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The Transformational Potential of 'Aha' Moments in Life Coaching and Beyond

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**The research described in this thesis is the author's own work and has not been
submitted in the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.**

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Abstract

“Aha” moments of insight are considered fundamental to personal transformational but the phenomenology of insight and intuition are poorly understood phenomena (Levitt et al, 2004). Life coaching has little to say on the subject since the body of literature relating to coaching is still in its foetal stages (Griffiths, 2005). This research addresses both of these problems by exploring whether “Aha” moments are fundamental to the transformational change sought by the “Co-Active” model of life coaching (Whitworth et al, 1998, 2007). A grounded theory methodology was employed to investigate the phenomenology of insight. Participants were selected for their use of the Co-Active coaching model and their willingness to render phenomenological accounts of “Aha” moments. Co-Active coaches and their clients recorded their experiences of insight during coaching sessions. Methods involved diary-keeping, questionnaires and interviews. Diaries captured the lived experience of the “Aha” moment while questionnaires and interviews revealed its lingering effects on beliefs and behaviours. Each phase of data collection informed the next. By comparing the findings of this research with other fields of inquiry into insight, an integral methodological element was added to the grounded approach. Findings reveal the “Aha” moment to induce ‘alethia’ the Greek term meaning to step out of lethargy and into truth. The moment can be experienced not only cognitively but somatically and emotionally, striking many chords across a spectrum of consciousness from body, to mind, to soul to spirit. The more chords the “Aha” moment strikes, the greater the resonance and potential for cognitive and behavioural change. Findings suggest that insight comes *from* intuition and can arise in cognition as a purely mental event or can be experienced in transpersonal ways, where such intuition is described as ‘spiritual’. The study suggests that the ontology of a truly holistic coaching model would offer the possibility of transformational change at the levels of ego, mind, body, soul and spirit.

Key words: Aha moment, insight, intuition, Co-Active coaching, spectrum of consciousness, transformational change.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The desirability of “Aha” moments in facilitating personal change is highlighted in depth and insight psychologies, yet insight remains a complex and poorly understood phenomenon (Levitt et al, 2004). This applies also to the related concept of intuition, defined as “*The ability to understand or know something without conscious reasoning*” (AskOxford.com). The definition of the concept of intuition has been widely debated, and numerous studies have addressed the content and theoretical consequences of intuition but few have addressed the subjective experience itself (Petitmengin-Peugeot, 1999). Some authors employ the terms insight and intuition interchangeably, while for others these are distinct events. For example, in their research studies both Liljedahl (2005) and Petitmengin-Peugeot (2002) describe a state of consciousness in which knowledge surges forth in a leap, with immediacy and certainty. While Liljedahl refers to this phenomenon as insight, Petitmengin-Peugeot describes it as intuition. Insight and intuition are often used interchangeably, or sometimes with no clarification whatsoever (Pronin et al, 2001). This makes it difficult to embark upon a meaningful review of the subjects since essentially different elements of insight are being muddled. A primary aim of this study is to understand more about the experience of insight and intuition and to distinguish, if appropriate, between the two. The literature review will show that there is more than one answer to the question of the nature of insight and intuition and also that there is more than one kind of answer.

The study takes place within the context of Co-active life coaching (Whitworth et al, 1998, 2007), considered to be a coaching model that is able to facilitate transformational change by approaching the person holistically. The nature of personal transformational change is another contentious issue and one of interest to this study. Shedding light on transformational change and the possible ways in which it differs from incremental change is a further ambition. Finally, while the “Aha” moment of insight is the major focus of the study, data was collected that informed those coaching skills and processes that had the greatest effect in facilitating successful coaching outcomes. This data is able to add to the tiny empirical base of coaching studies.

The “Aha” moment of insight, then, could be said to represent the figure in the study while coaching processes and their effects on personal transformation represent the ground. Figure and ground are co-essential to an understanding of the effects of insight

in the course of transformational development of the self. Present understanding is deficient in relation to the central concerns of this study. There is confusion and continuing debate about the nature of insight and intuition, the nature of transformation and how life coaching works. The aim of the study is to illuminate all of these areas.

This chapter is divided into six sections, each of which addresses a difference aspect of these objectives and the means by which the study aims to meet them:

Section 1: The Coaching Context sets the study in the context of life coaching as it is currently understood. The growth of life coaching in recent years is briefly discussed followed by an introduction to the Co-Active coaching model which will be discussed further in later chapters.

Section 2: Insight and Intuition highlights the controversy surrounding these terms from various fields of study.

Section 3: Insight and Transformational Development considers the role of insight in the context of personal transformational change. Both insight and transformational change are complex and controversial phenomena.

Section 4: Methodological considerations and Methods Chosen describes the methodological approach to the study. It briefly introduces the “Integral” methodological paradigm.

Section 5: Literature outlines the literature that was drawn upon to inform this study.

Section 6: Guide to Chapters explains how the study will unfold in the forthcoming eight chapters.

Section 1: The Coaching Context

This section provides a brief overview of the controversies surrounding coaching that lead to a lack of clear definition. It demonstrates the need for coaching research to add

to its tiny empirical research base. This is becoming more pressing as coaching now attracts so many practitioners and so much investment of resources.

Motivated by a billion dollar self-help industry, the new millennium saw the growth of life coaching in the U. S. A. as second only to that of the IT industry (Zeus and Skiffington 2002). The self-help industry extends to the spiritual dimension of life, evidenced by mushrooming book sales: 109,400 listed as 'spirituality books' on one website alone, www.amazon.com (accessed April 2010). The role of spirituality in life coaching has long interested me and I was keen to know if it would feature in reports from participants. My own first life coach exhorted me to 'trust the universe' or simply 'trust'. I later found many instances of such pseudo-spiritual hyperbole in coaching circles generally. For these reasons I wanted to understand the 'spiritual' content of the trust to which my first coach referred if it featured in reports.

Consideration of the spiritual line of development is now being entertained not just in holistic coaching models but in some corporate coaching settings. According to Whitmore (2004), socially responsible companies are now beginning to acknowledge the whole person, including his or her spiritual line of development: *"Socially responsible companies are not only entertaining coaches who use more cognitive approaches but are beginning to employ more holistic coaches and "even tolerate the "s" word (spirit) being introduced into corporate coaching programmes"*.

The pressing requirement for research on life coaching is borne out of: its growing popularity; the confusion in the individual and popular psyche surrounding the nature of life coaching and its objectives; the possibility of ill-equipped and unqualified practitioners entering this new and poorly understood market; and the fact that wildly contrasting views about the remit of coaching are openly practiced in an unregulated field (Williams and Davis, 2002). Coaching is attracting large numbers of practitioners. In 2006, the U.S. News and World Report listed coaching as one of the top ten growing professions. This burgeoning increase has taken place against a background of bewilderment about what coaching is and who it is for.

The principles and applications of coaching are drawn from an almost inexhaustible array of disciplines. These include leadership development, sports psychology,

personal development, clinical psychology, therapy, sociological change, and education and adult learning (Hurd 2002, Skiffington and Zeus 2002). Because of this eclectic underpinning, life coaching has given rise to myriad models and practices (Grant, 2003). Many coaching models grew out of management or organisational performance goals so that empirical evaluations of the effectiveness of coaching interventions are drawn almost exclusively from studies of executive coaching. Perhaps this is why authors conflate personal or life coaching with business or executive coaching (Whitworth et al, 1998). These multi-disciplinary roots are likely to have contributed to obtuse definitions of coaching, an overemphasis on achieving goals, and confused perceptions of personal versus professional coaching.

Coaching is often considered to be a form of training /consulting / tutoring, mentoring or therapy, wrongly so in the view of Zeus and Skiffington (2002), and Grant, (2001a). It is argued to be a form of mentoring since both coaching and mentoring employ skills and techniques such as encouragement, self-management, support and evaluation (Parsloe and Wray, 2000). Zachary (2000) points to the similarities between coaching and mentoring in dialogical practices such as questioning, reforming statements, summarising, listening reflectively and personal reflection. Nevertheless, since mentoring involves expert instruction whilst coaching involves only facilitation, the findings of mentoring may not reliably be extrapolated to coaching practice (Zeus and Skiffington, 2000). These researchers also note that the coaching literature indicates that while clients learn so, too, do coaches. It is hoped that the findings of this study may provide some information about the truth of this.

There is one area of consensus and that is that learning is at the heart of coaching; adult learning theories and theories in lifelong learning underpin the discipline, with experiential learning theory being cited in studies of processes and effects in coaching (Griffiths 2005). The type of learning that evolves during the coaching process is argued to be transformative (Hargrove, 2003). However, little consensus exists beyond the notion that coaching is a learning-based activity and many other disciplines are considered to have informed coaching models. For all of these reasons, life coaching has so far escaped a handy definition.

Controversy also surrounds the question of who should become life coaches and how the discipline should be informed. Some argue that with the growth of coaching, the discipline should be informed by psychology. Popovic (2007) found life coaching to share significant overlap with the process of counseling. Indeed many counselors now use coaching skills, switch concurrently between counselling and coaching and consider them to be similar (Hart et al., 2001). Cavanagh (2009), on the other hand, argues that coaching should not be hijacked by the discipline of psychology but instead should be free to think outside of existing psychological categories, or across categories to forge new, creative ideas about how to work with people in facing today's novel challenges. Others (e.g. Parsloe and Leedham 2009: 18) argue that too many practitioners from other helping disciplines have entered the arena, causing confusion and over-complicating the subject of coaching.

These are some of the reasons why far more systematic and rigorous research is needed (Grant, 2003: 5), not only to discover what works in coaching and for which populations, but also because the lack of adequate research and industry regulation risks unethical practice.

The study utilises the holistic "Co-Active" model of coaching (Whitworth et al 1998, 2007) which is designed to facilitate transformative change geared towards the client's higher purpose (Whitworth et al, 2007: 13). The psychological approach of the Co-Active model is a-theoretical. Its founders wove into the model those experiences that they had personally undergone during their years of involvement in the human potential movement. The model therefore comprises an eclectic mix of principals and processes drawn largely from humanistic and transpersonal psychologies. The founders were influenced by numerous psychological approaches: the experiential learning they encountered in the Esalen Institute; Gestalt therapy; and, most especially, drama theory (Kimsey-House, 2004). The result suggests that most techniques and skills that are used across the board in all life coaching models are present in Co-Active coaching. A further reason for choosing the Co-Active model is that it highlights the key role of the inter-subjective relationship in transformational outcomes for clients, a neglected field of study (Flaherty, 1999; Marzillier, 2004). The coach is a kind of catalyst for accelerated change (Whitworth et al, 2007: 13). The relationship itself is granted power and the

position that the coach is not an expert is reflected in the model from which any depiction of the coach is absent.

Finally, Co-Active coaching is usually conducted over the telephone and, through my association with fellow Co-Active coaches, I would be able to invite these coaching colleagues and their clients to participate in the study.

The only research of which I am aware that has been conducted within a framework of Co-Active coaching argues that it is essentially a behavioural approach to change: "... *life coaching offers a behavioural intervention through which trained coaches mentor their clients toward achieving their goals*" (van Zandvoort et al, 2009: 105).

Later chapters will present results that suggest that the Co-Active model cannot be contained within a behavioural paradigm. These chapters will also introduce the principles and practices contained within the model.

The next section considers the related subjects of insight and intuition. It highlights the lack of clear definition of these terms.

Section 2: Insight and Intuition

The shift in "seeing" that accompanies the "Aha" event has remained a fascination for me since I read about Gestalt psychology experiments from the 1950s designed to explore visual perception. Such experiments stimulated my interest in the observable fact that perception *alone* (and not some intrinsic 'reality' in the picture) dictates which elements of a picture we see as 'figure' and which as 'ground' and both cannot be seen at the same time. There is also an inherent connectedness in the picture in that whatever is seen as figure only makes sense in relation to the ground. A visual flicker can take place, momentarily disorienting the senses, and then a "switch" occurs where one sees figure and ground reverse, the flicker settles into recognition and the result is a visual "Aha" experience. Such experiments led me to reflect on how such visual perception extends to psychological phenomena (this was prior to my acquaintance with the work of Fritz Perls (1893 – 1970) who, among many others, shared similar preoccupations). A number of questions arose in my consciousness resulting from

reflections on this phenomenon. These included deliberations about the nature and range of the “Aha” moment of insight, its contextual occurrence, its phenomenology and its capacity to be created during Co-Active coaching.

According to legend, one of the most well-known “Aha” moments was when Archimedes discovered the principle of water displacement which prompted him to jump excitedly from his bath shouting “eureka”. Even though most people might relate intuitively to this experience, the phenomenon called insight is very hard to explain. It has been defined variously by different schools of thought or has been ill-defined:

“At various times, psychologists define it as a psychoanalytic process, a spiritual epiphany, or a type of experiential knowing (e.g., Hutter, 2000; Miller and C’de Baca, 2001; Miller, 1992; Miller, 2000; Zack, 2001), but, as this word has fallen into common usage, it often is presented without any clarification at all (e.g., Pronin, Kruger, Savitsky and Ross, 2001)”. (Levitt et al 2004:1).

This is an example of the confusion surrounding insight caused by a conflation of terms and interests. Different theorists concentrate on their different areas of interest. These areas demand specific methodologies. A psychoanalytic process might be studied phenomenologically, a first-person description of the interiority of insight. Alternatively it might be studied structurally, from an objective, empirical point of view. A spiritual epiphany might be described as the fruit of the insight in which case researchers might be interested in its experiential essence or studies could concentrate on comparing the contents of the productions of spiritual epiphanies. Alternatively, the researcher may be interested in the phenomenology of insight, requiring again a phenomenological description. A type of experiential knowing might be considered a line of intelligence and could be subject to study at all levels from the phenomenology of the individual to any number of empirical approaches. There is therefore a need to be very clear, when comparing the literature on insight, to ensure one is comparing like with like.

In the phrase “Aha moment”, the term ‘moment’ symbolizes the range of conscious experiences within which the “Aha” event might find its genesis. The moment is significant in and of itself, representing more than an instance of a fleeting spatio-temporal occasion. It refers to an event happening in conscious awareness, however

terms like “Aha”, ‘consciousness’ and ‘awareness’ are comprehended. Some theorists consider that the traditional Western preference for objective, measurable, data means that immaterial “Aha” phenomena and even consciousness itself pose unresolved epistemological quandaries. In the dominant scientific materialist model, McGilchrist (2009) argues that knowledge accrues by comparing something to an existing something else that we know more about. In other words we compare the focus of study to an existing model. This is not possible when it comes to studying consciousness because it would be difficult to imagine what such a model would look like. In such an instance, he suggests, we revert to default: the ‘machine’ model. Perhaps for this reason, among others, the study of consciousness in recent decades has been avoided and is only now enjoying a resurgence of research (Wilber, 2004; Oellinger et al, 2008). Even the notion that the “Aha” moment arises, whether from a conscious or unconscious source, in the mind, is contentious. Mind remains a disputed entity with some theorists equating it with the brain only; for them consciousness manifests in and through, thought. For others, insight derives from a level of consciousness above and beyond thought – from a *transpersonal* source. For these theorists thought is a bar to an “Aha” moment of insight.

Philosophers such as the spiritual leader Krishnamurti and the physicist Bohm consider insight to be the key to transformative change (Krishnamurti and Bohm, 1985, 1999). (Bohm (1994), for example, portrays thought as an ‘electrochemical fog’ that can only be dispersed through insight – the “Aha” moment. It must be noted here that Bohm, like many authors, tends to use the terms ‘insight’, “Aha” and ‘perception’ almost interchangeably. An overview of research that addresses such concepts as consciousness, insight, intuition, spirituality, transformational change and epiphany shows the need to be very clear about the meanings intended by these terms, otherwise like cannot be compared with like. When exploring concepts around the “Aha” moment it becomes immediately apparent that different authors construe the phrase differently and sometimes the same authors use concepts interchangeably. Even the spelling is disputed, with myriad italics, exclamation marks and capital letters all vying to convey the surprise element of “Aha” (“Aha”, “*Aha*”, “Aha”!, “a-ha”, “AHA”, “ah-ha!”, “Aha”!) moments. I have arbitrarily opted for the first spelling. “Aha” moment and ‘insight’ are terms that will be used interchangeably in forthcoming chapters. Clarification of terms will be an ambition throughout this study.

The next section discusses the role of insight in the kind of personal development that is considered to be transformational.

Section 3: Insight in Transformational Development

A key objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between insight and personal transformational development, there being no previous research (of which I am aware) addressing this link. The same is true of intuition and its relation to development. That is why existing theories of insight bear a somewhat tangential comparison with the findings presented in this study. Outside of cognitive studies, insight studies emanate from mainly psychoanalytic populations where participants have presented for therapy to address specific problems that might lead to pathology. This study aims to add some understanding of insight and intuition as they relate to transformational development.

The objective of learning more about transformational change invites consideration of the debate about the difference between quantitative and qualitative change, or in Piagetian terms, the difference between assimilation, which adds to the current cognitive system, and accommodation where the system itself is structurally altered. The notion of transformation can be expressed in different ways. Drawing on Wilber's "Integral" paradigm (see Section 4), Shervington (2004) distinguishes between translation and transformation. Translation comprises 'little shifts' when clients try out different options at their existing level of being or consciousness whereas transformation involves dis-embedding from one level of consciousness to ascend to a higher one. Transforming to this higher level represents a paradigm shift where understanding of the world becomes deeper, more complex and more expansive. To illustrate the difference between this shift in consciousness to a higher plane versus an accrual of new information, Cook-Greuter, 2004, describes a vertical rather than horizontal shift. However conceptualised, there is always the notion of structures of qualitative, permanent expansion involved in transformation. I wanted to know the role, if any, of "Aha" moments in appropriating these higher structures of consciousness.

Section 4: Methodological considerations and Methods Chosen

This section describes briefly the deliberations and considerations of methodologies that led to the final choices. The starting point was the awareness of the lack of relevant theories, both of insight and coaching, to which I could refer the research questions. This awareness profoundly influenced the methodology and explication of the results of the study. Having acquainted myself with some findings from other schools of thought, I became interested in supplementing and integrating the findings of this study with empirical findings from these other schools. This meant being keenly aware of the objectives of the different schools of approach, whether they were looking to find out more about the contexts, processes, functions or fruits of insight.

The first methodological choice was to adopt a qualitative paradigm. A distinguishing feature of qualitative methods is that they start from the perspectives and actions of the subjects studied, as opposed to quantitative methods which typically proceed from the researcher's ideas about the dimensions and categories which should constitute the central focus (Bryman, 1989). I then re-acquainted myself with commonly used qualitative paradigms to determine which best suited the purpose of the study. My prime objective was to investigate the inner, private world of the individual in the experiencing of the "Aha" moment and the context in which it arose. In addition, I wanted to uncover certain principles associated with insight and with Co-Active coaching that would functionally be able to be generalised, at least in principle. This meant undertaking research procedures that contain empirical material, such as ethnomethodology and grounded theory. Ethnography describes and interprets a cultural and social group based on observed behaviour and interviews. It deals, therefore, with an external perspective, as do case studies which rely on external sources such as archival records and documents and often investigate single cases. I rejected these external perspectives because I wanted to capture the private, interior worlds of "Aha" moments and I wanted to do so in a manner that might provide generic clues as to the phenomenology and context of insight as well as to how these might inform coaching practice.

This led me to phenomenology which provides a philosophical basis for interpretive research (Moustakas 1994). However, although a phenomenological approach can explain how subjects experienced "Aha" events, it does not attempt to build a theory. I

wanted a research design that was wider than phenomenology: namely an approach that would look to complementary sources, such as literature in the field, so as to develop a robust theory. When there is a negligible amount of research in a given field, I can see little alternative to grounded theory, which is a way of doing qualitative research rather than a prescriptive paradigm (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). Representing a theory generating approach rather than a verificational one (Rennie and Brewer, 1987), grounded theory is named for its purpose of developing theory “grounded” in the reports under investigation. In contrast to experimental studies where hypotheses based on known research can be tested, grounded study starts with questions and builds theory based on the picture that emerges from responses. In the case of this study, data contains descriptions of the lived phenomenology of “Aha” moments, offering the possibility of a theory of insight based on experiential accounts. The study, then, combines philosophical-theoretical ideas with empirical-practical sources in the hope of arriving at a useful theory.

Besides the roles of cognition and intuition in the experiencing of an “Aha” moment there is much that is not known, or not specified and not empirically evidenced in the understanding of this event. The conditions that relate to any phenomenon must be clarified before novel formulations can be devised. Grounded theory is again germane here in that what is relevant to the phenomenon of the “Aha” is allowed to surface in the course of the study. The ultimate objective of grounded theory is to build a theory that illuminates the phenomenon rather than merely describing it. In the coaching relationship the “Aha” event happens in the conscious awareness of the client and is therefore an internal, private, first-person, phenomenological occurrence. Given our current existential realities, (barring para-psychology) the only way for the coach, or researcher, to begin to understand the phenomenon is to request that the client communicate it, either in spoken words or texts. To receive the communication, hermeneutics demands that the researcher must interpret it, ergo the requirement for a phenomenological, interpretative approach to the study.

Grounded theory permits successive induction from empirical material and it is through the rigor of induction that the theory’s credibility is established (Glaser, 1978; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Induction in this approach involves firstly the intensive study of a limited set of data in single empirical cases and the subsequent comparison between

multiple cases with a concomitant extension of the empirical base (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000).

My first wave of data was collected through in-depth interviews with key respondents. Empathy (as in Mead's "taking the role of the other" and no-judgment are important ingredients (Robson, 2002: 14) so I was conscious of bringing these qualities to the fore in the interviews. I interpreted findings from these 'key respondents' to formulate a set of guidelines for the next wave of participants, diary keepers. Similarly these responses were taken into account when fashioning semi-structured questions for the next wave of participants who completed questionnaires. I wanted to explore the context of "Aha" moments and their phenomenologically experienced range and depth within the process of Co-Active coaching. I therefore contacted fellow Co-Active coaches via the group website and explained my study, requesting that they recruit current clients – one or two each – to participate in keeping diaries and completing questionnaires.

As previously mentioned, Co-Active coaching is conducted with clients on the telephone. In order to have clients' descriptions of their insights when they were still fresh, it was explained that diary keepers would be journaling immediately after the coaching session. These participants could be recruited to record any incidences of "Aha" moments immediately after the telephone sessions with their coaches. One of the reasons that an understanding of insight is so elusive is that it is difficult to explain post hoc, so capturing phenomenological reports as close to the event as possible was a prime aim of the study.

A second cohort of questionnaire respondents were recruited to provide information on what changes, if any, had been made and sustained as a result of insights. All of these clients, diary-keepers and questionnaire respondents, emailed their reports directly to me. Finally, I chose a sample of individuals to conduct in-depth interviews by telephone.

So, there are four waves to the data collection:

- key respondents' interviews
- self-completed diaries
- self-completed questionnaires
- in-depth interviews

A grounded theory approach to data analysis through coding and subsequent categorizing was then employed. This involves creating “sensitising concepts” that serve to stimulate the perception of new relations, perspectives and world-views in the data. Of course, the analysis of qualitative data demands hermeneutics, the “art and science of interpretation” (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000:6). I tried to be conscious and reflective of the findings throughout the process since it is well documented that pre-judgements in the research process arise from “...*the perceptual, cognitive, theoretical, linguistic, (inter)textual, political and cultural circumstances that form the backdrop to – as well as impregnate – the interpretations* (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000:6). The core categories that emanated from an analysis of the total data base formed an emergent theory of insight.

In the early stages of this study I came across a framework that was appealing to me for its methodological pluralism. The “Integral” approach of Ken Wilber features a collection of works that argue for the inclusion of all relevant research findings in a four quadrant framework that captures all fields of study. This framework will be explained in Chapter 3 and alluded to throughout this study. The next section turns to the literature that was consulted in the course of this study.

Section 5: Literature

The literature is drawn from studies that relate to coaching, sparse as they are, studies of insight and intuition, studies of transformational learning and change and studies of levels of consciousness' development. Fields relating to insight and intuition cover a wide gamut. My aim in presenting the literature is to highlight some studies that represent the major approaches to the study of consciousness. Many studies of insight come from the material and mental realms of knowledge, and focus on the mechanisms

of insight and problem solving. Other approaches view insight as a phenomenological experience emanating from a communal field of energy outside of the person with the power to change cognitions and personal epistemologies forever (e.g. Bohm 1984, Robertson 1998). A seminal study in intuition was conducted by Wild (1938). He depicts a phenomenon that may have its genesis in various sources, including rational, non-cognitive, personal and transpersonal seats of wisdom. This and more recent studies will be reviewed briefly in Chapter 2.

Literature pertaining to transformational change draws heavily from transformational learning theory in its more recent incarnations and from more integral models of transformative change. This phenomenological study very much focuses on self-knowledge through the gateway of the conscious awareness of insight – what it is, how and in what conditions it arises, what meaning is given to it, and its effects on attitudes and behaviours. Research findings from other fields of investigation are used to reinforce, complement or indeed contradict the phenomenological accounts rendered by participants in this study. For example, participants report an intuitively felt “impasse” immediately preceding the “Aha” realisation. Findings from neurobiology also suggest this split-second of neuronal quiescence prior to insight (Jung-Beeman et al, 2004). The impasse will be mentioned in several chapters as will other concepts that have relevance in different contexts in the study. Examples of these concepts are ‘gremlins’ – the Co-Active term for self-sabotaging inner dialogue, ego, intuition, meta-cognition, transpersonal states and stages, and transformation.

Section 6: Guide to Chapters

Chapter 2 presents the literature review. It outlines the dominant models of insight which are drawn from perceptual-cognitive, psychodynamic and humanistic schools (Levitt et al 2004). The review draws on a wide-ranging literature. For example, at the ‘epiphany’ end of the spectrum is to be found Miller and C’de Baca’s (2001) study. It shows the life-time effects of a single “Aha” moment that triggered in respondents a vivid, surprising, benevolent and enduring personal transformation that the researchers labelled “quantum change”. These researchers noted the similarity of concepts and language that quantum changers used in expressing their spiritual or mystical experiences. Miller and C’de Baca distinguish quantum change from the ‘insightful’

variety of change which constitutes for them a mere conceptual re-organization. Both types share the noetic element of sudden realization or knowing. It is hoped that findings presented in forthcoming chapters will justify the conclusion that “Aha” moments can occur at any level and depth along a spectrum of consciousness with insight registering on the mental level, intuition at the level of the soul, and epiphany at the level of spirit. Chapter 2 also introduces data from empirical life coaching studies which examine the ways in which successful coaching outcomes are achieved. Finally, the chapter discusses the many ways in which insight can be stimulated.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology and justifies a qualitative, interpretive, grounded study approach. As befits a grounded study, the objective is to discover what context and meaning participants themselves make of their “Aha” moments of insight. As explained above, one wave of findings from the data informed the next so that a full and rounded depiction and explanation of insight and its effects was achieved. The study attempts not only to capture the lived experience of the “Aha” moment but also to explore its lasting effects on attitudes and behaviours. To this end, as explained above, diary keepers give an account of “Aha” moments in their immediate aftermath and questionnaire respondents are able to provide accounts of their lasting effects. The final collection of data from interviews gives voice to the transcendental potentials of insight.

Chapters 4 – 8 present the findings of this study. Each chapter will begin with a brief summary of findings in order to orient the reader to the direction taken in evaluating the raw data that is presented. Throughout the presentation of results, findings will be compared to research in the fields of coaching, insight and transformational learning. By comparing findings, the study might help to distinguish a holistic model of coaching from other models and other disciplines.

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to present the potential theoretical bases of the Co-Active Coaching model. It also examines findings as they relate to the ways in which the model appears to facilitate insightful change. It tethers the principles and practices of the Co-Active approach to known psychological paradigms. The chapter demonstrates that the nature of the Co-Active relationship provides the ‘soup’ in which insights may bubble up. Co-activity nurtures the heightened self-awareness that can lead clients towards new reflections and insights. The chapter also documents the skills that

coaches are employing during their clients' moments of insight. Findings reinforce empirical studies which signify that powerful questioning lies at the heart of insightful discovery (e.g. Kolb 1984) and they add a further vital ingredient – the importance of the coach's role in facilitating the kind of insights that lead to transformational change. Findings can be interpreted in a manner which suggests that the quality of the humanity intrinsic to the Co-Active coaching relationship outweighs any particular skill or technique in achieving desired outcomes. While clients report the positive benefits of coaching, a consequence of co-activity would appear to be to propel the client towards higher, more complex and accommodating, levels of consciousness: to not just to change or develop, but to transform their lives.

Chapter 5 reviews those contexts of Co-Active coaching and those non-conscious processes that facilitate an "Aha" moment. While the occasion cannot be guaranteed, certain practices and "ways of being" seem to encourage it. The chapter explores the role of the "moment" in the "Aha" moment, demonstrating that it is far from a simple cognitive construction and invites comparison with notions of flow and mindfulness. The chapter concludes with a comparison of the insights gained in the process of Co-Active coaching compared to insights gleaned in other personal development endeavours like counselling and therapy.

Chapter 6 sets out to explore the nature of the "Aha" event, including its forms and functions. It presents accounts from fields of enquiry including cognitive psychology and neuroscience, neurobiology, neurotheology, social and mystical theories of insight. One of the questions that occurred to me prior to the commencement of this study was "In transformational change, what form is considered to *transform*, in the sense of going beyond the original form?" Later I became acquainted with the work of Robert Kegan (2000) who asked the same question. Findings suggest that the genesis of insight derives from multiple sources beyond the cognitive, inviting a perusal of studies relating to emotions, cognitions and energy, both gross, as in confined to the material brain and body and subtle, meaning originating from a somatic or transpersonal, transcendent source.

Chapter 7 concerns learning, development and transformational change. It discusses current theories of adult learning and transformational development. The social nature

of learning so crucial to learning outcomes in Co-Active coaching is absent from most theories (McGill and Beaty 1996). Findings are compared to experiential or action/learning theories such as that of Kolb (1984) and Mezirow's (1978, 1991) transformational learning theory. It is argued that most of these theories are developmental but not transformational. Change may amount to a developing breadth and not depth of the psyche and would therefore fail to result in an evolution of personal epistemology (Robertson, 1988). In this way, these theories fall into cognicentrism, (Ferrer, 2005) especially where insightful learning of the "Aha" variety is concerned. Findings show that the learning that accompanies the "Aha" moment is often to be encountered not just in rational discourse or critical reflection, but in non-rational ways such as visualisation, imagination, fantasy, working with dreams, being in the present moment, or in a state of 'flow'. Cognitively, insights derive from the accommodation of paradox or other ways of thinking dialectically, or whilst journaling, intuiting, surrendering ego defenses, meditating or simply *not* "knowing" and resting in the "now" regardless. The data also demands a perusal of the role of the whole bodymind as a system in the learning process. Embodied learning involves contemplative practices that aim to access whole body awareness that comes from all ways of knowing, precedes experience and precipitates a call to action. The "Aha" moment often heralds a call to action. Holistic learning theories are discussed in this chapter where spiritual immanence as a principle of holistic learning (Heron 1998) is discussed. Heron contends that transpersonal learning theories consider experiential transpersonal learning to be beyond ordinary consciousness – something to be worked towards, whereas a model of immanence would consider spirituality to be the foundation of psychological processes.

The identifying of life mission and purpose, so central to the Co-Active model, is identified by Kroth and Boverie (2000) as providing the stimulus and motivation for new elements of learning to be incorporated within the individual. Their study suggests that the self-knowledge that reveals life purpose is vital to successful learning outcomes. Findings presented in this chapter suggest that transformational learning is facilitated by the engagement of multiple human faculties and their practices. These include: the unconscious mind; the suspension of cognitive faculties; intuition; unlearning; and discovering mission and purpose. These provide the means and the motivation for learning and development.

Chapter 8 presents findings relating to how and where “Aha” events are somatically, cognitively and psychically experienced. Reports sometimes speak of insights happening ‘internally’ in the mind, in the body, and intuitively. Other reports describe insights as deriving from outside the person, from a spiritual energy. This chapter demonstrates how findings could be interpreted from the perspective of Eastern philosophical system, and singles out the chakra energy system purely as an exemplar.

Findings reflect a developmental and evolutionary model that covers all of the known potentials of human consciousness, instead of capping it, as Western psychology usually does, at the level of cognitions (Wade, 1996). Reports of the discovery of non-dual epistemologies imply development in the manner of Wilber’s (1977) Spectrum of Consciousness model. This posits an evolution in the development of consciousness from matter to body to mind to soul to spirit, where each stage is invariant and each stage, whilst transcending its junior stage, nonetheless includes it in an upward spiral of developing awareness, or consciousness.

Developmental psychologists have identified various aspects of an individual’s consciousness, such as cognition (what one is aware of), values (what one considers most important), and self-identity (what one identifies with) (Wilber, 2000a, 2005). There are numerous currently identified lines of development. Wilber (2000) argues that “These developmental lines include: morals, affects, self-identity, psychosexuality, cognition, ideas of the good, role taking, socioemotional capacity, creativity, altruism, several lines that might be called “spiritual” (care, openness, concern, religious faith, meditative stages), joy, communicative competence, modes of space and time, death-seizure, needs, worldviews, logico-mathematical competence, kinesthetic skills, gender identity, and empathy – to name a few of the more prominent developmental lines for which we have some empirical evidence.” (Wilber 2000: 28).

As with overall stages of development, the various lines are argued to proceed through recognisable stages, each stage revealing a markedly different and more expansive understanding of the world (Wilber, 2000a). Each stage transcends and simultaneously includes previous stages to produce a new system with its own coherent pattern and stable structure. Stages are not fixed like the rungs of a ladder but are fluid and unfold

across a spectrum of consciousness which is embodied and interactive: *"We are not our stages; we are not the self who hangs in the balance at this moment in our evolution. We are the activity of this evolution. We compose our stages, and we experience this composing"* (Kegan, 1982:169). The findings of this study suggest that

Data indicates that development takes place in various lines of development but cognitions, values and self-identity are arguably the most important for successful coaching outcomes.

Working within Wilber's Integral paradigm, Cook-Greuter's (1999, 2005) nine-stage theory of ego development encompasses not only ego or self-identity but each stage includes generic ways of being, doing and thinking. The theory illumines and describes the increasingly expansive ways of meaning-making and the changes in self-identity typical of those undergoing transformational, evolutionary change. Increasingly differentiated ways of making sense of the world lead to the overcoming of egoic demands, which then open the self to multiple perspectives and epistemic realities, and finally to one undifferentiated and unitive, or nondual, reality. This theory is useful in providing a vocabulary for ontologically subjective phenomena described in reports.

Chapter 9 considers the conclusions of the study. It offers a detailed analysis and discussion of its key findings. From these findings are drawn two models. The first is a model that delineates the forms and functions of insight. The second is a holistic model of coaching which encompasses the principles and practices of the Co-Active model and yet transcends these to include essential findings from this grounded study. The chapter discusses the ways in which the Co-Active model served well for the purposes of researching both the "Aha" moment and the role of coaching more generally in transformational learning and development. However, findings warrant a more fully holistic model that that would encourage the development of all lines of intelligence and all ways of knowing, including spiritual awareness. The chapter discusses the moral issues arising from the encouragement of transformational learning. It suggests that the empirical findings of this study could be enhanced in future studies on the transformational potential of insight, perhaps including the matter of the match between coaches and clients in relation to their individual levels of consciousness. It also suggests as a suitable area for empirical research the effect of transformation when

deliberately working across the mind-body-spirit continuum of the person concurrently. Finally the chapter reflects upon the methodological choices made in relation to this study and how an integrally informed appraisal of insight produces clearer understanding than studies which focus on the subject from within their own domain of knowledge. So the phenomenological accounts that this study has yielded can be complemented by fields which address both the human sciences and the natural sciences. Each approach helps to build a clearer appreciation of the nature of insight and intuition.

Summary

There are multiple objectives for this study. Its undertaking stemmed from a desire to understand how the “Aha” moment of insight is phenomenologically experienced and whether it is qualitatively different from non-insightful psychological processes and outcomes. It is also designed to contribute to a better understanding of its role in transformational change in the process of Co-Active coaching and thereby contribute to a clearer understanding of how life coaching works. The study utilises the methodology of grounded study, a good way of doing qualitative research when existing empirical data is sparse. A phenomenological approach is employed to allow participants to convey their private, inner experiences of insight and coaching and these reports require interpretation.

Counteracting the difficulties inherent in hermeneutics was the fact that so many of the reports used very similar modes of expression. This made coding the data relatively easy and gave me confidence about the way I coded categories en route to devising theory. The fruits of the study should therefore have sufficient capacity for application by stakeholders in the fields of coaching and transformational development. It fulfills the following objectives: it lends weight to a formerly neglected but growing interest in insight specifically and consciousness studies more generally; it proposes a model of insight that clarifies its nature in comparison with intuition; it helps to develop a positive psychological model of life coaching that includes the whole spectrum of consciousness available to the human psyche and is therefore genuinely holistic.

The next chapter, Chapter 2, reviews the literature in the fields of life coaching, insight and transformational change.

N. B. Recipients of coaching are sometimes called 'coachees' (as recipients of mentoring can be called 'mentees'). I find these terms clumsy and contrived and will use the term 'client' throughout this study to refer to the recipient of coaching.

