the case historically with a phenomenological approach. As such, in the early 1900s, phenomenology evolved from German philosopher Dilthey's term *verstehen*, his "attempt to empathically understand another's experience" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 35). Creswell (2013) further explained phenomenology the most succinctly in its contemporary state as a "study (that) describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon" (p. 76). For scope, referencing Dukes (1984) Creswell noted involving 3 to 10 subjects and one phenomenology (p. 157). Merriam (2009) also described phenomenology as attempting to understand the "essence" and "underlying structure" of a phenomenon (p. 23). This tasks the "phenomenologist" with undertaking these studies that often involve strong and extreme human emotion (p. 25).

This methodology, as applied to the social entrepreneur participants in the study, involved data collection via in-depth interviews, analysis and interpretation. Creswell (2013) noted that phenomenology works with several individuals and their detailed experience and perceptions of something they have in common.

Throughout the phenomenological inquiry, this research actively engaged in bracketing, "the act of suspending one's various beliefs in the reality of the natural world in order to study the essential structures of the world" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 175), as adapted from an original concept by Husserl (1911).

A researcher brackets so that "prior beliefs about a phenomenon of interest are temporarily put aside, or bracketed, so as not to interfere with seeing or intuiting the elements of structure of the phenomenon" (Merriam, 2009, p. 25); and to essentially "set aside . . . experiences, as much as possible, to take a fresh perspective toward the phenomenon under examination" (Creswell, 2007, p. 59).

To complement these assertions, Moustakas (1994) also stated that while bracketing in phenomenological studies, "the investigator abstains from making suppositions, focuses on a specific topic freshly and naively, constructs a question or problem to guide the study, and derives findings that will provide the basis for further research and reflection" (p. 94).

In summary, by bracketing my own experience, this researcher was able to assess objectively the data in the study.

Research Questions

As supported by the qualitative methodology and phenomenological method, the goal of this research was to answer the following questions:

1. How did social entrepreneurs in this study describe their intrapersonal communication experience in the context of self-leadership as it impacts mission and constituents?

2. What intrapersonal communication strategy did social entrepreneurs in this study utilize, either organically or proactively?

3. Did social entrepreneurs in this study report that intrapersonal communication strategies influence self-leadership?

4. Did the social entrepreneurs in this study indicate that improved self-leadership via intrapersonal communication strategy affects mission and constituents?

As a reference, the intrapersonal communication area can include a multitude of instinctual or purposeful practices. For purposes of this study, I focused primarily on two specific areas: inner voice/dialogue/self-talk (Cooley, 2008) and imagined interactions (Honeycutt, 2003, 2008; Honeycutt et al. 2014).

Information Needed

In order to answer these research questions, given the qualitative, phenomenological approach, I purposefully sought information within two specific data types. The first, and primary, was perception information, to understand the social entrepreneurs' core of experience with intrapersonal communication. The second was context information, as needed, to better understand and support this experience. This information was obtained directly from the social entrepreneur participants and provided rich findings to support the methodology.

Sites and Scope

The sites and scope for this study varied based upon the specific participants identified for the inquiry. Since the study focused on the social entrepreneur himself or herself, it was not site dependent, and the sites were wherever these individuals conducted their mission-based businesses. As long as the site was private and research conducive, most often a professional office depending on the operation of each person, it was selected as an appropriate environment to collect data.

Research Sample

Using a purposeful sampling approach, I identified 12 social entrepreneurs in interviews that led to an extensive, in-depth phenomenological discovery. Access to participants and subsequent data was gained through initial introductory outreach that included a detailed participant electronic mail (Appendix A). As a component of purposeful sampling, I also

engaged in snowball, or network, sampling as suggested by Noy (2008), where participants were asked to refer others to the study, and a few social entrepreneurs did suggest colleagues who fit the sample and selection parameters.

The core selection parameter was the experience with this particular intrapersonal communication strategy in their leadership, and its hypothetical chain of starting with internal dialogue and then affecting external action. The site component was a factor here only to the extent if it affected the individual in the context of the phenomenon.

Considering the definition of social entrepreneur being used for the study, there was mission diversification among the participants that maximized the richness of the data. Regardless of the varied cause advocacy, the participants' purposeful and sole intersection was a role where they all proactively employed business action, with an intrapersonal communication experience, to change social conditions.

This study specifically engaged participants, all adult age (18-65) businesspeople, through existing professional contacts, current academic contacts, referrals, cold inquiries and professional associations in which I hold membership. These participants were selected based on their prominent and perceivably effective roles as a social entrepreneur as defined in the study. While further reviewing these participants' leadership roles in social justice organizations, some potential participants were ruled out as I subsequently deemed that they served their organizations not at a leadership level.

In addition, participants were selected so I could meet them personally for data collection. From a Communication-driven lens it was valuable to conduct the interviews in person and in real time in order to assess both directly shared and indirectly nuanced communication messages. For example, a participant may have been expressing a thought via

language, but shared something quite more profound or even different by non-verbal means. It was crucial to be cognizant of these nonverbal observances in a qualitative phenomenological framework because they added meaning to the data.

Once again, most prominently, the participants were chosen based on the perceived ability to clearly and richly describe their personal experience with the phenomenon being studied.

Pilot Study

To prepare optimally for the formal study, a pilot study to assess inquiry focus, conceptual framework, research questions, and potential scope and detail of instrumentation was conducted. The sole purpose of this pilot study, which was clearly shared with participants, was to test the aforementioned components. All those involved were also succinctly informed that this material and resultant data was preliminary to support the creation of the inquiry, and would not be included in the final study.

For the pilot study I successfully conducted two informal observation sessions at non-profit sites while serving as a volunteer. I then engaged in two in-depth interviews of pre-participant social entrepreneurs. These interviews were administered professionally, yet informally, and the participants were briefed in detail in advance, including the fact that they were involved in a pilot study and, once again, for research ethics would not be included in the primary study.

Pilot study data analysis was completed and anecdotal themes were identified. This procedure served as a solid strategy to inform the methodological approach, supporting the now-realized data saturation point in a reasonable, confident effort for the study. The pilot study

informed the final selection of the number of interview participants and their specific demographics and psychographics.

In reflection, the pilot study proved essential to refining the interview process. I have been involved in other academic research projects, and in my practitioner role, I also have an extensive background in media training for leaders, businesspeople and executives, so I was well versed in the building and execution of in-depth interviews. These experiences served me well while conducting the study. Within the pilot, the general methodology worked and was deemed capable of producing solid data in the formal study. In addition, participants were eager to be involved. It seemed social entrepreneurs were quite willing to share their perceptions of their own communication, leadership, missions, social stories and business expertise. This pilot finding of willing participant engagement was also evident during the formal study.

Data Collection

For data collection procedures in the subsequent formal study, I followed the guidance of Creswell (2013, p. 205). These procedures included: identifying research subjects and participants; gaining access and obtaining permissions; considering instrument questions most aligned with the research questions; designing optimal instruments; and conducting the data collection process with ethical considerations at the forefront of every action.

Data collection occurred specifically through in-depth interviews. To strive for objectivity within this process, I purposefully used bracketing, considering that

> prior to interviewing those who have had direct experience with the phenomenon, the researcher usually explores his or her own experiences, in part to examine dimensions of the experience and in part to become aware of personal prejudices, viewpoints, and assumptions. (Merriam, 2009, p. 25)

In addition, an integral part of data collection was participant communication, where I gained access and subsequent permissions through initial introduction, participant electronic mail (Appendix A), and personal calls as necessary. Along with a purposeful reminder of what the research sought to achieve, ethical considerations permeated all study activities. Due to its extreme importance, ethics is also outlined in a separate section within this chapter.

Data Collection Instrument

After conducting the pilot study of informal interviews with pre-subjects, this researcher made a final participant selection, refined the collection instrument, and proceeded as follows:

- An individual, in-person, in-depth interview for 12 participants.

- Interviews were approximately 45 to 60 minutes.

- A follow-up interview was scheduled, in cases where my review assessed that additional data would strengthen the study.

Interviews took place individually, in person, in a private business office of most convenience for study participants, either in the participants' facility or a third party community office facility.

Prior to any data collection, participants were provided and briefed on the study's definitions of the key terms. Applicable abbreviations included: Intrapersonal Communication (IC); Social Entrepreneur (SE); Self-Leadership (SL); Self-Talk/Inner Voice/Inner Dialogue (ST); Imagined Interactions (II).

The open-ended, semi-structured interview instrument questions (Appendix B) included, as fundamentally guided by Merriam (2009, pp. 95-105) and Janesick (2011, pp. 99-137):

Foundation Questions

- Could you please tell me when and how you became a SE?

- Why did you choose your particular SE mission or cause?

- Do you feel you experienced IC in any form in choosing SE and/or your focus? If so, how? Could you share the experience and process in detail?

- Are you currently or previously a for-profit leader? If so, how do think this role compares with SE?

- Of the following terms–businessperson, activist, leader–considering your individual role, which do you feel most exemplifies you as a SE? Why?

Activation Questions

- How do you feel you involve IC in running your organization currently?

- Do you believe you utilize ST consciously and/or unconsciously? How?

- Do you believe you utilize II consciously and/or unconsciously? How?

- Given the IC, do you think this affects your ability to SL? How so?

- How does your SL impact your external leadership? Why is this?

Reflection Questions

- Please share a specific time when you actively used an II in a leadership capacity? What was the outcome(s)?

- Please describe a specific example of using ST prior or during a leadership moment? What was the outcome(s)?

- Do you feel there is a connection between your IC and external leadership? If so, please describe.

- Do you sense that your IC prompted leadership affects your mission and constituents? If so, why and how?

- What would the ideal component(s), usage and strategy of IC be for you as a leader? Please describe this optimal scenario. On the contrary, what would not work for you?

Data Analysis

The guidance of Creswell (2013) was again employed for this analysis and interpretation plan, inclusive of: preparing and organizing the data, transcribing the data, exploring and coding the data, building descriptions and themes within the data, layering and interrelating themes; reporting the findings, interpreting the findings, and validating the findings (p. 261-62).

Data gathered by the aforementioned interview instrument was coded and reduced into various themes and concepts via long tabling and the use of index cards. After multiple reviews of the transcripts, essence-supportive concepts related to the phenomenon were identified and coded. An index card was created for each participant with the concepts, capturing how many times they directly and/or inferentially appeared. On the back of each participant card was noted the location of the optimal quotes, as well as richest and thickest description. I then created cards for the concepts themselves that listed each participant associated and number of appearances, to then solidify prevalent themes and sub-themes. The connectively, or relationships, between these themes was identified and merged in an overall matrix. This complete process was conducted by human means to best capture the essence of the participants' experience.