Chapter 2: Overview of Relevant Literature

The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of the prevailing literature as it pertains to the nature of the “Aha” moment and its role in the transformational change of coaching clients. The place of a literature review is controversial in grounded studies. Strauss and Corbin (1990) favoured the review of literature prior to undertaking a grounded study to stimulate questions for research and provide supplementary validity. Glaser (1992) on the other hand recommended that literature should not be consulted until the researcher was in the field and had begun to formulate codes and categories. The matter of when to consult literature might be dependent upon the question under study. I did consult literature at the beginning of the enterprise and would argue that this was justified because of the nature of the question. I was not able to identify any body of literature relating to phenomenological accounts of “Aha” moments outside of cognitive studies of insight in problem solving. In addition, at this early stage I had not decided on the best methodological approach and this fact, together with the lack of extant knowledge on the subject of “Aha” moments or the workings of coaching, helped to determine the choice of grounded theory. The potential risk of my becoming influenced by existing knowledge was largely negated by this lack of research in the field of phenomenological descriptions of insight. I was therefore not in the position where the literature could shape the design of the study.

The central questions posed in this study demand an explanation of the following: the subjective experience of insight, or the “Aha” moment; the contexts in which it arises; the Co-Active coaching model; and the nature of transformational change and its effects. This poses numerous challenges. Although a few definitions of insight exist, no commonly accepted definition has emerged (Yi et al, 2008). As Petitmengin-Peugeot (2002: 45) argues: *“The difficulty of obtaining descriptions of the intuitive experience comes essentially from the fact that the gestures which prepare and follow the emergence of an intuition belong to that dimension of experience which is not a part of thought-out consciousness”*. Henley (date) contends that Petitmengin-Peugeot conflates insight and intuition, a position which later chapters will show me to be in agreement. Nevertheless, her point about the non-conscious nature of insight is valid. Moments of insight depend often on intuitive, implicit or tacit understanding, yet Western human development revolves around the collection of facts, not the

understanding of tacit knowledge (Ghent, 1990). The consensus in the psychological literature suggests that insights prompt therapeutic change, yet there is little agreement about how such change can be realised (Levitt et. al., 2004).

Another challenge in this study is the acute lack of critical research on life coaching generally, far less the holistic status that the Co-Active approach claims for itself. Since insight is considered to be implemental in transformative change, and since the co-active approach claims to deliver transformational change, then the understanding of insight is crucial to its premise. Finally, the criteria that must be met for change to be regarded as transformational is a disputed topic. Transformational learning theory (Mezirow, 1978, 1991) is seminal in highlighting the controversy around transformation of the self.

For all of these reasons, it has been necessary to cast a very wide net that covers diverse fields of the study of insight, from the neurobiological to the cognitive scientific to the pedagogical to the phenomenological. It might therefore be argued that some of the literature reviewed here is only loosely related to life coaching. However, not only is this approach dictated by the dearth of research on coaching, but it can be argued that psychological explanations of any kind are approaching the same entity, the human being, albeit they may investigate and interpret their findings from different perspectives, depending on their ontological models of the person. Taking into consideration all fields of study also gives a fuller picture of the nature of insights. This chapter, then, aims to examine the current state of affairs of research into insight and its role in the kind of personal development that constitutes transformational change in order to illumine the findings that are presented in subsequent chapters. The chapter is divided into three sections that address these issues:

Section 1: Insight and Intuition and their Range indicates that the range and levels of insight available to the person are disputed topics, raising ontological questions that show a marked divergence of views. Frameworks are introduced from both Western and Eastern perspectives, exemplified by Wild (1938) and Sadananda (1974) respectively. These differing paradigms relate to the human dimensions in which these “Aha” phenomena may arise and the section is therefore subdivided to examine:

knowledge and cognitive insights; mind and interpretive insights; and the soul and spiritual insights of classical intuitionism.

Section 2: Coaching Models presents a brief overview of models of life coaching so that the co-active model might be better comprehended in relation to the whole field.

Section 3: Personal Development and Transformation reviews theories of development and transformation as they pertain to adult learning theories. This includes Mezirow's (1978) seminal transformational learning theory and its more recent guises. Theories of insight stimulation, or activation, are introduced as are theories which delineate developmental growth from transformational growth..

Section 4: Stimulating Insight considers theories of insight from the point of view of cognitive, humanistic and transpersonal approaches as well as from the perspective of a positive psychology approach such as Co-Active coaching.

Section 5: The Impact of Insight in Personal Development and Transformation considers literature relating to the role of insight in personal development. It seems that insight can hasten a transition from conventional to post-conventional levels of consciousness.

Section 1: Insight and Intuition and their Range

This section considers the confusion surrounding the terms insight and intuition and provides a brief overview of models of these. The contributions of both the Western cognitive orientation towards insight and the Eastern version, where insight comes either from deep within the self or is experienced as emanating from a source that transcends the self, are included. Models of insight and intuition are subdivided into: a) knowledge and cognitive insights; b) mind and interpretive insights and c) soul and spiritual insights.

Models of Insight and Intuition

Insight and intuition are often used interchangeably, or sometimes with no clarification whatsoever (Pronin et al, 2001). This makes it difficult to embark upon a meaningful

review of the subjects since essentially different elements of insight are being muddled. For example, Petitmengin-Peugeot (1999) concluded that the phenomenological study of intuition has been sorely neglected, calling it the “blind spot in our culture” (p. 77). But as Henley (1999) argues, her research could just as easily apply to insight as to intuition. Such confusion has resulted in there being no coherent framework to synthesise views of intuition in psychology (Torff and Sternberg, 2001).

Psychodynamic models link insight with awareness into unconscious conflicts (Jinks, 1999). The bridging that occurs between the unconscious and conscious mind was noted by Poincaré (1952) as the main means of illuminating ideas or solutions to problems. Some cognitive psychologists consider conscious knowledge to be the tip of an iceberg whose vast underbelly contains “implicit learning” or “tacit knowledge”. From this perspective Myers (2002), for example, incorporates elements of the psychodynamic model, arguing that intuition arises in reservoirs of subconscious and unconscious understanding. Humanistic insight is designed to raise awareness of experiential and emotional functioning. Perceptual-cognitive models (e.g. London 1998) promote awareness of thinking patterns, or meta-awareness. Other theorists frame cognitive insight within a social context that influences unconscious assumptions (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi and Sawyer, 1995).

The question of transformation is, like insight, a complex affair where no consensus exists. The study is informed by literature that proposes a link between insight and one’s stage of development as well as literature that eschews any such link.

Transformation for constructivist developmental theorists is a staged affair where transformation heralds the advancement to higher stages of consciousness, while for others, like philosophers and physicists (e.g. Krishnamurti and Bohm, (1999) and the behavioural psychologist Miller (2004), transformation is a once-and-for-all event, irrespective of stage of development.

Contemporary models of intuition continue to refer to Wild’s (1938) tripartite division of intuition: contemporary intuitionism where intuition provides access to a limited and fallible sense of truths that are not provable with reason - logic, mathematical axioms, etc; inferential intuitionism: a postmodern view which sees truth as a convention, subject to change because there is no reality outside of human perception; and

classical intuitionism where intuition provides access to ultimate truth, which is pre-cognitive and non-rational; it cannot be understood by the intellect because this ultimate truth is immediately apprehended and perfect.

In Eastern mystical traditions the physical body is not one entity but comprises several 'bodies' of differing densities. For example, in relation to Kundalini Tantra, Sadananda (1974) identifies the vital body as the sum of emotional experiences, the body of knowledge as the sum of cognitive possibilities, the body of the mind as the sum of interpretive possibilities and the causal body as the sum of possibilities of the unconscious. From this perspective "Aha" moments can be experienced emotionally, mentally, transpersonally and spiritually. This section will utilise the frameworks of Wild and Sadananda to elaborate the full range of possible insights.

a) Knowledge and Cognitive Insights

Wild's description of contemporary intuitionism seems to correlate with current cognitive studies into insight. Most research into insight and intuition have been of this type in the West – based on cognitions, reflecting the ontology, or model of the person, of Western science – the knowing subject's epistemic separation from an independent, objective reality (Williams, 2006). These studies feature the 'mental' side of insight and focus particularly on theoretical formulations of problem-solving skills and brain architecture.

In the empirical sciences such as cognitive neuroscience, neurobiology and neurochemistry, recent developments and innovations in their methodologies have helped to evidence the uniqueness of the "Aha" moment. Research into the neural substrates of insight has been facilitated by electroencephalography (EEG) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) devices. A burning question in neurological fields has been whether different cognitive and neural processes lead to insight versus non-insight solutions to problems or if solutions differ only in immediate subsequent subjective feeling (Jung-Beeman et al 2004). Studying the brain with the use of fMRI scans, Jung-Beeman et al showed "Aha" moments to involve a particular and specific neural architecture. Two neural correlates of insight in problem-solving

were observed, showing activity in the right hemisphere for insight relative to non-insight solutions. Further research implicates the brain's right hemisphere in the processing of remote associations and the left hemisphere in the processing of close or tight associations (Jung-Beeman, 2005). The field of brain architecture is informed in this study by McGilchrist (2009). His twenty year perusal of 2,500 individual research studies of lateralisation of brain function resulted in their synthesis and the development of an emergent theory. His findings are germane to this study in multiple ways. Firstly, he alerts his audience to the simple fact that almost every function once thought to be the province of one or other hemisphere—language, imagery, reason, emotion—is served by both hemispheres, not one. Secondly, he cautions against using neuroimaging studies as a source of information on their own. He points out that one cannot assume that brain areas that light up are involved in the 'function' being imaged, nor that areas that do not light up are not involved (McGilchrist, 2009: 35). Nevertheless, he argues that the accumulated evidence suggests distinct differences in how the two hemispheres interpret and create the world, with different modes of attention, different priorities and different values. The left hemisphere uses denotative language, abstraction, yields clarity and the power to manipulate things that are known, fixed, static, isolated, decontextualised, explicit, disembodied, general in nature and ultimately lifeless. It represents a closed system that mediates knowledge in mechanical terms. The right hemisphere is individual, changing, evolving, interconnected, implicit, incarnate, apprehends anything new and represents embodied awareness, interested in living beings. It exists within the context of the lived world and relationships and not from an objective stance.

Finally his tentative conclusion that the neurology of the brain and the culture in which that brain is immersed has simultaneous effects. This means that he is considering fields of study that include the individual and the collective. The possible link between data that seems to reflect the perspective of the world taken by the right brain hemisphere and McGilchrist's hypothesis of the different ways in which the hemispheres operate on and make sense of the world is introduced in Chapter 5. This hemispheric lateralisation is a thread that runs through the chapters since findings of deep and personal insights reflect an arguably right brain hemisphere activation. These include active elements to prepare for insight such as the use of metaphor and ways of

being that entice insight, such as engaging intuition and suspending active cognitive activity.

A further key finding of Jung-Beeman et al's (2004) study was the discovery of a nanosecond of 'impasse' just prior to the brain registering the insight. Findings presented in later chapters will testify to this split second of "brain stall" as a common prelude to the full bursting of the "Aha" moment into conscious recognition. Jung-Beeman et al's scalp electroencephalogram recordings revealed a burst of high-frequency neural activity in the right anterior temporal lobe area of the brain (above the right ear) beginning 0.3 seconds prior to insight solutions. This brain area has been implicated in neuroimaging studies of cognitive processes like the detection of competing activity and attention switching (e.g., Botvinick et al, 2004). Kounios and Beeman (2009: 212) postulate that the anterior cingulate may be involved in the readiness to detect weakly activated, subconscious solutions and to switch attention to them when they are detected. Kounios and Beeman (2009) presented word puzzles on a monitor that could be solved using analytic or insight mechanisms. Preceding the display of problems to be solved analytically, they found an increase in neural activity suggesting that participants were preparing for analytical solving, in part, by directing attention outwardly—that is, to the monitor on which the next problem was about to be displayed. Conversely, preparation for solving an upcoming problem with insight involved directing attention inwardly—priming both hemispheres for lexical-semantic processing and the detection and retrieval of weakly activated potential solutions rather than focusing attention outwardly toward the monitor.

Since insight engages a wide neural architecture it is often linked with creativity. Findings suggest that individuals high in creativity habitually deploy their attention in a diffuse rather than a focused manner (Ansburg and Hill, 2003). In addition, insight may be linked to emotional mood. A recent fMRI study showed that people are more likely to solve problems with insight if they are in a positive mood when they arrive at the lab than if they are in a neutral or negative one (Subramaniam et al, 2009). Positive mood as an indicator of insight was found again in Kounios and Beeman's (2009) study, with enhanced activity in the anterior cingulate during the preparation period prior to each problem. They suggest that positive mood biases cognitive control mechanisms in ways that facilitate insight, with anxiety having the opposite effect. For example, when

positive mood is induced by showing participants comedy videos, they solve more problems, and solve more of them with insight, than they do after watching neutral or anxiety-inducing films.

Another aspect of cognition is the egoic image of, and belief systems around, the self. Levitt et al (2004) studied this aspect of insight and concluded that insight is normally experienced after a traumatic event or chronic dissatisfaction in primary relationships. They propose a stage model where insight is preceded by a trauma that causes anxiety. The resulting arousal of anxiety leads to the experiencing of strong emotions, reflexive introspection, the enacting of change within relationships and the development of a more adaptive sense of personal control. They speak of the insight resulting in the correction of “deficient preconceptions”. It could be argued that their analysis is very close to Mezirow’s transformational learning which is driven by a ‘disorienting dilemma’ and aims to transform distorted or inadequate belief systems (See section 3 below). In more recent “second-wave” transformational learning theories (Gunnlaugson 2005), the focus has shifted somewhat away from the possibility of a transformation in respect of a particular life event toward greater interest in factors that shape the transformative experience (critical reflection, holistic approaches, and relationships) (Taylor, 2008).

Besides the psychodynamic effect of insight uncovering unconscious material, insight is often a cognitive affair, directed at the external world. Wallas (1926) described insight as a stage in problem solving. His 4-stage model comprises preparation, incubation, insight and verification. Verification occurs when something that is already known is under investigation and can be compared against an existing predictive model, but cannot contend with the new against which there would be nothing to compare. With a prime focus on verification rather than insight, Henley (1999) argues that incremental reasoning could produce the same result as Wallas’s description of insight.

Those who reduce mind to brain and see no intelligence outside of material entities equate intuition with experience and memory. Ironically, as Petitmengin-Peugeot (1999: 43), among many others, points out, “...*the history of the sciences...is full of testimonies of scientists telling about how a new idea came to them in a sudden, unexpected manner, without any discursive activity*” and yet intuition is rarely addressed in state education. This has caused Burton (1999), in the pedagogical field, to ask a simple question which constitutes the title of her paper: *Why is intuition so important to*

mathematics but missing from mathematics education? A potential response to this pedagogical question comes from Cloninger (2006: 26) who argues that intuition is “...frightening to individuals who seek to assure measurable objectives in schools. Intuition by its very nature is that aspect of cognition that evades reductionism and measurability”. Cloninger concludes that the tension between acknowledging intuition, which is tantamount to acknowledging indeterminacy and uncertainty and the current emphasis on accountability, has led to an impasse in the field. In this analysis it would be argued that intuition is not supported culturally in the West.

b) *Mind and Interpretive Insights*

This kind of insight, it might be argued, is especially pertinent to the field of Co-Active coaching where hermeneutic inquiry takes place between coach and client, so that insights are stimulated in this inter-subjective space. Inter-subjectivity represents the ground out of which “Aha” moments are configured. The ‘body of the mind’ described by Sadananda (1974) above is the primary focus in Co-Active coaching where the ‘mind’ is a ‘bodymind’ affair linking soma and psyche. Embodied learning encourages exploration of bodily feelings and sensations as well as the encouraging of visualizations, flights of fanciful imagination, the developing of intuition and the taking of multiple views, or perspectives, on any situation. This multi-perspectival thinking is related to levels of consciousness beyond Piaget’s (1972) cognitively-based “formal operational” thinking to higher levels of consciousness and is the major focus of today’s cognitive therapies.

The Co-Active enterprise happens in relationship and, in turn, both coach and client are the products of the shared structures of experiences that are reflected in the evolution of human cultures and, to this extent, individual studies of consciousness do not inform the discipline of coaching. Some researchers criticise theories for disregarding the social nature of mind, with even Wilber’s Integral approach coming under attack for emphasising Piaget’s psychogenesis of mind at the expense of Vygotsky’s understanding of the sociogenesis of mind (Edwards, 2005). Other theorists contend that these biases have been exaggerated and that both Piaget and Vygotsky appreciated the joint roles of the mentally active individual engaging dynamically with the environment (Cole and Wertsch 1996). Cole and Wertsch argue that Vygotsky more

comprehensively accounted for the co-constructed nature of reality, or the mediation of human action by cultural artefacts. They suggest that mind is created individually, socially and as a result of the influence of prior generations within a culture. This implies that there are certain expectations about the nature of insight, limited by social and cultural reifications. This is highlighted in the experience of insights into unity consciousness where what is considered 'normal' versus what is considered 'psychopathic' may be influenced by culture. Newberg and d'Aquili (2000) describe unity consciousness as absolute unitary being, characterised by a loss of self sense, of space and time and an experience of undifferentiated oneness. For researchers like Pigliucci (2004), such descriptions are suggestive of brain damage since they reflect similar statements made by brain-damaged patients that he studied. The academic Jenny Wade (2004) experienced 'absolute unitary being' during a sexual encounter but kept quiet about it for years for fear of ridicule by the academic community. So what can be experienced through insight is linked to societal beliefs about what is possible to see, or not, depending on one's culture. The accounts of unity consciousness, taken as veridical in Eastern cultures can be met with deep suspicion in the West.

Inferential intuitionism is a mind-based intuition that is by definition atheistic and non-spiritual. According to Vaughan (1979: 45) this explanation of intuition assumes a blank slate approach where individual consciousness learns everything from the experience of interacting with the environment. Vaughan argues that such an approach to intuition assumes that it is not possible to know anything that does not enter consciousness through the five sensory channels. In this analysis intuition is solely based on experience and memory. In the field of management studies, for example, Patton (2003: 995) provides a good example of this perspective: "*Expert intuition is simply analyses frozen into habit and into the capacity for rapid response through recognition of familiar kinds of situations...*" In the field of life coaching, intuition has been argued to derive from experience and, ultimately, a personal capacity for memory retrieval: "*Intuition calls upon the combined wisdom that we have acquired during our lifetime. This wisdom consists of a rich cocktail of intellectual, emotional, physical and instinctive knowledge that is lodged within us...from our experience*" (Murray, 2004:204)

Some epistemologies acknowledge cognitions but point beyond the brain to the capacity of supra-mental or transcendental dimensions of the psyche to produce intuition and so a model like classical intuitionism is best suited to these approaches.

c) *Classical Intuitionism: Soul and Spiritual Insights*

Classical intuitionism derives from intuition which precedes reason and gives access to ultimate truths. Ben-Seev and Star (2001) argue that classical intuitionism should be deployed in pedagogy in mathematics to address the student's intuition. The mention of intuition is a leitmotif in the data: so too is the sense of insights arising outside of the self as if the information came from a transcendent source.

Transpersonal psychology has been accredited as the first of modern sciences to take human spirituality seriously (Kelly, 1991). In line with Eastern mystical literature, the three major natural states of consciousness – waking, dreaming and sleeping – are said to be supported by a particular energy or “body” – the gross, subtle and causal respectively (Wilber, 2006: 74). Insights studied by cognitive neuroscience derive from the gross body. Transpersonal insights emanate from this posited ‘subtle’ level of psychic consciousness, or intuition.

Louchakova and Warner (2004) describe the subtle body as the temporal structures of the psyche recognised within the space of introspection “inside” the physical body. They argue that subtle energy can be seen as mediating both self-recognition and personality development, culminating in pure consciousness as part of an intrinsic evolutionary drive. Pure consciousness is said to emanate in the causal realm, producing the insight of non-dual or unity consciousness which connects with the whole of creation (Wilber, 2006).

The data is replete with mentions of “Aha” moments emanating from the body, often when the client has been encouraged to slow the mind and direct attention inwards to the body. Louchakova and Warner (2004) reviewed spiritual traditions that recognize the body-related manifestations of spirituality and concluded that the vital body is a key element which is missing in psychology, even of the transpersonal variety. They propose a model of psychosomatic mysticism (PM) that concentrates on the body while simultaneously recognising the unity of body, soul and spirit. PM “*uncovers that the spirit, psyche and the body are but various expressions of one undivided substratum of consciousness*” (p. 117). These researchers, like Pert (1996), see the whole bodymind as intelligently communicating information, resulting in their ‘transpersonal decentralised consciousness theory’. This comprises an experience-based knowledge

system whose practice transforms narcissistic traits, explicates archetypes and integrates the collective unconscious. This impulse of consciousness to become manifest, to self-transcend and to be “about something” is likened by the authors to the notion of intentionality in Western phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty 1995).

When conscious awareness related to spiritual insight, it is often associated with the anatomical heart and the corpus callosum in the brain. This is the view of subtle energy theorists and the chakra system as one subtle energy theory is examined in relation to findings in Chapter 8.

The evolutionary philosopher Heidegger’s (1927) portrayal of intuition reflects Wild’s classical description: “*Intuition represents the ideal of all knowledge, the ideal of understanding of being in general*” (Heidegger, 1993:167). Wade (1996) asserts that such insights can be seen as arising from the deepest depths of a timeless consciousness that precedes birth and succeeds death. The extension of consciousness to re-incarnated multiple lifetimes is beyond the scope and requirement of this study. The plotting of “Aha” moments along a posited adult trajectory of consciousness from post-formal cognitive awareness through to mystical revelations suffices.

Intuition not only arises in the subtle realm but would seem to engage the right brain, (Vaughan, 1976, Wade, 1996) whether of a contemporary, inferential or classical nature. (Kumar and Dempsey, 2002) speculate that there is a universal increase in right-brain hemisphere activity thanks to a posited rise in kundalini. Kundalini is the Eastern name given to energy, or life force, which lies dormant at the base of the spine. Kumar and Dempsey predict that kundalini is universally rising and that this event is associated with an increase in right hemisphere brain activity. “*At this time, evolution is shifting consciousness so it can work through the right side of the brain*” (p. 156).

To conclude this section, most fields of human enquiry have begun to address consciousness. New methodologies have made possible the evidencing that the “Aha” moment is associated with the right brain, is preceded by an impasse, is facilitated by a diffuse rather than focused attention and by a positive, light-hearted attitude. Western approaches recognise intuition processed in the brain deriving from experience. Some philosophical and all Eastern approaches suggest that insight comes from intuition

where insight is the figure and intuition the ground, or the explicate manifestation of the implicate order, which together comprise 'cosmic consciousness' (Bohm, 1994). Consciousness for evolutionary theorists represents a ground from which the unfolding of ever-expanding awareness arises. The next section presents a brief overview of models of coaching.

Section 2: Coaching Models

Socrates is often considered to be the world's first coach, so coaching is nothing new, but its formalisation as a profession is (Whitmore 2004). Today coaching is construed in ways that differ both philosophically and in recommended practices. It is not the intention here to give an exhaustive list of coaching models but to use a few as illustrative of the different genres.

The growth of coaching since 1998, and in particular life coaching (Grant, 2003), has given rise to myriad models and practices. Since research results are almost solely confined to corporate coaching we know little about the effects of life coaching models that target the whole human being.

The most common approaches used by coaches are goal-directed coaching and facilitation and process oriented coaching (Bono et al, 2004). Perhaps because of its corporate heritage, the setting of goals and therefore actions features across the board, regardless of the orientation of the various models. Some models however, see the taking of action as the sole reason for the coaching relationship. Action is often directed at improvements in performance. Some models portray coaching as indistinct from directive learning and often cast the coach as "expert". From this perspective *"Coaching consists of observing students and offering hints, feedback, reminders, new tasks, or redirecting a student's attention to a salient feature – all with the goal of making the student's performance approximate the expert's performance as closely as possible"* (Druckman and Bjork, 1991:61).

Such definitions focus on instructing rather than facilitating the client's learning. In this analysis coaching is closely linked to training which is defined as a *"process of bringing a person to an agreed standard of proficiency by practice and instruction."* (Collins English Dictionary). Some expert-coach models, by emphasising the coach's

background and expertise, might describe coaching in a way that resembles consultancy. This means that people with distinctions in specialised areas can claim to be “speech coaches” “sales coaches” “leadership coaches” and a plethora of others. Coaching practitioners distinguish themselves through the adoption of established paradigms such as behavioural psychology (Skiffington & Zeus, 2002).

Action approaches can be more facilitative than instructive. Hudson (1999:6) suggests that: *“A coach is a person who facilitates experiential learning that results in future-oriented abilities...someone trained and devoted to guiding others into increased competence, commitment and confidence”*.

These facilitative approaches take cognitions as well as action into account, following the cognitive-behavioural paradigm which links together thought, emotions and behaviour. Cognitive-behavioural therapy is now often cast as cognitive-behavioural coaching (McMahon 2007) or life coaching from a cognitive-behavioural approach (Neenan and Dryden, 2001). Cognitive behavioural techniques are recommended to help overcome negative thinking and deal with difficult emotions and thoughts.

Grant (2003) undertook the first ‘empirical’ investigation of the impact of life coaching, studying the key metacognitive factors involved in allowing individuals to achieve their goals. His series of studies suggests that a combination of solution-focused cognitive-behavioural, clinical and counseling psychology, brief solution-focused therapy, and elements of self-regulated coaching are effective in helping personal development and goal attainment.

These cognitive-behavioural approaches deal only with material actions and thoughts – phenomena which can be ‘externally’ examined. This is one reason why they are too simplistic to afford a holistic approach to the individual, especially in their lack of regard for unconscious motives and conflicts (Ducharme, 2004). Nor do they take into account the suitability of different coaching approaches depending on the level of development of both client and coach. Laske’s (2006) model is an exception in that it does draw attention to the match between coach and client developmentally but then he considers that all coaching is developmental. This would not seem to be the case, given the popularity of action approaches mentioned above which add to behavioural repertoires but not to any form of personal development.

The Co-Active model is reflective of a holistic approach and the learning that is suggested in other life coaching approaches is emphasised in its definition as: “*A powerful alliance designed to forward and enhance the lifelong process of human learning, effectiveness and fulfillment*” (Whitworth et al, 2007: 221). Cognitive-behavioural models with their emphasis on behaviour and cognitions are relevant to Co-Active coaching which aims to “forward the action”, i.e. move in a goal-oriented direction, and “deepen the learning”, i.e. become more self-aware (Whitworth et al, 2007: 12). However, these models concentrate on “ways of doing” and overlook “ways of being” or internal states beyond objective understanding that guide one’s manner of being in the world. This imbalance is addressed by this study, which aims to investigate lasting change in “ways of being” as well as ways of doing. This means taking account of the internal phenomenological worlds of participants and not just the attitudes and behaviours that they report. The next section introduces the concepts of development versus transformation.

Section 3: Personal Development and Transformation

This section considers the difference between development and transformation, using transformational learning theory as a conduit for this analysis. It then discusses the ontology of the Co-Active coaching model in relation to constructivist developmental theories.

Cognitive insights can be evoked in the manner described in transformational learning theory, which emerged with the work of Mezirow (1978, 1991, 2000). According to the theory, personal experience is mediated through our values, beliefs and assumptions. When, upon reflection, these are found to be lacking in accommodating some new life experience, transformational learning can drive a new perspective that is “...*more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and more reflective, in other words more developed*” (Mezirow 2000:7). Others argue that having more developed mental models of the world is not the same as transforming or evolving consciousness to a higher level. More recent holistic formulations of transformational learning theory argue that transformation is achieved by engaging more than cognitive capacities. Merriam (2004) argues that transformational learning theory should be expanded to include more ‘connected’ affective and intuitive dimensions and for these elements to be placed on an equal footing to cognitive and rational elements of the

psyche. The transformation of these allegedly feminine qualities would balance what she considers to be an overemphasis on masculine qualities of rationality and agency. Other seats of learning that need to be added to the cognitive include emotional ways of knowing, (Taylor, 2000), 'embodied learning' (Leonard and Murphy, 1995), the power of the unconscious in learning (Boyd and Meyers 1988) and 'soulwork' (Dirkx, 2003). Methods used to facilitate learning in these dimensions include guided visualisations, self-expression through drawing and painting and other expressive pedagogical practices that engage holistic knowing.

The orientation of the Co-Active model shares the principles inherent in learning and development theories where intelligence develops through the life span and "*has the potential to evolve toward increasingly differentiated ways of making sense of the world*" (Daloz 1999: 67). Developmental theories are given empirical expression through the studies of Piaget (1972) (child development), Loevinger (1976) and Cook-Greuter (1999) (ego development theory) and Kohlberg's (1981) stages of moral development, to give but a few examples.

Processes of differentiation and integration are recurrent themes in transformative stage theories. In the 'self' line of consciousness, we are dominated by that with which our self becomes identified, but we can dominate and control everything from which we disidentify (Assagioli, 1965). Of course the unconscious is involved in raising awareness of the focus of identification: "*We have a measure of choice and control over what we are aware of, but what we are unaware of controls us*" (Whitmore, 1992:70). From the perspective of the integral paradigm (Wilber, 2000), disidentification leads to differentiation and subsequent integration to achieve a qualitatively higher level of consciousness. This higher level then becomes a stable structure. As the self-system negotiates each unfolding basic structure and switches from the narrower to the wider identity, it undergoes a *fulcrum* or switch-point in its development. That is, each time the self ascends to a new level of consciousness, it will go through a process of 1) merger or fusion or embeddedness, 2) differentiation or transcendence or disembedding, and 3) incorporation or integration. This 1-2-3 process is a fulcrum of self-development, and there are as many fulcrums of self-development as there are basic structures to negotiate (Rothberg and Kelly, 1998: 307–308).

While Mezirow focussed on rational cognitions, Kegan (1982, 1994,) conceptualised the mind in a much broader way, linking it firmly to self-identity. His “Orders of Consciousness” theory is based on his identification of patterns of perception about what is held as subject in personal experience versus what is considered object and how this changes in the course of transition, moving in the potential direction of greater objectivity. His theory chimes with the integral approach in that each stage of development is marked by a higher order structure of mind which is more complex, integrated and unified. The higher order structure emerges when the self differentiates from the lower structure with which it has exclusively identified. The self identifies with this higher holarchy until the next higher order structure eventually emerges whereupon the self disidentifies with the current level and shifts its essential identity to the higher structure (Cacioppe and Edwards, 2005).

This theme will be examined in subsequent chapters with reference to researchers whose interests lie in various dimensions of the human organism. While terminology differs, virtually all evolutionary transformational theories of consciousness posit 2nd tier stages (Wilber, 2006), which represent a transformational watershed beyond Piaget’s (1972) formal operational thinking. 2nd tier thinking is described as post-rational in the cognitive line of development, post-egoic in the self line and post-conventional in the line of beliefs and values. Lines of development, introduced above, refer to multiple intelligences of the person including moral, interpersonal, cognitive, spiritual and affective lines of development. This is a subject relevant to the findings and is taken up in later chapters, especially Chapter 8.

Brew (1994) argues that her research points to the necessity for transformational learning to address the whole person holistically and for the value of unlearning to be acknowledged. Unlearning requires that we deconstruct our mental maps of reality: *“Once our reality is deconstructed, it cannot ever be reconstructed in the same configuration”*, leading her to conclude that *“self-knowledge results from unstitching experiences, from unlearning”*. (p. 94). Encouraging unlearning and not knowing are facets of receptivity, a feminine quality which opens up space for novel insights to emerge (Ferrer et al, 2005). Petitmengin-Peugeot (2002: 44) notes that philosophers have pondered access to pre-intuitive knowledge which has manifested in *“Platonic conversion, Cartesian doubt, phenomenological reduction etc.”* all of which aim to

liberate sufficient internal space for intuition to spring forth. The physicist David Bohm agrees that insights can emerge when space is made in the 'electrochemical fog' that clouds the conditioned mind (Bohm, 1984). "Aha" moments at this level of non-conceptual mind provide conceptual clarity. Depictions of non-conceptual cognitions were borne in mind when fashioning questions that were asked of participants.

The next sub-section turns to accounts in the literature which consider the means whereby insight can be stimulated.

Section 4: Stimulating Insight

Evoking "Aha" moments is highly germane to the coach's job which is to provide fertile conditions for insights to occur. Cognitive insights can be fostered in the practice of dialectical thinking and the use of meta-cognition. Dialectical thinking, the tolerating of paradox and uncertainty, the withholding of premature conclusions, the reconciliation of either/or opposites to arrive at a unified thinking are the hallmarks of a maturation of mind to levels of 2nd tier consciousness (Kegan, 2000) and transformative wisdom (Wilber, 2006, Cook-Greuter, 2005, Wade 1996). In turn, advanced levels of intuition correlate with the capacity to explore uncertainties and entertain doubts (Westcott, 1968). At this transpersonal level, things are seen in a more dialectical way: we are at one and the same time separate and not separate; we are part of a field and not part of a field; we can allow ourselves to be invaded by the other and without feeling threatened (Rowan, 2005: 8). Meta-cognition, the ability to take a third person perspective on any situation, emerges from a self-reflective capacity or meta-role which also nudges intuition, aspirations, and the call to a higher self (Blatner, 2004). Standing back in time and space from the immediacy of things is a function of the right brain hemisphere and enables empathy (McGilchrist (2009). Cranton's (2002) version of Transformational Learning theory concurs that new insights arise not only through critically analysing the basis of beliefs but by more creative and innovative practices such as role-play and the engagement of intuition.

Metaphor as a means of both stimulating insight and communicating spiritual levels of consciousness is recommended by many theorists in the domains of holistic transformational learning (Dirkx 2001) and spiritual psychology (Louchakova and

Warner, 2004). The use of metaphor is recommended in the Co-Active coaching model to help clients reveal non-cognitive dimensions of the self and will be discussed further in Chapter 5. "Being in the moment" or "mindfulness" and being in a state of "flow" all provide the environment for a potential "Aha" moment. Occupying present experience by attending to whatever is presenting itself to consciousness is the common thread of these states which also illumine subconscious material (Goldstein, 1976). Concepts *about* reality are replaced with experience *of* reality. This conceptual void is the key to transpersonal insights. Experience devoid of any mental content or emotional feeling besides the present moment is a theme not just of Eastern traditions but of some humanistic psychologies like Gestalt and, of course, transpersonal psychology. An example of transpersonal psychology is psychosynthesis counselling. (Whitmore, 1991: vii) acknowledges the centrality of insight in personal development and describes how insight can be a re-cognition, a new appreciation of latent or implicit knowledge: *"Insight. Each move, each effort in counseling is directed towards that moment: the face relaxes, the eyes brighten, there is a smile of recognition"*.

The power of insight's role in the transpersonal or spiritual transformation of the self has been found in other grounded studies. In the field of music therapy, Amir's (1992) grounded study links insight and spiritual transformation. Amir investigated 'meaningful moments' reported by clients, including moments of insight and moments of transformation. Clients' experiences of insight were described as reflecting four types: intellectual, physical, spiritual and emotional. Moments of transformation were those in which *"clients experienced a powerful insight that virtually changed their lives"* (p. 92). These were described as *"accompanied by a tremendous joy and a feeling of being glorified"* (p. 93). Participant descriptions included feeling more alive and more connected to reality. They were better able to make decisions and to take risks, and their interpersonal relationships greatly improved. Amir's results could be interpreted as per the model of insight and intuition offered in Chapter 9, Section 2, by positing the occurrence of insights at the level of cognitions, emotions, body and spirit.

Flow is the term coined by Csikszentmihalyi (1975) to describe the relaxed state of consciousness where a sense of self-consciousness is overcome. It is described as total psychic engagement in a task with no awareness of space, time, or outcome: a state of arousal and a sense of capacity without a conscious intention to control the

situation. Flow is obtainable because of the flexibility of human consciousness (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). This state is achieved by utilising psychic energy in personally selected goals and activities. It is argued that the flow state can drive personal growth. Control over psychic activity in the pursuit of personally meaningful activities and consciously chosen goals facilitates personal growth into a more complex being (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002: 6). Irwin and Morrow's (2005) analysis of the Co-Active model reflects the goal-oriented description of flow. While the argument is made in Chapter 4 that the Co-Active model lacks a fully explicated and synthesized psychological perspective, the goal-oriented aspect of the model, 'forwarding the action' (Whitworth et al, 2007: 12) leads these authors to argue that Co-Active coaching is chiefly a behaviourist approach. This claim will be explored in Chapter 4. The next section turns to the literature on the impact of "Aha" moments in development of the self.

Section 5: The Impact of Insight in Personal Development and Transformation

The impact of insight in personal change is controversial. For some theorists, insight is synonymous with change (e.g., Miller, 2000; Miller and C'de Baca, 2001; Krishnamurti and Bohm, 1981; 1985; 1999). For others, insight alone is insufficient to produce change (e.g., Rowan (1998) and, for a third group, it is an awareness that can only follow change (e.g., Levenson, 1998). Perhaps the degree of impact depends on both the relevance of the insight to the individual and the depth of the insight. It may also depend on how the individual interprets it. The range, depth and interpretation of insight would be argued by transformational development theorists to be related to the person's stage of development. In the self line of development "Aha" moments have the capacity to break through ego defences, those aspects of our personality that attempt to control and balance our primitive and infant desires with moral considerations (Hergenhahn and Olson, 2003). The ability of the "Aha" moment to break through ego defenses in a manner similar to the uncharted subject of psychological surrender (Moze, 2009) is a subject taken up in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. In the course of overcoming ego, self-identity is transformed, in a manner described in section 3 above. It results from a combination of internal and external factors. The individual encounters a problem which he is not able to resolve within the perceived reality relating to his stage of consciousness and each stage presents intrinsic distortions of reality which must be resolved in order to move to a higher level. This movement upwards is argued to

depend on the individual's ability to access greater neurological capacity without which the individual is likely to remain at the current level of development or even regress to an earlier level (Wade, 1996:262-264). In this analysis "Aha" moments may help to prevent regression.

Since insights registering in consciousness can hasten its transformation, some authors argue for its advancement from a moral perspective. This is because elevated levels of consciousness produce more encompassing and integrated tolerance of self, others, and ultimately the universe at large: "...an individual needs to move from ethnocentric beliefs to worldcentric beliefs... This allows the individual to adopt a postconventional, worldcentric moral stance and not just an ethnocentric, us-versus-them mentality" (Wilber 2006: 199). The implications of stages of development, and the relevance of this subject for clients and coaches are addressed in Chapter 9.

Summary

The study of insight in Western psychology has traditionally been biased towards research into cognitive repertoires. "Aha" moments can crack problem solving, bringing forth clarity from a web of tangled ideas and thoughts, often residing in the fringes of consciousness. From the wider perspective of consciousness studies, historically very different epistemologies are beginning to find areas of convergence. Insight can be corroborated as a qualitatively different phenomenon from non-insightful knowledge at the neuronal, chemical, personal and cultural levels of analysis, i.e. effectively covering the whole of the human organism. New methods of testing can record brain waves, neuronal and chemical activity, transpersonal psychologists posit a 'cosmic consciousness', and Integral theorists a spectrum of consciousness which is both personal and transpersonal. Insight is fostered by holistic or whole body approaches to consciousness. This means attending to all aspects of the person in mind, emotions, body and spirit. Practices like mindfulness, being in a state of flow, thinking dialectically and tolerating paradox, and engaging in some sort of meditative practice encourage receptivity as well as agency in the transformational development of the person. It could be argued that such development is beneficial not only to the person but, because it

leads to more compassion and tolerance, is beneficial to the wider society and the universe at large.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodological choices for this study of coaching and the “Aha” moment. It addresses the epistemologies of various methodological paradigms, the options available for qualitative approaches to research and their ontological and philosophical referents. The chapter explains why a pluralistic blend of qualitative approaches is adopted, underpinned by a grounded study approach. It also clarifies the participatory turn of the entire study. The “Aha” moment is being studied within the inter-subjective field of Co-Active coaching and my own involvement as participant, gatherer and interpreter of data adds a further participatory dimension. This study focuses on the interior phenomenological world of individuals in relation to “Aha” moments. Findings from other fields of research on the subject are able to complement and in some cases to corroborate some of the findings of this study. A pluralistic approach to all methodologies is advocated in an integral approach to knowledge. The chapter will include an introduction to the “AQAL” methodological map which integrates knowledge from all fields of enquiry.

The chapter is divided into nine sections:

Section 1: Quantitative and Qualitative Paradigms briefly traces the development of qualitative and quantitative paradigms and their current guises – positivist versus interpretivist. A qualitative approach is required to understand more about the lived experience of insight, its qualities, the meaning ascribed to it and its effects on those experiencing it within relationship. The overview of paradigms includes transpersonal and integral approaches to research.

Section 2: The “AQAL” Framework introduces the means by which an integral approach to the study of any phenomenon seeks to include all of its manifestations, whether in the objective world of empirical study or the hermeneutic interpretation of inner subjective worlds.

Section 3: Phenomenology examines the myriad ways in which phenomenology has been construed and utilised. A phenomenological approach is required to explore the

inner depths of the individual combined with a hermeneutical element. This takes into account the interpretive nature of the analysis of any data reliant on the symbolism of language and involving the inner world of personal meaning. The section explains why my methodology includes principles of both phenomenology and hermeneutics, without adhering to the pre-eminence or methodological prescriptions of either approach.

Section 4: Grounded Theory presents the major methodological plank. Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1969) was chosen because the initial data collected from key informant interviews revealed a pattern of responses that suggested that the development of theory might be warranted. This section presents not only the rationale for making grounded study the lynchpin of the methodological mix, but also discusses some of the current criticisms of grounded theory. These come mainly from the post-modern philosophical camp, which casts doubt on the ability of any social science to produce objective data; the 'hermeneutic circle' between participant and analyst must be entered, at which point interpretation obviates objectivity. The section will explain my decision to adopt the kind of grounded study that befits an integral methodological approach.

Section 5: Selection of Research Participants explains how and why participants, including the researcher, other Co-Active coaches and their clients, were recruited for the study.

Section 6: Methods Chosen explains the rationale behind the selection of diaries, questionnaires and interviews for this study.

Section 7: Data Analysis explains the analysis of the findings. The analysis followed the grounded study method of deriving codes, concepts and categories from the data. The final result was a number of core categories or overarching themes that were then hypothesised as comprising a theory of insight.

Section 8: Validity discusses the special criteria that need to be addressed in the case of qualitative methodology for findings to be considered valid. It briefly considers the literature review that complemented the findings of this study and the ethical issues relating to it.

Section 9: Data Presentation explains the way in which data will be presented in later chapters.

Section 1: Quantitative and Qualitative Paradigms

The key distinction in paradigm choice lies between the approaches of the natural sciences and the “human” sciences. Dilthey’s (1833-1911) human science or ‘Geisteswissenschaften’ asserted that human (mental, social, historical) phenomena differ from natural (physical, chemical, behavioral) phenomena. Comprehension of the human psyche requires interpretation and understanding whereas natural science involves for the most part external observation and measurement. In its efforts to establish itself as a scientific discipline, psychology had two choices: it could have positioned itself as a science on grounds *other* than being quantitative, or it could have manipulated psychological phenomena to render them open to quantification (Hornstein 1988, Polkinghorne 1989). While qualitative research aligns itself in principle with the first of these options, in practice some psychologists transformed and redefined psychological phenomena into measurable units in order that psychology might be defined as a traditional science (Hornstein, 1988). In aligning itself with the paradigm of the natural sciences, psychology committed itself to methodologies which enact particular phenomena that restrict the theories that flow from them. Paradigms are therefore social practices: *“A paradigm is a mode of phenomena production or generation, a social practice that enacts or brings forth a phenomenological world, and theories are after-the-fact frameworks that attempt to explain or elucidate the newly-disclosed worlds”* (Wilber, 2010, para 7).

The debate is not just between competing epistemologies, positivism versus interpretivism, but also continues within the qualitative camp itself: *“...this is the science whose practitioners challenge not only each other’s results but also their methods”* (Salmon, 2003: 24). I wanted my study to be qualitative *and* scientific in the sense of being accurate, valid, and reliable, and reductive of errors, artifacts, biases, illusions, and delusions, as far as humanly possible. In this way the study could validly and reliably add to the tiny empirical bases of both Co-Active coaching and the phenomenology of insight. The objective of a scientific study was partially met by a

conscious and continuous attempt to remove personal bias. This was achieved through ongoing reflexivity or mindfulness of personal opinions, albeit resting on an awareness of self that can only ever be partial (Cutcliffe, 2003).

The main injunction in this study, namely to ask participants: *“Tell me about your “Aha” moment”* invites a phenomenological account which cannot be rendered in objectively measurable units and therefore demands accounts which must be interpreted. Interpretation is inescapably subjective. However my aim was to employ a methodology that could be reliably replicated by future researchers, especially the growing numbers who are interested in the adoption of an integral paradigm.

“Aha” events germinate in the coaching relationship and qualitative inquiry is conducted through relationship. The idiographic and personal nature of “Aha” moments thus demanded an in-depth, qualitative approach, so I briefly reviewed the choices. Since the event occurs in individual consciousness, observer methods, participant or otherwise, would be redundant. These would only be relevant in behavioural studies where actions can be observed. The internal experiencing of an “Aha” moment can only be phenomenologically experienced and reported. I then re-visited ethnomethodology, an offshoot of phenomenology where the focus is on the micro-processes, in the form of social interactions, which generate common sense knowledge among different groups in societies, not an objective of my study. The sense that participants would make of their “Aha” moments would be influenced by social and cultural conditioning, but, nevertheless, my aim was to find out how people subjectively experienced and construed these moments, and so cultural studies like ethnomethodology would not be an appropriate framework. My methodology would be participatory and require a phenomenological approach for descriptions of the lived experience of “Aha” moments.

Research methodologies, whether positivist or interpretivist, appear to set themselves up in opposition to each other, rather than see the potential complementarity of their contributions, depending on the nature of the research question. Physical sciences are appropriate for descriptions of humans *qua* matter, whether measuring neurons, chemicals or giving biofeedback based on quantifiable bodily changes. However the methods of physical sciences are not relevant to this study, where meaning and interpretation are key: *“Values, life meanings, purposes and qualities slip through*

science like sea slips through the nets of fishermen" (Smith: 1976; 16). When personal values and their meaning is involved, research methods call for introspection, language and all the other peculiarities of the human being which differentiate and distinguish "human science". With the focus on interpretation that reports about meaning and values demand, many qualitative methodologies emphasise the role of the researcher in the co-creation of knowledge. In addition, approaches like the transpersonal research paradigm, where 'mindful inquiry' is situated, invite the researcher to nurture qualities of intuition, empathy and self-awareness (Braud and Anderson, 1998). These are qualities that are reflected in the Co-Active coaching approach and so I amplified my awareness of the need to employ the method of mindful inquiry that stems from this approach.

The transpersonal approach exemplifies those qualitative approaches wherein the personal development of the researcher is fully expected (Bentz and Shapiro, 1998). My approach was initially not transpersonal in that developing my own consciousness was not an objective of the study. The decision to adopt mindful inquiry practices was undertaken simply in order to attract the fullest accounts of "Aha" moments and to interpret them in a spirit of reflexivity in order to diminish subjective bias as far as possible. However, in the course of interpreting findings I did ultimately encounter personal development. So, while self-development (beyond the intellectual) was not originally an objective of the study, it became a vital component in comprehension. This experience (reported in Chapter 8, Section 3) was of such import in comprehending findings that I decided it warranted an equal status to the experiential reports of participants (see Section 3).

The next section introduces the AQAL meta-theoretical framework which makes explicit the various elements of the total methodology that guided this study.

Section 2: The "AQAL" Framework.

"AQAL" is another term for the Integral map (Wilber, 2006: 18). This map invites methodological pluralism by providing the scope for all legitimate fields of the study of insight to be 'mapped out' and indexed and for all methodologies to be considered. It represents the "all quadrant" element of the Integral paradigm which requires investigation of the human being at all levels (of development), all lines (of multiple

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intelligences), all states (of consciousness) and all types (of individual) within an all quadrant approach. These four quadrants (see Figure 1) represent both the natural sciences and the human sciences, with the two right-hand 'windows' depicting the former and the two left hand windows the latter. The aim of the quadratic formulation is not to simply present an aggregation of epistemological approaches but to integrate them, since every occasion in life is thought to arise in these four quadrants simultaneously. Every individual is steeped in a culture, which itself exists in a specific time and place, and is influenced by the ways in which the culture organises its social affairs. The "AQAL" matrix also has the potential to indicate the methodological errors that occur when one paradigm is privileged over all others, or extrapolates its findings to other areas. This framework is utilised in this study in two main ways. Firstly, locates the study in the upper left quadrant of phenomenological experience. Secondly, it identifies the other major approaches to the study of insight, and their findings will be discussed in forthcoming chapters as a means of comparison to the findings produced by this study.

Figure 1 — Wilber's (1995) Four-Quadrant Structure

According to Wilber, the fundamental category of every experience or event is the 'holon', which implies that every entity, phenomenon or occasion is neither merely a whole, nor a part, but both simultaneously. Each holon or actual occasion has subjective (I), intersubjective (we), objective (it) and interobjective (its) dimensions – the four quadrants (Wilber 2006:9). This means that the "AQAL" approach takes account of interior depth as well as breadth of different methodological perspectives. Any phenomenon in the four quadrants can be investigated from its own inside or outside,

giving eight primordial perspectives involving eight different methodologies where 'perspectives' refer to the location of the perceiving holon in AQAL space. Each zone implies not just a perspective but a set of injunctions that bring forth the phenomena being studied in each perspective (Wilber, 2006: 34).

The knowledge sought in this study is that derived from the interior-individual experience of the "Aha" event, placing it in the camp of phenomenological inquiry, the UL. It is the feeling of "I" inside one's own present experience, a 1st person having a 1st-person experience (Wilber, 2006: 36). In simplistic terms, phenomenology asks "How does it feel?" (p. 23).

These abbreviations, UL, UR, LL and LR will be employed throughout later chapters. The next section explores the various ways in which phenomenology has been construed.

Section 3: Phenomenology

The historical trajectory of phenomenology to the present day has viewed it as having many forms and functions: Husserl (1967) discusses phenomenology as a philosophy; Moustakas (1994) uses phenomenology as a research methods framework; Polkinghorne (1989) sees phenomenology as an exploration of the structures of consciousness in human experiences; for Denzin and Lincoln (1990, 2000) it's an inquiry paradigm, an interpretive theory; and for Van Manen (1990:10), phenomenology asks for the very nature of a phenomenon for that which makes a some-'thing' what it is.

The fate of phenomenology as "human science" has largely been determined by the mores of prevailing cultures from pre-modern to modern to post-modern. The main argument between postmodern and modern/ pre-modern epistemologies concerns whether the weight of truth is to be assigned to relativity or universality, whether interpretations or facts are most fundamental (Wilber, 2006: 66). Starting with Husserl (1967), direct intuition was the foundational pillar of his phenomenological method (Tymieniecka, 2002). His intuition was the discovery and awareness of transpersonal depths in his psyche, an awareness which "...is not of the phenomenal realm of perceiver and perceived [but] rather it is a noumenal, unitive space within or from which

both intentional consciousness and phenomenal experience manifest." (Valle and Mohs, 1998: 100). Husserl resisted the prevailing culture of modernity with its materialist scientific bent by framing a 'science of the first-person perspective' in an attempt to avoid the fundamental category mistake of equating human science with the basic categories of the natural sciences, or their methodologies. However, a subject is set in cultural contexts of which the subject is totally unaware (Wilber, 2006: 45). Intuition would not permit Husserl to either 'see' his own transpersonal or transrational structures of consciousness or to prescribe to others how transrational levels are achieved.

The influence of culture was one of Heidegger's (1927) key observations, but phenomenology has fared no better under postmodern approaches which do not subscribe to the transparency of Husserl's self-reflective cogito. Husserl's phenomenology was attacked by Heidegger (1927) for ignoring the individual as a "being-in-the-world"; Heidegger's way of underscoring the fact that the individual is embedded in culture. Meanings are not given directly to us, so we must make a hermeneutic detour through the symbolic apparatus of the culture (van Manen, 2002). Heidegger considered Husserl's phenomenology to constitute an "inward gazing" that ignores the fact that all description is always already interpretation (Luft, 2005). Heidegger's own approach has been portrayed as that of a 'hands on', pragmatically oriented philosophy of practical subjectivity while Husserl's has been dismissed as an over-theoretical armchair philosophy (Luft 2005). I considered that their fields of knowledge lie in different, though complementary, realms of human existence. Transcendental phenomenology belongs in the domain of personal, interior methodologies like introspection, meditation and contemplation. It examines the depth of the individual, a 'vertical' exploration. Hermeneutic phenomenology, on the other hand, is located in the inter-subjective realm of shared culture, language, meanings and interpretation. It covers the breadth of multi-perspectives, multi-realities, and endless relativities, offering a 'horizontal' dimension. It seems that phenomenology becomes hermeneutical when its method is taken to be interpretive, rather than purely descriptive as in transcendental phenomenology. With this in mind, I reviewed contemporary approaches.

Modern day proponents such as van Manen (1990), for hermeneutic phenomenology, and Moustakas (1994), for transcendental phenomenology, continue to represent philosophical assumptions about subjective experience and ways to organize and analyse phenomenological data with different methodological procedures (Lavery, 2003). In his analysis of participatory research strategies, Hiles (2008) distinguishes between 'researcher-oriented' methods, where the researcher's own participative experience is the explicit focus of inquiry and 'participant oriented' methods where the focus is on the participatory knowing of research participants. As I reflected on this, I realised that I had only considered 'participant oriented' methods. My own data would depend on the quality of the phenomenological descriptions of the lived experience and feel of the event. However the individual is a being-in-the-world whose perception is always already constructed – and this goes for both participant and researcher. Therefore meaning has to be co-constructed and this alerted me to at least two implications: my ability to interpret descriptions depended on my ability to set aside personal bias, through reflexivity; and my 'lifeworld' would have to sufficiently approximate to my participants to permit me to interpret descriptions.

I reflected upon the "Aha" moment which might be experienced individually and agreed that it does not always arise in individual consciousness but co-arises in an embedded, time-bound social and cultural setting. However, while I appreciated the role of cultural conditioning and the co-creation of meaning in any hermeneutic endeavour, I was being persuaded, by early data collected, that life-changing "Aha" events could apparently arise *ex nihilo* to reveal dimensions of self and experience not predictable via language and culture. So, I saw the necessity for the philosophical (if not the inclusion of all methodological) approaches of both phenomenological and hermeneutic inquiry. Transcendental phenomenology would be required to appreciate the essences of human experience and hermeneutics, including reflective interpretation, to achieve a meaningful understanding (Moustakas, 1994).

Phenomenological approaches following a Moustakas (1994) model would urge the researcher to set aside bias, an instruction that I fully endorse but don't consider wholly possible. The central principle of "epoché" is described as the first step of the phenomenological reduction process to enable researchers to reflect upon and then set aside their own views to focus on the reports of participants. However, in Moustakas's phenomenological approach of "heuristic inquiry", reflections turn back to lend primacy

to the researcher's own participatory experience as described by Moustakas, (1994: 9-11):

"...the self of the researcher is present throughout the process" (p. 9), and ". . . from the beginning, and throughout an investigation, heuristic research involves self-search, self-dialogue, and self-discovery" (p. 11).

So in this scenario, only the researcher's perceptions are retained as indicators of knowledge, meaning, and truth:

"no position whatsoever is taken...nothing is determined in advance;" the researcher remains present and focuses on one's own consciousness "by returning to whatever is there in...memory, perception, judgment, feeling, whatever is actually there"

Moustakas 1994: 84).

Moustakas relates research data back to "whatever is there" in the consciousness of the researcher. This surely presupposes that the 'lifeworlds' of both researcher and the respondent are on a par, which they would have to be to produce a hermeneutic circle of perfect, shared understanding. This seems part of the postmodern philosophy that sees all knowledge as relative to cultural and historical setting, reflecting the primacy of the inter-subjective nature of knowledge and being. In addition, the heuristic researcher *must have had a direct, personal encounter with the phenomenon being investigated. There must have been actual autobiographical connections" (Moustakas 1990: 14).* This focus on the researcher was not appropriate in this study. I had never experienced the transpersonal states indicated in the findings, although at the outset of the study I had no way of foreseeing such a plethora of transpersonal accounts. This poses another argument (which will not be developed here) about the 'match' between levels of consciousness of researcher and researched, specifically whether postformal or post-rational levels of consciousness should be trained and developed in the researcher so that he or she is equal to reports in transpersonal data.

I also rejected this heuristic phenomenological approach on the basis that I was uninterested in my own views of the "Aha" event, otherwise I would have drawn the line at introspection. I was keen to explore any universalities in the descriptions of the experience and so the hyper-emphasis on the co-construction of meaning was a

premise I rejected. Description and interpretation are two different things, the first belonging to Husserl's phenomenology of the interiors of individuals and dependent upon the linguistic turn to communicate it, and the second belonging to Heidegger's intersubjective hermeneutics. If the findings suggested that theory generation was warranted, this possibility excited me much more than the gathering of rich descriptions. This became an even more powerful directive after I gathered my first wave of data and led me to place grounded theory at the heart of my methodology.

Section 4: Grounded Theory

On seeing the internal consistency in the first wave of data collection, I decided that grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) would be the main ingredient of the methodological mix. This choice emanated from a desire not only to comprehend the nature of the "Aha" moment for individuals and its role in coaching, but to see if idiographic accounts might extend nomothetically, lending pragmatic validity to the study through its potential capacity to help wider populations. Additionally, in the absence of critical research into insight, and even less within a coaching context, there was, in my view, no real alternative to grounded theory, a sentiment shared by other researchers (e.g. Robson, 2002:191). The purpose of grounded theory is to go beyond a mere description of a phenomenon in order to generate theory. This must be achieved in the absence of an a priori conceptual framework or hypothesis. Grounded theory is a "...systematic, qualitative process used to generate a theory that explains, at a broad conceptual level, a process, an action, or interaction about a substantive topic" (Creswell, 2002: 439).

Developing reliable theory in this study would also mean advancing beyond the moribund position of current research on insight and grounded theory provides a set of procedures for the generation of theory from empirical data. Grounded 'theory' is an inaccurate description since it is not so much a specific method or technique but more a style of doing qualitative analysis (Strauss 1987) and an epistemological perspective, a way of thinking (Salmon 2003). My way of thinking has always been to appreciate all fields of legitimate study and the partial light they shed on the nature of the human subject from within their own domains. Additionally, I can see no other way for a science – human or otherwise - to define itself in the absence of devising more

generally applicable theories. Without theory formulation human 'science' offers only descriptions of inexhaustible relativist, pluralistic positions. This postmodern stance, exemplified in phenomenology by Moustakas or postmodern 'grounded' theorists such as Charmaz (2006 (described below) permits critics like Rosenau (1992) to argue that postmodernism constitutes an attack against theory and methodology, where all attempts to create new knowledge in a systematic fashion are relinquished.

To crudely state my own position, it is to: study the phenomenon as it arises within a limited population, then see if it applies to wider populations; if so how and in which populations. Grounded study achieves these goals by offering a 'middle way' between idiographic and nomothetic theorizing, providing theory that can bridge traditional positivistic methods with interpretative methods (Charmaz, 1995: 30). The method allows a theory and hypotheses to emerge from the perspectives of research participants, rather than it being imposed upon data by the researcher. In this manner, grounded theory complements the phenomenological aspect of the study. Grounded theory's principles borrow from symbolic interactionism, from which we get, according to Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000:13): the following "intellectual goods":

"...: pragmatism, idiographic research, qualitative method, exploration, sensitizing concepts, social action, cognitive symbols, empirical orientation, and successive induction from empirical material".

My own study already included most of these 'goods'. In grounded theory's 'constant comparative' method, data are collected and analysed concurrently. The researcher looks to reveal 'sensitising' concepts that suggest new connections, perspectives and world views. Findings accrue in an inductive manner as the research process continues, a process criticised for its 'naïve' inductionism (e.g. Haig 1995). However, Alvesson and Skoldberg (1990:15) argue that:

"...induction here differs from that of the classical Baconian school in that it does not start direct from the data but proceeds in two phases: first, the intensive study of a limited set of data in single empirical cases...and secondly, comparison between several cases with a concomitant extension of the empirical base".

This chapter makes transparent my commitment to methodological pluralism. This preference is in contrast to researchers who give primacy to an 'absolutist' pluralistic postmodernist approach which, as mentioned above, stands in opposition to quantifiable data. For them, no realities are ever universal, nothing is ever 'waiting to be discovered', because everything is already socially constructed. Charmaz, for example, (2000: 522) says: "*Like wondrous gifts waiting to be opened, early grounded theory tests imply that categories and concepts inhere within the data, awaiting the researcher's discovery*".

Glaser (2002: para 12), with whom I agree, addresses Charmaz's criticism directly: "*Not so. This statement is unbelievably wrong. Categories, which are concepts, are not wondrous gifts...they come from the tedium of the constant comparative method linked with sensitive theoretical sampling and are constantly fitted to the data*".

Glaser and Strauss make clear that knowledge production is necessarily affected by the perspectives of those who are engaged in producing it, so that different researchers will bring different perspectives and interpretations to empirical findings. Some critics argue that this interpretive element of grounded theory is not given sufficient prominence. Rennie (2010) sees a need to reconcile what he sees to be the unresolved tensions between realism and relativism in the theory and its methods. He advocates seeing grounded theory as a form of hermeneutics. With the initial coding and then the further advent of ever higher-order categorising and therefore abstraction of data, interpretation on the part of the analyst comes ever more into play. For this reason he considers grounded theory to be an amalgam of method and hermeneutics, a 'methodical hermeneutics' (p. 482). In this analysis, understanding depends on the 'fit' between the research participant and the analyst (p. 487) and since meaning is latent and depends wholly on interpretation, grounded study can never be wholly objective and therefore lacks explanatory power. And so, as ever with those researchers who give primacy to the inter-subjective nature of knowledge, knowledge is always related to social and cultural signifiers.

Thomas and James (2005: 767) take issue with grounded theory on all fronts- as 'theory' 'ground' and 'discovery': "*Grounded theorists... want (it) both ways. They want the comfortable feeling which comes from a denial of the arrogance of foundationalism*

and essentialism... But they want this insignia of intellectual adulthood while clinging on to an epistemological security blanket—one woven from the associated notions that (a) some clearer distillation of truth can be established about the particulars and generalities of social behaviour, and (b) that this can be established using the cogs and levers of structured inquiry. Far from the notion that understanding is irreducible, their project is to step aside from the ineffable and rise above it to emerge with theory". (p. 780).

Whilst criticising the approach as incommensurate with interpretation, narrative and reflection, in that procedures might obfuscate these imperatives, i.e. disdaining a 'scientific' approach, Thomas and James then contradict themselves (p. 785): *"Even if one could, in other words, 'fracture' the data, clean it up, map it to its barest neural components, one would be no closer to a definitive, transcendent understanding... There is, in other words, no 'ground' when interpretation is being spoken of".* Mapping the data to its barest neural components is not a goal of qualitative enquiry. They ignore the dimension of the inner world of the individual and in so doing write off the transcendent potentials of interior subjective experience. Thomas and James ask why 'rich descriptions' are not sufficient for grounded theorists. One answer is that grounded theorists are not phenomenologists and there is no attempt to discount participant reports with which the researcher cannot experientially identify. In addition, grounded theory's ultimate ambition, whether using qualitative or quantitative methodologies, is to generate theory.

The tendency to collapse approaches is evident in postmodernist researchers who claim to favour the marriage of empiricism and constructivism but, *au fond*, belong to the fashionable constructivist camp. Charmaz (2000) epitomizes this stance. She wants to distinguish between 'objectivist' and 'constructivist' grounded theory, aligning the former with *'awkward scientific terms and clumsy categories'* (Charmaz, 2000: 525), to counteract which she offers her own version, or rather 'vision':

"I add ... another vision for future qualitative research: constructivist grounded theory. Constructivist grounded theory celebrates first hand knowledge of empirical worlds... assumes the relativism of multiple social realities, recognizes the mutual creation of

knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims toward interpretive understanding of subjects' meanings." (Charmaz, 2000: 510)

The disdain for objective findings is clear, as critics reject the objectivity claimed by grounded theory. For them, every datum is a co-construction where the researcher's voice is always 'heard' in the data: *'The myth of silent authorship is false but reassuring'* (Charmaz and Mitchell, 1996: 299).

I gave this interpretive orientation the courtesy of reflection and concluded that it might hold true for researching complex social interactions, where observation or questioning might depend upon careful interpretation of such interactions. However, my data is phenomenological and not strictly hermeneutical. Glaser (2002: para 4) agrees and responds to Charmaz's orientation thus:

"This orientation, as written, never seems to see it as a characteristic of the type of interviewing. It probably applies to lengthy, in-depth interviews where mutuality can grow based on forcing type interview guides..."

Glaser's (2002, para 5) orientation is much closer to my own experience of conducting this research study. He notes that *"Much grounded theory interviewing is a very passive listening and then later during theoretical sampling focused questions to other participants during site spreading and based on emergent categories. It is hard for mutual constructed interpretations to characterize this data even though the data may be interpretive"*.

This study throws into question analyses like Rennie's (2010), Thomas and Jones's (2005) and Charmaz's (2000) which privilege the hermeneutical element of grounded theory. Without the personal experience of those transpersonal accounts of insight mentioned so often in reports, I was only able to attempt to logically examine them and not empathically attune to them. I could only sift them through perception and not experience. I had no experience of transpersonal states of consciousness (until very late in the research process, and even then a single glimpse of transpersonal realities does not provide a window into all transpersonal realities). Other researchers would filter data through their own perceptions whether they had experienced transpersonal realms or not. Ultimately, I developed a confidence that the rigours of the 'constant

comparative' method would help treat any subjective bias on my part as just one unit of study, one 'code' which would be, if appropriate, weeded out as eccentric in comparison to the others. While grounded theory provided the best framework for generating theory in a manner that stays true to the data while enabling its potential generalisation, I still had to modify it to suit the findings of my study. Unlike qualitative data analysis and its "*worrisome accuracy abiding concern*" (Glaser, 2002), grounded theory can use any data and this is "...*what the researcher is receiving, as a pattern, and as a human being (which is inescapable)*" (para 2). As the study unfolded I found that I did use several sources of data and ultimately conferred on them equal status. This came about from a threefold process:

- The realisation that I had not had, as Moustakas (1994) recommends for a heuristic researcher, direct and personal experience of those transpersonal insights contained in early data collection. This meant a review the literature in order to advance my understanding. I was obliged to refer to literature from spiritual psychology and Eastern mystical traditions to attempt to understand what these experiences meant or represented. Had I decided on a strictly heuristic or hermeneutic phenomenological methodological approach, would I have been content to sift the data through my own consciousness and, finding there nothing comparable, would I have then interpreted it as delusional and ignored it? In a grounded study, the researcher has to follow the lead of the concepts presented in the data. This led me to explore literature on transpersonal insights and explains why literature features heavily in forthcoming chapters.
- Instead of editing early reports gathered through my own experience, I hypothesised that these reports of transpersonal states represented not delusion or psychosis but examples of latent dimensions of consciousness. This is why I deliberately extended my participant research base to include further accounts of these higher states, as described in the next section. The totality of participants' reports (both originally chosen participants and those from the extended base) comprises the second component of this grounded analysis.
- I stepped up my own spiritual practices throughout the period of the study for two reasons: firstly I was curious to discover whether I could personally

experience these alternative dimensions of consciousness; and secondly, I felt compelled to do so in an attempt to be equal to the data by sharing a transcendent experience. While I ended up experiencing an insight that I interpreted as a transpersonal experience, this could not have been predicted during initial periods of theoretical sampling. However, this glimpse of a perceived transpersonal experience represented a data finding that I included with equal status to the other participants' reports and to the literature.

Hence, three different elements of this grounded study are inter-related throughout the presentation of the findings of this study. These findings are necessarily subjectively interpreted. The result is a grounded theory which is situated within an integral paradigm. This paradigm, as explained above in Section 2, prizes all valid knowledge, whether about the individual depth of consciousness of the individual or the socially shared representations of the culture in which the individual is entrenched.

The next section explains the rationale behind the choice of research participants.

Section 5: Selection of Research Participants

Finding a relevant sample means to seek out individuals where (and for whom) the processes being studied are most likely to occur' (Denzin and Lincoln 1994a). So the sample was not random in any traditional sense. I considered Co-Active coaches to be the perfect co-researchers. They already possess the qualities recommended in participatory research methods, such as the "intuition, empathy and self-awareness" of the 'mindful enquiry' (Braud and Anderson 1998) approach. Coaches are used to practising empathy and detachment simultaneously and encourage the same in clients, so I hoped for honest and full accounts of insight and the coaching process more generally. I opted to conduct research myself and other practicing Co-Active coaches were recruited using contact lists of attendees of Co-Active coaching workshops. They received guidelines about the research project by e-mail and were invited to sign a letter of consent (see appendix 1). All coaches subscribed to ethical guidelines as outlined below. These coaches then contacted present and past clients by e-mail to invite them to participate. Clients were sent letters of consent which were signed and returned to me.

Having recruited coaches and their clients, my next step was to decide on methods of data collection and devise a framework that would proceed in phases, in keeping with the recommendations of grounded theory. Among a plethora of methods for capturing phenomenological data, the most common include interviews, case studies, diary-keeping and questionnaires. Ultimately, I employed a mix of diaries, questionnaires and interviews, further described in section 5 below. Participants were contacted by me and sent diary journaling guidelines (see appendices 2 and 3) or questionnaires to complete online (see appendix 4).

Physical access issues were redundant as all participants were contacted by telephone. While Co-Active coaching can take place face-to-face, most of it is done on the phone and participants were used to telephone coaching. In the absence of visual and other distractions, sufficient information is communicated through the voice and its energy. Additionally, the participant is able to 'go inwards' into memory and the re-living of experience to render a full phenomenological account without the distraction of the researcher in the environment.

I was aware of the potential pitfalls of researching my own and other Co-Active coaches' clients. These include the possibility that participants might suffer in the process of revealing possibly painful or traumatic insights. However, in Co-Active coaching, a contract is entered into that each party will be truthful and open, and that each will take responsibility for events in the coaching session. The client is held to be creative, resourceful and whole (Whitworth et al 2007) and is expected to take responsibility for personal disclosure and its effects. Participants would not be asked to do anything that they would not be doing in normal coaching sessions. I was therefore satisfied that no special measures need be put in place to deal with potential negative effects on participants. A further danger that I considered was that participants might be tempted to say what they think I, the researcher, want to hear. However, as will be clarified in Chapter 4, the tenor of the Co-Active coaching relationship is built on a foundation of truth-telling without judgement, and the 'feel' of accounts rendered – their vitality and the similarity of transpersonal descriptions - convinced me that less than complete and honest accounts would be unlikely to pose a threat to the objectivity of the findings. Data gathered were e-mailed to me by coaches and clients independently.

All data were anonymised so that even while four of my own clients participated in the research, nothing in the data could have alerted me to their contributions.

Principles of theoretical sampling include *“The processes of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them in order to develop his theory as it emerges”*. (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 45). I found that it would not have been possible to plan theoretical sampling since the specifics of sampling decisions had to evolve during the process of the research based on the first wave of data from key informant interviewees. I was so struck by the pattern emanating from subsequent phases of data collection about transpersonal accounts of insight that I decided to explore them further among a population where the phenomenon was likely to have been experienced. As I went through the data collection and analysis process, I discovered, in true grounded fashion, areas of literature that I felt needed to be included.

Table 3.1 below shows an illustration of the reciprocal design:

Paradigm	Qualitative, Interpretative, appreciative of integral
Approach	Grounded Theory approach
	Using Systematic Self-Observation (SSO)
	And Phenomenological Interviewing
Participants	68 in total (includes myself and 4 of my own clients)
	Age range: 24-69 years old
	Male: 42%. Female: 58%
	Clients and C.T.I. Supervisors x 12 (interviews)
	Clients x 12 (SSO diary keepers, including 2 own clients)
	Coaches x 6 (SSO diary keepers, including myself)
	Clients x 30 (clients – questionnaire including 2 own clients)

	Clients and Integral Practitioners x 8 (interviews)
Data Collection	Interviews: Key Informants. Clients/Supervisors
	Diaries: Clients, Coaches and Researcher
	Questionnaires: Clients and Former Clients
	Interviews: Clients and Integral Practitioners

Figure 2 illustrates the structure of this grounded theory study

This section provides the rationale behind the choice of methods and is broken down into four sections: 6.1 key informant interviews; 6.2 diaries; 6.3 questionnaires; 6.4 interviews.

6.1 Key Informant Interviews

The first wave of data came from the intensive study of a limited number of cases in the form of telephone interviews. Originally, this was designed to be a pilot study to provide clues to how best to design diary and questionnaire questions. However, these interviews produced concepts that were repeated in later waves of data collection and so these early concepts ultimately drove the shape and direction of the whole study.

Twelve interviews were conducted to find out how the “Aha” event is experienced and construed. I simply asked these individuals if they could recall an “Aha” moment and to describe it to me. I also asked if the moment had impacted on their lives to any significant degree. These key informants included past clients of my own, supervisors of C.T.I. (the Coaches Training Institute who deliver Co-Active coach training and use it in their own coaching practices) and a co-founder of C.T.I. Key informant interviews usually involve canvassing expert opinion in a speedy and inexpensive way (Marshall, 1996). Informants often occupy a particular status and influence in the community to which a study is addressed and in this way are not necessarily representative of the population as a whole. This is not the case in this study, where the only requirement of respondents is that they are able and willing to divulge knowledge impartially (Tremblay, 1982). Key informant interviews have been widely used in social and anthropological studies where social commentary may be underscored by political bias or other vested interests, which would corrupt the ability of the data to be representative. Again, this criticism is not relevant here. The key informants who were asked to describe an “Aha” moment were chosen simply because they had experience of both Co-Active coaching and insight, and were willing to share these experiences.

6.2 Diary-Keeping

I wondered whether the accounts rendered by key informant interviewees had painted, in the hindsight of those involved, an over-rosy view of insight. Or perhaps, given that “Aha” moments are qualitatively different from mundane cognitions, informants had exaggerated the impact of the moment because it was vivid in their memories. I wanted to rule this out by having participants describe their moments of insight *in situ*. The choice of diary keeping offered a way for descriptions to be given as close to the event as possible so that recall was immediate. Diaries are a good choice in any phenomenological study aiming to explore the lived experience of the phenomenon under investigation.

I opted for the Systematic Self-Observation (SSO) method of journaling (Rodriguez and Ryave, 2002). This method aims to capture “...*covert, elusive and/or personal experiences*” (p. 3). Clients could provide first-hand descriptions of “Aha” experiences since, unlike traditional methods such as observation where researchers must analyse and interpret their observations, in SSO the observer and the observed are one. There are no pre-ordained theoretical categorisations since data is expressed in informants’ own voices, using their own terms. This met my objective of capturing a first-person phenomenological, lived experience. Clients and coaches, including myself, would journal for a minimum of six coaching sessions. Questions that structured the diary reports were kept loose and open so that respondents would not be hampered in their ability to give very full and unbridled accounts of their experiences.