After this procedure, the study's conceptual framework was revisited to guide the analysis. The relevant studies included Cooley (2008) in self-talk, Honeycutt (2003, 2008) and Honeycutt et al. (2014) in imagined interactions, Neck (2006) in self-leadership, Foss and Foss (2011) in the model of constructed potentiality, and Hartnett (2010) in joyful commitment as well as ongoing work by organizations such as Ashoka (2014) in social entrepreneurship, all of which provided direction to the data analysis.

Ethical Considerations and Participant Rights

Throughout the entire process, beginning with a thorough assessment and subsequent study approval by my University's Institutional Review Board, a primary ethical consideration was to protect the identity of the research participants. To this end, participants were tagged literally as "participant" or "social entrepreneur." No identifiable or assumptive details were used in the data collection, analysis, interpretation or ultimate communication of the findings. To complement this nomenclature, organizations were neither named nor referred to in a generic form.

Since the focus of this study was on the social entrepreneurs themselves and not directly the organizations and constituents, participants were encouraged to share their stories and information from a first-person perspective. To alleviate any unintended outcomes of involvement in the study, participants were also instructed that should they choose to include in their responses information about their organizations and constituents, in the context of relevance to the phenomenon in the study, they were to do so only in a generalized and anonymous manner.

To further support ethics and participant rights, the research additionally included an agreement (Appendix C) to detail the extent and content of the data collection process. This "informed consent" allowed participants to understand and approve their participation in the research. In general, this included the following guidelines: voluntary agreement to participate, core moral principles of obtaining information, confidentiality and privacy, ability to opt-out at any time for any reason with no penalty, and pledge of the correctness of the data.

Throughout the study, privacy of participants was of the strictest and utmost importance. I was purposefully the only individual with any participant identity information and data whatsoever, and treated all with complete anonymity and care.

In addition, all audio-recorded interviews for transcription purposes were destroyed once the study was complete. Electronic files, including documents, were deleted and system purged. Paper materials, including anything printed or hand-noted, were substantially, physically shredded.

Overall, to supplement these ethical considerations, it was also noted that this study carried no identifiable risks to participants.

Trustworthiness

To support validity and reliability of the study from the onset, I collected all data in quiet and private office settings with no or minimal distractions to the interviewer or participants. In addition, I used "prolonged engagement" with the participants to build trust (Creswell, 2013, p. 250), that supplemented the similar concept of "functional familiarity" suggested by Schein (2003), as well as recognized any researcher bias that may occur (Creswell, 2013, p. 251; Merriam, 1988).

In specific support of the phenomenological approach, I sought the practice of Polkinghorne (1989) as suggested by Creswell (2013, pp. 259-260) and asked myself the following questions:

- Did the interviewer influence the contents of the participants' descriptions in such a way that the descriptions do not truly reflect the participants' actual experience?

- Is the transcription accurate, and does it convey the meaning of the oral presentation in the interview?

- In the analysis of the transcriptions, were there conclusions other than those offered by the researcher that could have been derived? Has the researcher identified these alternatives?

- Is it possible to go from the general structural description to the transcriptions and to account for the specific contents and connections in the original examples of the experience?

- Is the structural description situation specific, or does it hold in general for the experience in other situations?

I then engaged further validity and reliability standards for a phenomenological study, via these questions put forth by Creswell, (2013, p. 260):

- Does the author convey an understanding of the philosophical tenets of phenomenology?

- Does the author have a clear "phenomenon" to study that is articulated in a concise way?

- Does the author use procedures of data analysis in phenomenology, such as the procedures recommended by Moustakas (1994) or Van Manen (1990)?

- Does the author convey the overall essence of the experience of the participants? Does this essence include a description of the experience and the context in which it occurred?

- Is the author reflexive throughout the study?

Researcher Bias

The interviews conducted provided all the relevant data for the study. Despite a personal interest and introductory experience as an emerging social entrepreneur, in my primary role of

researcher, objectivity was the key consideration throughout the process of describing and interpreting the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Van Manen, 1990). In addition, I was acquainted with some of the social entrepreneur participants in the study, but by no means in the context of the phenomenon being examined.

Usefulness of Findings to Stakeholders

Moving forward, to support the scholar and practitioner areas in transforming both my organizations, there were two main, dedicated goals for the study. First, the inquiry produced new knowledge about the intrapersonal communication area. This component is not offered in the Communication Department where I am a faculty member. I envisioned that the findings from this study would inform development of a new course and eventually a full area offering in this part of the Communication discipline. Second, the inquiry documented the self-leading inner-workings of social entrepreneurs that I will explore further in future, post-doctoral studies. While the public relations agency I founded and operate has successfully served many non-profit organizations, I am genuinely seeking a deeper presence in support of personal, social justice missions. The business plan moving forward is to create an organization first in the form of a new company division solely devoted to strategic communication and public relations for causes.

For the study participants, a primary stakeholder group, the core benefits have been identified as: (a) participation in this co-construction of meaning within this particular and unique intersection of subject matter may offer participants the experience of an enhanced perception of their own individual expertise; (b) knowledge and ongoing reflection of the benefit of a social entrepreneur's usage of intrapersonal communication may be advantageous to a variety of stakeholders in all leadership roles; and (c) identification and understanding of the participants' organic and purposeful use of inner voice/dialogue and imagined interactions may

improve self-leadership, subsequent external leadership, and ultimately benefit the organizations'
missions and constituents.

In summary consideration of this study's usefulness, this research engaged a qualitative,
phenomenological approach to learn about social entrepreneurs and their experience with
intrapersonal communication. These findings and their subsequent interpretation are expected to
be of interest to scholars, practitioners and journal editors in potential areas such as: Non-Profit,
Social Entrepreneurship, Communication, Leadership and Coaching, Business, Psychology,
Health and Wellness.

Conclusion

This study explored the presence of intrapersonal communication as a self-leadership
strategy in social entrepreneurs. It engaged a qualitative, phenomenological approach via 12 in-
depth interviews of participants.

Given the study's purpose, research questions and overall framework of what it sought to
discover and subsequently offer both academia and practice, as a researcher I felt that the
detailed methodology was well aligned with and supported by both the scholarly literature and
industry protocol. It was an optimal method for not only this research, but also serves as a
catalyst for further phenomenological studies of intrapersonal communication in social
entrepreneurs. When considering future research, as this study merged concept areas that
appeared to be not previously combined, I will develop a typology classification of the concepts,
since according to Creswell (2007, p. 77) "a description of the essence of the experience of the
phenomenon becomes a phenomenology".

Throughout the entire study, as a researcher I experienced affirmation in both the inquiry and process, and was consistently eager to move forward, all in an effort to bring everyone involved better tools for social justice.

As I now move to communicate the data discovered, along with the subsequent interpretation and conclusions, I feel confident in the methodology as "the method of reflection that occurs throughout the phenomenological approach provides a logical, systematic, and coherent resource for carrying out the analysis and synthesis needed to arrive at essential description of experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 94).

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore the presence of intrapersonal communication as a self-leadership strategy in social entrepreneurs. Within this research, I believe that understanding a specific phenomenological experience will offer social entrepreneurs another strategic tool to address better the challenges they face in their various leadership roles as they serve their respective constituents and pursue their missions. With that purpose in mind, this findings chapter presents a brief overview of the participant pool, as well as the four major findings identified along with the further delineated secondary and supplemental findings for each.

For this study, 12 social entrepreneur participants were selected, all of whom were adult (18-65) leaders and businesspeople who used communication strategy for mission-centered work. The primary criterion in choosing these participants was their experience with the phenomenon itself, and of equal importance, their ability to articulate it both clearly and deeply. This study purposefully sought mission diversity within the participant pool, so the research would focus solely on the participants' collective intrapersonal communication experience, with no other variables of potential effect.

Data gathered by the interview instrument detailed in the methodology was coded and reduced into various themes and concepts via long tabling and the use of index cards. After multiple reviews of the transcripts, essence-supportive concepts related to the phenomenon were identified and coded. An index card was created for each participant with the concepts, capturing how many times they directly and/or inferentially appeared. On the back of each participant card was noted the location of the optimal quotes, as well as richest and thickest description. I then

created cards for the concepts themselves that listed each participant associated and number of appearances, to then solidify prevalent themes and sub-themes. The connectively, or relationships, between these themes was identified and merged in an overall matrix. This complete process was conducted by human means to best capture the essence of the participants' experience.

The data garnered from the 12 social entrepreneurs produced four "major" findings, an experience expressed by 9 or more of the 12 participants. To support these major findings in more demarcated detail, "secondary" findings appeared, representing an experience expressed by 3 to 8 of the 12 participants. As well, a further selection of supplemental findings, those experiences expressed by 1 or 2 of the 12 participants, was included as they offered an acutely unique experience with the finding.

Here are the four major findings:

1. All social entrepreneur participants (12 of 12) indicated usage of intrapersonal communication as a technique for both individual personal and organizational strategic planning.

2. The overwhelming majority of social entrepreneur participants (11 of 12) conveyed intrapersonal communication as an ongoing experience of reflection and recognition of learning opportunities.

3. The majority of social entrepreneur participants (10 of 12) discussed engagement of intrapersonal communication as a tool to prepare for anticipation or for post-justification of specific stakeholder interaction scenarios.

4. Most social entrepreneur participants (9 of 12) described intrapersonal communication as a vehicle that involved the need for various forms of both explicit situational and generalized self-regulation in leadership roles.

Following is a presentation of relevant, clustered excerpts from participant interviews for each of these major findings, along with accompanying secondary and supplemental findings. Excerpts contain great detail and abundant description by the participants. Social entrepreneurs conveyed in their own words their individual experience with the phenomenon being studied. To capture the richness of their thinking and portray their alignment to the literature, direct quotes from the in-depth interviews are utilized. The identification coding shows that all participants' voices are represented. For utmost anonymity, each participant number purposefully does not correspond with the original order of the interviews conducted.

Finding 1

All social entrepreneur participants (12 of 12, 100%) indicated usage of intrapersonal communication as a technique for both individual personal and organizational strategic planning.