I was unsure if reports from coaches as well as clients would yield anything of theoretical interest but I decided it would be better to ask for maximal data and then cull it back if it were not informative, rather than ask for too little and regret it later. An “added bonus” to journaling might also be expected. Progoff (1975) found that a nonjudgmental, objective SSO write-up immediately following a therapy session can be an engaging form of therapy in its own right so I was keen to see if data relating to insights during the act of journaling would be mentioned.

A potential weaknesses of diary-keeping is that it places a great deal of responsibility on the respondent. In addition, respondents might misreport in order to please the enquirer (Robson, 2002: 258). I found, however, that all participants provided very full accounts of their “Aha” experience and the events surrounding it. Given the

encouragement of Co-Active coaching clients to be open and honest, I saw no reason for their behaviour to deviate during the research process. It is difficult to envisage in any case what they might construe as pleasing to the researcher in their descriptions of insight.

6.3 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were chosen to extend and test the emerging theory. Diaries had shown that the “Aha” moment is not only cognitively experienced but resonates viscerally in the body and, often, transpersonally. Diaries had asked participants to describe where they experienced the moment in body and mind. Many had construed mind as spirit.

Questionnaire respondents were therefore asked to give a detailed recollection of their “Aha” moments in body, mind and spirit and to report the effects of the “Aha” moment’s ‘aftermath’. The other reason for including questionnaires was to discover the extent to which insights had resulted in permanent changes in beliefs, feelings and attitudes. Finally, questionnaires provided the benefit of allowing participants to respond in their own time and space, using their own words.

The questionnaires provided challenges that the diaries did not. One disadvantage of using questionnaires is a potentially low response rate, my answer to which was to ask Co-Active coaches to invite their own ‘old’ clients to participate. ‘Old clients’ denotes former clients or clients receiving coaching for longer than three months. These clients were sent a questionnaire inviting them to explore their recollections of “Aha” moments. The questions that guided the observations of the participants invited them to report in detail their experience of an “Aha moment”, whether it had heralded transformation and, if so, the degree to which this had been maintained. I soon realised that many questionnaires were not being returned to me by the agreed date. I also found that questionnaires place too much responsibility on the respondent, evidenced in the completed questionnaires I *had* received, where information was sometimes sketchy. I e-mailed the non-responding participants, requesting that I telephone them to administer the questionnaire. All agreed and I found that I could attract much more robust data. Simple prompt questions such as “Can you tell me more about that” enriched the responses and therefore the quality of the data gathered. I began to see why qualitative researchers favour the interview method.

Participants were required to reflect upon events that preceded insight. I added the question "Please describe what was happening just before your "Aha" moment" to capture data that might suggest a pattern of triggers to the "Aha" moment. Ultimately, although there are identifiable triggers to the "Aha" moment, these are too variable to predict. I was keen to elicit more general data about transformational change, whether of an insightful nature or not. I therefore included general questions about coaching: the reasons for clients to seek coaching; their assessment of the coaching relationship; its role in the developmental process; and more targeted questions about skills and techniques used by both coach and client. All questions were loosely structured to allow clients to respond in their own words, as far as possible, because the very wording of a question will orient the client in a given direction.

6.4 Interviews

During this study I became acquainted with the "Integral Institute", a virtual organisation founded by Wilber and others to promote their 'integral' paradigm (www.intergralinstitute.org). Many subscribers to this internet site practise an 'integral' way of life that promotes healthy development across all lines of development, including mind, body and spirit. Findings indicated contexts of insight: not knowing, trusting, silence, use of metaphor, creative visualisations, surrender, meditation etc., all practices found in the literature on Eastern mystical traditions. I arrived at a proposition that such practices, especially meditation, result in "Aha" moments in the spiritual line of development. I therefore deliberately sampled a target audience of meditators. I contacted by e-mail the public forum part of integral institute's website, known as 'Integral Naked'. I briefly outlined the nature of my study and invited those who meditated and could report experiences of spiritual epiphanies to contact me with a view to being interviewed about them. Of eight interview subjects, two had been questionnaire respondents, two were practicing Buddhist clients of mine and four were recruited from the "Integral Naked" subscribers. All participants signed a letter of consent and all agreed to the telephone interview being tape-recorded (see appendix 1).

From a phenomenological perspective the interview is a specific type of in-depth interviewing grounded in the theoretical tradition of phenomenology (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). Again, there is acknowledgement of the relationship between the philosophical tradition and method which distinguishes this interview from other forms. The distinction is clearly seen in the relationship between researcher and participant, where this moves from observational in quantitative research, to dialogical in qualitative research, and then to reflective in phenomenological research (Munhall and Oiler Boyd, 1993). Both the key informant interviews and the final interviews about transpersonal states of consciousness achieved during “Aha” moments were approached in a coach/researcher manner. Coach-like skills of empathy were combined with the open questions and curiosity of the researcher to encourage full phenomenological results.

While I had originally expected at the final interview stage of the ‘transpersonal’ informants to have prepared a list of semi-structured questions, this proved unnecessary. My first question: “Please take a moment to recall the moment and when you feel you can step back into it, please describe it as fully as possible” was the only one necessary for a very full account. This held true of all eight interviewees. Subsidiary questions were about the results of such experiences and all respondents considered that the centrifugal point of their existence was their spiritual life and practices, so that spiritual insights were relatively frequent. These individuals reported that they had arrived at a stability in their spiritual dimension beyond the flashes of spiritual insights reported in the main body of this study’s findings.

Section 7: Data Analysis

This section outlines the key components of the grounded study approach in relation to their usefulness in arriving at theoretical propositions of the “Aha” moment. As mentioned in the previous section, grounded study’s methodology calls for data collection and analysis to operate in tandem, with data being analysed from the first point of collection. This immediate analysis allows seemingly relevant issues to be identified and to inform the next wave of data collection. The interplay of data collection and analysis continues, with each successive wave of data informing the next until the completion of the study. The objective behind this systematic and sequential treatment of data is to capture all potentially relevant aspects of the phenomenon as soon as they

are perceived. This strategy constitutes a major source of grounded theory's effectiveness by grounding the theory in reality (Strauss and Corbin 1990: 6). This section specifies how participant reports were conceptualised and coded, categorised and synthesised to arrive at the development of theory. Using the transpersonal potentials of the "Aha" moment as an example, the section will demonstrate that every concept identified in one form or another relating to this theme was considered provisional until, through repetition, it earned its way into the final theory. In this systematic manner, the potential relevance of the theory is enhanced and the possibility of researcher bias is minimised.

Concepts represent the basic units of analysis in grounded theory and these are generated through the process of coding. Open coding is a form of content analysis to find and conceptualise underlying issues within the plethora of data. Open coding was approached with an open mind, as recommended by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Transcripts of key informant interviews were scrutinised to identify indicators of phenomena relating to the "Aha" moment and these were given conceptual labels or codes representing key points. This technique follows Glaser's (1992) preference for an analysis of key points in enabling concepts to emerge from the data. (This is in opposition to the 'microanalysis', i.e. word by word analysis recommended by Strauss which Glaser 1992:40 condemned as producing an "over-conceptualisation"). Table 3.2 provides examples of how similar reports were grouped together to arrive at a conceptual code, or key point.

Table 3.2 *Coding of "Aha" Moments from Key Informant Interviews*

Interview Extract	Code (Key Point)
<i>When the Aha thing happens the difference is that now you're SEEING it.</i>	Clarity and certainty
<i>It's like solving a problem or puzzle and you just know it's right.</i>	
<i>Clarity and conviction – a sense of "Yes-that's it!"</i>	

<i>It's like the brain has to screech to a halt before re-orienting itself in a new direction.</i>	Impasse
<i>The brain just stalls prior to the "Aha!"</i>	
<i>It seems like the brain has to halt swiftly. move in a new direction</i>	
<i>Aha moments give a burst of clarity and Energy.</i>	Energy
<i>I feel this energy, this connection resonating between me and my coach.</i>	
<i>Not just a dribble, but a powerful stream of energy, propelling into the heavens, showering everything in its path.</i>	
<i>I felt my spirit expand and connect to all things.</i>	Spiritual Awakening/Development
<i>This first burst of insight was followed by a cascade of connections and, several months later, by a full-scale revelatory experience.</i>	
<i>My spirit became replenished and I had the feeling of life re-kindling/awakening.</i>	

The next table, Table 3.3, Coding of Journal Texts, is an example of how I coded responses from diary data to arrive at key points which would hint at provisional categories. Categories address the question, "What's going on here?" (Strauss and Corbin 1998: 110). As recommended by Strauss and Corbin (1998:79), each incident of

the “Aha” moment was compared to other incidents to identify similarities and differences in descriptions. The constant comparison method requires the researcher to continually ask questions of the accumulated data at the levels of properties and their dimensions to arrive at specified categories (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 66). The ‘property’ level provides answers to questions such as: what does an “Aha” moment represent; how does it appear in consciousness; and what are the mechanisms involved in its occurrence? Dimensions add depth and variation in each of the properties.

At the property level of analysis, reports unanimously described the moment as appearing suddenly, accompanied by a surge of energy, a pleasurable event producing feelings of clarity and certainty, calm and surrender. Concepts that had been coded as relating to a singular category were hypothesised as potentially viable categories. For example, reports of “Aha” moments being experienced in the heart were given a conceptual label which was coded as “embodied knowing”. These reports were compared to others and examples of feeling the “Aha” moment in the gut or stomach were added under this conceptual umbrella. Only by comparing incidents and naming like phenomena with the same term can a theorist accumulate the basic units for theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 7). Embodied knowing, by dint of repetition throughout all phases of data collection achieved the status of core category and formed a cornerstone of the final theory. Unlike the last table which gave several examples of concepts leading to key points, this table presents some single examples.

Table 3. 3 Coding of Journal Texts

Journal Text	Code (Key Point)
<i>Previously held beliefs have lost their hold on me</i>	<i>Beliefs</i>
<i>Old behaviours have lost their allure</i>	<i>Behaviour</i>
<i>A massive sense of calm and peace</i>	<i>Feelings and emotions</i>

<i>Effortless release, relief</i>	
<i>Energy throughout. Blood rushing to my neck and face</i>	
<i>The “Aha” was that I have control of the future. I should and will focus more on my present life.</i>	<i>Present Focus</i>
<i>The “Aha” Moment is a suspension of everyday thought. This suspension unveils new thinking.</i>	<i>Deliberate suspension of impasse</i>
<i>I’ve only had moments like this in meditation, and after meditating for years</i>	<i>Meditation</i>
<i>The “Aha” showed me what’s truly important to me</i>	<i>Values and Life Purpose</i>
<i>There is a clear image – visual realisation of my life’s purpose</i>	
<i>It came from a place of intuition</i>	<i>Intuition</i>
<i>Intuition in the form of “aha” moments tap into what our species already knows because someone, somewhere deposited the knowledge into the morphogenetic field</i>	<i>Collective Consciousness</i>

Further key points emerged from continuing groupings of conceptual codes and formed new categories and sub-categories. I configured a grid with key categories along the top and the number of the journal participant down the left hand column. For each journal participant (J1, J2, J3 etc.), I then entered those concepts from data that

seemed to have the same or a similar conceptual meaning to the key points I had devised. I did this until I was satisfied that each of the concepts I had originally identified was classified according to one or other of the categories, adding a few categories which showed differences from the existing categories.

The diary entries advanced the theory considerably. Firstly, reports echoed the suddenness, clarity, conviction, embodied knowledge and transpersonal potentials of consciousness that had been described by key informant interviews. So, these concepts became more reliable and began to provide a conceptual handle on “Aha” events. Another important contribution of diary-keeping is that it fulfills the objective of producing rich, immediate accounts of insight. Since participants journalled as soon as the coaching session was over, their phenomenological accounts were fresh and vividly described, often with the help of metaphor. Now, I had data about the phenomenology of the “Aha” moment from interviewees whose experiences were described from the past and also from participants who had freshly lived it.

Diary descriptions emphasised not only the emotion that often accompanies the event but spoke of the visceral feel of it in different dimensions of mind, body and spirit. Personal development and transformation was hypothesized given the reports on changes in beliefs and behaviour. Since each step of data collection and analysis advances theory development, the next wave of data collection could test this category of personal development and / or transformation and thereby allow it to earn its place in the final theory.

Questionnaire participants were invited to discuss the long term effects of “Aha” moments on their attitudes and behaviour. The next table, Table 3.4, Coding of Questionnaire Texts, is an example of how I coded questionnaire data to arrive at this and other major theoretical planks:

Table 3. 4: Coding of Questionnaire Texts

Questionnaire Text	Code (Key Point)
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<i>I no longer see things in simplistic terms – this OR that</i>	<i>Cognitive: dialectical thinking</i>
<i>I see myself as much more in charge of my life and have more confidence as a result</i>	<i>Cognitive: ego, confidence</i>
<i>I gave up having to know the answer. I went to a place of NOT knowing and trusted</i>	<i>Surrendering</i>
<i>I know it in my heart</i>	
<i>I now go to a place of power when I need it</i>	<i>Embodied Knowing</i>
<i>“Aha” moments feed my desire for connection</i>	<i>Connection</i>
<i>Almost like hearing an inner voice</i>	<i>Intuition / Soul</i>
<i>Generosity, the ability to focus on others</i>	<i>Post-egoic</i>
<i>...like a near-death experience. Like being re-born, blissed out</i>	<i>Transpersonal</i>
<i>Perception crumbles and is replaced by something clearer and infinitely more real</i>	<i>Non Dual</i>

It seemed that personal development and even transformation could be kick-started and/or maintained through insights. At this point I reckoned that I had arrived at the point of saturation, in that reports were not providing any new information. I found that I could slice the data in various ways to inform categories, their properties and dimensions. Responses provided information about the phenomenological experience of insight, the circumstances under which it occurred and its effects on those experiencing it, all of which was divided into categories reflecting all these aspects.

During data collection I carefully followed a stricture of grounded theory which is to keep preliminary analytic notes or ‘memos’. Memos are written about codes, comparisons and any other ideas about data to elaborate categories and specify their properties (Charmaz, 2006). I examined and re-examined the total data base, including all the

memos I had written, in a process of selective coding which involves integrating the categories. At this stage of the data analysis, categories coalesce, becoming more theoretical as a result of successive levels of analysis (Charmaz, 2006), and propositions are advanced. Propositions indicate general relationships between a category and its concepts and between discrete categories. The final integration of categories and sub-categories should provide tight linkages in a manner that delineates the basic paradigm features: conditions, context, actions/interactions (including strategies) and consequences (Corbin and Strauss, 1990: 6-7). To continue with the example of the developmental potentials of "Aha" moments, as previously mentioned, these were theorised to have the capacity to drive personal development. For example, on a cognitive level, the experiencing of "Aha" moments can give rise to dialectical thinking. At the level of ego, "Aha" moments strengthen connection at the level of self and other. At a deeply personal level they can reveal life purpose. They seem also to provide revelations which propel spiritual development. So, "Aha" moments seem to encourage development or transformation of the self in the dimensions of mind, body, soul and spirit. These core categories comprise theoretical concepts that, taken together, formulate an emerging theory of development. For the theory to be tested, this involves specific theoretical sampling.

The experiencing of insight in the spiritual dimension was striking in all three waves of data collection. Development in the spiritual line is argued to represent the pinnacle of personal development. While spiritual experiences can arise spontaneously, they are more likely to arise as a result of purposeful development and can be argued to be the most important of all lines of consciousness when it comes to personal evolution (Wilber, 2006). Having theorised that "Aha" moments arise in body, mind and spirit, my interest now lay in the phenomenology of consciousness itself and the hidden depths it could reveal. Spiritual "Aha" moments provided a gateway to alternative realities and it is to these potentialities of consciousness that the final phase of data collection is dedicated. The data had led me in the direction of theoretically sampling a population who could provide phenomenological accounts of these alternative worlds, namely the integral practitioners described above. In this way, the sample was chosen to test the validity of the emerging theory as it relates to the spiritual depths of the body-mind-spirit continuum in which "Aha" moments can arise. The final interview sample all described

spiritual or non-dual levels of consciousness, represented in these excerpts from the data:

I had the living experience of being form and yet no form

I guess the best way to describe it would be that my consciousness had been elevated and with it the whole consciousness of mankind was elevated

Theoretically dense and richly dimensionalised categories give a theory explanatory power (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 16). The exemplar of the transpersonal potential of “Aha” moments earned its place as an overarching theme (cosmic consciousness) in the final theory formulation from several perspectives: it was corroborated at every stage of data collection; it is richly dimensionalised from the data; and it provides the theory with explanatory power. Other core categories addressing the properties of “Aha” moments will be elucidated in forthcoming chapters. Through the presentation of participant reports it is hoped that the reader will gain an understanding of the properties and dimensions of the “Aha” moment including its forms and functions, the conditions which give rise to it in the coach/client interaction that generates it and the consequences it produces.

Section 8: Validity/reliability

The validity of data must be assessed within the paradigm of study to which it gave rise. For data to be valid, it must be representative of the subject under research and display consistency. In grounded theory, these criteria are achieved through the theoretical sampling of concepts, not people. Consistency is achieved because concepts that seem to adhere to the phenomenon under study are indicators that are deliberately sought in future waves of data collection (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). These authors argue that while the canons of good science should be retained, these canons need to be redefined. While canons of good science including significance, theory-observation and compatibility, generalisability, consistency, reproducibility, precision and verification apply to grounded theory, they must not be applied in a positivistic way since every mode of discovery develops its own standards (pp.4-5). The objective in this study is to deepen understanding of the “Aha” moment by adopting a multiplicity of methods to illumine the different aspects of the phenomenon. This is why reports from interviews,

diaries and questionnaires were supplemented with literature and my own report to achieve the final theory. It could be said that the data's validity and reliability is enhanced by this 'triangulation' of the data. While researchers are rightly keen to advocate a methodical and reproducible approach to study, terms like triangulation are imported from the paradigm of the natural sciences.

Researchers argue that prevailing research orthodoxy holds that both positivist and interpretivist paradigms are scientific if they subscribe to certain parameters. It seems, though, that qualitative researchers fail to clarify the canons of their research paradigm. For Giorgi (1985b), good science means that the subject of study "... *must be able to be performed by many researchers, the findings should be intersubjectively valid, and there must be a definable method*" (p. 72). This description would seem to miss the essence of qualitative inquiry, there being nothing in it that could not be said about natural science methodologies. The essence of grounded study not only includes a sensitivity to the richness of the human experience but spells out what it sets out to achieve, as explained in the previous section. In this way, the researcher arrives at a knowing rather than a comprehending of the data and has faith in it thanks to the constant comparative method. Ideally, the researcher has a direct apprehension of events described in the data, beyond a cognitive appreciation. Wilber (1990: 44) considers that the general or abstract principles for data accumulation and verification pertain across all realms of experience. These verification procedures include: (a) an *instrumental injunction* (in the form, "If you want to *know* this, *do* this"), (b) an *intuitive apprehension* (an *immediate experience* in the domain in which the injunction is addressed), and (c) a *communal confirmation* (checking of results with *others* who have adequately completed steps (a) and (b)). These procedures apply across the board, whether one is conducting research in the sensory, empirical realm that is accessible to the "eye of the flesh," or in the mental realm accessible to the "eye of the mind" or in the spiritual realm through the "eye of the spirit." Ultimately, step (b) – the intuitive apprehension, based on personal experience is key to producing valid findings in qualitative research, experience that can only be confirmed in a research community of others who have shared the same experience. This study aims for validity through the constant comparative method of grounded study which prevents the researcher from straying too far from the data, the following of scientific canons as described by Strauss and Corbin above, and the literature which confirmed experiences described in reports.

Literature

Linking emerging theory to extant literature adds validity: *“Overall, tying the emergent theory to existing literature enhances the validity, generalisability, and theoretical level of the theory building...”* Eisenhardt (1989: 545). In the early stages, this was problematic as I attempted to interpret data such as being “blissed out”. As Strauss and Corbin (1998: 97) note, researchers are a product of their culture and I was not familiar with being “blissed out”. In the course of deliberations of ‘systematic comparison’ between the literature and my findings, I chanced upon Wilber’s (1977) Spectrum of Consciousness model. The ‘states’ described in my data – including transcendental states like being ‘blissed out’ - could be situated within the wider context of consciousness studies, along a developmental spectrum of consciousness progressing from matter, to body, to mind, to soul, to spirit, in evolutionary fashion. This unfolding of consciousness is accompanied by a change in self-identity from pre-personal, to personal, to transpersonal, meaning a change in focus of awareness from self, to self and others, to self and all of creation / the universe.

Ethical and / or Access Issues

Permission for this study was sought and received from Oxford Brookes ethics committee. Ethical guidelines have been developed by the International Coach Federation (ICF) and are designed to protect the dignity and integrity of the client (Whitworth et al, 1998:170). Confidentiality is a term with which Co-Active coaches and their clients are familiar, it being built into the relationship very specifically. When confidentiality was assured of research participants they understood that it meant unconditional confidentiality. It was explained that only initials would be used to identify data. Since the coaching world is small, it was decided not to offer any autobiographical details since individuals might in this way be identified. These safeguards guaranteed anonymity to participants.

All participants received information about the nature of the research piece, including: its aims and objectives; those individuals who would have access to the data; how and for what time period the data would be stored. On the basis of this information and

these assurances, informed consent was received by all participants. As previously mentioned, there is no question of the coach 'rescuing' the client from painful reflection or lived experience. The same tenets held true for this research process when I, as a researcher, interviewed some of my own former clients. It might be argued that such potential bias questions the validity of findings. However, my focus was exclusively on the data that was presented and nothing else. Accounts were too similar for data from my own clients to stand out in any way. Even if this had been the case, the constant comparative method would have neutralised it or demanded an explanation as to how and why it contradicted existing categories.

Section 9: Data Presentation

Data is presented over the following five chapters. Each chapter follows the same tripartite pattern. Firstly, a brief introduction to the data will precede its in-depth presentation, indicating how patterns of ideas were expressed in similar terms. The objective is to orient the reader to the findings presented later in the chapter. It will also begin to depict the process by which theory was developed from raw data. The data will highlight how I moved from example quotes to get to the word. In this manner I am following the recommendation of Glaser of enabling concepts from the data. In the example of say, the concept of 'impasse', this is the word that, for me, most efficiently linked together and encompassed all the themes pertaining to it. In this way I codified excerpts into key conceptual planks. These key concepts, then, are introduced as examples of how the grounded study built from concepts to categories to final theory. Secondly, I will give a very brief overview of the literature that pertains to the ideas contained within the data and the interpretation that was made of these.

Finally, each chapter is divided into sections and often these section headings will represent a direct quote from the data. In this way the reader will dip into the phenomenological worlds of "Aha" Moments. Anonymous quotes, identified by initials, protect participants' identity.

Chapter 4: The Co-Active Coaching Model

This chapter's aims are twofold: to introduce the Co-Active coaching model and its principles and practices; and, in the process of doing so, to demonstrate why this model provides a suitable platform from which to launch this grounded study. The model will be examined in relation to the data offered. In the course of presenting data in this and later chapters, a feel for the co-active model emerges. Key informant Kimsey-House (2004) considers the Co-Active model to be a-theoretical. Data, however, suggests that it reflects and includes a wide range of psychological approaches, including cognitive, behavioural, humanistic and transpersonal paradigms. Findings presented in this chapter expose concepts and principles that suggest underlying theories that Co-Active coaching's founders were not interested in elaborating. The intention is to pull these concepts together to suggest a more comprehensive theoretical understanding of the model.

Key Conceptual Ideas

Reports suggest that the relationship is primary in facilitating growth and development and speak of connection, rapport, finding acceptance and mutual trust. Insights arise in the 'safe and courageous space' and rigorous truth-telling offered by the coach. Such reports resulted in the key concept of connection.

Data also communicates the vital role of the coach in providing the conditions for insights to arise, the coach's role in keeping "Aha" moments 'alive', and the accountability demanded by the coach to keep clients focused on their insights. The key concept linking these reports is coach support.

Reports contain descriptions of mutual energy, aliveness, positive feelings and the sense of having found a new direction in life. This is often the result of having found a new purpose or direction. Insights arise in global listening or intuition, encouraged in both coach and client. Intuitions tap into the 'real' self and identify what is truly important to the self. This data led to the key concept of life purpose.

Linked to life purpose are reports of feelings of confidence, autonomy and the drive to take 'risky' action in pursuit of personally meaningful goals. This led to the key concept of bold action.

Reports also mention tolerance for and acceptance of self and others, reaching out to others and empathy and connection with others. These reports may be interpreted as overcoming egoic demands. They resulted in a key concept of expansion of the self.

Data also clarifies the importance of learning for one's self the principles and skills of coaching so that clients can sustain their personal development journey. This data culminated in the key concept of self-coaching for development.

Background Literature

The negative self-talk which clients identify in reports in this chapter has been studied in the psychology of sport. This field indicates a correlation between pre-competition anxiety, goal-performance discrepancies, and athletes negative self-talk while performing (Hatzigeorgiadis et al 2008). Reports illustrate the willingness with which clients give up their self-sabotaging games in order to be seen for who they are. They also highlight the importance of the coach's role in nourishing insights. Some researchers acknowledge this role: "...one of the most powerful interventions coaches can provide is simply to keep critical insights alive for their clients" (Fitzgerald and Berger, 2002: 31). In contrast to those therapeutic approaches that adopt a medical model of the person, there is no attempt to 'cure' in the peer relationship of Co-Active coaching since the resourcefulness of the client is an ontological given. One of the model's four principles, or 'cornerstones' is that the client is naturally "creative, resourceful and whole" so clients have "...full responsibility [and must] make contributions and exercise authority" (Whitworth et al: 2007: 16). Fulfilment, balance and process coaching provide alternative means of coaching different dimensions of the person. Clients may be coached via any of these coaching 'tunnels'. Fulfilment coaching (Whitworth et al, 2007: 134) is designed to explore values as the basis for self-actualisation through what is termed the "Big Agenda" (Whitworth et al, 2007: 130). The 'balance' tunnel is designed to explore perspectives and beliefs (Whitworth et al, 2007:144). 'Process' coaching focuses on where clients are now, in the present

moment of their lives (Whitworth et al, 2007: 155). In their investigation of the behavioural elements of Co-Active coaching, Irwin and Morrow (2005) employed the method of inductive-content analysis to conclude that the Co-Active model is firmly linked to existing behavioural change models. They deduce this from the finding that reinforcement is critical in promoting new behaviours and is “deeply embedded” in the Co-Active model where *“coaches are encouraged to include challenges, accountability, acknowledgment and championing, among other tools, in their professional repertoire”* (p. 34). Drawing on the drama training of the founding members, perspective taking in balance coaching is more than a cognitive practice since it entails role-taking and felt sense. Additionally, the aim is always to stimulate new behaviours through the realisation of choice: *“Coaching balance is about helping clients see the circumstances of their lives, clarify what is important, and move from perspective to choice. In the process, the coach helps them find their own unique vision of balance”* (Whitworth et al, 1998:136). Cognitive-behavioural theories are today evolving to include more and more diverse schools of thought since cognitive processes cannot stand equivalent to all psychological processes. (Gilbert, 2009: 403). Gilbert points to some of them - behaviour therapy, schema therapy, acceptance commitment therapy, mindfulness and radical behaviour therapy.

Fulfillment coaching (Whitworth et al, 2007: 134) addresses learning about the meaning, or purpose that directs one’s life and its ideas draw from fields of humanistic, existential and transpersonal psychology. The existentialist Yalom stressed the iterative nature of meaning and values: *“Once a sense of meaning is developed, it gives birth to values – which, in turn, act synergistically to augment one’s sense of meaning...values constitute a code according to which a system of action may be formulated”* (Yalom, 1980: 464). Underpinned by a principle that the whole body constitutes the unconscious mind (Wade, 1996), the Co-Active model further mirrors humanistic approaches in appreciating that the whole person is interconnected. This ontology is at the core of Gestalt therapy which aims to integrate the dimensions of self into a unified whole (Perls, 1969). Humanistic psychology concerns itself with human behaviours such as *“love, creativity, self, growth...self-actualization, higher values, being, becoming...autonomy, responsibility, meaning...”* (American Association of Humanistic Psychology, 1962:2). The principal of transcending the ego is another major thrust of the humanistic and transpersonal paradigms which address personal growth: *“Growth*

psychologists (or transpersonal psychologists) describe this process of realizing one's potentialities as quieting the conscious mind (seat of the ego) and awakening of the unconscious (seat of the Self)" (Tart, 1975: 157). All of these topics are relevant to the reports that follow.

The chapter is divided into six sections, the first five of which present participant reports that can be usefully employed to explore different facets of the Co-Active coaching model. Co-Active coaching provides a vocabulary for change and transformation. Some phrases that clients use demonstrate this vocabulary and have been used to inform this grounded study. The sixth section identifies the theoretical underpinnings of the Co-Active model:

Section 1: The Co-Active Coaching Model: A Designed Alliance introduces the Co-Active model followed by reports identifying those elements of the Co-Active relationship that contribute to personal development. The relationship will be seen to mirror, in many ways, a person-centred and positive psychology.

Section 2: Five Skills Sets in Co-Active Coaching is sub-divided into five sections, each reporting moments of insight and personal growth that clients attribute to the coach's use of the five key skills sets of the Co-Active model: listening, intuition, curiosity, action and learning and self-management.

Section 3: Elements of Behavioural Theories in the Co-Active Model presents findings that might be linked to behavioural approaches to change. While elements like reinforcement can be identified, reports also show ways in which the Co-Active model cannot be contained within a purely behavioural approach, since these reports concentrate on ways of being as well as ways of doing.

Section 4: Elements of Cognitive Theories in the Co-Active Model examines findings in relation to cognitive approaches. While traditional cognitive approaches may focus on maladaptive belief systems, the Co-Active coach consciously and deliberately engages clients in all ways of knowing, thinking and being. This holistic approach reflects an epistemology that never sees mind as being separate from its unconscious aspects, nor separate from feelings, emotions and the wisdom of the body.

Section 5: The Co-Active Model and Humanistic and Transpersonal Approaches compares the ontology of the Co-Active model with humanistic and transpersonal psychology and finds they have much in common, especially the ontology of the different levels of consciousness which can be coached and which can yield “Aha” moments.

Section 6: The Co-Active Model’s Theoretical Underpinnings proposes some definitive practices and principles deriving from the findings presented in this chapter.

Section 1: The Co-Active Coaching Model: A Designed Alliance

Co-Active coaches are trained by the Co-Active Training Institute. Training takes around two years and requires attendance at workshops, conference calls led by C.T.I. supervisors, buddy coaching and personal supervision during the coaching of clients. Upon successful completion, the title of CPCC, certified professional Co-Active coach, is conferred. Co-Active coaches offer coaching to anyone who is looking for change. This section begins to depict the Co-Active model in action by using extracts from participant reports which will in turn begin to depict the principles and cornerstones of the model.

Client respondents were asked what had contributed most to the changes they had made. E.W.’s response suggests coach-client connection as a major contribution:

“The connection and rapport with my coach is fundamental” (E.W., client)

The joy of co-activity is expressed by client L.A., responding to a question about whether Aha moments had been experienced outside of the coaching arena:

“I’m quite good at nurturing some a-ha moments in my own time. So it’s not like a ‘wow never experienced this before.’ But it’s somehow very sweet when it happens with a coach” (L.A., client)

The next excerpts suggest that such connection is enhanced by the sense of safety and intimacy fostered in the relationship. Coach T.C. was journalling at the end of a session about the context that immediately preceded his client’s “Aha” moment:

“I sensed the “Aha” moment happening in the safe and courageous space that had been created”. (T.C., coach)

In this space, clients feel 'heard' and 'seen' in a unique way by their coaches. Client M.M. feels that her coach singularly understands her:

"My coach seems to understand what I say and how I explain when other people don't".
(M.M., client)

Client M.L.'s diary entry indicates how change is effected and made permanent:

"I could not have made or sustained the changes without the unconditional love and support of my coach" (M.L., client)

The Co-Active coach is trained to attend to the energy in the relationship. Client S.H. feels 'seen' in a new way because of this energy:

"There is something in the energy between my coach and I – a resonance that I have not found with another human being. I know that she SEES me in a way nobody has before" (S.H., client).

Coach A.D. is reflecting on how his own clients achieve successful coaching outcomes. His excerpt again highlights the importance of a kind of synchronised energy:

"Connecting with their energy and going with it to listen to the inner voice of conviction"
(A.D., coach)

When energy, or aliveness, is transmitted, the coach can infer that this is where the client's passions, or values, lie.

Coach C.L. reports her own experience during her client's "Aha" moment:

"Her energy went softer and inward. She really felt the shift. For me, I sensed the energy shift by the timbre of her voice and the silence". (C.L., coach)

Ubiquitous feelings of energy also seem to accompany the outcome of the coaching process itself. S.B.'s account suggests that she was listless and lacking in 'joie de vivre' prior to coaching:

"It would not be an overstatement to say that I have come back alive as a result of the coaching and I have an entirely new direction which is very inspiring to me". (S.B., client)

The link between finding a direction in life and feeling energised and motivated is clear in S.B.'s account. The next report from client M.L. explains that she now takes personal responsibility for the energy that she creates in her own phenomenological world:

"My energy about my life is endless and created from within me so any negativity will have no effect on my supply" (M.L., client)

An important part of the Co-Active relationship is the ability to be non-judgmental. That it is rare to be heard without judgment, is a point raised by client N. O. who confers genius status on her coach for his non-judgmental attitude, a key factor in helping to bring about the changes she desired:

'Compassion, understanding, non-judgmental genius on the part of the coach'. (N.O., client).

The non-judgmental attitude of the coach encourages the same in the client, and tolerance of self would seem to extend to tolerance of other people, according to client S.W.'s diary entry:

"I find myself being far more tolerant of myself and others. I no longer leap to judgment the way I used to". (S.W., client)

The twin objectives of the Co-Active coach are to 'deepen the learning' and 'forward the action' (Whitworth et al, 2007: 12-13). Insights may enhance self-knowledge and thereby deepen learning but personal transformation can only be facilitated by changes in behaviours as well as cognitions. Some findings suggest that this knowledge may not find expression in action without the help of a Co-Active coach to help 'forward' the action:

"The coach's making me accountable for turning the insight into action is crucial". (S. H., client)

S. H.'s account suggests that insights might fall by the wayside of cognition but for the role of his coach. Reports suggest that the 'container' of the relationship, to which coaches and clients subscribe, produces development in clients that would not occur

either alone or with people other than the coach. Client S.B. is responding to a question about whether he had had an “Aha” moment prior to being coached. His report suggests that the relationship with his coach was fundamental to recognising insight and acting upon it:

“Very very rarely and if I did I didn’t know what it was or how to build on it. (S.B., client).

Findings continually reinforce the notion that being truly known by another human being is a prime motivator for personal development. Client K. T.’s report indicates that being understood by her coach has been fundamental to her self-discovery. Her extract highlights an important principle in Co-Active coaching: that her coach has no agenda – he is ‘disinterested’:

“Having an outside observer who looks over time at my attitudes etc. and knows my strengths and so can give suggestions from an informed but disinterested viewpoint has helped most in my learning and discovery”. (K.T., client)

Client D. L. also attributes the activation of her insights to the coaching relationship:

“Coaching keeps my “Ahas” alive”. (D. L., client)

This last notion is expressed by client R. P. as an appreciation of his coach being prepared to accompany him into the ‘unknown’:

“That my coach is prepared to go with me into places that I fear to go, holding out a hand of trust and acceptance, certain in the uncertainty of not knowing where this journey will take us and what gifts and hurdles we may encounter along the way”. (R.P., client)

For client L.A., this included an agreement that her coach would ‘see through’ her ‘stories’, and would only allow her to accept the greatest of challenges:

“We negotiated that my coach wouldn’t be suckered in by my smooth-talking and that she’d not let me accept challenges that weren’t great” (L.A., client).

Findings reflect the tenet that Co-Active coaching is not so much a methodology, or a set of skills and tools, as it is a relationship (Whitworth et al 2007: 15). This relationship constitutes a 'designed alliance', the alliance representing "... *the container within which coach and client do their work*" (Whitworth et al 2007: 21). Designing the alliance is a practice which recognises the uniqueness of every client and includes jointly deciding how the client would like to be treated during the coaching relationship. Each party recognises and affirms the responsibility that they jointly undertake in the formation and continuing success of the relationship. A contract is signed to this effect.

The therapeutic relationship has been found to play a crucial role in determining successful therapeutic outcomes. Miller's (2000:41) study concluded that "... *the quality and strength of the therapeutic relationship was the primary determinant of successful outcome across treatments – including medication*". Clients most frequently attribute successful treatment outcomes to the personal qualities of the therapist and in particular the latter's ability and willingness to understand and accept them (Norcross and Goldfried, 1992). The egalitarian nature of a therapeutic relationship has a significant impact in therapy. Besides having someone to talk to and being accurately heard, clients in Howe's (1993) study emphasise the importance of connecting with the therapist on the level of their shared humanity. Clients appreciated that their therapists were prepared to engage as one imperfect but concerned human being to another.

The unconditional love mentioned in reports echoes the unconditional positive regard noted by Rogers (1961) as a guiding principle of client-centred counselling. Historically linked to humanistic and existential psychology, the client-centred approach has metamorphosed into the person-centred approach, a positive psychology positioned within a holistic meta-theory whose stance is that people are their own best experts (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). A positive psychology accords with the ontology of Co-Active coaching, which mirrors Rogers' requirement for the counsellor to display congruence, unconditional positive regard, non-possessive warmth, acceptance and a non-judgmental attitude. Participant reports suggest that these qualities and more are demanded of the coach.