Of all the findings in this study, the process of intrapersonal communication as a means to deliberate over and potentially, to successfully accomplish various approaches in leadership roles was the most universally articulated by the participants:

One mechanism I use . . . with choices . . . is to ask myself 'OK, how does this sort of action match up to your strategic plan?' since I have a good sense in my gut . . . and so over the years, I've gotten very good at trusting those internal instincts. (Participant 11)

Self-talk for path forward is something that goes on 24/7, every waking minute. There's inner dialogue with . . . everything . . . and I was thinking a lot about how it was going to

work and how I was going to get the money, and who could relate to the kids, and where I was going to get the volunteers, and get the space, and the money. The *money* was . . . (points to forehead) always top of mind. I spent so much time walking around working that out internally. (Participant 10)

When you tune into yourself you kind of guide it to the right plan and approach and that's the most powerful part of . . . strategic practice. It's like when you do that you have an internal compass that 90% of the time gives you the right answer. You trust it. It's not like computer processing; it all kind of flows together through that Grand Central Station in your brain, and it pops out something and you're like, 'Is that it'. The feedback you get is that you planned the right thing. *Yes*. (Participant 4)

I don't take notes at meetings. I find then I'm listening, and 100%. Then I will remember 100% of the conversations and how they played through, my understanding of them. As I play them back, I begin to group together ideas and pieces of information that ultimately will give us . . . the synopsis and . . . next steps. And not only will I be able to strategize, because I'm doing it mentally, I will be able to recall it weeks later. (Participant 11)

Planning is individualized, and if you're a social entrepreneur, internally strategizing helps you interact with your stakeholders and run your organization productively. You'll have strong leadership moments and just be a better person to talk with. (Participant 7)

When I create for my organization I think that it's kind of the voice of experience, like, you know . . . you walked this before, you remember the last time that might have happened, so just be aware it might again. So, you have to take that historical view in order to inform what's going on either presently or for the future. Strategically I think that this type of communication for planning helps to inform your journey. (Participant 1)

There is intel gathering so I'm constantly noting people's emotional reactions to certain statements, data they reveal. To me it's been a little bit of memory training. I am somewhat eidetic with that kind of stuff so I'm constantly squirreling away all this in a mental databank, and that info when replayed is telling me how I should have subsequent interactions with that person. That sounds a little ill, sick, I know, but it feeds my internal conversations and it all has to do with the business and how I plan for it. (Participant 6)

When you do something new, you're . . . always trying to figure out how you're going to describe this to other people because there's no reference, no model. I'm always asking myself, 'How do I define it for this person?' The intrapersonal helps me plan all that to make my organization make sense to other people. (Participant 4)

When considering intrapersonal communication as an approach to strategy development, 8 of 12 social entrepreneurs also sharpened this planning experience further by discussing its use in scenarios requiring specific problem solving and situational decision making, either prior or in the active moment:

I notice that my internal communication definitely is used more when I don't exactly know what my next steps will be. When I know what I'm doing or following a routine, I

don't use it as much. I could be, but it's probably more unconscious in that instance unless I'm preparing for a specific task or making a real (sic) important decision. (Participant 12)

So I had to step back, figure out my priorities for the organization and for me in general about how I wanted to deal with this group of people, and the larger picture. Did I need to be so tough on them that it was just making it miserable for everyone? And so there was definitely a lot of self- discussion about how I wanted to handle my problematic board of directors, and eventually I figured out that it wasn't even worth the fight. (Participant 7)

I spend much time in my mind connecting the dots and thinking about decisions. I'm a big believer in the macro and the micro so I think, as a leader of an organization like this, it's important for me to be confident, passionate, and really deliberate internally about my actions that affect people. (Participant 5)

We know the goal is to survive the incident and we have to have the self- talk before we're in a situation. We have to rehearse it, right? As it ties to my mission, I'd love to share using internal dialogue with people who are marginalized and vulnerable. I think those imagined interactions prior . . . are critical for decision making while something is happening. For example, hypothetically, if Trayvon Martin* (the Florida teenager shot and killed in a high-profile 2012 incident) had imagined, right, a different outcome, he maybe would have had another consequence than being hunted down in cold blood. (Participant 2)

Communication begins at home with oneself and you're thinking about what am I going to say, why am I saying it, what do I know? You're also thinking about the battle and the war and sometimes you can see the battle because you want to win the war, not necessarily win in the sense of versus another person, and the inner voice tells you when do you hold your fire or not. (Participant 5)

I experience the intrapersonal when I feel like I have an instinctual reaction to something that's not easy to solve. I sit there, write like three or four different responses, and sometimes . . . delete them all. At the end of the day sometimes your inner dialogue tells you it's OK to just punt. (Participant 9)

My problem solving has lots to do with managing people. I struggle sometimes with the internal conversation about this. I use imagined interactions all the time to play situations with staff and decide how to handle all of it . . . and I think it helps me be a better leader. (Participant 8)

The conversation I was having for self-leadership was that I really needed to be engaged, and I could justify it because we're the biggest program. I would never be able to make sound decisions like this if it weren't for the internal dialogue. (Participant 11)

I recognize that I'm always talking to myself like, 'How do you solve this problem?' because there are all these barriers and obstacles . . . to navigate, and I'm constantly

working myself through tackling issues and then all the next steps to move forward.

(Participant 4)

Four of 12 participants noted the privacy and refuge of intrapersonal communication in a

strategic planning context:

It usually happens in my car so people won't see me. (laughs loudly) I literally think

through board meetings, big events . . . and whatnot, to kind of imagine what people are

going to say and not say. The deliberation physically in the car and then in my mind has

layers of protection. (Participant 9)

I drive almost an hour each way to the office and it's the best isolation possible. I have an

inner dialogue trying to figure out problems, people, you name it. I'm alone, secure, and

try to maximize every little moment possible. (Participant 10)

To be effective you have to be internally thoughtful and there are times that you're going

to have brainstorms . . . conversations . . . dialogues in your head that never get out.

Without that safe space to fail, to doddle, to kind of wander for a minute, you may never

get to where you need to be. (Participant 1)

Because these inside conversations happen all the time, I cherish them. Quite honestly,

it's a safe circle for me. I don't have to be judged; I don't have to be right or wrong. I can

think outside the box because it's my box. And I think that even strategically it becomes .

. . a very powerful weapon because no one really knows exactly what you're thinking

other than you. So, the self-talk is a really good thing that happens very spontaneously on

a consistent basis. (Participant 3)

Two of 12 participants viewed the intrapersonal communication process in metaphoric

alignment with their prior experience as athletes:

I think that we have to study more . . . look at the terrain, contemplate it internally before

we act, as opposed to just jumping out there. This is a long race. As a runner I know the

ground you're stepping on right now, in ten more steps might be different. Mission-based

work is a marathon and not a sprint. (Participant 1)

I was a really skinny kid . . . and so the self-talk, when I prepared to do judo was 'This

guy is in front of me. And he's maybe, right, 20 pounds heavier than me. What am I

gonna do?' So, this self-talk, and its ability to strategize in a way that makes sense, is

something that has fueled me throughout my entire life. Because I'm faced every day . . .

like all of us in David-Goliath entrepreneurial situations with the challenge to create and

innovate. (Participant 2)

One of 12 participants utilized intrapersonal communication for strategic planning in a

direct, peer relative sense:

I'm on these monthly calls with colleagues, doing my usual self-talk of comparing myself

to them in similar leadership roles. I'm asking 'What am I doing that's coming up to the

level of the national efforts, or just local and OK that has value?' My inner dialog is

always trying to make me aware of . . . what I'm doing right, what I'm not stepping up to

and what strategies we could do if we had more resources. (Participant 8)

One of 12 participants also offered a highly personal, fine-grained and comprehensive process for which the intrapersonal communication as a self-leadership strategy was experienced:

My internal is often around planning or problem solving and is language focused . . . like a gestalt comprehension of the system . . . and you have to process it and then share it with people. That inner dialogue becomes most intense around finding the right language and ways of articulating. I'm happy in my own space because I get it . . . but my daily work is to externalize that understanding so others can share in it. With that in mind literally . . . it's a system that's a funnel, where the intrapersonal communication is the mouth . . . where there's huge live input . . . and my self-leadership in the middle acts as the focusing dynamic, and then there is a manageable and relatable delivery for the stakeholder at the end of the funnel. I always use this process . . . it makes me more confident in my decisions and helps me as a leader pick a lane, hit the gas and adapt to the scenery along the way so to speak. I find that using this internal practice creates structure for me I need where there is none organically . . . and then I also drink a lot less Scotch. (Participant 6)

Finding 1 richly detailed the fully universal experience of all 12 study participants, that of intrapersonal communication as a tool for strategic planning. Within this finding's data, participants also further expressed usage with particular problems and decisions, privacy to deliberate leadership moments, peer comparison, metaphoric alignment to other roles previously portrayed and the need to individualize the process.

As a complementary experience to the specificity of strategic planning, social entrepreneur participants strongly communicated the phenomenon of a more generalized thought process in their leadership roles as evidenced by the next finding.

Finding 2

The overwhelming majority of social entrepreneur participants (11 of 12, 92%) conveyed intrapersonal communication as an ongoing experience of reflection and recognition of learning opportunities.

This finding clearly demonstrated the constant flow of thought within the minds of the social entrepreneur participants. Most expressed intrapersonal communication as a consistent internal dialogue where they processed a variety of circumstances and gained both perspective and knowledge from each to support their leadership journey:

> To me the internal conversations are ironically not always a mirror, but more a picture frame, I think, since I'm trying to project something helpful onto other people whose livelihood, own missions, and daily activities are going to depend on how well I do what I do. (Participant 1)

> There's always dialogue going on in the back of my head, but sometimes it's more up front. And that feels like it's cyclical, really, and situations control it. Like if I've had a really good experience with a recipient, I then start struggling with, I should be doing more, helping more. If there's a slow period then my internal chat turns to how it's not going to be sustainable forever if I don't put 100% into it. My dialogue is always this should or shouldn't, push or pull. (Participant 7)

These are fascinating points . . . as I'm a very introspective person and fascinated with systems. The through line through all my career is systems thinking and it's taken me a long time to actually realize it. That's been a *very* intense, never-ending internal conversation that is a real phenomenon for me as I think about my mission. In fact, the moment I get up in the morning the dialogue starts and it doesn't really ever stop unless I watch TV, my version of a drug. That's my only escape because otherwise it's like just there. I can't eat with people. Even when I'm meeting with people I'm having that self-conversation about the organization. (Participant 6)

I have the self-talk every day to sort of reframe who I am, right, so that the listener in my conversation doesn't think it's the first day I'm doing all this. It's like a bit of a refresh . . . or on more intense days, a reinvention where I make sure I'm giving the best I possibly can to those we serve. (Participant 2)

My auto-pilot inner dialogue is often in the lens of my own principles. I have four laws, personal laws, that I do regularly compare things to as a litmus test for my individual actions and when leading the organization. The four are quite simply do what makes you happy . . . do it with people you like and respect . . . never look up or down at anybody in the process . . . and make sure that it pays the bills. (Participant 6)

The reflection stuff helps me learn from my mistakes. If I'm not rehearsing or reviewing the way that I handled something the first time, and I continue to do wrong based on the visible outcome, then it will definitely affect constituents. I know every conversation I've

ever had, and how I process each, has led me to how I feel with people, clients and volunteers right now. (Participant 3)

As you become aware of your inner voice you can diagnose if you're about to be hijacked by fear or hijacked by greed into doing things that are probably not going to lead to the best outcomes. I monitor it to see like, 'Oh, these thoughts coming in are associated with anxiety' so I'm afraid of something. Now, is this healthy fear or is this fear going to limit me in my leadership role and affect others? How do I respond? (Participant 4)

I often automatically in my head refer to something that's similar that happened 10 or 15 years ago; and it's interesting to see how my perspective has changed. My inner voice is used for contrast and kind of a barometer to help me in the moment. (Participant 8)

When you get that internal 'Hmm' moment, that pause, that something, you either don't understand it, you don't know which way to go . . . that's when I feel the intrapersonal communication, and I stop to contemplate all the options. (Participant 9)

The way I learn is to gather information and then process it through my own emotional reaction, taking it to a more analytical space, to say to myself, "OK, I know how that made me feel; but what did that make me think?" And then I somehow activate it for my mission. (Participant 11)

A component of ongoing reflection via intrapersonal communication for 6 of 11 social entrepreneur participants was for testing and ensuring authenticity in a multitude of instances:

I'm very much an observing person, and this might have to do with being a person of

color. I have instances where I think in my own mind that others are saying, 'You can't

be the person in charge. You (sic) got to apologize because you slighted me in some kind

of way,' and I tend to think right then my inner voice tells me constantly to be as

authentic as possible with the people I'm dealing with . . . taking that veneer off to try to

get a better sense of who we really are as people. (Participant 1)

We live in an environment where your own truth claim with a capital "T" is expected and

constituents directly equate that to value. They want real and that process starts internally

for me. I do literally talk to myself a lot, rehearsing language, testing ideas. The real

making process is a linguistic process. It starts inside first then becomes even more real

when I share it externally as it then becomes a commitment. (Participant 6)

I knew as a minority growing up that going into the back door of the restaurant, which

my father *owned*, seemed humiliating at the time, but informed my consciousness about

what I need to do now in my leadership role. My mind tells me I have to be real no matter

the possible consequences. (Participant 2)

I want my voice to be seen as really thoughtful and always authentic . . . genuine . . .

inviting. To get there I think there's a self-editing process that has to be consistent and

test your messages otherwise you run a credibility risk with your stakeholders. Being real

is the only way to build trust. (Participant 5)

In the book sense anyway, I don't really think of myself as all that bright. But I have a

real sense of how to reach people . . . and have them feel confident in my leadership. I

always try to be genuine and give the best I can and that dialogue starts inside.

(Participant 8)

I think the most important part is really to be self-authentic, and as I get more experience

under my belt, I'm less critical of the way I do it. But I see it may be a bad thing if I get

so confident that I don't even question myself anymore. I know there's a fine line

between being jaded and being wise. (Participant 9)

Six of 11 social entrepreneur participants also recognized that their ongoing reflection

and personal learning driven by intrapersonal communication manifested itself as a type of inner

critic:

All I kept hearing was, 'You hypocrite. This is wrong and you know it.' I will never do

that again. You can probably convince yourself to kind of go along and get along for a

while, but then it's like the other "you" looks at the mission, opens up its big mouth and

stops you in your tracks. (Participant 1)

The message was loud and clear: 'Don't do that again. Stop trying to fool yourself and

other people.' If I'm going to be authentic, at least from the self-play in my mind, I have

to protect my own view of my credibility. If I don't have it then others won't see it in me

either. (Participant 11)

There are figurative citizenship issues in our industry. And I was being self-critical and riddled with doubt. I kept hearing myself asking 'Are you the real deal? Are we even qualified to do this, and you know, are we going to be accepted?' (Participant 6)

My self-talk at that time was extremely negative because I only saw how different I was from my peers and how much money and privilege they had. When I started my organization, I really had to work hard to put that critical voice in perspective. (Participant 4)

Negative, negative, *negative.* (smiles and laughs) I can spend hours beating myself up in my head. But somehow . . . in that reflection . . . that negative talk strengthens me, and it brings me to a new level of understanding different things . . . and that helps the people I serve. (Participant 8)

I replay conversations in my head all the time. It's like my best friend jokes, 'Oh, you're getting in a fight in your head with someone again?' And I'm like, 'Yes.' I'm not sure if anyone wins but somehow it helps me work through whatever happens to be the issue. (Participant 9)

As a contrasting experience from intrapersonal communication as a device for self-criticism, 5 of 11 participants conveyed the engagement of the phenomenon as a tool for self-motivation and affirmation of themselves, their roles and their organizations:

I have a superhero complex that I need to be helping people all the time, so I keep telling myself, 'Keep going, keep doing it.' As a social entrepreneur, it's an inner conflict of

ending the organization and letting people down versus . . . doing even more. So I'm

constantly having that fight in my head. In the end the constant inner dialogue skews to

positive reinforcement and then internal motivation always wins out and I keep going.

(Participant 7)

The possibilities of possibilities comes from the notion of self-talk. It's affirming to be in

a space where you're engaged in a dialogue internally, and then you have other people

echoing that. This allows me and us to build and grow. It also reinforces that I have value

. . . self-worth, and then you can better lead the conversation not only for yourself, but

also for the stakeholders in your mission. (Participant 2)

There are two "people" (wide-eyed expression) conversing inside me . . . one says, 'I'm

tired and I want to go home, had it, don't want to talk to another damn person.' The other

often stronger one says, 'But look at the opportunity you'll miss to help people if you

don't get out there, something good is supposed to happen, and you've got these signals

and signs that say it's going to happen; just take a few more minutes and go!' (Participant

11)

It was lots of psyching myself up in my head. 'You're supposed to be there, you belong

there, don't let them give you any (explicative) about it. Just walk in . . . and do your

thing' So there's tons of internally nervous conversations that I try to turn into a positive

push. (Participant 3)

So instead of feeling negative, I try to build positive self-talk. Most of the time I already have the answer and I'm just looking for more validation. The inner dialogue does that for me. I try to do that with my constituents too and give people space to manage whatever they have going on and where I can be helpful. If they ask me for advice or feedback, I just reflect to them what they're feeling or thinking and validate their experience and help them to accept themselves and to learn from the situation. For me it's like having a self-coach. You don't know what the self-coach is going to say, but normally the self-coach is going to help and motivate you. It's like your own intuition coming to the surface and saying, 'Ah, maybe this person wants to hear this' and then you just say that and they smile. You're like, 'We did it' but you don't know why. It's like having a coach talking through every lesson in a positive way versus having someone who nitpicks at you and tells you everything you're doing is a catastrophe. (Participant 4)

If you're not functioning at your best you're not going to be . . . useful to other people. I use the metaphor of the cellphone. If you could only charge yourself . . . to 50% it would be pretty frustrating; and as a human being a lot of us only charge ourselves up to 50% . . . . but the positive inner voice kicks us to full capacity and keeps us running. (Participant 4)

Four of 11 social entrepreneur participants told of an experience where intrapersonal communication was focused on an illustrative process of visioning:

I picture everything in the organization, what it could be, which is an eye- opening, enlightening experience. Talking yourself through it and seeing how it could be done better, I think is a good management tool to have. (Participant 3)

We have solid programs and concrete visions of what we need to do to support and

advocate, but still my self-talk is, 'What would it really look like if we had, you know, a

perfect scenario? What programs could we offer with more resources?' My self-talk

under my leadership hat always pictures all of that. (Participant 8)

In my mind I kept obsessing and asking myself 'How do I frame who I am and the path

that I see for all of us?' I kept envisioning how this place is going to operate and how to

make everyone feel valued and a little bit happier, hopefully. (Participant 9)

I'm an athlete and when I used to run and compete, I found the best races . . . are those

that I've run the track before. Because I can not only visualize and comment on it in my

mind, but I know when the terrain is going to shift and I how I have to adapt to succeed. I

use that same process in my own leadership. (Participant 1)

For one of 11 social entrepreneur participants, intrapersonal communication as a self-

leadership strategy took on a definitively divine manifestation:

I think you have a lot of internal conversations whenever you are beginning something

new. I prayed a lot and then right after . . . ideas for the organization would come into my

head. There was really no rhyme or reason to it. I pray before presentations and meetings.

My mind feels spiritual . . . and wanders and I converse internally about strategies to

grow and improve the charity. I also notice that . . . despite the flow I would say I'm

actually very in control of the internal conversations. The majority of the time, the

outcomes are in line with what I set out to accomplish. (Participant 12)

Finding 2 captured the experience of 11 of the 12 study participants, intrapersonal communication as a flowing and constant mental presence. Authenticity was a key component of this expression for many, as well as the relatively equal notation of the polar concepts of inner critic and self-motivator, along with the highly conceptual processes of visioning and spirituality.

Social entrepreneur participants robustly conveyed the phenomenon within the framework of particular situations as shown within the next finding. This experience was markedly more focused than a broader reflection mechanism and involved particular communication moments with constituents.

Finding 3

The majority of social entrepreneur participants (10 of 12, 83%) discussed engagement of intrapersonal communication as a tool to prepare for anticipation or for post-justification of specific stakeholder interaction scenarios.