Some reports are reminiscent of Buber's 'I-Thou' relationship where the partners are 'neither two nor one' (Friedman, 1999:543). Underpinning Friedman's (2008) 'dialogical psychotherapy' is the ontological position that the self in 'interhuman'; the essence and

meaning of life is relatedness. Both therapist and client engage in interactions where each partner becomes more in tune with his or her own self as they move to respond more fully to the other. The therapist being present to the uniqueness of the client, without trying to cure the client, confirms the client as a person, which is healing in itself.

Participants' accounts of "Aha" moments frequently contain descriptions of accompanying bouts of energy, the energy that coaches intuit in their clients' communications and the energy that creates the excitement and impetus for action. The latter derives from identifying the client's values and life purpose. In interview, Kimsey-House (2004) explained the importance of listening for 'energy' in the client's communication so that the coach may decide whether a client is talking about his or her own values or ones they feel they 'should' have.

This section has demonstrated the centrality of the Co-Active relationship in successful coaching outcomes and in personal development more generally. Energy and vitality can be inspired within the intimacy of an environment that is dedicated to identifying and pursuing personal values and life purpose. Accounts highlight two of the four cornerstones of the model: that the client is naturally creative, resourceful and whole; and that the agenda comes from the client. The other two cornerstones (the coach dances in the moment and Co-Active coaching addresses the client's whole life) will be introduced in Section 5. The next section presents reports that reflect the five skills-sets or contexts of Co-Active coaching.

Section 2: Five Skills Sets in Co-Active Coaching

The application of coaching skills can best be understood within a framework that comprises the five contexts of coaching: listening; intuition; curiosity; forward and deepen; and self-management (Whitworth et al, 2007: 29). Each of these skills, in sub-sections a) – e), is discussed in relation to participant accounts to illustrate the model's efficacy for the purpose of this research.

a) Listening

Client S.L. is journaling about his coaching session regarding his coach's ability to listen to him - he calls it:

"The luxury of being listened to" (S.L., client)

S.L.'s comment indicates that having someone listen is rare yet this 'luxury' is such an important part of self development. The Co-Active model posits three "levels of listening": in Level I awareness is limited to the self; in Level II there is a sharp awareness of the other person; and in Level III, termed global listening, account is taken of everything in the environment, including emotions and energies that are not observable by the senses. This level provides access to intuition (Whitworth et al: 2007: 34-38). Coaches are trained to listen at Levels II and III, but being human, they sometimes slip into "Level I" listening, especially when the client's 'story' resonates with their personal experiences. In the following example both coach and client have experienced problems of commitment in their relationships with men. Client R. B. records her "Aha" moment in her diary:

"Aha" – I understand the problem – everyone is too distant from me because I have not let them get close. "Aha" – this understanding went to men straight away and then a feeling of impossibility set in....how to do it?" (R.B., client).

At the end of the same coaching session her coach, N.M., made a diary entry that records this 'slippage':

"Awareness of some Level 1 activity in myself. Firstly, she is dealing with a man who is scared of commitment – as I have been in the past". (N.M., coach)

Unlike traditional counselling and therapeutic models, the Co-Active coach shares the principles, tenets and skills of the Co-Active model with clients so that the latter become familiar with both skills and techniques and also with a language that helps to pin down phenomena that are intangible yet palpable. Client M.L. demonstrates in her diary entry just how familiar she is becoming with Co-Active coaching jargon (as well as a hint at familiarity with therapeutic jargon suggested in her use of the term 'resistance'):

"We were exploring the resistance I was feeling. She named the Level 3 – as we say in coaching – noticing the control I was hanging on to" (M.L., client).

Not only do Co-Active coaches pass on coaching vocabulary to their clients, but they model ways of 'being'. Level II listening is the level of empathy (Whitworth et al. 2007: 36). The empathy role-modelled by coaches can be emulated by their clients, as C. G.'s excerpt testifies:

"I have more empathy in relationships. I'm calmer – more accepting and more forgiving"
(C.G., client)

C.G.'s account indicates an expansion of the self to include others. This will be seen to be a leitmotif of the study as the findings are discussed.

The next account from client M.L. not only highlights her active use of coaching principles but also demonstrates the colourful and creative ways in which clients are encouraged to explore their values. She explains how, in conjunction with her husband, she uses 'clearing' to focus on values and this practice often provides "Aha" moments:

"My husband and I regularly conduct "meetings" with each other, where we "clear" the things happening in our lives and consciously create our future together based on our joint values. There are often aha's. Our most recent came out of an exercise we created, which consisted of making a collage out of pictures to clarify the difference we'd like to make in the world over the next part of our lives" (M.L., client)

Listening in Co-Active coaching requires both coach and client to be 'present'. The practice of 'clearing' is undertaken by coaches and encouraged in clients in preparation for the coaching session, prior to the requirement for listening. Clearing means preparing to listen and to be present for clients in physical, emotional mental and even spiritual ways (Whitworth et al, 2007: 111). It also means allowing clients to vent at the outset of a coaching session so that they may *"get rid of the words that are clogging up the cognitions to become present and open to coaching"* (p. 117).

While the Co-Active model, then, includes the listening skills and empathy found in person-centred counselling approaches, it distinguishes itself by 'clearing' prior to a coaching session, engaging not only the Level II of empathy but also Level III or intuition.

b) Intuition

Client P.L. was surprised at the accuracy of his coach's intuition:

"When I was describing one of the employees in my new team I clearly, according to my coach, showed my negative attitudes regarding him. It was a bit shocking that my coach could read me so simply". (P.L., client)

P.L. was discomfited by his coach's intuitive feedback. Intuition can surmise what clients *don't* say, as experienced by client M.L:

"K.F. has a fantastic ability to pick up on the things I don't say" (M.L., client)

In response to the question, *"What is your intuition telling you about this coaching session?"* coaches demonstrate that they are going beyond verbal cues in order to better 'read' the client:

"His nervous laugh and body movements made me aware of his resistance". (A.D., coach)

Coach N.M. intuits qualities in his client that are not recognised and owned:

"My intuition tells me that as well as being fun-loving, lively etc. she would really like to be recognised for other qualities – qualities for which she does not give herself the recognition she deserves" (N.M., coach).

Client R.P.'s excerpt hints at a more intuitive understanding:

"It was like squeezing the words out that made it make sense. Then it was quite surprising that the words weren't new, but the understanding was". (R.P., client)

However, coach T.C. was unsure of whether he was acting from intuition:

"My energy was low – not feeling too good – so let client talk a lot – but she recognised lots of true things. Rational mind says I was passive but maybe intuition told me to listen and give her space". (T.C., coach).

Coach T.C.'s report indicates that intuition is not always easy to recognise and/or trust. He is unsure whether he is post-rationalising or whether intuition really did come into play. Perhaps his concern is not surprising in a culture which seems not to validate intuition as a reliable means of drawing conclusions or making decisions, so we hesitate to use it (Whitworth et al 2007: 11). Nevertheless, the subject of intuition crops up often in the diaries of coaches and clients alike. Intuition features in the Co-Active model as a very important intelligence. It is encouraged by a 'soft focus': "...*an open hand will hold it; it will slip through a fist*". (Whitworth et al: 2007: 57). It is interesting to compare this conceptualisation to the UR studies introduced in Chapter 2. Individuals high in creativity deploy their attention in a soft and diffused manner as opposed to employing focused attention (Ansburg and Hill, 2003). Co-Active coaches are encouraged to bring the soft focus of intuition to every coaching encounter.

Intuition will be further discussed in forthcoming chapters. On a more rational level, for coaches to get to know and recognise their clients' unique abilities, curiosity must come into play.

c) *Curiosity*

Curiosity uses provocative and open-ended "powerful questions" and inquiry (Whitworth et al: 2007: 76-80). Powerful questions play a key role in the coach's repertoire of skills, not least because they function as precursors of the "Aha" moment, according to client P. L.:

"Often the coach asks me a powerful question and then gives me time to have my aha moment. Also I don't believe that my coach has an agenda to have me have x number of aha moments. It is a process that comes over a period of time" (P.L., client)

P.L.'s account hints again at the principle in Co-Active coaching of the coach being detached and having no agenda, a principle which is part of the 'spaciousness' provided by the Co-Active container (Whitworth et al, 2007: 20). As client E.W. reports:

"My coach doesn't have any answers. But he sure does have powerful questions!"
(E.W., client).

C.K. is responding to the question, *“What has your coach just been saying / doing to bring about this “Aha” moment?”*:

“Asking questions: “what does xxx mean to you?” “what would you like to say to xxx?” “If you could xxx, what would you do?” (C.K., client)

Implicit in C.K.’s account is the acknowledgement that ‘xxx’ means different things to different people. Co-Active coaches are curious about the meaning that clients idiosyncratically attribute to words, feelings and events in order to guide and support action. Coaches never have answers because they trust that clients can find their own. L.A.’s account demonstrates how coaches guide clients through resistance to find answers:

“She looked beyond my immediate agenda to the larger or deeper issue of my resistance and gently guided me to reconnect with the centre from which I could find my own answers” (L.A., client)

Client J.C. explains the context of his “Aha” moment in both literal and metaphorical language, again using the jargon of the Co-Active model, regarding the space held by his coach:

“Powerful questions. Held the space – wasn’t going to go away”. (J.C., client)

Powerful questions equate to ‘guided discovery’ (Neenan and Palmer, 2001) where a series of questions are posed in order to stimulate thought and bring insight. Their aim is simply to raise awareness of the question. The goal of Co-Active coaching is to empower people to find their own answers (Whitworth et al, 2007: xx). To this end questions point clients in a particular direction. They are often short and sweet, e. g. *“What do you want”, “What did you learn” or “What’s next for you?”*, reflecting the model’s ontological position in assuming the resourcefulness of the client, the present and forward thrust of the coaching, and the commitment expected of the client to learn and to take action. In short, powerful questions reflect the ontological positioning of the client as creative, resourceful and whole. The next section addresses the commitment expected of clients to learn and to take action.

d) *Action and Learning*

Client M.L. has learned to concentrate on the positive possibilities that risk-taking can afford:

"Yes, I tended to think about the risks instead of the possibilities. Focusing now on the possibilities instead of the risks". (M.L., client)

As client S. H. explains, risk-taking can be emotional, involving the risk of forging deeper connections and becoming more intimate in relationships:

"I'm more willing to take risks in communicating with my intimate partners resulting in deeper intimacy in our relationships". (S.H., client)

Risk-taking often follows the laying down of a 'challenge' (Whitworth et al, 2007: 101) by the coach. Having the courage to accept challenges can cut through doubts and fears according to client P.L.'s report:

"Since I started being coached, whenever I have doubted or feared I have accepted the challenges anyway". (P.L., client)

Action is derived from values, as expressed in client E.W.'s report:

"I keep my mind on my key values as I move forward". (E.W., client)

Loyalty to the relationship, and the commitment to action that can accompany this feeling is gleaned from A.S.'s extract in her report about what works best in coaching:

"And also accountability - just knowing I didn't want to let myself or my coach down" (A.S., client).

Responding to the question, *"What have you learned as a coach in this session?"*, coach K.F. reported that mentoring can sometimes accompany coaching:

“Where appropriate, if you have a solution or a skill to share, then it opens up possibilities for a client. It doesn’t stop them experiencing it, you just gave them a leg up. Mixing practical mentoring with coaching can have its place”. (K.F., coach).

Coach K.F.’s account gives mentoring a role within the paradigm of coaching (although it is the sole mention of mentoring in the study). In Co-Active coaching, action and learning constitute an experiential cycle where self-understanding guides action, the analysis of which feeds back to deepen understanding (Whitworth et al, 2007:87). Co-Active clients are warned at the outset that they will be challenged to take risks, i.e. try out new behaviours, and that, in the course of so doing, they will “fail”. There is as much to be learned from so-called failure as from so-called success (Whitworth et al, 2007: 93).

Accountability for action (Whitworth et al, 2007: 91-92) is central to personal change. When clients are held accountable, it has the effect of mobilising insight and translating it into action.

The next section presents accounts from coaches about how they deal with their own feelings and thoughts during coaching sessions, a process known as self-management.

e) Self-management

The client’s “Big Agenda” (Whitworth et al, 2007:130) represents the focal point in Co-Active coaching and is based on personal values and life purpose. The coach’s job is to hold it continually in sight and, in order to do so, the coach must self-manage. Coach A. H.’s diary entry centres on self-management when she found herself coaching a new client with very intransigent beliefs. The resourcefulness of clients sometimes seems well hidden under the surface:

“I observe for myself, in this particular session, I had to keep lifting myself up out of the quicksand, and hold my client naturally creative, resourceful and whole – self management!” (A.H., coach)

Coach K.F. journals immediately after a coaching session, responding to the question “*What are you aware of?*”, a question designed to bring forth the phenomenological reality experienced by the coach in the moment. She reports that she sensed boredom in the energy between herself and her client:

“Some of the lack of commitment and boredom came from me. I needed to share it, before we realised that I was projecting this on the coaching”. (K.F., coach).

A further entry in K.F.'s diary explains:

"What impact my assumptions and feelings have on the coaching. Being honest about me gave us space to find out what was going on with her". (K.F., coach).

K.F.'s accounts bring the nature of co-activity into sharp focus; the energy and atmosphere is co-created by coach and client. The commitment to truth-telling shown by coach K.F. enhances trust in the relationship, according to client P.L.:

"What really helps me is the trust I have and feel during our coaching sessions. This is because my coach says it like it is" (P.L., client).

Responding to the question about what worked best in coaching, client S.H. noted:

"My coach not holding back, either with loving support or telling the hard truth" (S.H., client).

Several themes are highlighted by these reports. For example, that the coach is 'human' enough to admit projection of her own boredom on to the session gives the client 'permission' to also err and be human, an element of a successful therapeutic outcome, as noted by Howe (1993) above. Findings also suggest the importance of rigorous truth-telling in the Co-Active environment: "...*the elements that must be present in the Co-Active relationship include respect, openness, compassion, empathy and a rigorous commitment to speaking the truth*" (Whitworth et al 2007: xx).

In sum, the skills and 'ways of being' of the coach contribute most to personal development, according to reports. These include levels II and III listening, the conscious use of intuition, accountability and scrupulous truth-telling. In addition, the 'container' that holds the coaching relationship includes: the need for a loving and non-judgmental environment; the desire for open and honest communication; and the belief in the resourcefulness of the client. The Co-Active coach actively encourages and supports the client's growth and helps maintain the momentum to nourish insights and to take action. The coach also holds the client tightly accountable, encourages bold action and teaches coaching skills so that clients can self-coach. Ultimately findings suggest that the ontology of coaching means that coaches have a much greater faith in the intrinsic wholeness of the client than those therapeutic alternatives which adopt a medical model (Joseph, 2006). The next section presents findings that again demonstrate the role of the support of the coach in facilitating clients' development.

Participant reports suggest that the taking of action, a fundamental principle of the Co-Active model, is likely to increase the incidence of “Aha” moments.

Section 3: Elements of Behavioural Theories in Co-Active Model

Client S.B.'s account very firmly links action with the loving support of her coach:

“Without the love and support of my coach I would never have been able to translate my “Aha” moments so consistently into positive action” (S.B., client)

Client S.B.'s account endorses Rowan's (1998: 91) view that insight alone might not change actions and emphasises the role of the coach. For client P.L., what worked best in coaching was his coach's teaching him skills like challenging and questioning:

“Passing on coaching skills: challenging and questioning my own behaviour”. (P.L., client)

Client S.D. noted how his coach, through 'calling him forth', was able to challenge his belief systems, leading to new behaviours:

“He never stopped reminding me of the best of me. I used to think that I couldn't do what I really wanted to do, even though it took some time for me to make the change. Now, I consistently challenge the misguided belief that I have to settle for what I have. I might see myself holding back and then I think, “I can do that, easily” and I do. I call myself forth!” (S.D., client)

Clients are facilitated to self-actualise when their coaches show belief in them: “...when you point out your clients' ability, their strengths, their resourcefulness, and let them know you believe in them, you give them access to a little more of themselves” (Whitworth et al, 1998:105). Client N.O.'s excerpt indicates that positive affect, in his case feeling more 'alive', has led to behavioural change. This change is displayed in inter-subjective behaviour:

"I feel more alive. I am reaching out to people, engaging in meaningful discussion. The negative aspects of my former behaviour are lessening as I realise they weren't helpful".
(N.O., client)

In the pursuit of personally meaningful goals, it seems that positive effect can go hand-in-hand with risk-taking, according to client D.C. who is now prepared to change behaviour in pursuit of his values:

"I used to be risk averse but not any more. I've learned to take more risks in order to be congruent with what I hold true for me internally" (D.C., client).

P.L. 's increased confidence leads to new behaviour in inter-personal situations:

"I now do not shy away from meeting new people and feel more confident in doing so..."
(P.L., client)

Client S.B. no longer has to consciously think so much about having confidence:

"More confidence, less thought about it" (S.B., client)

"Aha" moments can lead to immediate bursts of goal-directed behaviour. In the example given by client S.L., creative and productive actions follow insights:

"In the immediate aftermath of an Aha, my behaviour is totally different. I'm free to create and act in ways I wasn't before. In the specific case I am focusing on here, I sat down and wrote an article in less than an hour that was published with very little editing". (S.L., client)

Client S.W. is responding to a question about what worked best in his coaching relationship, and his report shows that the coach is always encouraging him to 'check in' with his body:

"Checking and reinforcement – coach would make me articulate physical feelings"
(S.W., client)

Behaviour is not divorced from expressions of who one aspires to be. Reports show being and doing to be intrinsically linked:

"I knew all the things I needed to do; I just couldn't link them up with who I wanted to be. (M.O'R., client)

M.O'R reports later in her diary that it was only when action became internally focused that she was able to manifest the outward changes she desired. Her accounts suggest that Co-Active principles and practices cannot be captured within a purely behavioural paradigm. She had to address the central Co-Active tenet of "deepening the learning" to find out more about who she needed to be to fulfil her purpose. The ability to make changes is therefore linked to changes in perceptions of self-identity. This is given expression in client M.M.'s account. When asked if he was taking new action, he responded:

"Yes, because I used to define myself through my corporate career" (M.M., client)

'Being' qualities emerge when one recognises choice, according to client M.L:

"I am as 'big' and as 'brave' as I want to be. I always have a choice. (M.L., client)

Many "Aha" moments are reported as resulting directly from clients' apperception that their essence is being and not having, and that being unfolds with the moment-by-moment direction of attention. Client J.R. expressed these sentiments when an inner voice constituted his "Aha" moment and said:

"Enjoy being who you are. In fact, enjoy simply BEING. Let go of concerns because there's no need to worry" (J.R., client).

The Co-Active model focuses on being rather than having since *having* things is momentary and the satisfaction is fleeting (Whitworth et al 1998). The model promotes a framework for fulfilment based on qualities of being and becoming.

Client F.D. responds to the question about what contributed most to the changes he'd achieved through coaching, and the focus again centres on being rather than doing:

"Being in the moment instead of planning. Trusting my own resourcefulness". (F.D., client).

Reports suggest, then, that there are aspects of behaviour change in the Co-Active approach. Behavioural elements such as reinforcement are apparent.

Action in participant reports often links to perceptions of self-efficacy and self-confidence, as predicted by Irwin and Morrow (2005). In addition to the goal-setting practice of Co-Active coaching, which is a distinctly behavioural pursuit, Irwin and Morrow also identified personal values, self-defined issues, empowerment, self-confidence and self-efficacy as key elements in behavioural change (p. 29). Reports conveyed that goals are set and pursued in accordance with personal values. Fulfilment derives from the pleasure of honouring values, as reflected in Locke and Latham's (2002) goal setting theory which suggests that the setting of challenging goals is intrinsically motivating because it links to positive affect.

Reports show behaviours are shared between coaches, and the skills they have are passed on to clients. In addition they suggest that, even when coaches are employing behavioural "techniques" like reinforcement, they are seeking to unify mind and body in an 'embodied' knowing. Irwin and Morrow (2005) admit that their study does not include all the theories that pertain to the Co-Active coaching model and certainly reports have shown that behavioural change is crucial in "forwarding the action" (Whitworth et al, 2007:12-13). Nevertheless, their contention that the model is largely behavioural misses out the most important element of the Co-Active model that this research points to: the coach's role in supporting the client in manifesting and revealing more of his or her identity and of the person he or she is becoming. This translates into action that can refer to behaviour that is not directed towards external goals. It still constitutes a change in behaviour, but one that has a much more intentional awareness of personal habits.

This section shows how clients now employ Co-Active terminology and in so doing consider the concepts to which it relates in ways that facilitate expansion of the self. Findings offer insight into not only the skills and tools employed by Co-Active coaches but, more importantly, the whole tenor of the relationship itself and how it is designed to 'be'. In sum, while the Co-Active model shares some principles and techniques of

behavioural psychology, it differs in ontology, attending to the client as a whole person, including clients' ways of being as well as ways of doing. There is an emphasis on intuition, deliberately seeking out a client's passions to direct actions, and a physical phenomenology to promote bodymind unity that are absent from traditional behavioural approaches. Additionally, the behavioural theories to which Irwin and Morrow (2005) pin the Co-Active model are concerned only with *rational* attitudes and actions. According to participants' reports, sometimes it takes an "Aha" moment for realisations to filter through the unconscious mind into conscious cognitive awareness. The next section briefly outlines what could be described as cognitive elements of the Co-Active model.

Section 4: The Co-Active Model and Elements of Cognitive Theory

Reports suggest that challenging habits of mind in Co-Active coaching takes various forms: challenging negative thinking patterns, or gremlins; accessing unconscious material; viewing any event/ person/ experience from multiple perspectives; and engaging meta-cognition, or reflective self-awareness.

A coach can help unearth belief patterns since, as client S.D. notes:

"It's hard to catch your own pattern" (S.D., client).

Clients are often invited to simply and dispassionately observe their own mind-sets to see what is limiting them. Much realisation is gained as a result of this self-reflexive awareness, according to P.L.'s account of his "Aha" moment:

"Realisation I had a certain frame of mind when thinking about Public Speaking" (P.L., client).

Through coaching client S.H. has changed his thinking:

"Coaching can change your habitual thinking patterns" (S.H., client)

As S.H. observes, as well as behavioural patterns, coaching can change patterns of habituated thought to produce novel cognitive insights. Client P.L.'s description of his

"Aha" moment is typical of a cognitive shift. His report hints at the need for a coach to help him 'see' what he failed to understand on his own:

"I felt a clarity like when a puzzle or riddle is revealed to you and you wonder how you couldn't have seen it before ". (P.L., client)

Even with the support of a coach, however, insights can fail to produce cognitive change. Coach D. L. reports that cognitive rigidity, in this case judging and over-analysing, can be so habituated that insight is prevented from 'taking root'. Describing her client's 'aborted' "Aha" moment, she notes:

"I think it is experienced by the client for a second – then he goes so quickly to judgment and analysis of bliss/joy during the week that the Aha moment goes away, waving sadly" (D.L., coach)

A later diary entry from coach D.L., working with the same client, hints at some progress but indicates that attitudes can be very resistant to change:

"The attitudes are shifting, and I feel somewhat like they are 'moving plastic ducks' in a booth at a fair. Up they pop – we shoot them right out of the water...and they keep popping up. Hopefully we're taking aim better – and faster!" (D.L., coach)

Belief systems are not only habitual, but they can be influential in a non-conscious way. Coaching can bring unexamined material to the fore, as recorded by client S.P:

"I realised that I knew consciously that I had pre-conceived ideas about what would happen in a situation" (S.P., client)

Bringing unconscious ideas to the fore can illustrate their relevance to current circumstances, according to client N.Y.:

"I have learned that raising an issue that seems quite dormant shows that it may in fact be a very live issue" (N.Y., client)

Coach N.M. reports her own understanding of her client's "Aha" moment as the latter identified unconscious thinking patterns. She notes the skills she used during the session, many of which are to be found in traditional cognitive approaches to change:

"The 'aha' perhaps was about the unconscious life pattern which has not served this client well. Coaching skills used: clarifying, articulating what's going on, reframing and huge acknowledgment" (N.M., coach)

Negative thinking patterns can block new insights. Client C.L. is becoming aware of patterns of negative thinking:

"Awareness of specific beliefs and then belief patterns helps me recognise them sooner in subsequent episodes". (C.L., client)

When responding to a question about what contributed most to a successful coaching outcome, client S.B. reported:

"Perspective work, confronting and dealing with Gremlins, and Aha moments" (S.B., client)

Gremlins (Whitworth et al: 1998) represent negative self-talk and are explored in Chapter 5. (n.b. the gremlin has been re-christened the 'saboteur' by Whitworth et al (2007), but because the data speaks of gremlins, this will be the term employed throughout this study). Findings imply that the recognition of habituated negative thinking patterns reveals more of the individual's innate potential:

"My attitude is positive. I find myself shaking my head almost out of disbelief as I realize my potential. Less and less do I give voice to the Gremlins and think negatively" (N.O., client)

N.O.'s management of her belief systems is now more consciously intentional. Co-Active coaches challenge clients' belief systems and life stories. This is noted by client S.H., whose coach challenges his stories whilst simultaneously calling him forth:

"My coach's standing up to the old story that I told myself about my life, challenging it, not settling for the small place". (S.H., client).

Client C.G.'s change of beliefs has improved his relationship with himself:

"Examining my beliefs with my coach, and self-reflection has led me to my being me, trusting myself, respecting myself" (C.G., client).

A method by which coaches encourage clients to examine their beliefs and explore alternatives is to take multiple perspectives. This activity represents the principle of "balance" coaching (Whitworth et al, 2007: 144-153). It aims to help clients balance their lives while accepting that change is an integral part of life and so achieving balance is always a dynamic quest. This kind of 'dynamic equilibrium' is achieved by encouraging clients to view a particular situation from as many perspectives as they can imagine. Client A. S. responds to a question about what worked well in coaching. Her excerpt highlights the particular value of balance coaching when clients feel stuck:

"Having someone help me to separate all the issues that I was having. I felt completely overwhelmed and was stuck due to being so overwhelmed". (A.S., client)

Perspective taking can result in re-framing a situation, a common pursuit in cognitive approaches. This is encapsulated by client E.W. when considering how to view a colleague:

"A change of perspective regarding a person that I must cooperate with in my new position. From a threat to a possibility" (E.W., client)

Clients are encouraged to use imagination and role-play so balance coaching can result in non-rationally based learning. Client H.G.'s account of seeing a person from different perspectives illustrates the unorthodoxy of balance coaching:

"Yes, I was not able to see a person from different angles. In the session I saw this "difficult" person as a 3 year old, a great grandfather, a customer and a colleague". (H.G., client)

The next excerpt from client N.Y. illuminates the dynamics of the Co-Active relationship. It is also seminal in demonstrating the inseparability of thinking, feeling and action. N.Y. presents a vivid account of what led up to his “Aha” moment:

“We had spoken about this topic and related stuff several times and what he did was go there with me again and again. Whenever something new came up, there was a new facet to explore, a new insight to be gained. It was processing again and again, looking at values again and again, choosing perspectives again and again and more learning and action all along – until the AHA! Which shifted lots – and I dared going there because I knew that I would not be judged by my coach about what I was about to discover about myself. He gave me safety and filled me with courage!” (N.Y., client)

A further method employed in balance coaching is encouraging clients to take a metaview of the presenting issue in order to open up room for perspective (Whitworth et al, 2007: 43). The next client, S.G., journals immediately after a coaching session and refers to his realisation that he was looking objectively at himself, from a third-person perspective, in partnership with his coach:

“The “Aha” was: Hey, I’m operating at a meta level, being an observer and partner with the person helping me to uncover what is limiting me”. (S.G., client)

Client S.W. explains the effect of a memorable “Aha” moment. Again, the excerpt shows that while he arrives at cognitive clarity, accompanying positive feelings of energy and power are present:

‘Clarity on something that had been fuzzy before; new insight and an ability to articulate clearly what I see and feel. A feeling of power, vision, direction and energy’. (S.W., client)

With the employment of imagination and role-play, clients are encouraged to disengage from fixed attitudes and rigid belief patterns to explore more creative ways of meaning making. The coach's job is to facilitate conscious awareness of these “fixed programs” so that choices and decisions can be made in conjunction with the client’s present values. The “Aha” moment is extremely important in bringing knowledge or awareness

into consciousness since "...much of human memory is unconscious, and it never becomes conscious – though that does not mean that it does not influence consciousness." (Solms & Turnbull 2002: 278). McGilchrist (2009) points out that very little brain activity is conscious with estimates ranging from only 1 – 5%. In the adoption of imagination, role-play and the exploration of feelings to deepen and enrich the chosen perspectives, balance coaching may be seen to deviate from more traditional cognitive approaches.

The cognitive and behavioural aspects of Co-Active coaching discussed so far deal only with material actions and thoughts – phenomena that can be objectively examined. They concentrate on "ways of doing" and overlook "ways of being". Traditionally dependent on external empirical verification, these approaches belong, in AQAL terminology, to the right hand quadrants. The inclusion of Buddhist psychologies such as mindfulness mean that inner depths are now being addressed in CBT models. Gilbert also points to the usefulness of inter-disciplinary studies such as neuroscience and genetics to integrate CBT concepts. For example, recent research reveals the role of 'mirror neurons' in empathy. If one individual encounters another who is experiencing strong emotion or pain, that individual's brain will also fire as it were happening to him or her. This occurs in the absence of cognition and represents a direct activation of brain systems (Gilbert, 2009: 402). This example of the trajectory of CBT means that it is now moving in the direction of the appreciation of an integral approach which privileges neither inner workings of the mind nor external behaviour.

While participant accounts described so far evidence the importance of taking action and consciously exploring belief systems, data also emphasises the effects of internal awareness in creating "Aha" moments. Findings require analysis in relation to humanistic and transpersonal psychological paradigms, approaches which attend to the interior quadrants of the left. In "forwarding the action" and "deepening the learning" the Co-Active model integrates both, a prime reason for choosing it as a vehicle for this study. The next section turns to these left-hand, interior, phenomenological quadrants to examine data in relation to humanistic and transpersonal approaches.

Section 5: The Co-Active Model and Humanistic and Transpersonal Approaches

This section briefly discusses practices and principles of Co-Active coaching adopted from humanistic, including transpersonal, approaches. The Co-Active model mirrors humanistic psychology in representing an eclectic mix of approaches taking an ontological stance that sees human beings as naturally evolving towards personal growth and fulfilment, or self-actualisation (Maslow, 1987). Both approaches invite clients to self-actualise, or realise their deepest potentials, and in the case of Co-Active coaching discover the values that comprise their life purpose. Kimsey-House (2004) argues that the Co-Active model represents the first truly holistic model, holding that coaching must target the client's whole life, at every level of consciousness. This is another of its four cornerstones.

The next section has two sub-sections and begins by presenting participant reports as they relate to the "whole" person before going on to examine what they suggest about life purpose.

i) The Whole Person

Client E.W. reports changes in his attitudes, actions and communications:

"Better at saying no. Better ability to stay balanced and centred. Better ability to communicate with my wife, particularly when things aren't going well" (E.W., client)

E.W.'s account suggests an increasingly integral orientation to life. Not only is his behaviour altered (UR), but he has achieved new personal phenomenological depths (UL) and is better at sharing thoughts (LL).

The next extract from N.O. suggests a change to the whole of her life as a result of her coach's guidance in integrating insights into her daily activities:

"I have had "Aha" moments before coaching but I could only experience them in an intelligent way. I sometimes wasn't able to consciously integrate them into my life and daily activities. With coaching all that has changed – and my life has too" (N.O. client)

Achieving wholeness can involve addressing buried feelings. Feelings that languish buried in the body are encouraged to surface and find expression. Clients learn to fully embrace feelings rather than deny or repress them, evidenced in S.H.'s report:

"Instead of immediately going for cover I ask myself what this sensation is trying to tell me" (S.H., client).

Feelings are an embodied source of knowledge, as reported by S.L.:

"I have learned how to dissolve and evaporate the knots of fear and frustration in my solar plexus and head" (S.L., client)

Attaining wholeness of self is implied in client S.B.'s report as she responds to a question about the effects of "Aha" moments in her life:

"Self-integration" (S.B., client)

Client L.A.'s report talks of the holistic effects of her "Aha" moment:

"Since the "Aha" moment I have changed for the better in mind, body and spirit as it is all interconnected. Even self-care is better, I eat better, cook more meals" (L.A., client).

Mindbody integration that results in a sensation of wholeness is facilitated by overcoming the ego, according to client S.H. Transcendence of the ego allows expansion of the self and access to intuition and wisdom:

"More and more do I feel that I am no longer dominated by my ego but from a centre deep within, an intuitive, wise place" (S.H., client)

The 'Self' or real self is a humanistic concept distinct from the mask-wearing, role-playing self (Rowan, 1998). Rowan argues that humanistic psychology targets this area of the psyche, which lies between the mental-ego and transpersonal dimensions of the body. Bodymind unity represents the centrifugal point of the whole personality, the "real" self underneath the self-concepts and sub-personalities. The unification of mind and

body – or “centaur consciousness” (Wilber 2001) is designed to heal the split between the ego and the body. The whole person is addressed and the split, or duality, that is often experienced between body and mind is reconciled.

Forging bodymind unity is a practice that was introduced in Section 1 and is the objective of ‘process’ coaching, discussed further in Chapter 5. Process coaching (Whitworth et al, 2007: 156) encourages clients to fully enter their presenting phenomenological worlds in the moment, and to contact corporeal sensations and emotions. The focus is very much on here-and-now felt sensations. Contacting embodied knowledge through process coaching contributes significantly to ‘deepening the learning’ as clients come to realise that by paying attention to bodily sensations they can use them to deepen self understanding or change them.

Co-Active coaching methodologically addresses the whole person in two senses of the term. Firstly, there are many aspects of self – feelings, thoughts, body awareness and all of these dimensions are targeted during coaching. Secondly, the client’s whole life is addressed, as change in one area will have a knock-on effect on others. Participant reports presented in this chapter reflect the centrality of these behaviours and the next section focuses on higher values, being and becoming. Taken together, these constitute life purpose.

ii) Life Purpose

“Being” in the Co-Active sense is very active, holding connotations given to it by philosophers for whom being connotes the idea of becoming manifest or revealed (Kimsey-House, 2004). One has to decide who and how to be:

“I’m willing to allow the possibility that there is another way to be. I think this is a prerequisite for me to allow the Aha to occur”. (S.B., client)

S.B. notes that finding alternative ways to ‘be’ can pre-empt “Aha” moments.

Client M.M. experienced an “Aha” moment in the form of a rush of energy as he realised that he had the answers to his own questions. These were questions asked of his ‘future self’. During this visualisation the ‘future self’ is ‘powerfully’ questioned (see

Section 1: curiosity). Guided visualisation is a key device used to put clients in touch with their own inner wisdom and higher values:

"I got a huge rush of energy through my body as I answered my questions" (M.M., client)

For client M.W., values light the path of action:

"Honouring my values now dictates the course of my actions" (M. W., client)

Client E.W. has realised many different ways of being through the visualisation of the future self:

"Vision, understanding, patience, self realisation, greater self esteem from being able to see my "future self" (E.W., client)

Client H.G. is empowered by her future self to re-conquer the fearless spirit of her youth. Her "Aha" moment arose in a flow state when she and her coach were dancing in the moment:

"As we danced in the moment I realised that the way I see my future self is actually the way I saw myself when I was much younger with fewer setbacks and a feeling that I could conquer anything". (H.G., client)

Client S.L.'s account typifies many of the descriptions of the future self in its inclusion of concepts such as confidence and elegance:

"When I saw the confidence, the elegance, the environment of my future self, I knew that this was who I really was and was starting to become" (S.L., client)

Transpersonal approaches like psychosynthesis (Assagioli 1965) share the Co-Active model's emphasis on who you 'be': *"The first essential is to decide the plan of action, to formulate the "inner programme". We must visualise the purpose to be achieved - that is, the new personality to be developed" (Assagioli 1965: 26).* Assagioli has been

accredited as being perhaps the most important contributor to the term 'transpersonal', following Maslow (Firman and Gila, 2002). Excerpts relating to being needs presented in this section reflect the desire in Co-Active coaching to speak to the whole human being (Kimsey-House, 2004). He argues that the vocabulary of Western, individualist, capitalist society neglects the notion of being in favour of a language for 'having' and 'doing'. The Co-Active founders decided to import terms and definitions that would do more justice to the whole of who a human being *is* and not just his or her thoughts and actions. Developing a new personality, then, focuses on 'being' needs. If we can be who we really are, then we will find ourselves doing things that are enjoyable and satisfying (Rowan, 1998).

Shervington (2004) considers the Co-Active coaching relationship to be underpinned by humanistic psychology. He compares therapy with coaching in the tenor of the relationship. In his 'Integral' approach to coaching, he describes how the coach 'holds' the client: "...the coach won't 'therapise' but will 'hold' the individual...The function of holding will, however, increase in effectiveness when the coach understands 'how to hold' and what is 'to be held'. (p. 26). What is 'held' (in addition to the safe and courageous space discussed in section 1) in Co-Active coaching is the big agenda comprising the values that formulate one's life purpose (Whitworth et al, 2007: 130).

Some theorists see the use of active imagination in visualisations like the future self as a dimension of being that is ontologically real. Drawing on the doctrine of the "world of the image" of Eastern mystical philosophy, Kuhn (2000) suggests that this doctrine invites a reconsideration of the logical-positivist position that imagination, in the common sense of the word, implies fictitious or arbitrary. Imaginal phenomena, he argues, evince a dimension of being that is no less real than the sensible world and this "world of the image" is identifiable neither with the intelligible world of abstract ideas nor the sensible world of physical forms, but constitutes an inner world that intervenes and mediates between the two (p. 153).

The Co-Active model, then, is close to humanistic and transpersonal approaches in ontology. Epistemologically it shares many of their practices, especially the use of the imaginary world. The final section attempts to draw together the combined theoretical underpinnings of Co-Active coaching.