Within this finding, the need to consciously formulate an approach for particular communication and leadership moments, often deemed significant or high pressure by the participants, was consistently expressed:

> I literally model interactions every time I think of a conversation or write an agenda for a meeting . . . asking myself who is there, what do I need to share, what are the must accomplish items. This is kind of my practice to do that . . . both for myself individually but also by extension for everybody I work with. It's a constant process of response prediction with people. (long reflective pause) You know, I think I model communication all the time. (Participant 6)

Having the conversation in my head before I go in especially in high-stakes set- ups is crucial. I try to feel it before it happens so my reactions in the moment are confident. There's a million different ways to find the path . . . so that's why I try to do it ahead of time. Especially if you're anticipating a difficult conversation, I think this process really comes into play. (Participant 5)

So I like to have all those crazy inner dialogues ahead of time, to help me I guess narrow my response. When I go back then to the other people we serve, I can tell them in a thoughtful, loving way, you know, offering them the honest version of what happened which I hope will continue to build our community. I guess we'll see. (Participant 8)

A lot of our conversations happen via email or text so they're already getting lost in translation. I really try to make sure I work ahead of time to review how I'm approaching something since the electronic chats can get out of control quickly and you don't have the in-person fix option. (Participant 3)

I rehearse all these, going after a client . . . a funder . . . someone who has some influence with another advocate . . . elected official. Since these are outcome-based conversations, you (sic) got to kind of figure out how you're going to get to that. Others conversations are not for specific outcomes but you want to have some experience with someone that might be transformative later. (Participant 1)

I just did this today in fact. I'm preparing . . . to handle a couple of my board members who haven't been doing as much as we need, let's face it, we are structured as a *working* board. Anyway, I'm figuring out a firm but friendly approach to get them motivated and remind them of the mission they've committed to. (Participant 7)

My board comes from corporate America and I don't, I just don't speak that language . . . and so I really have to have a lot of internal dialogue about how I'm perceived, how I perceive them, especially in certain situations. They look at the world differently and I always have to prepare for that in order to make this all work. It's part of the job. (Participant 10)

The preparation is not only the words, but the timing. The wrong pace . . . delivery . . . overall demeanor that you have can all destroy the message. People can shut down easily especially if it's something they don't have to care about at all in their lives, and then it's a waste of a conversation. The rehearsal . . . can help to avoid all that. (Participant 3)

I try to use self-talk to understand what people are going through which helps frame conversations better. Before I interact I put myself in their position and try and really empathize with them so that I can be more patient and less rigid, and be a little more compassionate. (Participant 4)

I was seeing the small group setting with like eight people, knowing at least two weren't going to get it and be really loud about it. I asked 'What are the words that I have to say

to be proactive here?' I needed to be conversationally prepared and confident. I know there's reactive advocacy and proactive advocacy. So I think my imagined interactions try to understand the difference between the two. (Participant 9)

Honest here? I do this in the shower. I'll play out a whole conversation, speech, interview, whatever. I rehearse it all, words, actions . . . reactions . . . options. Everything I do at the organization can make or break somebody's life in some way so I owe it to them to be ready and as effective as I can be. (Participant 11)

As a complementary device to preparation, 8 of 10 participants also reviewed particular communication and leadership moments after they have occurred for a more comprehensive understanding of what took place, insight or mental notes for future engagement, or to personally rationalize what was said or done:

Sometimes . . . however . . . when I'm getting ready for a discussion I hate to admit it . . . but I think I wing it. I use the imagined interactions after they're over, a lot of times it ends up to support what I said. Sometimes I even try to make myself feel better afterwards, maybe taking away guilt, right? Sometimes even to justify that I didn't prepare enough, and that I'm still really working hard and supporting my stakeholders. (Participant 2)

Oh yeah, post-game analysis big time. I do that to prepare for the next conversation. Pulling the ideas right then can be tough. But of course sometimes I forget the post-game by the time it needs to become the next pre-game (laughs) . . . but I know it's rolling around in there somewhere. (Participant 5)

I prepared but it really didn't go down like that. You know, they had examples of why they couldn't do what I wanted or they felt like they were working a lot more than I felt they were, and I'm not good at confrontation despite this moment, so it ended up not going in the way that I saw it in my head. I still stand by what I said. It's still my organization and I have to fight for it. Anyway, you know what though? I learned a lot about them in the process . . . and think they're here for their resumes and not really to help anyone. There will be changes that come from this conversation. (Participant 7)

I always do this to make sure the conversation was productive and didn't veer off track into areas we didn't want to go and really to make sure it was a good use of everyone's time and that it will benefit someone, recipients, staff, funders, just do something for someone. (Participant 10)

You know I think I'm doing that a lot more now. There is talking through it after to figure out if something was misinterpreted . . . and if so . . . going back through it in my head and saying, 'How was it misinterpreted so I don't do that again?' It's just replaying the conversation and then explaining to myself the reason, like if I'm busy or rushed. Really I need to get an answer quickly, or something under control fast. Once the situation kind of levels itself out then it's going back and saying, 'OK, wait, could I have said or written that differently? Should I have done something first before I did that, like stepping back and waiting a couple of seconds before I react next time?' (Participant 3)

OK . . . so I imagine three or so different ways of responding, and then the clue they give me from their hints is how I then choose one of those prepared responses; that way those imagined interactions actually guide the conversation in real time. If I feel like I've screwed up a conversation, those I would replay in my mind, just to ask myself in the future is there a better way of handling that if you're in that situation again? Then I obsess . . . and say 'Look, I did the best that I could with what I knew at the time,' to make myself feel better, then like, 'Well, here is what happened, now you've learned more about yourself and that person', and so in the future how do you mend that relationship . . . to see if you can move past that. (Participant 4)

Internally I would come out of those meetings . . . really bummed that the person didn't get what I was trying to say. Those meetings that are just a big grind and no lighting rod I thought I was ready to get, you know? My internal at that moment tries to tell me . . . that all these interactions have a purpose even if you don't see it immediately. (Participant 1)

I still have conversations I replay many years later. We lost a big grant, *millions*, (head shaking) and I still obsess about what I could have done to fix it. The organization blew up and politics and all . . . power struggles . . . and I joke now that I have post-traumatic stress from the whole thing, because I still find myself having conversations in a couple key moments with certain people, you know? I wish I could have shaped them differently, and maybe there would have been a different outcome. And unfortunately, as the years go on the conversations get much closer to what they should have been to begin with. (Participant 9)

One of 10 social entrepreneur participants even engaged intrapersonal communication to prepare for a conversation with a significant other to gain support for the founding of the individual's organization and its accompanying time commitment:

I kept doing imagined interactions and like role playing of how I was going to sell this idea to my family. Having the conversation first with myself, like 'Here's what I'm doing, here's why it will help people but not really interfere here at home' which honestly I wasn't sure about. My wife in particular is hesitant of my next scheme, so my communication plan was to drop little hints, and then have the conversation with her about why this was really important to me to help these people. It's funny I prepare and make things out to be worse than they are. She was fine with it, as long as I made sure that I had other people helping me, that it wasn't solely 100% my responsibility, and that it didn't take away from our family needs. The rehearsing really did help me. (Participant 7)

One of 10 participants described a specific example of preparing for an important, arguably once-in-a-lifetime conversation, its outcome, and post-reflection:

My self-talk a lot of times is really on purpose. In preparation for this conversation today, I even imagined what the questions might be. Doing this ahead of time gives me confidence to engage in a discourse in a way that will be meaningful, not only for me, but the other people. This doesn't always work unfortunately. I'm going to take a left turn here . . . and talk about the time I met President Barack Obama. So, I had imagined what it would be like to shake the President's hand over and over and over. And I said to myself, 'I'm going to come up with the most profound thing that he has ever heard. I'm going to hear it, but I'm not even going to write it down because I am so confident that it

will come to me when I am with him.' And so there I am in the line with other people

who are non-profit leaders . . . and it's my turn and I extend my hand and he extends his

hand. And he has this big, broad smile, and I say . . . '(speaks gibberish)'. I completely

flubbed it. As much as I had rehearsed, sometimes you just get overwhelmed with power

and pressure and fail in these moments. In my mind I was going to tell him about my

organization and he was going to think it was the best mission ever, right? Anyway, he

smiled graciously . . . Now I've learned from all that mess and I've rehearsed it again so

much that when I have the opportunity to meet him for a second time I will stay calm and

have the elevator speech down pat. I feel confident it will happen. (Participant 2)

Finding 3 demonstrated the experience of 10 of the 12 study participants, intrapersonal

communication as a process that is leadership moment specific, with somewhat of a balanced

usage before and after these moments, along with preparation for the social entrepreneur role

itself as well as high-stakes conversations.

Aligning with the experience of intrapersonal communication for particular leadership

instances, many social entrepreneur participants took this concept a step further, sharing the need

to deliberate internally over potentially damaging stakeholder approaches as discovered in the

next finding.

Finding 4

Most social entrepreneur participants (9 of 12, 75%) described intrapersonal

communication as a vehicle that involved the need for various forms of both explicit situational

and generalized self-regulation in leadership roles.

Another distinct experience the social entrepreneurs conveyed with intrapersonal

communication was that of self-regulation. The conscious need to analyze, temper and even alter

in the moment one's leadership actions and approach, comments and attitudes with stakeholders was evident in the participants' responses:

> Well, I think that not every thought or idea that's in your head . . . can be executed as you're thinking it. Because once it gets out, then it's going to be within the context of an environment of other human beings, other circumstances. So, it has to be self-regulated. I don't think anybody has the power, except a creator, a god, that can say, 'OK, this is how it's going to be.' It just doesn't work that way. (Participant 6)

> It's very conscious, particularly when, if I'm thinking about the role that I have to play . . . that my action is going to have an impact on other people. So, I've got to at least start to think those things through. Otherwise, it becomes reckless. And that becomes dangerous, particularly in the hands of an activist, or a business leader, someone who's trying to move some things forward and doesn't have time, or doesn't take time, to be more reflective, I think could be very, very (hand hits the table) hazardous. (Participant 6)

> It has a big impact, because . . . my instinct with some of the stakeholders is to be sort of, at times, dismissive, you know? And so the imagined interactions and the self-talk . . . make me see . . . that's not productive. That first instinct is a pattern . . . and it's not serving my purpose to . . . react that way. (Participant 10)

> I am *very intense* (wide eyes and expanded facial gesture) sometimes, and so . . . I expect people to have the same work ethic and efficiency skills that I do. When they don't . . . I need to stop and tell myself that these are volunteers; *volunteers*, they're not staff people.

They are working for the organization but they're not being paid, and so the constant challenge for me is remembering that. And yes, they have something invested in this, but they don't have the same type of investment in it as I do because it's my organization. I think that's my biggest challenge with the self-talk and the intrapersonal communication. It's their job to get us funding and pay the bills . . . and I have the expectation that they're going to get it done. It's a constant battle in my head of, 'Don't micromanage them, they're adults, you want to show them that you trust them', but on the other side, it's like, 'Well, it needs to get done and it's not getting done in the time I need …' I'm setting expectations for me, for them, before they even know that those expectations are there. (Participant 3)

I think there is a kind of self-regulating piece to it. I'm not a big believer in the phrase these days, 'throwing people under the bus' or calling people out in a public setting. I guess in the First Amendment they would call it prior restraint . . . (Participant 5)

We're having a meeting about an important initiative and . . . I was frustrated because one of our staff members had taken the time . . . to summarize everything that we knew and had sent it out in advance. A third of the people in the room didn't have it with them and were asking questions that had already been answered had they read. That's one where, in the moment, I'm thinking about it and I said, 'No'. If you ask people I'm not a screamer, but at some point I would be less than authentic if I didn't say . . . if I didn't basically call folks on it as a group and say, 'Hey, let's get with the program here'. In the

moment you don't want to be discouraging. You don't want to be over the top, but you also want to make it clear that you have expectations. (Participant 5)

Three of 9 social entrepreneur participants expressed self-regulation via intrapersonal communication as a means to deliberate over specific communicative moments:

So I think, I think that's probably how I use it the most, is like to weigh my communications, because I'm–every day there's something that could be–whether it's somebody challenging you or somebody just asking you a question that–it has ramifications, and you have to think through them. (Participant 8)

Definitely I think intrapersonal skills . . . would be realizing how I talk to people, especially volunteers, of how it may come off if I'm in a rush or there is something happening. Continuing to replay conversations in my head and second guessing myself on how I'm going to say something or do something, and doing it better or nicer or more chilled, I think that's definitely my biggest take from all this. (Participant 3)

When I go in, I make sure that I'm presenting myself as a leader . . . even though I may be having negative self-talk or uncertainty about what's happening. In my head, there may be chaos going on, but it's always important that I present myself . . . properly . . . even though the self- talk is telling me 'This isn't going to work out well,' or, 'Make sure you're doing this or doing that,' or I'm already having my imagined interaction with the person before I'm even in close proximity to them and start the actual conversation. It's a barometer for . . . the reality of what's going to happen, and so I'm able to, to either turn off that negative self-talk or turn up my, my positive self-talk in such a way that I can be

as successful as I can when I'm presenting myself in that moment of communicating.