Section 6: The Co-Active Model's Theoretical Underpinnings

Reports presented in this chapter suggest that, while the Co-Active model includes many of the tenets of existing models of personal development, it nevertheless offers its own version of a person-centred and positive psychology of change, with an emphasis on the coach's role in evoking and maintaining insights. Accounts yield concepts that clients have linked together. These shed light on how transformation might be effected. Central concepts that are correlated include:

Coach/client connection and the experiencing of insight

Sustained action and change and the support of the coach

Expansion of the real self and connection to others

Life purpose and energetic action

Self-coaching and continuous development

These linked categories have been identified as dynamics of Co-Active coaching that produce accelerated change and development. Participant reports in this chapter also evince the wide theoretical underpinnings of the Co-Active model. Ultimately, however, the model is decidedly humanistic and transpersonal in its ontology, leading to expectations of clients' progress in the evolution of expanded states of being. The findings of this study help to formalise the central elements of the Co-Active model. Its theoretical orientation might be argued as containing the following principles and practices:

Principles of the Co-Active Model

The client is creative, resourceful and whole

Coach is a guide, not an expert

The Co-Active relationship is egalitarian

Forwarding the Action and Deepening the Learning are co-essential for development

Evolution of the self is a natural drive

Coaching addresses the whole person

The whole person includes levels of development

Practices of the Co-Active Approach

Engage at the level of shared humanity

Engage meta-awareness

Promote bodymind unity

Develop intuition (coach and client)

Attend to energy in the dynamics of the relationship

Focus on presence in the here-and-now

Turn “Aha” moments into motivators for sustained action

Teach coaching skills and techniques to clients

Given the adoption of Co-Active vocabulary which refers to 'being' as well as thinking, feeling and doing, together with the inclusive theoretical underpinnings of the model, the Co-Active coaching approach arguably provides the most wide-ranging context for exploring “Aha” moments and their contribution to transformational development.

Summary

This chapter has demonstrated that the Co-Active coaching model is broad enough for coaches to be able to practise the widest possible range of skills to assist clients in making potentially transformational changes. Insight is stimulated in the course of the Co-Active relationship and the methods it uses, with particular emphasis on the quality of the relationship itself for promoting development. The Co-Active model takes cognisance of both inner phenomenological worlds and the external behavioural worlds of clients. Drawing as it does from myriad schools of psychology, including behavioural, cognitive, humanistic and transpersonal approaches, the possibility of insight is stimulated in all human dimensions, physically, emotionally, mentally (including the unconscious) and transpersonally. Ontologically the model resembles most closely the approaches of the humanistic and transpersonal paradigms. Participant reports have shed light on the theoretical underpinnings of the Co-Active model, leading to a key list of principles and practices that the model would seem to endorse. In addition, participants' accounts of insights highlight the energy that so often accompanies them, whether from a cognitive or transcendental source. This infusion of energy is also reported in the context of the coaching relationship more generally. Indeed, energy

forms a striking leitmotif in the findings presented not only in this chapter but also in those that follow. For this reason attending to energy in the dynamics of the coaching relationship is included within the model presented from the findings of this research in Chapter 9.

The next chapter presents findings that provide information on how “Aha” moments can be facilitated in the Co-Active relationship.

Chapter 5: Triggers of the “Aha” Moment Leading to Potential Transformation

Chapter 4 identified contexts in which “Aha” moments arise, highlighting the role of the Co-Active relationship, the use of coaching skills such as asking powerful questions and the engagement of intuition. This theme continues in this chapter, presenting findings that describe accompanying events or contexts during the moment of insight. The majority of reports in this chapter are in response to the question “What has just preceded this “Aha” moment?”.

Key Concepts

Participant reports display a pattern in which particular ‘triggers’ appear to influence the shift in consciousness that accompanies the “Aha” moment. Some inform the coaching and client practices that pre-empted “Aha” moments while others convey the state of being of the recipient at the time of insight. These are not mutually exclusive. For example reports might mention ‘presence’ as a consciously adopted state of awareness and also as a context in which an “Aha” moment arose. In addition, states of being lead to states of doing and vice versa. For example, the coach might initially encourage meta-awareness to help clarify personal values. The client engages in personal reflection which brings forward an important insight that reveals more of the ‘true self’ which in turn leads to more authentic action based on personal values. Clients engaging in meta-awareness in subsequent self-coaching provide for themselves an environment in which insights may arise. So “Aha” moments arise in, and from, a whole process that includes both dialogical and personal phenomenological practices. However, the ‘trigger’ may be said in this instance to be the meta-awareness which motivated the whole process.

With this proviso in mind, Figure 5.1 gives an idea of how the reports in this section have been grouped together to indicate those coaching practices and states of receptivity of clients that would seem to stimulate and provoke “Aha” moments. It is not an exhaustive list but merely illustrative of clients’ phenomenological accounts and gives a direction to the examination of the reports that follow.

Figure 5.1

Practices

<i>Coach</i>	<i>Coach/Client</i>	<i>Client</i>
Meta-awareness	Presence	Journaling
Engage all ways knowing	Dance in the Moment	Self-coaching
Use metaphor	Define values	Examine inner dialogue
		Raise awareness of belief systems

Receptivity/States of Being

<i>Coach/client</i>	<i>Client</i>
Presence	Openness to experience
Mindfulness	State of flow
	Receptive to all epistemologies
	Emergence of 'being' qualities that
	Enhance a sense of authenticity

Background Literature

Inner speech, whether negative or positive, is a characteristic of human kind (Fields, 2002). Insight has the ability to change conditioned thought reflexes: "...by means of this perception of truth or insight, perception acts... directly in the system and somehow makes a change so that the reflex becomes inoperative" (Bohm, 1994:148). Raising awareness is considered by some philosophers to be the royal route to insights. The ability to remove mental obstacles to insight relies on one's ability to become acutely aware of thoughts and thinking patterns. The conditions for creating insight are brought about through proprioception - a direct awareness that is not mediated in any way (Bohm, 1994). Bohm argues that this awareness should be applied to thinking since thought is conditioned by the past and projects what's going to happen in the future, in

a manner that ingrains itself in the synapses of the brain, causing stale, habituated thinking patterns. The effect is that people forget that thinking patterns do not simply represent a true reflection of an outside 'reality' but instead present a jumble of representations through words, images and symbols that directly affect perception. The illusion is thus maintained that perception is fresh when in fact it is highly conditioned. In focusing on being aware of and differentiating from the contents of awareness, meta awareness becomes a fertile space for supporting the development of other ways of knowing, including knowledge from the unconscious mind (Gunnlaugson, 2007). Insight can lead to new ways, not just of thinking, but of being and behaving, ways that are more in line with personal values and display authenticity. Finding a means of being true to oneself by actualizing one's personal values reflects the characteristics of the stage of development labelled 'authentic' (Cook-Greuter, 1999; Wade, 1996), where authenticity means that *"I need to be all that I can be to fulfill my purpose in life"* (Wade, 1996: 263).

There is a growing body of literature attesting to the benefits of not knowing, being present and mindful on the part of both coach, or therapist and client. Rowan (2005) contends that when therapist and client occupy a space of not knowing, boundaries can fall away. When both parties let go of aims and assumptions, they may occupy the same space at the same time in a 'transcendental empathy' at the level described as soul, heart or essence. Studies in therapy highlight the phenomenology of presence. Presence is *"...perhaps one of the most powerful, yet intangible and unquantifiable variables, which affects the course of therapy, and is an irreducible aspect within the therapeutic relationship"* (Nanda, 2009: 158). Presence recognises the interconnectedness of therapist and client where there is a letting go of any agenda to 'cure' the client. The objective is to stay with what the client presents, a practice which induces compassion for self and other, including being spacious and open to those aspects of our self which we disown. The quiet that this induces nourishes the domain of being and, according to Nanda (2009) cultivation of 'being' qualities in the therapist is the greatest contribution to therapy. This in turn facilitates transformational change in the client in emergent 'being qualities' such as being more present, more receptive and open, more accepting, less judgmental, with the arising of loving, kindness, and compassion (Bien, 2004; Kabat-Zinn, 2005). Mindfulness generates "Aha" moments. This constitutes an embodied knowing bringing together body and mind in relation to

the mind. It involves a coming to our senses (noticing seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling, and noticing our thoughts, feelings, and body sensations), and knowing of our existence in an embodied manner (Kabat-Zinn, 2005).

The chapter is divided into four sections to reflect the different ways in which insights might be stimulated. The introduction to the sections is followed by a table (Table 5.2) that indicates the ways in which findings can be interpreted from a developmental analysis. Insights are shown to contribute to the kind of growth that represents potential transformation of the self.

Section 1: Removing Mental Obstacles to Insight presents findings that suggest the need to overcome potential obstacles to insight. Obstacles manifest as self-sabotaging inner dialogue, or unexamined belief systems. Self-examination helps to bring about insights that appear to reveal more of the authentic self, as discussed by respondents.

Section 2: Multi-Levelled Processing suggests that insights are stimulated when clients utilise all modes of knowing, including dimensions of being that are not confined to the rational. These might be argued to involve the engagement of the right brain hemisphere, which, it is argued, produces intuitive and non-conditioned insights. The use of non-prosaic language like metaphor is also shown to generate “Aha” moments.

Section 3: Mindfulness reflects “Aha” moments that arise from practices like ‘dancing in the moment’ and being in a state of flow. Findings indicate the emergence of ‘being’ qualities that stem from insight experienced in these states. Other psychological approaches are increasingly adopting ‘mindfulness’ meditative practices to assist in personal development. An “AQAL” methodological approach to various fields of research on mindfulness encompasses their different orientations, from investigating mindfulness as a potentiality of the human subject to a practice in its own right.

Section 4: “Aha” Moments in Self-Coaching presents reports from client participants experiencing insights when alone. These findings come mainly from diary keepers, many of whom experienced “Aha” moments when journaling, an activity in which they were engaged immediately after the coaching session.

Section 1: Removing Mental Obstacles to Insight

This section presents findings that indicate the importance of identifying and managing mental barriers to insight, including self-sabotaging internal dialogue, or gremlins (Whitworth et al, 1998). Insights appear to be effected through the use of powerful questioning and the encouragement clients receive to become familiar with their gremlins.

Clients are encouraged to identify the nature of their gremlins and become intimately acquainted with them. Client H. G.'s "Aha" moment resulted from his coach's curious questioning about his gremlin:

"I became aware of my fear of being not liked and rejected which was very powerful" (H. G., client).

When client P. L. was being encouraged to listen to the voice of his gremlin, he had the insight that he sometimes holds back:

"The 'AHA' was the awareness of my holding back on certain things" (P. L., client)

Client J. Mc L.'s report links his gremlins to his physiology, indicating the power of the mind to affect the body:

"My coach was encouraging me to reflect on the voice of the gremlin at the same time as exploring the feelings and sensations in my body. The "Aha" moment came as I saw the link between the gremlin and the body and mind response. I felt myself shrinking as I realised that this is too often my tendency" (J. Mc L., client).

Powerful questioning also led to client L. A. making a mindbody link:

"A question about my back pain which made me think about its cause/origin in an emotional rather than physical way. K. F. suggested it could be to do with breath and shallowness of breath with change; I also linked this to hayfever and taking medication to help with the symptoms. I have felt the pain ease and lessen through the day with stress, and have tried to breathe in and release breath to ease it as I've felt my muscles tighten" (L. A., client).

Powerful questioning had client M. L. realise her pattern of avoidance in relation to talking about her inner self:

“Moving into talking about outside stuff and other people rather than myself and my own inner world/feelings – focus this time largely the mirror an ex-partner provides for me. A tension – talking about such things is a way in, but I can stay with them rather than truly reference things to myself” (M.L., client)

Powerful questioning led client S.H. to conclude that he himself could offer to society that which he most wanted to receive:

“My Aha moment came when I realised: I need to make an effort to acknowledge because I like to be acknowledged myself” (S. H., client)

The next excerpt, taken from the diary entry of client S.D., demonstrates how balance coaching leads to more than the simple accretion of ways of looking at the world. It can represent a shift in the window of the world itself and so amounts to transformation, a qualitative change in the conditioned pattern of thinking:

Coach: *“What comes most easy is most probably right for you”.*

Client: *“I don’t believe you. Give me some reference. Don’t you dare tell me a lie to fool me. It’s too easy, too good to be true”.*

Client: *Try this thought for a week. Or go back to your old thinking – do what is hard and tough and rough if you like”.*

Client: *The switch came during the call. All these things went boom, boom, boom. It clicked. It explodes into all this proof, from looking back, and lots of thoughts stem out of it”.* (S.D., client).

Later entries in S.D.’s diary suggest that this initial ‘switch’ in perspective led to deeper awareness of perceptions and constructs of reality, resulting in the cessation of clinging to old belief systems. A new level of self-identity appears to have been achieved, as has a more tolerant and loving approach to others:

"Now I operate on a different level. I am not attached to beliefs – mine or anyone else's. It's so freeing. I'm lighter, brighter, more loving and more tolerant, of myself and others" (S.D., client)

Journalling can bring forth unconscious insights. This is the case for client T.D. whose insights come from an unconventional part of herself – her "uncensored core":

"Yes. As I journal, I sometimes have an Aha hit like a bolt of lightning from something that I've written, that has come up from my uncensored core" (T.D., client)

Client E. W. reports on the most common sources of "Aha" moments:

"Vision and values, Gremlin management and future self" (E. W., client)

A later report by E.W. indicates that the power and resourcefulness reported above can be accompanied by a growing sense of authenticity. Coaching has given client E. W. the motivation to behave more authentically:

"I have learned to be true to myself and not pretend to be somebody I am not, or that I perceive other people want me to be" (E. W., client)

Client P.S. reports that seeing himself from different perspectives led to his abandoning his role-playing self. This liberates one to simply 'be':

"All I had to do was strip away the artificial layers to be who I always was. It was liberating in the true sense of the word, the freedom just to be" (P.S., client)

The next client, S.D., links "Aha" moments of insight to her conscious ability to be present and authentic:

"Aha moments have become a constant reminder of being authentic in the present moment". (S.D., client)

In the sports psychology literature, inner speech has been described as a "*multidimensional phenomenon concerned with athletes' verbalizations that are addressed to themselves*" (Hardy et al, 2005: 905). These verbalisations allow individuals to interpret feelings and perceptions, regulate cognitions and give themselves instructions and reinforcement (Hackfort and Schwenkmezger, 1993).

It could be argued that personal gremlins and belief systems in general constitute the societal conditioning of AQAL's LL quadrant, where ideas about the self and the world have been assimilated. However, reports also suggest that some insights cannot be understood from the point of view of cultural conditioning but appear to come from an 'uncensored core'. It might be argued that this core is not conditioned by society but represents the upper left quadrant of internal phenomenological depth. When artificial layers of the self are stripped away, more of the authentic self may be experienced.

In Co-Active coaching the fulfilment of life purpose goes hand-in-hand with honouring personal values. Inauthenticity stems from people's tendency to try to actualise a concept of who they think they should be, rather than to actualise who they really are. This difference between *self-actualising* and *self-image* actualising is very important (Perls, 1969: 19). The existential notion of being able to live authentically, free from societal conditioning is controversial. Since being authentic entails living according to one's idiosyncratic values, then what constitutes authenticity is different for each individual.

Heidegger (1927) argued that authenticity involves the human struggle to reach self-recognition and self-understanding. However, his view of self-understanding emphasises the social, cultural, and historical context for the authenticity of being, causing him to argue that authenticity is inseparable from the world. It is bound up in the same discursive framework as the exploration of the self and is thus contingent upon the particular social and historical circumstances of each person who seeks it. This infers that the individual is subject to changing environmental influences which prompt corresponding changes in the self. Authenticity of the self is therefore not a goal to be achieved but an evolving and continuous process that mirrors environmental changes. Heidegger's analysis would seem to address the lower two quadrants of the "AQAL" paradigm – the lower left of cultural beliefs and the lower right of social

systems. Whilst authentic living comes from facing ontological anxiety by turning away from everyday concerns to confront their fluid nature and one's inescapable mortal destiny, a decidedly upper left function, authenticity is above all the "...*expression of one's genuine Self in the community and society*" (Cranton, 2001: iiix). It might be argued that this analysis that privileges an inter-subjective explanation gives a breadth of understanding of authentic living across the board but fails to account for the phenomenological depth of the individual quite apart from societal conditioning.

In addition to claims of enhanced authenticity, reports also suggest a growing sense of autonomy and empowerment. They speak of the kind of internally focused action that can lead to transformational change. This might be the expectation of developmental stage theorists who posit the potential for life-long development. As it pertains to the mind, Kegan's (1982) 'orders of mind' theory describes "self-authorship" as a stage of development where values and expectations become decided internally rather than drawn from the mores of society. (Kegan's theory is discussed further in relation to findings presented in Chapter 7).

This section has highlighted how managing gremlins, identifying personal values and journalling can all pre-dispose "Aha" moments. Slowing down and being present can also facilitate powerful insights that lead one to experience more of who one authentically is. Findings also suggest that insights arise from the unconscious mind as one of many loci, resulting in the transcendence of the ego, a subject taken up in the next section.

Section 2: Multi-levelled Processing

Whole brain processing is, according to Cook-Greuter (1999), characteristic of a self whose neo-cortex is able to dominate and manipulate the lower brain centres so that the individual overcomes ego-defensiveness to arrive at the authentic stage of consciousness alluded to above. This section presents reports that indicate the power of whole brain thinking in triggering "Aha" moments. Meta-awareness, the raising of unconscious material and the use of metaphor all contribute to the incidence of insights. The section discusses the implications of the engagement of multiple dimensions of the self in processing experience and how this relates to the ego.

Balance coaching encourages the adoption of meta-view and reports show this to be a critical trigger for “Aha” moments. Client S.M.’s “Aha” moments are contextualised within the skills his coach is using, noted as follows:

“Acknowledging and mirroring and letting and encouraging me to think big...being totally present and putting into words that which I am fumbling through...naming it for me in some instances”. (S.M., client).

Client L.S.’s insights are triggered when she is reminded of the bigger picture:

“Knowing that my coach has utter faith in me and frequently reminds me of the Bigger Picture. Knowing that he knows who I really am” (L. S., client)

The adoption of a systems view triggers K.C.’s insights:

“The common theme in my insights is a sense of pulling back from the situation and sensing a system or big picture thing at work”. (K.C., client).

Client D.C. recounts how taking a “third-person” perspective allowed her to see her egoic ‘games’. Her coach had invited both of them to travel above the city in a helicopter and view her life from that detached perspective:

“My coach asked me to describe what I saw from this ‘on-high’ perspective. As I looked down on me and my colleagues, suddenly I could see the way I was being, the games I was involved in” (D.C., client).

Meta-awareness can trigger a change in emotions (Gunnlaugson, 2007). Client L.M. reports that she has just created a meta-view in the engagement of flights of fantasy and visualisation with her coach. This is how she feels afterwards:

“Feeling expansion my mind...letting other possibilities in, allowing my imagination to lift me up and put me in touch with the bigger picture”. (L. M., client)

Client S.L.’s report suggests that meta-awareness involves the body:

"Aha moments happen when I take a step back and reflect on my own mind games, without judgment. I can also go into my body and listen to what it has to tell me" (S.L., client).

J.M.'s report suggests a combination of cognition and intuition in the moment of insight:

"Mental 'clicking into place' of the intuition that tells me - live in the moment". (J. M., client)

Client M.M.'s coach has been encouraging him to set his beliefs outside of himself and examine them from a detached perspective. Client M.M. can now laugh at his ego, a report that suggests a capacity to transcend it:

"I am so much more aware of my ego and its demands. I used to be a slave to these demands but now I can recognise it and laugh at it" (M.M., client)

Client S.W. reports experiencing, in the course of balance coaching, an "Aha" moment which took him "beyond his ego" to another level of identity:

"When the aha came, it came from a place beyond my ego, my 'little self' and felt like it came from my core, my essence, another order of reality completely". (S.W., client)

Client M.G.'s excerpt shows the accommodation and resolution of previous paradoxical thinking:

"After wrestling with doubts and uncertainties, I've learned that there is a much more powerful place for me to go – both/and and not either/or" (M. G., client)

The 'helicopter' perspective is an improvisation device to encourage clients to disengage from the contents of awareness to observe these contents more objectively. In this manner subjective identification can be objectified and so, in Piagetian terms, can be operated upon. Reports indicating the potential for meta-awareness in mind and body may be interpreted as reflecting the urge to transformative development. The

adoption of dialectical thinking as in either/or possibilities relates not just to triggering “Aha” moments but is itself a developmental process in which stable periods are viewed as *“moments in a developmental process in which new, more equilibrated forms are continuously created out of tensions in previously existing forms”* (Basseches, 1984: 221). Reports of overcoming the demands of the ego reflect the ability to see more and more of the ‘self’ as object. This plays a central part in clients’ ability to make transformational change (Cook-Greuter, 1999) and is indicative of a qualitative transformation of consciousness.

As indicated in Chapter 4, the identification of unconscious material is a key facilitator of insights. S.W.’s diary entry shows that unconscious material was unearthed in her coaching session:

“Today felt like it flowed so it’s difficult to pick out one moment. Perhaps the link L.L. suggested between my family history (accepting and meeting people’s needs being very old learned behaviour); this felt wrong on a conscious level, but completely right when I linked it to unconscious thought, behaviour and emotion”. (S.W., client)

Journalling can trigger unconscious insights into different parts of the self, according to client M.L.’s account:

“I’m not remembering a specific time. I know that when I write, allowing my unconscious to spill out on paper, I sometimes have Aha moments. I can remember this happening particularly when I allowed different parts of my psyche a voice. As I moved the pen as fast as I could to capture their words, a dialogue would emerge among them from which an Aha moment might occur” (M.L., client).

Client C.G. is journalling about the potential of her “Aha” moments to uncover unconscious material:

“I’ve only ever had comparable moments of insight from the unconscious mind during meditation”. (C.G., client).

Reports that suggest the overcoming of the ego, the accessing of unconscious material and the overall expansion of the self might suggest the engagement of both brain hemispheres. For instance, the left side of the brain is associated with conscious responses while the right is linked to the unconscious mind. Morris et al's (1998) study demonstrated that unconscious emotional processing was specifically associated with the activation of the right and not the left hemisphere. McGilchrist (2009: 187) surmises from the work of Jaynes and others that the major differences between the hemispheres lie in their relationship to the unconscious mind. So too does personal emotional material. Fink et al (1996) suggest that the "right" mind and not the later-forming verbal-linguistic left hemisphere is the substrate of affectively-laden autobiographical memory. Wittling and Roschmann (1993) concur that the right cortical hemisphere is dominant for subjective emotional experiences.

The suspension of analytical thought in the impasse prior to an "Aha" event allows the right brain or intuitive brain (Vaughan, 1979) to engage. Some researchers consider that, as left brain hemisphere can interact through language, right brain hemispheres can unconsciously communicate. In psychoanalysis Marcus (1997) suggests that the analyst, by means of reverie and intuition, listens with the right brain directly to the analysand's right brain (p. 238). This right brain to right brain communication represents an alignment of the non-linguistic dimension of the relational unconscious of both therapist and patient (Zeddies, 2000).

The use of metaphor seems to be a strong contributor to insights. Client M.L. describes her "Aha" event in the midst of feelings of grief:

"Yes...dealing with overwhelming grief, hope (recognising it was waiting in the side lines), and hope being launched (a picture of a boat.)" (M.L., client)

Client F.W. had just been experiencing a combination of perspectives and process coaching when he had his "Aha" event. This is how he describes his accompanying thoughts and feelings:

"I'm free. The ball and chain is gone. I feel whole again". (F. W., client)

Finding something new is expressed metaphorically by client, C. L., who is explaining the effect of her “Aha” moment:

“For me it felt like a light in a dark tunnel shining on something new” (C.L., client).

The following account is from client S.R. who was beginning her own training as a Co-Active coach. She attended a ‘Leadership’ course run by C.T.I. Her report highlights this expanded sense of self together with a metaphorical device, in this case ‘particles’:

“A big AHA moment for me that has occurred as a result of coaching has been that I often don't go for something or make it a harder journey by getting stuck in the things to do. So therefore I get overwhelmed before I begin. At Leadership they called these things to do particles. I now always look at what I want to achieve, if the particles, things to do, get in the way or trouble me I jot them down, knowing that I will come back to them and deal with it. It has helped me get a clear vision on where I want to go, in all areas of my life. It could be small tasks or something major. The result is that I don't get stuck as often, I don't delay or put things off as often and I go for so much more than I thought possible. More feels possible for me now, and it's just a case of working through what needs to be done. Also, once I am clear on where I want to go, I am committed to it and then I just have to go through the things that I need to do to get me there. I hope this makes sense, it has completely changed the way I view the world and what's possible for me” (S.R., client)

In the next extract, client M.L. describes the context of her “Aha” moment when her coach is encouraging her to use imagination to access intuitive knowledge. Her report evidences again an embodied knowing from the multi-dimensional nature of her seen/felt/intuited experience, which leads to an action plan described in metaphor:

“Visualise a positive moment, define the “feeling”, she said...Suddenly I saw/felt/intuited the building blocks or foundation for moving forward. The road ahead was finally clear”.
(M.L., client)

Client J.R. lists ‘open perspectives’ among the means he now deploys to sustain the changes he has made through coaching:

“Seeing my gremlins for what they are, future self and values, rationalising things, open perspectives, less black and white” (J.R., client)

Similarly, client N.O. lists the metaphorical future self as a prime force in strengthening his position:

“Primarily Gremlin management and future self have had the largest impact in helping me see things from different perspectives, from a stronger vantage point” (N.O., client)

Coach T.C. reports the instance of his client’s “Aha” moment as the latter was discussing a co-worker whom she feared. Employing metaphor supported her in breaking down her resistance to discussing this man. T.C. is responding to the question, “What ‘landed’ most with the client?”

“Metaphor (co-worker as animal). Used animal image as a starting point for different perspectives”. (T.C., coach)

The diary reports of coaches suggest that reflecting on coaching sessions while journaling validates and reinforces tools and skills that coaches are deploying. This coach, A.D., was journaling in response to the question, “What have you learned as a coach in this session?” and reflects the non-rational ways of knowing that metaphor can access:

“The power of metaphor in helping the client relate to a situation in a non-analytical way” (A.D., coach).

Metaphors are routinely elicited from clients in Co-Active coaching and represent important tools in the Co-Active coach’s arsenal. Henry Kimsey-House (2004) explains that at the heart of Co-Active coaching is the question, *“How do you speak to the whole human?”* He emphasises the importance of metaphor to get beyond the individual perspective of the client, since *“metaphor allows you to get bigger than your life to date”*.

While reports emphasise the non-rational role of metaphor in effecting change, some researchers have defined metaphor in largely rational, cognitive terms. Angus and

Rennie (1989), for example, define it as “...a form of verbal expression and cognitive structuring which invokes a transaction between differing contexts of meaning and construct systems” (p. 373). However, in the therapeutic field, Marlatt and Fromme (1987) found that metaphorical language helps to overcome conscious resistance by providing access to the affective component or the feeling memory of the individual. Metaphors can reframe a problem in a novel way, and produce new ideas for action based on the new data provided by the metaphor (Berlin et al., 1991). Metaphor can also be seen as a teaching and learning tool, presenting meanings, perspectives, implications and directives for change in a succinct and creative form (Boone and Bowman, 1997) and in this way reduce complex situations to simplicity and clarity. Metaphor can also encourage self-exploration or disclosure in resistant individuals (Newton and Wilson, 1991).

Angus (1996) correlated successful outcomes in therapy with the use by therapist and client of a few core metaphors. The future self has been evidenced in reports in this section as one such core metaphor commonly used to uncover personal values. ‘Fulfilment’ coaching (Whitworth et al, 2007: 134) utilises this guided visualisation exercise from which to draw a “life purpose” statement, expressed in metaphorical terms, to retain the focus on the client’s self-actualisation plan. Such exercises have the dual effect of accessing subconscious material while creating the statement and thereafter being better able to retain it in memory. In therapy, adults retain a verbatim memory for metaphorical phrases for a longer period than for literal phrases, so the mnemonic properties of metaphor may be useful (Reyna, 1996).

While findings suggest the success of the employment of metaphor for creating an environment conducive to insights, research on the role of metaphor in counselling has been criticised for comprising mainly case studies and speculation (Bayne and Thompson 2000) and for confining the small number of empirical studies to the mere classification of metaphorical expression (McMullen and Conway 1996). In a developing theme in the presentation of this study, metaphor is considered to be associated with the right brain hemisphere (McGilchrist 2010).

Reports in this section have included the idea of vocalizing different parts of the self, different sub-personalities. Rowan (1990) estimates there to be around sixteen schools in psychotherapy employing sub-personalities, citing examples of Freud’s superego,

Jung's complexes and Perls's top dog/underdog. In transpersonal psychology Assagioli (1965: 75) defined sub-personalities as "*...the functions of an individual in whom various psychological traits are not integrated... it is possible to synthesize these subpersonalities into a larger organic whole without repressing any of the useful traits*". Many reports in this study have shown the usefulness of acknowledging gremlins (and subsequently splitting them off from the core self) in the quest for insight.

This section implies that a combination of approaching the mind in imaginative and linguistically symbolic ways helps to bring about insights which transcend the ego and evoke the future self's qualities. Allowing all aspects of the psyche, or all sub-personalities, to have their voice provokes insight. Reports also indicate the power of meta-cognition in triggering insights that may affect emotions and self-identity. In the Co-Active model, metaphor or imagery is used not only in fulfilment coaching, but as an effective access point for exploring the moment during 'process' coaching (Whitworth et al, 2007: 159).

The section has also evoked the notion of evolving levels of development, evidenced in personal empowerment, the search for authenticity and the engagement of the whole brain, the facility of the right brain hemisphere to intuit new experiences, together with the left hemisphere's ability to conceptualise them (McGilchirst, 2009). These endeavors promote intuition and the release of ego so that the self may be experienced as a whole. In overcoming ego-defensiveness, this way of being reflects an authentic stage of consciousness. Psycho-physiological investigations continue to suggest that while left-hemisphere brain functioning is responsible for the maintenance of semantic memories, right-hemisphere functioning is closely associated with the system that sustains episodic, personal, and emotionally laden memories (Rotenberg and Weinber, 1999).

The next section introduces another set of practices that influence insight, and are grouped together under the umbrella of mindfulness.

Section 3: Mindfulness

This section presents reports that speak in one way or another of the importance of being open to present experience as precursors of insight. 'Dancing in the moment' (Whitworth et al, 2007: 5) and being in a state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1992) are close correlates of mindfulness, a kind of meditation. All of these practices invite non-rational creative thinking or no thinking and openness to other ways of knowing.

Dancing in the moment created a massive "Aha" moment for client M.L:

"My coach and I were just dancing in the moment when all of a sudden I was hit by this huge "Aha" moment that engulfed me" (M.L., client).

Client J. Mc L. attributes raising his self-awareness to his coach's skill of dancing in the moment:

"It was my coach's ability to dance in the moment – to flow, to go with whatever came up that helped me to become self-aware and self-correcting" (J. Mc L., client)

Client M.W.'s excerpt hints at various triggers of insight, including the mutuality of the 'dance' with his coach. M.W. reports how one big "Aha" experience was created:

"It was created through openness, speaking truth, receiving and giving feedback and trusting the dance." (M.W., client)

The Co-Active concept of dancing in the moment refers to the ability of the coach to be present to whatever is arising in the moment for the client. This skill triggered client M.M.'s "Aha" moments:

"Ability of coach to 'flow'" (M.M., client)

Client S.M. considers his coach's ability to flow key to his development:

"Only upon looking back, I realise it was the ability of my coach to "flow" with each and every whim I had, which led to "Aha" moments and played a major role in my development". (S.M., client)

Dancing in the moment and being in a state of flow would seem to be closely related except that the former happens between two subjects while the latter can happen alone. Experiences of illumination, creativity and insight can arise in this relaxed state of being (Csikszentmihalyi, 1992). The object of attention comes so much to the fore that all distractions recede into the background, including noise and the passage of time. Participants might be said to be occupying this temporal-spatial vacuum in the experience of the “Aha” moment. Fully occupying present time features in the findings, both as a description of the momentum of the coaching session and as an experiential state of being. Moment to moment direction of attention can be a conscious choice. This can be surmised in client J. Mc D.’s account:

“I realised that in order to live, i.e. experience my life fully, I have to occupy this moment now. I realise that if we’re not experiencing the flow, we’re living in a virtual reality of our own making”. (J. Mc D., client)

“Aha” events often germinate in a silent space. Client H.G. reports adopting a strategy suggested by her coach of simply raising awareness of thinking patterns:

“I learned to sit in silence, just observing my thoughts as they arise”. (H.G., client)

Client S.W. recorded in his diary that his first big “Aha” moment came at a time when he and his coach had shared *“a kind of meditative silence”*. In a diary entry several weeks later he reported:

“Since the initial AHA when I realised that I could be (and stay) in the present moment, being mindful, I now consciously direct my attention to present awareness in all situations”. (S.W., client).

The importance of appreciating the present moment was grasped during client H.G.’s “Aha” moment when discussing her personal values with her coach:

“I have the power to choose to live my values right now” (H.G., client)

Embodied awareness led to client P.L.'s "Aha" experience during process coaching:

"As I realised the position, colour and shape of my feelings I felt an amazing satisfaction and powerful feeling. This is so easy to tap into". (P.L., client)

Process coaching (Whitworth et al, 2007: 156) was introduced in Chapter 4 as one of the three paths of Co-Active coaching. The goal of process coaching is to enhance a client's awareness of the moment by slowing down to appreciate and expand the present, the here-and-now (Whitworth et al 2007). The flow of process coaching comprises five steps: 1) the coach hears the turbulence and names it; 2) the coach explores it; 3) the client experiences it; 4) a shift happens, and the client integrates it; and 5) movement happens (Whitworth et al 2007:157). The skills required by the coach include Level III listening (see Chapter 4) to access intuition that may tune into the client's 'turbulence', which might be an emotion or something that the client is ignoring or bypassing (Whitworth et al, 2007: 157-158). Process coaching promotes presence by guiding the client deeply into his or her present experience, in body and mind, as a singular entity. As reports indicate, the shift that happens during process coaching can often take the shape of a profound "Aha" moment.

In order to promote presence, or here-and-now awareness, Co-Active coaches borrow from the Gestalt toolkit. Client H.G. explains that her "Aha" experience occurred as she was engaged in a typical Gestalt practice – switching chairs, the chairs representing the self and the other to promote dialogue. She journals in her diary her intention to use this strategy on future occasions:

"Going from stressed to relaxed. Changing chairs was very useful. I can do this on other matters!". (H.G., client)

Client H.G.'s "Aha" moment arose when she had come to realise her values and the intentionality she could now apply to them. Consciously attending to values provides the motivation for personal change and development: *"Motivation influences awareness through the agency of attention"* (Wade, 1996:20). Intentionality means making conscious, moment-to-moment choices that are in line with personal values. Client P.L.

reported that his coach had been exploring his values and encouraging him to use his intuition in the moment of the “Aha” event:

“Creativity – my value around being creative and proactive with all – making a connection with all makes it right and whole” (P.L. client)

Client S.B.’s change of perspective produced compassion, in this case for himself, whom he describes in the third person following his “Aha” experience:

“Oh my God! I feel sorry for this person. Total change of perspective”. (S.B., client)

The moment element of the “Aha moment” can be understood as an aspect of mindfulness, where conscious attention is paid to whatever is arising in the here-and-now. This mindfulness of the present means suspending judgment of both self and others, by not referring to mental ‘data’ to check new experiences or people against stored information. N.Y. expresses this sentiment of no prejudice in his account, which he recorded after reporting that his “Aha” was triggered by his coach’s powerful questions:

“I can be very content and get positive feedback from others if I am ‘in the moment’ and meeting people where they are. I used to pre-judge people and was reluctant to assist people who don’t ‘deserve’ it. How my awareness has grown” (N.Y., client)

The next account comes from my client, R.B. I had been coaching him over several weeks, with much perspectives coaching to have him investigate his somewhat rigid beliefs and attitudes. He also experienced process coaching to have him live more fully in the present. He came to see that clinging to stories, justifications and interpretations was keeping him locked in the past. This extract from R.B.’s diary reflects the excitement of a man in his sixties who has learned for the first time in his life how to concentrate on the present rather than the past or future:

“I’ve spent all my life thinking about then (past and future) and never appreciated the pivotal role of NOW. It works – I’ve tried it!” (R.B., client)

Client S.H.'s extract explains one benefit of 'going with the moment':

"Going with the moment eliminates the fear of anticipation" (S.H., client)

Client S.R. links "Aha" moments to presence:

"I am more present. Slowly more focused. This brings "Aha" moments. I'm more energetic because I'm now aiming for things that really matter to me". (S.R., client)

Resting in the moment has become a conscious ploy for M.L. and can lead to a succession of emotions and feelings, from loss of fear to bliss:

"In the moment, there is nothing to fear – no memories, no anxieties. And as I rest in the moment, a good feeling settles on me, then joy, then bliss" (M.L., client)

The next account, from client B.F., shows how the coach's curiosity can trigger insights and highlights how the dynamics of Co-Active coaching can work. When, during process coaching, B.F. had identified where in his body he was experiencing his "Aha" event, this led to insight of a transpersonal nature, where his inspiration came from a source outside of his own 'being', a purpose beyond himself:

"She kept poking around there until I exclaimed, "It's bigger than I am!!!" That epiphany resulted in an instantaneous understanding of why I was feeling out of control at the same time that I felt inspired by a purpose bigger than I am" (B.F., client)

S.M. reports the environment in which his coach is being 'totally present' as instrumental to his development. According to Pert (1997), deciding to become fully conscious entails becoming aware of emotional, mental and even basic physiological experiences. Heightened awareness allows us to... *"listen in' to the conversation going on at automatic or subconscious levels of the bodymind, where basic functions such as breathing, digestion, immunity, pain control, and blood flow are carried out".* (Pert, 1997: 286).