(Participant 8)

I'm a big person for striking balances, to be strong enough, without being rude, to be

persuasive without being argumentative. I try to choose words carefully, especially those

that are written. And I'm also very aware of who else is copied on the message. The same

thing if you're having a live conversation, whether it's within earshot of people or in

front of them. (Participant 5)

For 1 of 9 participants in particular, self-regulation as activated by intrapersonal

communication, directly equated to self-protection:

I have multiple inner dialogues going on at any one point, so my inner voice can be

telling me . . . to be very afraid and on guard, but at the same time, when I think through

those fears, my inner dialogue can fight against them on my behalf. So back when I was

working . . . to get ahead . . . the dialogue was always, 'What did you do wrong? What

happened in that conversation? What could you have said in that meeting?' It can be very

cutthroat. You're always on the defense. So my self-talk, and I still do this at night, I just

go through my conversations with other people. The self is always working on my behalf,

I think. And so at that time, it was the 'get ahead' inner voice that said, 'Make sure

nobody knows you're gay. Don't wear the pink tie today, because those guys will know.'

I became very, very savvy at that, at least I thought. And so that was the inner dialogue,

always . . . that fear and then its counteraction. (Participant 8)

Another 1 of 9 participants even succinctly noted self-regulatory intrapersonal

communication advice for stakeholders:

You can write me any email you want and I have only one request before you hit send . . .

you should hit delete. (Participant 5)

Finding 4 focused on the experience of 9 of the 12 study participants, intrapersonal

communication as a valuable process of self-regulation, along with shared sub-expressions

including usage in particular interactions, protecting one's personal identity and conveying the

need for others to experience the phenomenon as well.

Conclusion

This chapter detailed the four major findings discovered by this study via in-depth

interviews of 12 social entrepreneur participants.

The first finding of the study offered insight into all the social entrepreneur participants'

usage of intrapersonal communication for strategic planning, problem solving and decision-

making. Within this finding, secondary findings appeared including approaches in leadership

roles, comparing the experience to sports, the safety and security of the practice, relating with the

activities of industry colleagues, and personally customizing the entire process.

The second finding of the study delivered a glimpse into intrapersonal communication as

a tool for reflection and the ongoing learning of the overwhelming majority of social

entrepreneur participants. Within this finding, secondary findings appeared including a consistent

internal dialogue for perspective and knowledge, presence of an inner critic, self-motivation and

affirmation, authenticity, visioning and spirituality.

The third finding of the study detailed intrapersonal communication as a device by which

the majority of social entrepreneur participants engaged either before or after specific

interactions. Within this finding, secondary findings appeared including the recognition of

substantial and stressful leadership moments, using the process to prepare for the social

entrepreneur role itself, dealing with power and pressure, and replaying interactions for some type of future benefit.

The fourth finding of the study provided insight into most social entrepreneur participants' usage of intrapersonal communication as a vehicle in a variety of scenarios requiring self-regulation. Within this finding, secondary findings appeared including analyzing and adjusting communication, measuring specific interactions, self-protection, and counseling stakeholders.

In Chapter 5, these findings will be discussed in the light of the study's research questions and conceptual framework, aligned with the relevant research and used to offer specific conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Social entrepreneurs are leaders and catalysts for change. They expertly merge the needy and the ready, uniting those within our culture who require specific social support with volunteers and the accompanying initiatives delivering assistance. Though upon preliminary consideration this connection seems to be a simple formula, this is not always the case for the social entrepreneurs offering the systems of solutions.

In fact, social entrepreneurship, though an incredibly valuable venture, is fraught with challenges. Some compounding challenges noted in the literature include: supporting social justice issues via advocacy (Rajendhiran & Silambarasan, 2012), the managing of vital business and legal issues (Lasprogata & Cotten, 2003), and having a comprehensive, challenge cognizant yet enthusiastic perspective (Brouard et al., 2012). Themes highlighted in these three works included questioning accepted norms, advocating for social change, getting support from others, handling life issues, creating visibility, navigating taxation and non-profit legalities, procuring funds, and legitimizing businesses and innovation.

These themes are documented, potential challenges within the leadership role of the social entrepreneur. As a researcher I strongly considered that understanding a specific phenomenological experience of intrapersonal communication, essentially conversations within oneself, offered social entrepreneurs another tactical tool to address better these challenges they face in their various leadership roles while serving their missions and constituents.

Social entrepreneurs constantly face the extensive dual challenges of promoting a mission while running a business, and need to actively engage self-leadership in order to tackle these difficulties and best serve their constituents. As evidenced by this study, self-leadership can

initially activate as intrapersonal communication, and can be a logical foundation to subsequent outward communication and leadership. The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore the presence of intrapersonal communication as a self-leadership strategy in social entrepreneurs.

To support this study, an extensive literature review was conducted, primarily in the areas of intrapersonal communication, self-leadership and social entrepreneurship. It was discovered that though these three conceptual topics were in various developmental stages, some primary, study relevant sources did emerge including arguably seminal works such as Cunningham (1992), Roberts and Watson (1989), Neck and Houghton (2006), Manz (1986), and Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort (2006). These works were offered both balance and contemporary complement via works by Bodie et al. (2013), Cooley (2008), Honeycutt (2003, 2008), Honeycutt et al. (2014), Estay et al. (2013), Brown and Fields (2011), and Oncer and Yildiz (2010). All of these works were supplemented by additional research, and this literature amalgam provided an optimal backdrop for this study, a convergence that appears to be the first intersection of inquiry involving intrapersonal communication, self-leadership and social entrepreneurship, such that it shall complement the growing literature in these areas.

With the conceptual framework in place, the methodology was addressed, and focused on a qualitative phenomenology that engaged 12 in-depth interviews (Appendix B) of social entrepreneurs. Indeed, phenomenology was the obvious method selection for this inquiry due to extensive support in the literature (Bann, 2009; Creswell, 2013; Honeycutt, 2003; Seymour, 2006) and direct connection to the primary components in the conceptual framework. After a pilot study to refine instrument and approach, supplemental, separate participants were requested via electronic mail (Appendix A), selected based on their strategic roles, and network, or

snowball sampling was engaged. Each interview took place each in an atmosphere constructed to create a private and optimal environment for data collection. Through the process of data gathering and subsequent analysis, ethical considerations abounded, including the need to respect participants' time and privacy. A consent form (Appendix C) was utilized and anonymity was ensured throughout every facet of the study. Transparent procedures for trustworthiness and validity, as well as potential researcher bias, were additionally addressed. Through this specific methodology, a profound expression of the phenomenon arose.

All of this groundwork was supplemented by the previous chapter's objective and purposefully organized view of the data as study findings in order to tell thoroughly the story of the social entrepreneurs' intrapersonal experience. This concluding chapter offers a succinct discussion and conclusion of the core meanings derived from this qualitative discovery based on the following research questions:

1. How did social entrepreneurs in this study describe their intrapersonal communication experience in the context of self-leadership as it impacts mission and constituents?

2. What intrapersonal communication strategy did social entrepreneurs in this study utilize, either organically or proactively?

3. Did social entrepreneurs in this study report that intrapersonal communication strategies influence self-leadership?

4. Did the social entrepreneurs in this study indicate that improved self-leadership via intrapersonal communication strategy affects mission and constituents?

Discussion

From the onset of this study, as noted in Chapter 1, it was assumed that social entrepreneurs not only experienced forms of intrapersonal communication, but could also richly

describe the essence of the phenomenon. It was expected that this conjecture would provide interested others an exceptional opportunity to learn about this phenomenon. After much in-depth inquiry and analysis, it was quite apparent that this assumption proved to be true well beyond my expectations as the participants actively shared their intrapersonal perceptions with abundant candor and enthusiasm.

Within these perceptions, research discoveries were made on various levels. They were subtle and specific, and yet they were also vast and robust. Regardless of their observed and analyzed form, discoveries were made possible by the privilege of this journey itself, catalyzed solely by the eager and genuine welcome into the minds of the social entrepreneur participants. The constant thoughts within them flowed like a majestic river, and I was able to gently, respectfully, yet comprehensively navigate the unique and varied currents that distinctly presented themselves within it. In other words, at its anecdotal surface, the symbolic waters appeared merely as a collective body. With a deeper dive, however, while immersed there emerged a richness of nuance and delineation of the intrapersonal phenomenon. With this picture in mind literally, several meanings were found that connected and correlated to the aforementioned research questions, concepts and literature.

To frame this ongoing conversation, as a researcher I was cognizant that there were a multitude of potential interpretations within the arguably subjective progression of taking information and data from findings, to explanation of select, noteworthy elements within these findings, and finally to conclusion and recommendations. This discussion represents my specific thoughts and elucidations in the context of the study and my ongoing immersion in it.

After a detailed introduction, extensive literature review, creation and subsequent execution of a comprehensive qualitative, phenomenological methodology, a conversation was

warranted of a macro-interpretive, deductive view of the four major findings of the study. As a crucial precursor, a panoramic view of the river's surface was seen once again, via a guiding concept of the study.

Within the research findings it was clearly demonstrated that a guiding concept of the study, the constructed potentiality paradigm (Foss & Foss, 2011, p. 205) not only applied, but was experienced by all participants in various forms. Constructed potentiality conceptually asserted that self-change must occur before external social change is possible. In addition, the paradigm offered that Communication was the most viable tool for this since words and language offered an unlimited approach to change agentry (p. 26). Without direct reference to or even anecdotal knowledge of this specific paradigm, the participants supported it, and conveyed this to be the case within their intrapersonal experience, where social evolution happened inside the individual first, then progressed outward to involve other stakeholders. There were numerous relevant examples of this observation directly from the participants themselves, and select representative illustrations included:

> Part of my mission is to ask others to do something new, maybe something very different to them, so I guess change, really. It's tough for me to throw out there . . . and ask like this if I'm not doing it myself. I have to say that my inner dialogue reminds me of this . . . constantly. (Participant 5)

> Being language obsessed, when I play some options of communication ahead of it, I guess . . . scenarios . . . I will keep at it in my head until I find the most impactful approach. No matter how long it takes I just keep going . . . kind of like building and

rebuilding . . . until I find what I feel is the right one. Fortunately . . . I never seem to run

out of ideas. (Participant 6)

As an inclusive, cross-participant interpretation, this observation showed that social

entrepreneurs in the study seemed to regard highly the perceived influence, control, and options

that the Communication discipline offered them. Within every finding, it was evident that each

participant's individual intrapersonal communication process, ranging from massive, amoebic

concepts to focusing on a solitary thought, traveled literally and figuratively from a starting point

to an ending point, essentially from thought to action. From an intrapersonal perspective,

whether a conscious or unconscious experience, participants shared that concepts were born,

immediately channeled through a core personal practice, and then were often manifested as a

tangible outward expression or leadership action.

From Thought to Action: Confidently Ready

The first finding was that social entrepreneur participants indicated using intrapersonal

communication as a technique for both individual personal and organizational strategic planning.

The strongest current in the river was that of the planning of actions that served the social

entrepreneur, their organization's stakeholders, and ultimately the organization's mission. A

significant finding relative to planning of action was that those who identified as long-time social

entrepreneurs, based on their own self-defined discernment of this status, very clearly

experienced the intrapersonal communication phenomenon as much more organization directed

and much less personally targeted. As characteristic participants in this segment shared:

I've been at this so long that I think the internal conversations just happen. They're

really important but often are in the background . . . and really always focused on my

mission. I think I gave up the bigger self-analysis part years ago [laughs] . . . too late for me anyway [laughs] but not for the people we serve. (Participant 11)

 I purposefully often avoid the 'me' part . . . as it's not always productive anymore. All this time doing this has shown me that in most situations I do the right thing. The internal dialogue . . . looks outward and that's where I need to be . . . figuring out how to help and empower others, but not necessarily questioning myself . . . been there, done that. (Participant 5)

This observation connects distinctively to a core concept in this study, that of the role itself of the social entrepreneur. Weerawarenda and Sullivan Mort (2006) explained that social entrepreneurs differ from customary entrepreneurs as they are "driven by social mission; show a balanced judgment; explore and recognize opportunities to create better social value for clients; innovative, proactive and risk-taking" (p. 24). This appears logical as Oncer and Yildiz (2010) supported this assertion by adding that the "two forms of entrepreneurship have different objectives" (p. 222).

Ruvio, Rosenblatt, and Hartz-Lazarowitz (2010) also focused on the arguably external expression and planning linked element of vision in entrepreneurship. As a component of the business leader type, Rajendhiran and Silambarasan (2012) further offered the larger perspective role of the social entrepreneur, saying that those in that position "have the same core temperament as their business peers . . . but solve global social problems" (p. 188).

Of particular interest is that these aforementioned concepts and definitions do not seem to exhibit any inward focus or internal component. They appear to operate along the lines of standard entrepreneurship, where business reigns supreme and for social entrepreneurs, the

"social" is simply the commodity. It can then be further speculated that the seasoned participants in this study may consider themselves as true, even more "traditional," business people who happen to care about something and "business" stereotypically warrants a more external focus. Should that be the case, this study then offers a new perspective where the internal workings of social entrepreneurs are recognized and validated within those participants who would benefit from the support.

The organizational focus discussed appears to signify that success as a social entrepreneur over many years can help the leader develop communication confidence. Along with this self-assurance evolves a potential for an even more acute service to stakeholders, as they become the primary focus, and not necessarily the inner needs of the entrepreneurs themselves.

From Thought to Action: Consistently Contemplated

The second finding was that social entrepreneur participants conveyed intrapersonal communication as an ongoing experience of reflection and recognition of learning opportunities.

A sweeping sense of contemplation for a variety of purposes was discovered, and as such, took on many forms, from a peaceful, almost nondescript river to seemingly individualized, detailed personal assertion. When looking across participants, a very distinguishing observation emerged that those social entrepreneurs in this study who either directly expressed or inferentially placed themselves via their specific commentary as a member of a recognized minority community, including race, gender, socioeconomic, and sexual orientation, experienced the phenomenon very strongly as an individual motivator. According to these sentiment representative participants:

I feel like my mind takes on another dimension, sometimes on purpose and sometimes it just happens . . . where I am so aware of my own differences from others and sometimes it really hurts. My self-talk always tries to save me and my own value by saying 'hang in there' and 'you are a worthy leader' and things like that to try to overcome that I always . . . expect people to judge me constantly and harshly. (Participant 8)

Right within those moments my inner dialogue reminds me how I grew up so, well . . . unprivileged. It still kinda makes me angry. Then one day with the voice really running I realized something incredible . . . that . . . if it weren't for that upbringing I wouldn't be me and I probably never would've founded my organization and ever helped anyone. So good things really came out of it in the long run. (Participant 4)

Motivation is a key concept in numerous related Communication studies. One in particular, Brinthaupt, Hein, and Kramer (2009), found that the intrapersonal communication component of self-talk can have a direct and measurable impact on self-value. For the study's participants, self-talk used for positivity and reinforcement resulted in higher reported feelings of self-esteem. Study participants also directly demonstrated this correlation while experiencing self-talk. For example, Lepadatu (2011) found that motivational self-talk can lead to "spectacular progress" (p. 286) and is an "interpretive and educational instrument" (p. 287) that also supports the participants' feelings of wanting to improve and reinforce themselves and their leadership positions via the experience of intrapersonal communication.

Personal empowerment via motivation was studied by Politis (2006), who found a viable link between intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and team performance (p. 209). This is relevant to the participants in this study as quite often the success or failure of their leadership is

at the mercy of the team members with whom they interact. In fact, both self and outward leadership via motivation are addressed in many studies (Estay et al., 2013; Steel & König, 2006; Stewart, Courtright, & Manz, 2011) with common themes of a reward system, satisfaction, and activating internal energy. A key finding from the data indicates that study participants are not only motivated by personal success, but markedly more often by serving others well.

Considering the centrality of motivation, it can be surmised that intrapersonal communication may be effectively used to overcome conditions that a leader sees as his or her own personal deficit. Self-perception, especially surrounding one's positionality in the world, can very often make or break leadership actions and intrapersonal communication may be engaged to attack head-on those apparent disadvantages, whether they are tangible or self-created.

From Thought to Action: Acutely Focused

The third finding was that social entrepreneur participants discussed engagement of intrapersonal communication as a tool to both prepare for in anticipation or for post-justification of specific stakeholder interaction scenarios.

For the majority of participants, the self-talk focused on the details of highly particular, and often exceedingly stressful communication scenarios that ranged from dealing with individuals to group presentations. Intrapersonal communication in this sense was often used to create pinpoint attention to detail and the exploration of exhaustive communication options. A primary theme within much of the literature reviewed conveyed the power of self-talk and imagined interactions for situations of extreme conflict, as expressed by these representative participants:

It all came down to millions of dollars . . . how to get it . . . how to spend it . . . whatever. Who knows that better than me . . . and of course money creates problems between the people involved. But if it meant being better able to help my families I would train my brain for that like a verbal prize fight. I could always apologize later I guess. (Participant 9)

Part of me was scared to death and the other part of me was ready. I think preparation was key to feeling . . . at least a little bit . . . confident as I approach these people. Hey, it's my organization, right? I was tired of being bullied. I had my messages ready and one thing I knew is that we were going to argue, but ironically . . . something positive could still result. (Participant 7)

Relational conflict in its numerous forms is well addressed in the intrapersonal communication literature, specifically in the facet of imagined interactions. Honeycutt (2003) called interpersonal conflict part of the state of being human. The participants recognized this and engaged the imagined interactions quite often to prepare. Honeycutt further described that conflict linkage theory can explain why "conflict is enduring" and either "constructive or destructive" (p. 3). Based on analysis of their interviews, the social entrepreneurs in this study embodied some of the components of Honeycutt's theory, including: personal mood driving positivity or negativity in imagined interactions, pondering over specific conflicts, and a diversion from reality, where one may talk to someone else in a certain way only in the imagined interactions (p. 3). This concept was also echoed by the participants.

Supplementing and furthering these Honeycutt (2003) concepts is the Honeycutt et al. (2014) study that showed their participants experienced imagined interactions readily for means

of rehearsal, proactivity, and catharsis (p. 21). Collectively, this knowledge demonstrated that this study's participants deeply experienced and expressed the intrapersonal communication component of imagined interactions in alignment with the overall literature as demonstrated by the connection to prevalent studies.

The relevant literature and this study analysis illustrates that intrapersonal communication, either proactive or organic, is often chosen as the preferred method to address conflict-based types of interactions. Whether a social entrepreneur participant had a proclivity to conflict did not seem to influence the perception that enhanced communication confidence, and often a personal sense of righteousness, came from rehearsing to prepare, or replaying to understand or justify a situation.

From Thought to Action: Deliberately Controlled

The fourth finding was that social entrepreneur study participants described intrapersonal communication as a vehicle that involved the need for various forms of both explicit situational and generalized self-regulation in leadership roles.

Like river rapids, this is one particular area where the intrapersonal communication within the minds of some participants became incredibly intense. Either directly expressed in the interviews or assumed through the context of the dialogue, many social entrepreneur study participants exhibited somewhat impulsive and potentially explosive personalities that seemed to be driven in particular moments by the enthusiasm they had for the self-perceived importance of their mission. The findings demonstrated that for study participants, passion for a cause can turn to destruction of communication channels and sometimes organizations themselves. A couple of participants explained:

I know how important this whole thing is to me and it's really tough to not overwhelm everyone else with how I feel about it . . . so . . . I really have to stop myself before I push other people away or even worse . . . to a breaking point. My inner dialogue helps me not damage these people on which our survival really depends. (Participant 3)

A lot of times, my brain kicks in and really just says 'shut up, right now stop talking, they're not getting it and you're making this whole problem much worse . . . and they're probably going to walk away and never come back to help us.' (Participant 10)

These statements are significant examples of one of the self-leadership concepts in this study. According to a relevant work by Furtner et al. (2010), leaders often engage emotional intelligence combined with self-leadership that can result in using self-regulation. The participants in this study experiencing self-regulation seemed to align with the concepts put forth by the Furtner et al. study that also highlighted the essential leadership ability to control one's emotions. This dimension was prevalent in the participants' commentary as well. One area discovered in this study was the intensity with which the participants experienced this facet of the self-regulation phenomenon. This may be caused by the fact that these were social entrepreneurs and the work they do is often inherently emotionally charged and thus naturally elicits strong reactions in leadership situations.