Continuous attention to the presenting moment acts to extend the spiritual line of development in Gestalt therapy (Kennedy, 1988). He describes the Gestalt approach as a "*way of being in the world*" and not just a type of therapy (p. 88). Three principles facilitate spirituality in Gestalt: co-creative dialogue, temporality (being in the present, in my body), and horizontalism (we are all equal as humans).

This section has shown the primary role of the embodied knowledge to which process coaching gives access. It has also pointed to the links between process coaching and Gestalt therapy in principles and practices, particularly the importance of exploring clients' experiences in the presenting moment. 2,500 thousand years ago the Indian philosopher Nagarjuna contended that our most profound existential and emotional problems stem from clinging to cognitive positions and presuppositions. The key word here is 'clinging'. Having cognitive positions is inevitable, but becoming entrenched in them and seeing no other way of viewing any phenomenon constricts the sense of self and cuts off choice (Claessens, 2009). In contrast, a mindfulness perspective sees discursive logical thinking to be often unhelpful in resolving difficulties whereas practising simply stepping back and letting go of habitual reactions and accessing inner 'breathing space' over time can be deeply therapeutic (Harvey, 2008).

Mindfulness teaches individuals to inhabit the present moment. This is all they have, given that past and future are mere mental constructs (Claessens, 2009: 114). The concept of the 'moment' is much better understood in Eastern than Western paradigms of consciousness and involves conscious awareness, or mindfulness of the moment. Blatner (2004) points to the link between meta-cognition and the Buddhist practice of 'Vispassana' or mindfulness meditation.

Kostanski and Hased (2008) distinguish between concentrative meditation practices which have a focal point of awareness and mindfulness meditation which aims at becoming consciously aware of thoughts as they come and go. Mindfulness is described as "*...an experiential practice in the development of moment-to-moment awareness of our physical, cognitive and affective responses to internal and external stimuli* (Claessens 2009: 109).

Mindfulness in the West has been incorporated primarily in cognitive therapy and psychoanalysis (Claessens 2009). In Segal et al's (2002) study, participants were taught to distance themselves mindfully from their thoughts and this meta-cognitive practice was found to be a key factor in cognitive therapy for depression. These authors argue that this mindfulness is not limited to cognitive shifts but offers the integration of a wholeness of the self. Teasdale et al (2003: 160) present the combination of mindfulness and cognitive-behavioural therapy as *'one of the most exciting and potentially productive avenues for future exploration'*.

The adoption of mindfulness based cognitive therapy has resulted from a flurry of research on its benefits, not only by clinicians, examining the UL quadrant of personal experience but also by neuroscience in the UR quadrant, where new discoveries about neuroplasticity are confirming beneficial changes in the neural circuitry of meditators' brains (Harvey, 2008). In addition, in the LL quadrant, representative of the public sphere of consciousness, recent books on mindfulness like Eckhardt Tolle's "A New Earth" (2007) are selling internationally in their millions. Harvey (2008) identifies other current mindfulness-based research fields, from stress reduction, to mindfulness-based humanistic psychotherapies. The ubiquitous uptake of mindfulness practices is related to the idea that as a healing device, mindfulness is easy to practise and has wide potential applications in therapy (Claessens, 2009) and because, unlike metaphor studies, as a meditative practice, many empirical findings testify to its benefits (Nanda 2009).

Kostanski and Hased (2008) found the aetiological basis of mindfulness to be equivocal but it might be argued that their analysis conflates mindfulness as a concept, as a practice and as a process. In the same paragraph, they compare the following research: the predisposition to mindfulness as an aspect of a personality that is open to experience (McCrae 1992); mindfulness as a cognitive ability (Carroll, 1993); as a promoter of neuroplasticity and a healthy immune system (Davidson et al 2003); and as a pre-reflexive mode distinct from the processes of reflexivity (Brown and Ryan, 2003). Findings in this study suggest that mindfulness is something one can engage in, with intention and motivation; it consists of focusing awareness and attention; it is experienced as a level of consciousness in its own right; and it triggers insights and other, positive attitudes and affects. If Wilber's AQAL model were applied to the findings

of the combined studies, this would prevent unnecessary confusion and conflation of separate facets of mindfulness in research studies. How one experiences mindfulness belongs in the phenomenological quadrant of “I” (UL), the actions taken to achieve mindfulness relate to the behavioural quadrant, “It” (UR), as do empirical findings of brain structures related to the phenomenon, and the rising awareness of mindfulness in the public’s consciousness relates to the quadrant “we” (LL). The concept in Western culture is not often represented institutionally. Schools and other centres of learning, for example, do not tend to address the body, mind, spirit continuum and do not acknowledge the human potential to access the consciousness of the eternal now, so mindfulness is under-represented in the systems quadrant (LR). Reports presented so far have come from participants experiencing it in the intersubjective space of the coaching session. The next section examines reports of insights experienced by participants when alone.

Section 4: Influencing “Aha” Moments in Self-Coaching

Not all “Aha” moments are experienced in the coaching session. As indicated in Chapter 4, a key task of the Co-Active coach is to pass on the skills required for the client to be able to self-coach in between coaching sessions. Findings suggest that self-coaching influences “Aha” moments. Practices such as self-reflection, evoking the “Future Self” metaphor and mobilising intuitive knowledge are again shown to trigger insights. In Chapter 3, the question was raised as to whether findings would show an important role for journaling in the creation of “Aha” moments. Findings presented in this section would seem to echo earlier reports presented in the chapter in verifying the importance of journaling.

Client K. P. responds to a question about whether she has had “Aha” experiences outside of the coaching session:

“Yes sometimes the work of the coaching session is left with an inquiry that brings on an ‘aha’ moment afterwards. This is very empowering”. (K.F., client)

Coaches often leave clients with a homework 'inquiry' (Whitworth et al, 2007: 80). The coach offers a powerful question to the client for reflection and exploration between coaching sessions.

Reflection and awareness sustain the insights that client M.L. has reached through coaching:

"Self-reflection, more aware of behaviours and my feelings and not allowing others to take priority all of the time" (M.L., client)

Self-coaching can involve gremlin management. Client C.M. reports an "Aha" moment that occurred when she recognised a 'gremlin' for what it was and, employing her future self, turned it around:

'One such moment was when I was visited by a 'gremlin'. I was able to identify it; remember it in detail from the coaching session and then 'turn it around' so that it was a positive. It was provoked by moving 'forward' in reaching a goal. The Gremlin was about how I wasn't any good. I was able to catch myself in it and sort of shake it off. Then I switched to visualising my future self. It was really quite magical' (C.M., client).

Reports show the metaphorical 'future self' to be a popular aid in self-coaching. C.M's report is a reminder of the power of metaphor to awaken charisma, heroic qualities or magical gifts (Kopp 1995). The use of this metaphorical device has allowed client H.G. to chart her personal development:

"Self-reflection, increased awareness of what I do to me, using my 'future self' as a measure of where I am now" (H.G., client)

Client D.R. uses the future self as a motivational aid in the unfolding of self:

"My future self is always pulling me forward toward the vision of who I am becoming. It's great in self-coaching" (D.R., client).

Client L.S. consciously links insights to her life purpose:

“Aha moments also take place for me when I’m journaling, when I’m in the shower (!), watching TV, talking to my husband – I’m constantly engaged in an inquiry with myself about how to make my purpose real in the world” (L.S., client).

Client S.B. stimulates insights in the course of pursuing her evolving identity:

“Journaling, compelling purpose, who am I becoming?, values and gremlin management” (S.B., client)

Client M.W. reports an “Aha” moment in the process of perspectives self-coaching:

“I can think of one example of an Aha moment where I just changed the way I thought about something from one day to the next - I amazed myself at how easy that was!” (M.W., client).

Clients report the use of meditation in self-coaching to illumine the unconscious. For A.S., this resulted in uncovering the unconscious reasons for her lack of momentum:

“I have been strangling my momentum through the fear of rejection, and this reflected in my apprehension to just say what am I and what I do. The meditation and other techniques have enabled me to illuminate the hidden reasoning, and to overcome them from within from seeing the other side”. (A.S., client)

Client S.D. has learned to access embodied knowledge more easily thanks to her process coaching. She now accesses positive affect at will:

“This feeling is becoming more familiar. It has started to become less conscious. I used to have to use techniques that were time consuming, now I can access these feelings quickly or they are a part of me now in a way they weren’t before” (S.D., client)

For L.K., the most useful self-coaching skills are also embodied and include meditation, breath work and process coaching:

“Meditation, breathing, visualising positions of impact within my body... ” (L.K., client)

Embodied wisdom for client N.Y. comes in a visual ‘hit’ and now she trusts this way of knowing:

“The Aha comes in a visual hit. Whenever I have ignored it, I have made the wrong decisions. Now I always trust these insights” (N.Y., client).

Client N.Y. noted that her “Aha” moment happened immediately after her coaching session, in the act of journaling:

“Right at the end, making notes about what we’d discussed” (N.Y., client)

Journaling was also a “huge help” in triggering insight for C.G., according to her diary entry:

“Writing huge help, Aha moment while journaling” (C.G., client)

M.L. reports that journaling triggers self-understanding by “reaching her core”:

“I took 2 pages of notes today; in our last coaching session I wrote 2 lines. Writing is part of what helps me reach my core, and recording helps my understanding even if I don’t read what I’ve written again”. (M.L., client)

Diary findings show that journaling benefits coach as well as client participants in the study. It appears to invite introspection on the part of coaches that can sharpen their skills. Coach D.L. held an even larger space for her client as a result of journaling. Responding to the question: “What have you learned as a coach in this session?” she reports:

“Actually responding to this questionnaire last week allowed me to be much more objective. I went into the coaching session from a space that served my client much better, and was able to hold a larger space for him to stay in his truth and values”. (D.L., coach).

Client S.L. wrote in his diary that he had been identifying where, in his body, he experienced feelings – both positive and negative – with his coach. This process coaching had happened on several occasions. Here, S.L. describes what happened when he attempted to contact somatic awareness for the first time on his own:

“Just realised how easy it is to tap into this moment and claim all of my power, passion and energy”. (S.L., client).

Insights in journalling may depend on one's type, according to some authors. Cranton (2002) speculates that journalling may produce more insights for introverted than extroverted people and Wilber (2006) considers that women often report difficulties in silent meditation and he recommends that they spend quiet time journalling instead.

Client P.L. journals about the effect on him of “Aha” moments when walking himself through different perspectives:

“I get a huge rush of energy running through my body” (P.L., client)

Client A.S. reports energy of a more ubiquitous nature as she journals about the changes she'd made through coaching:

“A widening sense of myself – life feels brighter, I feel stronger and more energised”. (A.S., client)

A linking of mental and spiritual dimensions is exemplified in the excerpt from client A.F who was journalling on the immediate awareness accompanying his “Aha” moment:

“Mind (imagining lots of possibilities) connected to spirit (connection to what's important) and dragging the body along (have to jump up and start walking around)” (A.F., client)

Findings show, then, that clients can easily employ the skills and techniques that their coaches have introduced. Some respondents, however, while experiencing insights

outside the coaching session, still recognise that the coach's presence might have illuminated the insight further. This is true of the report from client M.G:

"I process a lot in-between sessions and there is always some realisation in that. The main difference here is that in between sessions, my coach is not with me to take me further with questions and thus take me deeper into the experience". (M.G., client)

Client P.L. reports that his coach was using empathy and understanding during an "Aha" experience, "not like a therapist", but as a champion of his fulfilment:

"Coach was using empathy and understanding...not like a therapist but really a nagging voice that wants you to be fulfilled". (P.L., client)

Jordan (2000) considers mutual empathy to result from a co-creative "movement-in-relation", reflecting the dynamics of the Co-Active model. The dynamics provide for a bigger shift in personal transformation than might be expected in therapy, according to client S.M. who was comparing the two. Her excerpt shows how much coaching has affected her way of being:

"Coaching Aha...SUCH a big paradigm shift. Had to happen to allow mental insights...previous beliefs and behaviours have been abandoned...I am calmer, more spontaneous, light-hearted, more giggly, more sense of fun". (S.M., client)

Accountability can be viewed as a 'trigger after the event' of the "Aha" experience, turning insight into behavioural change. This is surmised by reports such as that of client K.P:

"The coach's follow up to make me accountable for turning the insight into action is crucial" (K.P., client)

While other "insight" therapies may support the re-framing of meaning, this pursuit does not necessarily result in tangible differences in the client's life. Only behaving differently results in objective differences, according to the excerpt from client C.W. who had been in therapy prior to being coached, and was noting the differences:

“Therapy for me was about exploring the meanings of things but not doing anything about them. My coach supported me in taking action”. (C.W., client)

Client D.L. compares therapy to Co-Active coaching and, while reporting insights in each, considers therapy to lack the “follow through” that is supported in Co-Active coaching:

“Therapy was about the insight, not the follow through. Coaching support extends way beyond the insight increasing personal awareness which is what I found in therapy (with my therapist anyway).” (D.L., client)

A similar sentiment is expressed by client, W.S., who had previously undertaken personal development work, but without the support of a coach. He attributes the ability to keep his insights “alive” to the Co-Active coaching experience:

“The difference to coaching is for me that in this way I keep my AHA’s alive. I can come back to them, build up on them and I feel that my coach is living them with me. That is not so much the case in other PG work from my point of view”. (W.S., client)

It would seem that practices singular to the Co-Active model act not just as triggers to “Aha” moments but reflect a collaborative and dynamic relationship that turns insight into action. The various approaches to understanding triggers to insight have useful contributions to make and some researchers see the advantage in integrating them to gain a deeper appreciation of how they can address this issue, which is crucial to transformational development. For example, having found mindfulness to be key to meditation, Kornfield (2008) favours the marriage of Eastern and Western insight to capitalise on both intuition and rationality.

One of the main findings, both in the accounts that relate to insight within the coaching interaction and when experienced alone, is the importance of “being in the moment” as a trigger for insights. Mindfulness of this can also be viewed as a level of consciousness in its own right, a meditative space in which non-cognitive insights are revealed. One of the most interesting findings was the role of journalling in encouraging such meditative insights. Finally, findings show the value in the Co-Active practice of encouraging

clients to use coaching skills on themselves. “Aha” moments often occur in between coaching sessions, especially when the client is consciously utilising coaching skills, or ‘self-coaching’ and this practice, together with the co-activity in the model, implies that coaching is more action-oriented than therapy and other developmental and insight approaches.

Findings would seem, then, to endorse Kornfield’s view in highlighting the importance of mindfulness within a range of multi-modal practices and ways of knowing that simulate insights. These practices in turn facilitate the completion of developmental tasks that pave the way for transformation of the self. Table 5.2 presents a summary of the methods used to address these tasks, the emergent processes that result from their undertaking and the experiential / developmental fruits that they yield. Descriptions in the table were developed in grounded study fashion with some representing initial key concepts from the data and others representing higher-level categories.

Table 5.2

METHODS	EMERGENT PROCESS	EXPERIENCE
Adopt meta-view Engage right brain	Ego Transcendence	Humour; lightness Accesses intuition
Think dialectically	Post-conventional Growth	Authentic expression Vision logic Post-rational, post-egoic
Use metaphor	Overcome Resistances	Accesses non-rational knowledge Accesses feeling memory Enhances future memory recall
Conscious action to manifest values Presence of coach	Overcome Fear	Embodied knowledge Perception replaced by a clearer reality

Journal	Wholeness of Being	Reaches one's core
Mindfulness meditation		Reveals unconscious insights Enhanced neurological capacity Reduces Stress

Summary

Analysis of findings in this chapter has highlighted a number of ways in which the Co-Active coaching approach triggers insights in clients. These include the separating of the self from gremlins and the analysis of belief systems, both conscious and unconscious, from a meta-level of awareness. The chapter has illustrated how embodied and intuitive ways of knowing, often stimulated by fantasy, imagination and role-play, are pivotal in the experiencing of "Aha" moments. Different ways of knowing trigger different ways of being and this includes the ability to be more self-confident, more empowered and more authentic. Findings suggest that what might remain as a cognitive or intellectual phenomenon seeps into the spheres of beliefs, attitudes, emotions and perceptions of self, thanks to the multi-dimensional ways in which the coach encourages the client to investigate thoughts and feelings. The pattern of findings identified in this chapter supports the notion that personal development proceeds in increasingly inclusive and expansive stages, where the ego is transcended, energy is activated through the relaxing of emotions and the individual may find contact with spiritual experiences. In other words, findings reflect elements of the harmonisation of body, mind and spirit. For this reason, the place of body-mind-spirit coaching is included in the model recommended from findings and presented in Chapter 9.

The next chapter turns to insight itself and examines its features and functions in more detail.

Chapter 6: The Forms and Functions of the “Aha” Event

The intention in this chapter is to explore the nature of the “Aha” moment in relation to the forms it appears to take and the functions it appears to serve. Addressing the question of the nature of insight demands not only different explanations but different *kinds* of explanation. Reports indicate that the “Aha” event is a multi-faceted occasion involving various human faculties and producing a host of different effects. The chapter revisits themes that this grounded study has identified as epitomising insights, such as their potentially transpersonal nature. In addition to highlighting further the forms that insight can take, it ‘slices’ this data in a manner that makes it amenable to examination from the point of view of the function of the insight, as described in Chapter 3.

Key Concepts

Reports in this chapter have been classified into ‘forms’ and ‘functions’. For example, reports indicate the experiencing of ‘brainstall’ prior to insight, the sense of the brain moving in a different direction, thoughts seeming to cease and no cognitive activity being experienced. These reports concerning the form that the “Aha” moment takes led to the key concept of impasse.

Concomitant reports of the effects of impasse suggest how it functions. Reports describing the surety, clarity, personal strength and increased conviction, leading to the key concepts of clarity and confidence.

Many accounts highlight the form that “Aha” moments take in regard to their affective resonances. They speak of feelings of calm and certainty, release and relief, and a drive to action. Emotionally charged is the key concept housing these reports.

“Aha” moments function to deliver feelings of optimism, positive energy, a sense of freedom and being in control. Reports describing these states led to the key concept of increasing self-confidence. Table 6.1 at the end of this chapter (p. 177) summarises findings as they relate to form and function.

Background Literature

This chapter compares findings to recent studies made possible by new methodologies. These studies emphasise the desirability of Wilber's "AQAL" meta-theory to achieve a fuller and more integrated, rather than competitive, understanding of insight from all fields of inquiry. Findings are compared with alternative fields, drawing on a wide range of research interests ranging from mathematical pedagogy to mysticism and transpersonal theory. By comparing alternative paradigms with the findings of this study, it is hoped that this chapter might shed some light not just on how this phenomenon is contested across disciplines but also on those points of synergy that invite inter-disciplinary integration of ideas.

Davidson and Sternberg (2003) argue that insight depends not so much on the re-organisation of sub-conscious thought material, but on the unconscious mind. Ideas in non-conscious memory must be reconfigured in order for insight to be produced. Neuronal network connection theories offer an explanation of "Aha" moments in relation to the unconscious. These theories posit specialised neuronal connections that form matrices or networks, which, over time, develop into patterns that gradually disappear from conscious volition. This would be one way of explaining why the "Aha" appears to come suddenly 'out of the blue' when in fact the information exists, in some format, in long-term memory. *"Like dynamite, the insightful solution explodes on the solver's cognitive landscape with breathtaking suddenness, but if one looks closely, a long fuse warns of the impending reorganization"* (Durso et al, 1994: 98). Besides failing to account for the multi-faceted nature of the "Aha" event, a further criticism of problem-solving and puzzle-problem approaches is that they lack the ability to generalise their findings to more real world problems (Davidson and Sternberg, 2003: 165). Cognitive approaches set out to examine how insight functions in relation to externally presented objects, often puzzles or problems, and are not concerned with the left hand quadrants of interior motivation or meaning. Since findings demonstrate the transformational potential of insights deriving from internal sources, like is not being compared with like, with different methodologies being appropriate for investigating different aspects of insight.

The affect that accompanies "Aha" moments is prominent in reports. Affect includes emotions but also connotes a way of attending to the world (or not attending to it), a

way of relating to the world (or not relating to it), a stance, a disposition towards the world and ultimately a 'way of being' in the world (McGilchrist, 2009).

While the role of intuition in mathematical discovery is theoretically acknowledged, the extra-logical processes leading to intuition are not taught (Burton, 1999). It is argued that studies in intuition are reported in linear and logical parlance. Despite the employment of creative processes like imagination and intuition, the results of these processes are "*encoded in a linear textual format born out of the logical formalist practice that now dominates mathematics*" (Borwein and Jörgenson, 2001). There is the suggestion here that two different languages are being transmitted, that of intuition and that of reason, and they are incompatible. Nevertheless researchers in pedagogy, as in cognitive psychology, continue to study the phenomenon of a potentially non-discursive (and so non-*verbalisable*) dimension of the human psyche and then attempt to verbally explain it (Borwein and Jorgenson, 2001).

The chapter is divided into three sections, each of which presents findings as they relate to cognitive, emotional and transpersonal insights respectively:

Section 1: Material, Cognitive and Social Approaches to Insight presents reports of insight that are compared to findings in cognitive approaches, neuroscience and social approaches. Reports are also compared to research in intuition, especially in the field of mathematics pedagogy.

Section 2: Affective components of the 'Aha' moment examines emotional accompaniments of the "Aha" event, such as confidence, relief and a desire to take action. Findings indicate that the Aha event is invariably accompanied by sensations and feelings which are interpreted as visceral confirmation of the insight.

Section 3: Transpersonal Dimensions of Insight introduces findings that are interpreted as 'transpersonal'. As explained in Chapter 4, these are reports of insights being experienced in a way that seems not to be confined to the gross body, but feel like they emanate from sources within and beyond it. The spiritual or mystical intensity of these insights is reported to supersede emotionally intense insights and to change personal epistemology permanently.

Section 1: Material, Cognitive and Social Approaches to Insight

When client A.S. was journaling about how she experienced her “Aha” event, she recorded:

“No bodily sensations, just a mental sense of ‘clicking into place’” (A.S., client).

This ‘*clicking into place*’ implies the re-organisation of pre-existing thought material, an element of insight that would be predicted in cognitive approaches. Client M.M.’s account suggests a restructuring of thought material to appear as a ‘gestalt’ of pattern recognition:

“Often the Aha links several seemingly separate topics together” (M.M., client)

In early experimental studies of insight, Gestalt psychologists found that solving an insight problem required that the problem be restructured in a novel way, leading to a possible “Aha” moment: *“The decisive points in thought-processes, the moments of sudden comprehension of the ‘Aha!’, of the new, are always at the same moments in which a sudden restructuring of the thought-material takes place”* (Duncker, 1945:29). In this analysis, cognitive insights can be blocked by functional fixedness. Fixating on only one possibility restricts the ability to conceptualise novel uses for objects presented. Gestalt psychologists recommend the breaking of fixations, or mental blocks, to arrive at a solution (Davidson and Sternberg, 2003: 151). The same principle could be said to operate in ‘balance coaching’ (Whitworth et al, 2007: 142). It addresses cognitive ‘fixedness’ by taking multiple perspectives of the issue being coached. Client F.H. has learned to ‘break fixations’ by adopting a meta-view:

“I’ve learned to take a long step back and see the much bigger picture in situations!”
(F.H., client)

Re-organising thought material in this way can involve the discovery of a non-obvious connection between new information and prior knowledge (Davidson and Sternberg, 2003: 159). “Aha” moments can function to forge cognitive connections:

“Recognising a link between a recent successful experience and an earlier one which had in common that I acted spontaneously” (S.W., client).

Problem solvers can also artificially constrain solutions by not attending to all background knowledge that pertains to the problem (Knoblich et al, 2001). Applying this analysis to internal insights and not the objective studies to which Knoblich et al refer, some parallels might be found. For example, people can represent themselves in a way that might be said to artificially constrain their sense of self by not accounting for all background information until an “Aha” moment causes them to reassess their capabilities. This is one way of interpreting client K.C.’s account:

“Since my “Aha” moment, I have come to see myself as the strong and capable woman I really am” (K.C., client)

The next very vivid account from client S.D. raises two aspects of insight: its suddenness and the role of the unconscious mind. One argument for working with a coach is that most cognitive processes occur unconsciously, with only the end products reaching awareness, and then only sometimes (Kihlstrom, 1987):

“The Aha moment suddenly smashes through the crust of consciousness to reveal what was hidden underneath”. (S.D., client).

Some theorists directly link the smashing through the crust of consciousness with the experiencing of insight. So, for these cognitive researchers, the experiencing of insight relates to how representations are configured in memory: *“Representation can be thought of as the distribution of activation across pieces of knowledge in memory”* Jones (2003: 1018).

Client T.H. reports no conscious cognitive processing during his “Aha” event:

“No processing of information is involved. In the moment of the Aha itself, thoughts seem to cease.” (T.H., client)

Participant reports like that of T.H. evince the ubiquity of the 'impasse' in the form that the "Aha" moment takes. The impasse is a further way of distinguishing "Aha" moments from non-insightful ways of knowing, recognised in various fields of inquiry. This has been confirmed in problem-solving studies; problem solvers give more statements about reaching an impasse on insight problems than on analytic problems (Schooler and Melcher, 1995). While the impasse often occurs when people feel 'stuck', these researchers argue that it is in this moment of impasse that conceptual changes can be produced. Their interpretation of the form that insight takes is similar to the memory-based models discussed above. Impasses are initially processed serially at a conscious level, whereupon semi-conscious filters determine which relevant information enters a subconscious network. This network allows for parallel processing of connections between ideas, allowing these ideas to incubate beneath the level of awareness.

Methodological innovations help to distinguish "Aha" moments. Knoblich et al (2001) identified them utilising eye movement recordings to study the moment of insight in respondents working on arithmetical problems. Their 'representational change' theory posits that insight problems cause impasses because they mislead problem solvers into constructing inappropriate initial representations. Insight is achieved when the initial representation is changed. D.L.'s account also stresses the point of impasse:

"It's as if the brain has to stop before re-orienting itself in a new direction". (D.L., client)

Research findings from neuroscience support this nanosecond of 'brain stall' as a prelude to the full bursting of the "Aha" moment into conscious cognition. They also locate a 'eureka centre' in the right brain hemisphere. Jung-Beeman et al's (2004) study suggests distinct patterns of performance as well as differential hemispheric involvement for insight versus non-insight solutions. Their scalp electroencephalogram recordings revealed a burst of high-frequency neural activity in the right anterior temporal lobe area of the brain (above the right ear) beginning 0.3 seconds prior to insight solutions. This brain area has been implicated in neuroimaging studies of cognitive processes like detection of inconsistent or competing activity and attention switching (e.g., Botvinick et al, 2004). Kounios and Beeman (2009: 212) postulate that the anterior cingulate may be involved in the readiness to detect weakly activated, subconscious solutions and to switch attention to them when they are detected. Further

research implicates the brain's right hemisphere in the processing of remote associations and the left hemisphere in the processing of close or tight associations (Jung-Beeman, 2005). This study is an example of how multiple methods can be used to good effect to corroborate theories on the form and function of the eureka centre.

Kounios and Beeman (2009) presented word puzzles on a monitor that could be solved using analytic or insight mechanisms. Preceding the display of problems to be solved analytically, they found an increase in neural activity suggesting that participants were preparing for analytical solving, in part by directing attention outwardly – that is, to the monitor on which the next problem was about to be displayed. Conversely, preparation for solving an upcoming problem with insight involved directing attention inwardly—priming both brain hemispheres for lexical-semantic processing and the detection and retrieval of weakly activated potential solutions, rather than focusing attention outwardly toward the monitor. In addition to the engagement of both brain hemispheres, the experience of impasse and the inward focus of attention, recent research has suggested other interesting avenues of exploration. Since insight involves a conceptual reorganisation that results in a new, non-obvious interpretation, it is often identified as a form of creativity (Friedman & Forster, 2000). Findings suggest that individuals high in creativity habitually deploy their attention in a diffuse rather than a focused manner (Ansburg and Hill, 2003, McGilchrist, 2009). McGilchrist (2009: 40-41) posits that, during problem solving the right brain hemisphere presents an array of potential solutions which remain live while alternatives are explored. By contrast, the left hemisphere takes the single solution that it already knows and latches on to it. It prioritises the expected and positively prefers what it knows. It is argued that the right hemisphere can direct attention to the edges of our awareness and the detection of something new triggers a release of noradrenaline mainly in the right hemisphere and changes in the right hippocampus and not the left. He concludes that phenomenologically, it is the right hemisphere that is attuned to anything new.

Some accounts of insight do not seem to be cognitive in origin. Client S.H.'s account suggests that the brain can be the last part of the body to 'know'. His "Aha" moment emanates from bodily sensations and the impasse occurs there before his brain 'catches up' with his emotional response:

"My body senses it, my heart opens and my brain finally registers its meaning". (S.H., client)

In the LL quadrant of inter-subjectivity, in this study the personal, one-to-one Co-Active relationship, life-changing insights are regularly stimulated. Client J. Mc C. reports that he recalls one powerful "Aha" moment that happened in the environment of the coaching session:

"Every time I remember the experience in the coaching session, I am better in every way. I am more human and secure and assertive and powerful". (J. Mc C., client)

Coaching has helped client E.W. to move forward:

"Coaching has kept me moving ahead when self-doubt threatened to undermine my dreams" (E.W., client)

These excerpts highlight the role of relationship in development. Since findings in this study relate to the Co-Active relationship, the majority of reports predictably describe insights that derive from the lower left quadrant of inter-subjectivity. Some cognitive psychologists attempt to incorporate the social dimension of insight into their theories. The 'great-minds' approach, for example, aims to illumine both the cognitive and social mechanisms that drive insight in real-world settings, claiming that the significant insights of seminal thinkers are embedded within a social context (Davidson, 2003). Even if insights are experienced in isolation, this theory suggests that the preparation, evaluation and elaboration surrounding these insights will have derived from social interaction. In contrast to the laboratory experiments of Gestalt and other cognitive researchers, Csikszentmihalyi (1988), for example, adopts a systems model designed to recognise that cognitive factors, as they relate to creative insight, derive initially from a social context. According to this model, creativity relies on convergence between an individual and a social domain: *"Although the moment of creative insight usually occurs in isolation, it is surrounded and contextualized within an ongoing experience that is fundamentally social, and the insight would be meaningless outside of that context"* (Csikszentmihalyi and Sawyer, 1995: 334-335). Social and cultural phenomena will largely dictate modes of expression and their forms, whether one is a researcher or a

research participant. This will influence any descriptions offered by participants, even when discussing the phenomenology of transcendent insights. That notwithstanding, findings in this study suggest that social theories must be complemented by acknowledgment of interior dimensions that may escape description from a purely inter-subjective stance. A further problem for social approaches like the 'great-minds' approach is that they fail to account for how models of insight should incorporate social factors in problem solving (Davidson and Stern, 2003: 171).

Perhaps this helps to explain why findings from cognitive approaches like Gestalt experiments have led some researchers to conclude that Gestaltists have provided many questions about insight but few answers (Davidson and Sternberg, 2003:17). Some researchers (e.g. Perkins, 1981) dismiss the problem by denying the difference between insightful and non-insightful problem solving, the "nothing special" approach. They claim that the solving of novel problems occurs in incremental steps that can be described by problem solvers. In questioning the validity of insight as a distinct cognitive phenomenon, Davidson and Stern (2003: 171) argue that 'nothing special' theories could be a way of dodging the difficulty of defining and theorising a phenomenon which is a multi-faceted construct and not a singular structure. Findings in this study would not support these 'nothing special' approaches. Reports instead reflect the majority of cognitive approaches introduced in this section, which describe the "Aha" moment as a qualitatively distinct event that is associated with the right brain hemisphere. It functions to deliver an all-at-once solution to a problem, as a result of cognitive re-orientations or information held in the unconscious mind.

Whatever the role of socialisation in insight, changes in the mind of the individual client are a necessary precursor to personal transformational change. Even when speaking of cognitive "Aha" moments, many findings hint at something more than just a cognitive shift. These accounts describe outcomes of the "Aha" moment that transcend a rational understanding and resulting knowledge involves supra-mental, or rational-and-beyond, ways of knowing. For example, most people would understand the metaphor of the "penny dropping" to express sudden understanding. However, something more expansive and revelatory is suggested in client D.C.'s description of "Aha" experiences:

“Specific moments where pennies dropped – kind of like walking through a door into a new place”. (D.C., client)

J.M.'s "Aha" moment comes from intuition:

“This mental realisation that came from the deepest, most intuitive part of me”. (J.M., client)

Chapter 4 demonstrated that “Aha” moments can function to express intuition. If, as was suggested in the introduction, there is no consensus on the definition of ‘insight’, the same is true of intuition (McKinnon, 2005). Insight and intuition are terms that are sometimes conflated. Research into “Aha” moments in the field of mathematics pedagogy exemplifies the confusion that prevails in attempts to differentiate between insight and intuition. Barnes (2000), for example, apparently construes insight and intuition differently, referring to sudden understanding as ‘magical moments’, which “... *may be best described as illumination or insight rather than intuition*” (p 34).

Intuition uses symbolic imagery, as evidenced in client M.L.’s account of her “Aha” moment, which she experienced in mental, physical and affective realms as a result of visualisation:

“There is a clear picture – a visual realisation about what and how. I immediately feel calm and resolved, knowing that I have my answer” (M.L., client)

For Csikszentmihalyi and Sawyer (1995), it is this random convergence of ideas from different *symbolic* domains that produces insight. As reports in this section demonstrate, intuition often implies more than just something remembered, even if the words used connote no more, as in the excerpt here from client L.A. There is a wistfulness in her account that suggests there is more than memory at play:

“...a realisation of something I’ve known all along”. (L.A., client)

Intuition is theorised by some researchers to be material, linked to neural networks. Here, intuitive thought, like insight, is memory-related, aroused by its subject-related relevance or situational ‘background understanding’, as perceived by the practitioner

(Benner 1984). The “soft” skill of intuition plays a major role in the “hard” sciences since intuitive thinking often suggests how to proceed in the laboratory (Klein, 2004). Klein argues that intuition is a developed sense helping to put experience into recognizable patterns for future use. Creative discovery for mathematicians arises in symbolic, extra-logical processes, which include intuition, imagination, insight, and illumination. Reports have shown how clients can solve problems by seeing links and patterns, unearthing unconscious beliefs and accessing inner wisdom during “Aha” moments. It is important to recognise that cognitive and neuroscience approaches complement an understanding of insight but are only able to capture its physical aspects. They provide evidence of the event in the individual, objectively verifiable path of knowledge-seeking. Attempts have been made, unsuccessfully, to account for social factors in insight. The next section presents findings that reflect the role of emotions in insight.

Section 2: Affective Components of the ‘Aha’ Moment

The “Aha” moment functions to ignite emotions. It can be so powerful that it bypasses the cognitions, according to client J.W.’s account of one powerful insight:

“It went straight for the emotional jugular” (J.W., client).

Emotions are invariably mentioned as a facet of the “Aha” experience, frequently accompanied by pervasive positive affect, energy and excitement. This section features reports that demonstrate the emotional nature of insight. These are presented in subsections a) – d), the headings of which are grounded in the data and therefore reflect concepts identified in it. These concepts were grouped into clusters of categories that were frequently mentioned together:

a) Suddenness /Clarity /Certainty

b) Calmness/ Relaxation

c) Relief/ Release

d) Impulse to Act

a) Suddenness /Clarity /Certainty

Suddenness, clarity and certainty are all conveyed in N.Y.'s account. This suddenness functions to produce instant clarity and an associated feeling of certainty. As N.Y. noted, there is 'no equivocation'.

"All of a sudden realisation dawns. I have my answer. There is no equivocation" (N.Y., client)

The suddenness with which the "Aha" moment is experienced appears to be a *sine qua non* of the event. This "all-at-once" sensation was known to James (1902) who distinguished "Aha" moments from 'volitions' in which analysis transformation does not accrue in small, deliberate steps but in the manner of a subjectively catastrophic process. The next report from client A.D. also suggests that his "Aha" moment delivers not only cognitive clarity and certainty but is accompanied by multiple positive affect. As is so often the case in participants' reports, the "Aha" moment is accompanied by a surge of energy:

"Clarity on something that had been fuzzy before; new insight and certainty and the ability to articulate clearly what I see and feel. A feeling of power, vision, direction and energy". (A.D., client)

Client M.L. reports that the positive reverberations of her "Aha" experience have conferred a sense of boundlessness about her life state:

"My energy about my life is endless and created from within me so any negativity will have no effect on my supply" (M.L., client).

Client S.W. communicates her excitement at seeing things in a new way:

"Wow, is what I'm thinking. I never saw it like this before" (S.W., client)

Excitement is also apparent in M.L.'s description of a switch of perspective that led her to switch the course of her life:

"About a month ago though, I probably had the biggest aha yet, which set me off into a completely different direction and has helped me to step into a new perspective on a matter that I have been dealing with for over 15 years!" (M.L., client)

M.L.'s account suggests that the transformation of her beliefs has led to personal transformation holistically, infusing her whole life with a renewed emotional vitality. Transformed emotions resulting from personal insights have a far more long-lasting effect than its fleeting effect on the emotions during problem solving.