Given the intensity of many social entrepreneurs, one can surmise intrapersonal communication experienced as self-regulation can lead to improved relationships and a more productive work environment. Core self-leadership literature from Manz (1983, 1986) was supplemented by a study from Brown and Fields (2011) where self-leadership was used to "refine and focus . . . work-related processes . . . and reasoning . . . leading to improved . . .

behaviors" (p. 275). Once again the literature supports what the data from the study demonstrates, that the study participants understand and value self-regulation, especially in a social entrepreneurship environment where damage to key relationships can literally and quickly destroy efforts to advocate a mission.

Both the literature and the study findings support that intrapersonal communication helps social entrepreneurs recognize personality pitfalls and better understand what is possibly at risk in each interaction. Stakeholders, especially volunteers, are vital to the survival of social organizations, and the intrapersonal experience can be crucial to preserving those relationships.

Conclusion

With a worthy research concept, extensive literature review, fitting methodology, comprehensive findings and thoughtful analysis, this study provided a fundamental understanding of the social entrepreneur participants' experience with intrapersonal communication as a self-leadership strategy in support of mission and constituents. It is hoped this study will both support and expand the scholarly literature, as well as positively influence practice in the three concept areas, including intrapersonal communication, self-leadership, and social entrepreneurship.

As the journey along the river has come to an end, it is wholly concluded that the study demonstrated the experience of intrapersonal communication as a self-leadership strategy was:

1. A universal and communicable understanding by all social entrepreneur participants in the study and each instance having both commonly shared components and those facets that were highly individualized.

2. A viable and beneficial approach for social entrepreneur participants in the study to deliberate over vital leadership decisions in both personal and organizational contexts.

3. A powerful and valuable personal process where social entrepreneur participants in the study could contemplate communication, actions and potential impact on stakeholders.

Recommendations

As a result of this study, its specific data, analysis, and conclusion, there are several recommendations that have arisen for both the social entrepreneurs as well as future academic researchers involving these concepts.

For social entrepreneurs, these recommendations include:

- Recognition–social entrepreneurs should consider identifying the particular type and extent of their intrapersonal communication practice to establish a baseline for their personal phenomenological experience.

- Analysis–social entrepreneurs should consider investigating their individual internal messaging to understand when it arises, how it is used and to what effect.

- Engagement–social entrepreneurs should consider proactive, purposeful usage of intrapersonal communication strategy in the context of what is optimal to their personal leadership goals and organizational needs, primarily in support of mission and constituents.

For further academic studies, these recommendations include:

- Replication–academic researchers could conduct a longitudinal study with the same participants to see if the essence of their intrapersonal communication experience has changed or evolved once the initial study had made them cognizant of it.

- Focus–academic researchers could specifically concentrate on self-talk, inner voice, inner dialogue, or imagined interactions in further detail to compare data to this initial study and the emerging literature.

- Exploration–academic researchers could expand this study into other components of intrapersonal communication like mindfulness, mantras, and daydreaming, in order to determine if a similar phenomenon exists and to what extent.

Researcher Reflection

Social entrepreneurship is a worthy, heartfelt, and all-encompassing commitment for both those who lead it and those who benefit from it. Our world, as it becomes increasingly more disordered by the moment, needs these leaders more than ever to match necessity for support with desire to help. As a society, and for me as a longtime Communication scholar-practitioner, I feel we must consistently care for these leaders by any and all means possible as they bolster the proverbial greater good. Learning about the experience of intrapersonal communication as self-leadership is just one way to do this, but it seems to represent quite a powerful one indeed. It is my hope that the knowledge gained here cannot only provide insight for social entrepreneurs, but for others in crucial leadership positions.

Ultimately, in conclusion, I pleasantly reminisce of a primary and personal guiding concept, that of joyful commitment (Hartnett, 2010), where one not only studies within social justice but actively practices it, no matter the issue or cause held dear. I am so grateful for the

continued opportunity to both academically explore and professionally apply within this communal realm, all the while now experiencing for myself a new fascinating figurative colleague, the phenomenon of intrapersonal communication.

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APPENDIX A

Participant Outreach Electronic Mail

Dear (Name Here):

You are a **mark maker**. You are a **change agent**. You are a **mission master**.

And you, as a successful and visible **social entrepreneur**, are invited to join me to share your experiences and insight. That's why I am reaching out to you today in hopes that you will consider participating in my new academic research study about people like you who make a huge impact every day in the lives of others.

As a longtime fellow entrepreneur and university professor, I am currently a doctoral student in education leadership at the University of New England. ***I respectfully seek your knowledge and perspectives as my study explores the internal conversations in our minds as social entrepreneurs, and how this self-discussion affects us and ultimately our external leadership in potential benefit of our missions and constituents.*** It is my sincere hope by your generous contribution to this research that you will also learn much about yourself through intrapersonal communication strategy and how it impacts your self-leadership as well as your external leadership.

What is particularly exciting to me is that this study seems to represent the first exploration of these concepts together. Please know that my research study is completely voluntary and participants may opt-out any time. It is absolutely confidential and involves qualitative data collection via interviews. It will be conducted with great care for you, your time and your organization, and has been approved to proceed by my research advisor and the Institutional Review Board at my university.

I am seeking a hand-selected, exclusive group for this study and need to have participants in place ASAP as data is being collected over the next few weeks. Please contact me to express your interest, refer other social entrepreneur colleagues, or for more information or questions, at wcowen@une.edu or 215-429-4985.

Will you please help me, and all of us, help others? I hope we can take this opportunity to learn together and in the discovery process support those around us who need it most.

Thanks so much for your consideration.

Best Regards-

William Cowen

Candidate, Doctor of Education, University of New England

APPENDIX B

Participant Interview Questions

Key: Intrapersonal Communication (IC); Social Entrepreneur (SE); Self-Leadership (SL); Self-Talk/Inner Voice/Inner Dialogue (ST); Imagined Interactions (II)

Foundation Questions

- Could you please tell me when and how you became a SE?

- Why did you choose your particular SE mission or cause?

- Do you feel you experienced IC in any form in choosing SE and/or your focus? If so, how? Could you share the experience and process in detail?

- Are you currently or previously a for-profit leader? If so, how do think this role compares with SE?

- Of the following terms- businessperson, activist, leader- considering your individual role- which do you feel most exemplifies you as a SE? Why?

Activation Questions

- How do you feel you involve IC in running your organization currently?

- Do you believe you utilize ST consciously and/or unconsciously? How?

- Do you believe you utilize II consciously and/or unconsciously? How?

- Given the IC, do you think this affects your ability to SL? How so?

- How does your SL impact your external leadership? Why is this?

Reflection Questions

- Please share a specific time when you actively used an II in a leadership capacity? What was the outcome(s)?

- Please describe a specific example of using ST prior or during a leadership moment? What was the outcome(s)?

- Do you feel there is a connection between your IC and external leadership? If so, please describe.

- Do you sense that your IC prompted leadership affects your mission and constituents? If so, why and how?

- What would the ideal component(s), usage and strategy of IC be for you as a leader? Please describe this optimal scenario. On the contrary, what would not work for you?

APPENDIX C

Consent for Participation in Research

Project Title:

Core Conversations for the Greater Good: An Exploration of Intrapersonal Communication as Self-Leadership Strategy in Social Entrepreneurs

Principal Investigator:

William L. Cowen, IV, MA
University of New England
Student, Ed.D.

Advisor(s):

Dr. Michelle Collay

You have been asked to participate, via an interview, in this study that is exploring intrapersonal communication as a self-leadership strategy in social entrepreneurs. You have been selected to participate since your leadership in your organization involves proactively engaging business strategy to support social issues.

The purpose of this study is to identify and understand your organic and purposeful use of inner voice/dialogue and imagined interactions to see if and how they affect your self-leadership, subsequent external leadership, and ultimately benefit your mission and constituents.

The goal of our time today is to discuss these experiences to further learn what may be of benefit to you and other social entrepreneurs using intrapersonal communication in all your leadership roles.

Please read this form, you may also request that the form is read to you. The purpose of this form is to provide you with information about this research study, and if you choose to participate, document your decision. You are encouraged to ask any questions that you may have about this study, now, during or after the project is complete by speaking with the principal investigator, William L. Cowen IV (wcowen@une.edu, 215-429-4985).

As we prepare for our interview today, please be advised of the following:

- You can take as much time as you need to decide whether or not you want to participate.

- Your participation is voluntary, and your responses are confidential.

- Your decision to participate will have no impact on your current or future relations with the University of New England or your employer.

- If you choose not to participate there is no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive.

- You are free to withdraw from this research study at any time, for any reason.

- If you choose to withdraw from the research there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive.

- During our time together, you will be asked a series of questions about your experience as a Social Entrepreneur. You may decide to withdraw your participation at any time, and you are not obligated to answer any question that you are not comfortable with.

- Your name, institution's name, and all identifying information will be removed, in accordance with Federal Laws surrounding student records. No individually identifiable information will be collected.

- Today's conversation will be recorded and transcribed. All notes and recordings will be securely locked and only accessible to the researcher. At the conclusion of this research, all recordings and transcripts will be destroyed.

  - Please note that the IRB at the University of New England may request to review research materials.

- There are no foreseeable risks or hazards to your participation in this study.

- The location of today's interview is mutually agreeable and in a location that assures a level of privacy.

- There are no other financial benefits to your participation in this research. Your participation will, however, indirectly inform the Social Entrepreneur community of important practices.

- The results of this research will be used for a doctoral research study at the University of New England. It may be submitted for further publication as a journal article or as a presentation.

A copy of your signed consent form will be maintained by the principal investigator for at least 3 Years after the project is complete before it is destroyed. The consent forms will be stored in a secure location that only the principal investigator will have access to and will not be affiliated with any data obtained during the project.

If you would like a copy of the completed research project, you may contact the principal researcher directly.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may call:

Olgun Guvench, M.D.
Ph.D., Chair of the UNE Institutional Review
Board at (207) 221-4171 or irb@une.edu

You will be given a copy of this consent form.

Participant's Statement

I understand the above description of this research and the risks and benefits associated with my participation as a research subject. I agree to take part in the research and do so voluntarily.

_____

Participant's signature/Legally authorized representative   Date

_____

Printed name

Researcher's Statement
The participant named above had sufficient time to consider the information, had an opportunity to ask questions, and voluntarily agreed to be in this study.

_____

Researcher's signature   Date

_____

Printed name