M.M.'s account conveys well the phenomenological experience of dramatic emotional change in the moment:

"From drowning and despair I felt pangs of anger/passion/flickers of fire and the confidence that seemed to have disappeared ignite, lots of other feelings were apparent also, like laughter and determination to 'succeed'". (M.M., client)

Client S.B.'s account delivers a sense of how emotionally satisfying the "Aha" experience can be:

"As the aha moment landed, a warm glow filled me" (S.B., client).

The sheer emotional intensity of insight is epitomised in client M.L.'s account:

"Goosebumps all over, neck hair standing up, blood rushing through my veins, tears in my eyes and a funny feeling in my tummy". (M.L., client)

The next excerpt from client M.L. evidences the play of cognitions and affect that the "Aha" moment can induce. It also hints that emotions can pre-empt cognitive clarity:

"I feel excited at the possible opportunities open to me and a calmness and relief as I know which way I should be going – I have clarity". (M.L., client)

When thinking produces clarity, this, in turn, reveals possibilities for future action, as suggested in A.H.'s account:

"The fretting starts, and possibilities begin to tumble out. I'm at my strongest when I can envisage how something will unfold, and the aha moment opens up that moment of clarity and shows immediately what's possible". (A.H., client)

That the “Aha” moment functions to deliver positive affect is corroborated in other fields of study. For example it is widely reported in problem-solving experiments to be an agreeable experience. Participants express the pleasurable feelings that accompany it: positive emotions such as pleasure and satisfaction (Barnes, 2000, Burton 1999, Grootenboer and Jorgensen, 2009); and feelings of warmth and well-being (Metcalf and Wiebe, 1987). “Aha” moments are intrinsically important to the learner because, “...far from understanding being something which is *only* driven by knowledge, there is both a *need* to know and an associated *pleasure* in knowing which is its own reward” (Burton, 1999:29). There is corroboration that emotions can pre-empt cognitions from the field of cognitive neuroscience. Panskepp (1998) found the interplay between emotion, response and reasoning to be milliseconds in duration, with the emotional message being 10 milliseconds shorter. In this analysis we feel before we think.

Research on emotions declined in the 1960's, for various reasons: cognitive questions are more tractable than emotional ones; the ‘dark cloud of subjectivity’ hung over the topic of emotion; and only the emotion of fear received much academic attention because it is a universal concept (LeDoux, 2000:158). Like the connectivist theories of memory, emotions are argued to comprise an interconnected network. Panskepp (1998) identified seven semi-independent emotional command circuits that, when stimulated, dominate behaviour in a quasi-automatic fashion. Divorced from the thinking brain, these neural circuits have the effect of “switching on” a particular emotion, which persists until the circuit is switched off. If this is the case, it would seem that “Aha” moments might function to interrupt this automatic emotional circuit to consciously evoke positive affect.

This is a very good reason to explore unexamined belief systems in the coaching relationship and findings presented in chapter 4 indicated that the “Aha” moment can function to transform ingrained belief systems. The power of belief systems and their inextricable link to emotions has been evidenced in pedagogical studies. In mathematics, the affective domain was introduced to explain why learners who possessed the cognitive resources to succeed at mathematical tasks nevertheless failed to do so (Di Martino and Zan, 2001). Learners believed that they were hopeless at maths and this became a self-fulfilling prophecy. In a study conducted among ‘maths-phobic’ students, Liljedahl (2005) investigated the effect of the Aha moment on both cognitive and affective domains. Defining the “Aha” experience as ... “*Having an idea come to mind with ‘characteristics of brevity, suddenness and immediate*

certainty" (p.220), he reports that 95% of his 'maths phobic' student sample reported experiencing at least one 'Aha' moment during his study. This "Aha" moment created positive beliefs and attitudes *about* mathematics as well as the ability and confidence of subjects to *do* mathematics (p. 231). Liljedahl infers that beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of self-efficacy can be drastically changed through a single Aha experience.

Not all researchers in the field of mathematical pedagogy consider insight to be valuable for learning purposes. Nolan and Dwyer (2002) consider effort and persistence to be more effective. They express concern that the 'getting it' or 'aha' moments might signify nothing more than procedural clarification, a kind of performance ability or cognitive 'gimmick' that may be void of a *deeper* understanding of mathematical meaning and relationships. That may be so in the right hand quadrants where results are being measured, but when applied to the upper left quadrant of the intentional, meaning driven self, "Aha" moments, which deepen learning in relation to the self, are much more personally motivating and memorable. "Aha" moments, then, function to change perceptions of self-efficacy and self-confidence. In the cognitive/affective domains, "Aha" moments can function to empower the self with vitality and self-confidence. In other words, they can strengthen and expand the ego through a change in belief systems and felt energies. As well as excitement, feelings of calm and relaxation are frequently mentioned as facets of "Aha" moments.

b) Calmness/ Relaxation

Somewhat paradoxically, feelings of calm and relaxation are mentioned with as much frequency as excitement. Perhaps it is the verification in both body and mind that creates these dual emotions. Clients learn to control emotions in Co-Active coaching. Client M.H. reports a melting of tension during the coaching session in general, culminating in relaxation in the moment of insight:

"Awareness and consciousness with regards to dealing with dictatorial persons. I went from totally tense to relaxed." (M.H., client)

Client D.C.'s "Aha" moments are both calm and expansive:

"Sensational moments of calm, clarification and expanding of possibilities". (D.C., client)

D.C.'s account suggests that he is not just experiencing an expansion of ideas but a feeling of personal expansion. These are not just memorable moments but sensational moments. It might be argued that reports like these imply that "Aha" moments can function to go beyond memory stores to produce new structures of thinking.

Connection to others is enhanced in coaching. Freedom and compassion are reported to have derived from L.R.'s insights in coaching:

"I'm free to create and act in ways I wasn't before. I'm finding myself much less judgmental and far more compassionate towards others." (L.R., client)

Care for others is demonstrated in client M.M.'s account:

"Less personal – more about giving others "aha" moments becomes the Aha for me" (M.M., client)

Client S.B.'s account shows the potentially 'humanising' effects of insight. She has become more compassionate towards her ex-husband:

"I was in the synagogue singing in choir surrounded by people who care about me. Saw D. on the other side of the synagogue utterly alone. I felt desperately sorry for him and that feeling has never gone away. Humanised (rather than demonised) him for me". (S.B., client).

Client S.H. was explaining an "Aha" experience based on his values. It represents a realisation that is not direct perception and not recalled:

"I became overcome with emotion, understanding that my business is based on the core values in me and how important those values are to me". (S.H., client).

Client C.M. is describing one particular event in which calmness and strength were felt simultaneously:

"Calm throughout. Strong body throughout. Relaxed" (C.M., client)

For client P.L. his insight linked physiology and feelings:

"Yes, aha – feel calmer, more relaxed, breathing more even" (P.L., client).

Client C.L.'s account suggests unconscious emotional material rising to the surface:

"I felt a rush of energy and understanding. A very deep moment occurred and I filled up with emotion and tears". (C.L., client)

Reports presented in this and other chapters demonstrate the conscious link between bodily sensations and emotional feelings and interpretations. Sensation and feeling are hotly disputed topics relating to the question of the link between awareness of internal body states and the conscious experience of feeling. Philosophers have argued that sensation and feeling differ because they have different objects (Bechara and Naqvi, 2004). From this perspective, bodily sensations involve awareness of the body's internal state, whereas feelings are directed towards objects in the external world. An alternative argument is that emotional feelings require both the body as the substrate for feeling and the external object that triggers the body changes and toward which the feeling is directed, either directly perceived or recalled (Damasio, 1999, 2003). A further view questions the separation of cognition and emotion or affect *per se*. McGilchrist (2009), like Panskeep, argues for the phenomenological primacy of affect. He criticises Damasio and others for whom emotion plays an auxiliary role to cognition. He points out that Damasio fails to appreciate the qualitative nature of emotions, instead preferring to treat them as cognitive phenomena that can be made explicit, measurable and quantitative and conveyed in language, a left hemisphere speciality (p. 185). The importance of the engagement of the whole brain, i.e. the right hemisphere as well as the left, in producing unconscious insights was a subject introduced in Chapter 5. The right brain hemisphere's role in creative insight is given further valence in studies of neuropsychology. This model combines neurological theories of the brain hemispheres with developmentally oriented psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Unlike the monosemantic left brain, which utilises this lexical-semantic code, the right hemisphere contains an affective-configurational representational system that encodes self-and-object images (Watt, 1990). The polysemantic context of the right hemisphere creates the representation of personal experience in a multidimensional way, reflecting all inner complexities, paradoxes and affective nuances as well as providing perceptions of self

and body image (Rotenberg, 1993). The right hemisphere offers "...the most comprehensive and integrated map of the body state available to the brain" (Damasio, 1994: 66), reflecting Freud's remark that "...the unconscious is the proper mediator between the somatic and the mental, perhaps the long-sought "missing link" (Groddeck, 1977: 38).

The field of neurobiology has historically always placed reason, situated in the neocortex (grey matter) above emotions, viewed as low order functions of the subcortical structures of the limbic system (Jones, 2003). The hippocampus had long been considered the centrepiece of the emotional limbic system but this theory was abandoned when it was found that damage to this brain region led to severe deficits in long-term memory – a decidedly cognitive function (Scoville and Milner 1957). Damasio et al (1996) combined psychological testing methods with neural imaging and tracking to demonstrate that while the hippocampus is responsible for initiating memory storage, the amygdala plays a key role in the emotional interpretation of events. LeDoux (2000) suggests that, contrary to popular belief, conscious feelings are not required to produce emotional responses, since these, like cognitive processes, involve unconscious processing mechanisms. Critchley et al (2004) found the subjective experience of emotions to be the result of brain activity caused by body states. Combining functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) and voxel-based morphometry (which estimates the size of the brain region), they, too, found that activity in the right hemisphere (in a region called the right anterior insular cortex) supports a representation of bodily states that is accessible to awareness.

The fields of cognitive neuroscience and neurobiology evidence a correlation between strong emotion during an event and memory recall of the experience. When it comes to memory, emotional experiences are often better recalled than non-emotional ones (Bower, 1992). LeDoux (1996) discovered a short circuit to the amygdala overriding the thinking process. Brain imaging studies, like those utilising positron emission tomography (PET) (Hamann, 2001), confirm amygdala activation as significantly correlated with emotional memory. Canli et al's (2001) dual methodology combined fMRI responses in the amygdala with participants' reports of emotional reactions. Their investigation of the role of the amygdala in enhancing declarative memory for emotional experiences found that the degree of activation in the left amygdala during encoding predicted subsequent memory recall when participants were tested three weeks later.

They conclude that activation in the amygdala reflects moment-to-moment subjective emotional experience and that the amygdala is especially active when experiences are emotionally intense. Reports in this study confirm that the “Aha” moment can be experienced in a profoundly emotional way, predicting that it will be well remembered. Thus the “Aha” moment may function to access a consciousness that is pre-linguistic.

The methodological approach of biofeedback studies beliefs and physiology in parallel. In this approach, science in the form of physiological studies in the upper right quadrant meets belief systems in the upper left quadrant to investigate group behaviour in the lower right quadrant during demonstrations of “Aha” moments that occasioned altered belief systems in the group, a change in the lower left quadrant. Wilson et al (2004) used the mechanical measurements of breathing and muscle tension as tools to induce “Aha” moments in participants, both individually and within the group. When participants can physically see measurements of these indices related to their own or other bodies, they comprehend the link between thoughts and behaviour. “Aha” moments reveal bodily discomfort to be linked to patterns of movement or patterns of beliefs, and this realisation leads to a paradigm shift, complete with positive feelings and a ‘can do’ attitude.

The next section addresses the positive feelings of relief and release that the “Aha” moment functions to induce.

c) Relief/ Release

Feelings of relief or being released from negative affect are reflected in participant reports. Client M.L. feels relieved, calm and energised during her “Aha” moment:

“Certainty, a calmness and a feeling of relief. A positive energy”. (M.L., client)

J.B.’s excerpt again demonstrates that it is not appropriate to separate sensation from emotion.

“Freedom – a loosening of knots of fear and frustration in my abdomen and an opening to possibility” (J.B., client)

J.B.'s ability to free himself from the fear that he keeps in his belly means that he can dissolve the fear and turn it into excitement. When clients learn how to control fears and anxieties, this can free up energy for more fun-filled affect:

"I feel the sense of fun coming back into my life". (E.W., client)

E.W.'s "Aha" moment functioned to release her from the feeling of having no fun in her life. Participants often report the sense of freedom that accompanies the release of negative affect. Possibilities reveal themselves when one is able to exercise personal control. Client F.P.'s "Aha" moment links freedom to a sense of control. The locus of control moves from external referents to internal choices:

"I can see a light to work towards – something I can effect rather than just waiting for things to happen to me". (F.P., client).

"Aha" moments, then, can produce increased feelings of personal agency and new methodologies can show the link between physiological states and reports of emotions and sensations in the body and mind. The "Aha" moment also functions to drive actions, as the next sub-section demonstrates.

d) Impulse to Act

The "Aha" moment functions to propel action, a subject discussed in Chapter 5. Action ranges from a basic need to move about to a determination to take specific action. Client M.H. becomes animated after "Aha" experiences:

"I tend to stand up and walk around. I start talking quickly". (M.H., client)

In the diary record of client, H.G., this impulse to act is linked to optimistic feelings:

"Aha. Energetic, restless, twitchy, wanting to move about. Positive energy – optimism". (H.G., client)

Client F.P.'s account suggests that motivation to act results from the surety that the mindbody oneness seems to foster:

"They are a turning point, the point of inner clarity when I suddenly know how to proceed and why. They are the moments when the doing and being come together"
(F.P., client)

When doing and being come together, this is an expression of bodymind unity, a phenomenon well documented throughout the presentation of this study. "Aha" moments function to synthesise body and mind, connecting head and heart, reason and instinct.

Client C.G. reports a unity of feeling in body and mind. She links this to a sense of control:

"A feeling of freedom in my body and mind. A feeling of not being controlled, but rather being able to control, or not, if I choose. A relief" (C.G., client)

C.G.'s extract is typical of reports suggesting that the "Aha" moment functions to change the locus of control from external referents to internal drives. Client S.W. achieves this internal locus of control by consciously contacting a place in his body. His report shows that the body can cue the mind:

"To feel powerful I go to a certain place in my body every time I experience self-doubt".
(S.W., client).

The lasting positive effects that "Aha" moments function to deliver are evidenced in client P.L.'s account:

"I've gone from passive depression to energetic action. I show up as a leader in a way I haven't in years" (P.L., client)

Client L.W.'s "Aha" moment combines cognitive knowledge with bodily information and the combination motivates action:

"I felt this is a breakthrough and really want to act on this immediately. I felt tummy churning and knew that this is what I had to do". (L.W., client)

'Bodymind' theories see the whole organism, and not just the head, as conscious and purposive where bodymind integration reflects the authentic stage of development where autonomy and authenticity are practised (Wade, 1996). In client A.D.'s report, his body and head are both involved in the "Aha" moment where confirmation comes from his gut:

"Confirmation of the truth from my gut – ideas popping in my head". (A.D., client)

Insight has been shown, in neuroscience experiments, to be linked to emotional mood. In "Molecules of Emotion" (1997) Pert presents the findings of her experiments in neurochemistry, which indicate that the chemicals that transmit emotions – peptides and their receptors - are located throughout the body as well as the brain. Prior to such findings, received wisdom had viewed these chemicals as being located solely in the brain, hence 'neuro' peptides. But Pert's findings demonstrate that these same chemicals are to be found throughout the nervous system, the endocrine system and the immune system. They are also located in profusion in certain parts of the body, such as the heart or the lining of the gut. Having a 'gut' feeling in this analysis is more than a metaphorical description - it is conscious awareness of these body-based chemicals and their emotional messages. Another way of saying this would be that the gut and many other sites in the body and its systems house the kind of instinctive awareness that used to be reserved solely for the area of the brain and nervous system. Pert (1998: 143) argues that: *"These recent discoveries are important for appreciating how memories are stored not only in the brain, but in a psychosomatic network extending into the body, particularly in the ubiquitous receptors between nerves and bundles of cell bodies called ganglia, which are distributed not just in or near the spinal cord, but all the way out on long pathways to internal organs and the very surface of our skin. The decision as to what becomes a thought rising to consciousness and what remains an undigested thought pattern buried at a deeper level in the body is mediated by the receptors."* These findings lead her to propose that the body is the unconscious mind (p. 96).

Even if the mechanisms underlying emotions are not well understood, the new methodologies introduced in this section are building bridges between right hand empirical and left hand interior quadrants. Reports suggest that insight can take a very emotional form and that emotions can cue the body and brain. Insight also functions to produce clarity of thinking, certainty of choice and positive affect, leading to increased feelings of confidence and self-efficacy and the impetus to take action. The result is an expanded sense of self and the abandonment of limiting beliefs to provide greater freedom of choice and actions. The ego could be said to have become strengthened and expanded. Beyond these reports are others that describe transpersonal experiences of the self in the moment of insight. Transpersonal models of the person are based on an ontology that posits ways of knowing that lie beyond the self. It is to these theories that the reports presented in the next section are compared.

Section 3: Transpersonal Dimensions of Insight

Insight studies reviewed so far address the gross body and so fail to account for findings describing subtle insights, which appear to derive from a source not contained at the material level of the person. It is important to note that, in this study, respondents were simply asked to describe "Aha" moments. Those whose accounts can only be labelled as transpersonal, mystical or spiritual came from *their* construal of the meaning of an "Aha" moment and their reports were quite extra-ordinary. Given that the subject will be explored further in Chapter 8, findings here are only briefly presented to demonstrate the forms that transpersonal insights take, the functions they serve and how they are construed across different scientific paradigms.

Many reports verbalise a feeling of 'alethia', the Greek word meaning to re-emerge from a deep sleep, or to awaken from lethargy to the truth, a truth that has been 'forgotten'. This sentiment is conveyed by client C.D:

"My spirit became replenished and I had the feeling of life re-kindling /awakening".
(C.D., client)

C.D.'s account of her transpersonal "Aha" moment infers that this 'awakening' might not be connected to memory as it is conventionally understood and theorised by psychologists. It could be argued that Aha moments, experienced at levels of consciousness beyond formal logic, would appear to depend less and less on any information stores in long term memory or at least, if they do, this is not something that can be evidenced. Client D.L. expresses inter-connectedness of energy as something tangible within and around her:

"I am aware of an energy, a healing energy, that I have and that can make you change and survive. Something more powerful but positive is in us, in everyone, in me too. It can make you feel very special and magical..." (D.L., client)

The function of insight at this transcendent level of consciousness appears to promote love and connection with others, according to client D.C's account:

"Like re-emerging from a deep sleep. I feel lighter, stronger and more loving". (D. C., client)

Connection is a recurring theme in the data. This can radiate beyond self and others to include "all" according to the excerpt below from client C.G. This could be interpreted within a Buddhist paradigm where interconnectedness is a central plank:

"...all – making a connection with all makes it right and whole". (C.G., client)

When asked what spot his "Aha" moment was hitting, client J.B. reported:

"Spirit (intangible a concept as this is)." (J.B., client)

This consciousness is the divine power and wisdom of the universe, according to client S.W.'s account of the result of series of "Aha" moments:

"I get a feeling of greatness, I think I am very intelligent. Not in a pompous kind of way. I simply am awed by the powers of the universe, and the way the human mind and body

work. It is the intelligence of GOD (or whatever name you may give it) manifested in me." (S.W., client)

Spirit is a contested phenomenon in psychology. Wade's (1996) 'holonomic' theory of consciousness is an exception to the orthodoxy. The seeds of development in all aspects of being, including spiritual realisations, are considered to be latent from birth and develop in stages. According to Wade enlightenment is binary in the sense that a person has either had it, even for a split second, or not. It is absolute and not dependent on frequency: *"Even a single, fleeting experience reduces ego, including greed for sensory objects, personal gain, possessions or praise; resentment; inability to share with others; failure to perceive the relative and illusory nature of whatever may seem attractive; mistaking impermanence for permanence; and seeing a self in what is devoid of self"* (Wade, 1996:216).

Not all theorists see transformation or evolution of the self as proceeding in a stage-like manner. Miller and C' de Baca (2001) found that insight functions do deliver quantum change. This is how they conceptualise the vivid, sudden, surprising, benevolent and enduring personal transformation described by participants in their study. Such insight they consider to be *"...distinctively different from the "a-ha" insights of ordinary experience. These awakenings break upon the person with great and sudden force, and in the moment of seeing, the person recognizes them for authentic truth (or Truth)"*. Quantum changers had experienced a 'road to Damascus' blinding epiphany, despite the fact that none was looking for spiritual enlightenment, and many were reported to be at their 'lowest ebb' when the event occurred. This moment had been experienced, on average, eleven years previously but its positive impact was still operating in their lives. The legacy was an expanded sense of self, a deepened appreciation of personal values and a purpose and meaning that had previously eluded them. The insight was recalled with great clarity: *"They knew at the moment that something quite out of the ordinary had happened to them, and they had passed through a one-way door. What changed most, it seems, was their identity, their fundamental perceptions of self and reality"* (Miller and C' de Baca (2001:6). Their findings suggest change of a transformative nature.

There is much debate over whether insight and transformational change have enjoyed wide interest in academic circles. Levitt et al (1994) consider there to be *“exhaustive theoretical literature describing the relationship of insight and personal change”* whereas Miller (2004) complains that there is not even a word for the type of transformational change experienced by his “quantum changers” (‘conversion’ in his opinion smacking too much of religious epiphany). In some respects, reports demonstrate a spiritual component comparable to the accounts given by ‘quantum changers’.

For some theorists, spirituality is a conscious, goal-directed activity. Newberg and D’Aquili (2001) assert that the religious experience is rooted in the biology of the brain. Their experiment in the neurobiology of mystical experience among meditating Buddhists and Franciscan nuns utilised computerised scanning machines. These highlighted two areas of the brain, one in each hemisphere, that are responsible for spatial awareness, providing a ‘guide’ as to the boundaries of our physical bodies. To simplify Newberg and D’Aquili’s findings, when this area in the left hemisphere is quiescent, our usual sense of self with boundaries disappears. When this area in the right hemisphere is quiescent, space seems infinite. When these two events happen together and both hemispheres are quiescent, often as a result of meditation or contemplation, we experience the sense of an endless self in an endless void, a description reminiscent of certain types of mystical experience. These authors concede that their findings may be interpreted in various ways and reach the tentative conclusion that religious experience is a product of human biology, a natural programming that in some way compels the spiritual urge. This theory is the basis of their ‘neuro-theology’.

Other scientific explanations come from those who would correlate brain damage and mystical experience. According to Shermer and Chance (2001), descriptions of mystical experience given by participants in Newberg and D’Aquila’s study, such as “feeling one with the universe”, were “uncannily” similar to descriptions given in their own studies of brain-damaged patients. They argue that mystical experiences originate from the same neurological mechanisms that underlie hallucinations from sensorial deprivation and drug induced “visions”, i.e. it’s ‘all in the mind’.

For transpersonal psychologists and mystics, however, spiritual experiences of unity consciousness are real and represent higher levels of consciousness, an ontology not widely accepted in conventional psychological inquiry: *"Mysticism and transpersonal theory assume these experiences to be ontologically grounded. Empiricism, on the other hand, and conventional psychology, have up to this point dismissed such experiences as pure subjectivity, the "incorrect", private, interior experiences of immature or dysfunctional brains"* (Wade 1996:18). It could be hypothesised from the results of this study and studies such as Miller and C. D'Baca's (2001) that the more cognitive insights require reinforcement to be translated into action but that "Aha" experiences at the transpersonal epiphany end of the scale, i.e. supra-mental, are self-transforming phenomena. They may evidence an evolutionary drive in consciousness. Even the materialists are beginning to wonder. As the behavioural psychologist Miller (2004:460) muses: *"I sometimes wonder if what we observed as quantum change is an evolution in consciousness that all of us are meant to undergo as the human race matures"*.

Results presented in this chapter derive from an upper left methodology based on introspection and phenomenological description. They describe experientially felt "Aha" moments and, from an integral perspective, bear comparison only with research conducted in this quadrant, as do alternative studies in the other three quadrants. Each quadrant is dedicated to investigating the phenomenon from within its own paradigm and therefore will bring forth descriptions of the forms and functions of insight within the remit of its own language, ideas and concepts. The UR will measure neurons, chemicals, words and behaviour, the LR measurable instances of group "Ahas" and the LL the cultural appreciation and appraisal of insight and intuition. Nevertheless, methodologies from all of the other quadrants are now able to corroborate certain aspects of the qualitative differences between insight and other psychological events. The advent of these novel methodologies means that studies by researchers, whose positions on the forms and functions of insight differ and diverge, can now be compared and can also be cross-matched in the four quadrants. Verbal reports of insight can be matched with fMRI scans during problem-solving activities (Jung-Beeman et al, 2004, 2005), reports of emotional responses can also be matched to fMRI scanning of the amygdala (Damasio, 1996), and biofeedback can investigate belief systems and physiology simultaneously and demonstrate their connection to produce a group "Aha"

(Wilson et al, 2004). Bower et al (2005) agree that the combining of phenomenological accounts with empirical data derived from technological and biological fields of investigation can now inform the subject of insight.

Table 6.1 summaries the main findings from this chapter as they illuminate the forms and functions that the “Aha” moment can take. Early grounded theory coding produced these concepts, which were absorbed later into higher level categories in the process of theorising.

Table 6.1: Forms and Functions of Insight

FORM of the aha moment	FUNCTION of the aha moment
Recognises links/patterns	Delivers immediate solutions
Impasse leading to insight	Delivers clarity and confidence
Strips away layers of the self	Re-connects the “lost self”
Emotionally charged	Increases personal agency, optimism Motivates action Enhances memory recall
Epiphany	“Quantum” irreversible change; Permanent change in self-identity Permanent change in perceptions of reality.
Spiritual	Promotes love and healing energy Accesses a pre-linguistic intelligence
“God manifested in me”	Experience of background consciousness-as-such

Summary

This chapter has demonstrated the forms and functions of the “Aha” moment, helped both by findings from this study and new methodologies. The marriage of research findings in the right-hand, material quadrants with left-hand phenomenological accounts contributes to this poorly understood event. It would appear that a single “Aha moment can function to bring

about dramatic changes in individuals. Whether changes manifest as increased self-confidence, as exemplified by Liljedahl's maths study, or as the invigorated life purpose of Miller and C' de Baca's "quantum changers", the result is almost invariably positive affect. To date, epistemological Western approaches to the "Aha" moment have been typical of the natural scientific paradigm, i.e. to measure what's happening in the brain and to treat the moment as chiefly a cognitive phenomenon located in memory stores. Findings presented in this chapter show that this is to ignore the affective, physical and spiritual dimensions that may accompany the moment. They suggest that there is no single meaning of insight: it can function to re-organise mental material to arrive at novel ideas or solutions, it can unearth unconscious material; it can change perceived self-identity and it can take the form of a spiritual, life-altering event that leads to permanent transformation. The form it takes is multi-dimensional and its potential depth and profundity is expressed in cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, intuitive and spiritual ways. From a teleological perspective, the moment can short-circuit through analytic processes in order to shed immediate light on a situation. It can quickly access tacit understanding, bringing subconscious and felt knowledge into the forefront of understanding. As has been reported earlier, it can function to forge a bodymind unity, or integration of the formal, verbal mind with the emotional body. When the span and depth of insights evident in the findings is acknowledged, the conclusion must reinforce the position that *"The traditional 'all or nothing' view of insight has been challenged in recent years by those who argue for a continuum"* (Rathod et al 2005). The data presented points very much to a continuum.

Insights may also be theorised as representing an ascending hierarchy of ever more complex and integrative aspects of consciousness. This argument is developed in Chapter 8 where the adoption of a developmental and evolutionary framework permits "Aha" experiences to be plotted against ascending levels of consciousness. The next chapter deals with the very important subject of learning in Co-Active coaching.

Chapter 7: The “Aha” moment: impact on individual learning and transformational development

The previous chapter explored the forms that the “Aha” moment takes and the functions it serves, showing insight to provide a wide range of possibilities for expansion of the self. This chapter presents findings as they relate to how the “Aha” moment promotes learning. Learning is a key feature of the Co-Active model, where coaching is described as “A powerful alliance designed to forward and enhance the lifelong process of human learning, effectiveness and fulfillment”. (Whitworth et al; 2007, 221).

Key Concepts

As an example of the concepts derived from reports in this chapter, Table 7.1 lists them and summarises what they infer about barriers to learning and development. This table is presented in a four-quadrant fashion to position accounts in the context of research approaches to learning and its outcomes. Table 7.2 at the end of the chapter presents a review of the chapter’s key findings.

Table 7.1: Barriers to Learning

<p>Gremlins (superego)</p> <p>Locus of control (external)</p> <p>Rigid software (scripts)</p> <p>Resistance to transition (homeostasis)</p> <p>Intuitive promptings and kinesthetic shifts go unacknowledged</p> <p>State of Readiness</p> <p>Mind/body disunity</p>	<p>Failure to honour values by living them</p> <p>Failure to engage all ways of knowing in all human dimensions</p> <p>Inaction</p>
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Social/relational nature of learning and development not culturally acknowledged	Cognicentrism
Rational thinking culturally embedded	Failure to address multiple intelligences
Emotional and transpersonal ways of knowing not widely communicated	Failure to acknowledge role of the 'eye of spirit' and the data it brings forth
Paucity of language to discuss higher realms of consciousness	Dominant in public education: left-brain learning; denial of inner knowings and the roles of meditative, contemplative practices in learning

Background Literature

Participant accounts describe the learning that accompanied the “Aha” moment or learning accrued in the Co-Active relationship more generally. These draw attention to the debate surrounding the constituents of developmental learning as opposed to transformational learning. Change in Co-Active coaching comes about through “action/learning”: *“The combined forces of action and learning in a continuous cycle combine to create change”* (Whitworth et al 1998:5). There is synergy here with action/learning theories such as Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning theory wherein learning is cyclical, with behaviour, reflection and renewed behaviour permeating the learning process. Whilst experienced within the private phenomenological world of the client, insightful learning can germinate in the alliance that is purposively designed between coach and client. Following the pre-eminence of Piaget’s model of staged growth where cognitive development is the yardstick of intelligence, contemporary researchers have called for the closer integration of the social nature of learning as espoused by Vygotsky (1978).

Mezirow (1994: 222-223) argues that learning constitutes *‘the social process of construing and appropriating a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience as a guide to action’*. However, his transformational learning theory, like other established constructivist learning theories, takes the unit of analysis to be the individual, with scant consideration of context and social factors in the transformative experience (Taylor, 2008). Failure to account for the inter-subjective nature of adult

learning is unhelpful in the coaching profession where the role of discursive activity is of paramount interest. Recent social theories have not been well integrated into learning theories, at either the cognitive or humanistic level. Failure to incorporate the relational aspects of the “whole” person is problematic for these theories (McManus 2007).

Learning as a result of perspective change, and not just incrementally, is the mark of a higher stage of consciousness and has been found to be an enduring and irreversible process (Courtenay et al, 1998). Representative of ‘second wave’ transformational learning theorists, Kegan (1982) clearly distinguishes stages in his theory of five ascending orders of consciousness; qualitatively different ways of constructing reality which develop from less to more complex. Transformational learning changes the very form of the mind to allow for more complex ways of thinking and also changes one’s personal epistemology or way of knowing.

This debate between developmental and transformational learning divides the chapter into two main sections with the first section presenting reports in relation to traditional learning theories and the second relating findings to more recent holistic and integral approaches to learning. Each section is sub-divided into sections which have as their titles partial quotes taken directly from clients’ reports. This is intended to give the reader a ‘feel’ for the data before going on to discuss findings in detail and reference them to other contemporary studies and their conclusions. Finally, this chapter attempts to elaborate the core operations and end states of intelligence as recommended by Gardner (1983;1993).

Section 1: Learning and Development presents findings that indicate the importance of action to a developmental learning outcome. It highlights the roles of life purpose, emotions and the unconscious in the personal development journey. It is sub-divided into five sections, each demonstrating an aspect of coaching which contributes to the learning cycle.

1 a) The learning is only the beginning features reports that link insight and action. These indicate the cycle of awareness, action, reflection and renewed action that stem from personal insights and from coaching more generally. The emphasis on action invites a comparison with experiential or action/learning theories.

1 b) Running on the Same Old Programmes explores Mezirow's (1978) transformational learning theory. Findings demonstrate the resistance with which personal development can be met, as well as the increasing feelings of autonomy and interconnectedness that insights can afford for those who are ready to change. Experiential data invites examination of Mezirow's blueprint for transformational learning, including questions of gender and cultural bias as well as his focus on rational, critical thinking. Post-formal cognitive levels are evidenced.

1 c) I've stored a new lesson in what these feelings were about examines emotional intelligence in relation to reports.

1 d) Somewhere in the slowness presents findings as they relate to tacit and unconscious knowledge in learning.

1 e) Having an outside observer presents reports highlighting the inter-subjective nature of learning.

Section 2: "Second Wave" Holistic and Integral Transformational Learning and Development presents findings that report holistic changes to the self in the process of learning and is broken down into the following six sub-sections:

2 a) I am fine and the future is bright addresses cyclical self-renewal. Findings relate to the manner in which the whole self is experienced differently, a self whose renewal is a continuous process.

2 b) The rest of my life changes presents reports that relate to holistic approaches to learning.

2 c) A sense of deep knowing presents accounts of intuitive learning.

2 d) We do not have to "break our heads" is about learning practices that promote transformational change.

2 e) *The complexity and multi-dimensionality of us* focuses on multi-dimensional coaching and learning.

2 f) *Totally understanding of everything* examines findings in relation to integral approaches to learning.

Section 1: Learning and Development

1 a) *The learning is only the beginning*

Client P.L.'s excerpt links learning firmly to action:

"The learning, the realisation is only the beginning. I know I now have to go on and perform an action". (P.L., client)

The discursive nature of the Co-Active relationship means that joint reflection can stimulate insights:

"It's when I go over things with my coach, he and I just reflecting on my actions with curiosity, that's when I have had many insights." (S.H., client)

G.C.'s report suggests that, without the collaboration of his coach, who holds him to account for his actions, insights might be lost:

"The AHA moments were only useful long term if they were backed up with action and supported change - the revelation in itself was not enough for me to change my habits, but accountability helped". (G.C., client)

Clients learn to challenge themselves and this can lead to new behaviours and evolving self-confidence, as it did for the chronically shy client M.M:

“Yes, I learned that I could challenge myself to take on new behaviours and it could be fun to try different ways of being, For example, I challenged myself to be exhibitionistic and it went well and I felt good”. (M.M., client)

Learning is fostered simply by building awareness:

“The learning is somewhere around how things can differ, and around leading and being led – I don’t have firm conclusions, just awareness” (D.L., client).

Awareness and reflection on how actions affect self and others also allows individuals to develop the ability to transfer what they have learned between contexts (Winter, 1991). Client W.L. reports that, with his coach’s encouragement, he transfers general positive affect:

“I’ve been encouraged to notice/reflect on how I deal with situations, and as a result, noticing that a more positive attitude has quite general effects”. (W.L., client)

Chapter 4 demonstrated the importance of the coach’s curiosity and non-judgemental attitude, not just in achieving desired coaching outcomes, but in role-modelling these demeanours for subsequent emulation by their clients. Curiosity is designed to be fun - open and playful and this invites intuitive knowing, surmised here by client M.H.’ s use of a capital “T” in the word truth:

“I have learned to simply get curious, without judgment and with a light stroke, about myself – my thoughts, belief systems and actions. This brings Truth for me.” (M.H., client)

Client W.H. has learned to use curiosity to be non-judgmental about himself:

“I have learned to simply look at the way I operate – in my head, in my body, in my actions with simple curiosity and a complete suspension of judgement” (W.L., client)

In this curious, intuitive and non-judgmental way, clients learn about their self-defeating behaviour. Client S.M. learned that she's not very compassionate towards herself:

"Other main area of focus/learning was around forgiveness and compassion – things I seem able to give to others far more easily than I can give to myself" (S.M., client)

H.G. reports how she identified a pattern of saying "yes" in situations where she would really like to have said "no", but she is gaining awareness of the emotional element of her current behaviour and of how she would like to behave:

"There was also something around giving myself space/permission to renegotiate rather than force myself to do things. New thinking/learning = that there is more fear/anxiety around cancelling an agreement than there is in forcing myself to do something I really don't want to do. What I take with me is an awareness of this and a knowing that I would like to get better at cancelling things without feeling guilty, to be communicating sureness about what I am doing and why, and acknowledging I am doing what I need for myself". (H.G., client)

Reports presented in this section point to two particular ways in which learning is achieved: in joint reflection upon action with one's coach; and in the accountability for the learning of the client requested by the coach, and so the role of inter-subjectivity in the learning process is prominent. Being sufficiently self-aware to reflect on action is an indispensable learning tool, since *"It is not experience that teaches or the stones of the street would be wiser than the wisest of men. It is the capacity to learn from experience."* (George Bernard Shaw, 1896). The link between awareness and action is acknowledged in other models of learning, and the next section explores the exemplar of transformational learning theory.

1 b) Running on the Same Old Programmes

Client W.M. reports that he has become aware of non-conscious, habituated thinking patterns:

"I learned that I was running on the same old programmes and didn't even know an update was possible until I started coaching." (W.M., client)

Client W.M. (who works with computers) describes habituated thinking as "running on old programmes". This computer metaphor might be extended to offer an interpretive analogy of the difference between accumulative and transformational learning. The brain runs on 'software' of belief systems and their accompanying emotions, which comprise a number of programmes. When new software is installed, there is more computer memory, the software 'updated', hence expanding its operating base and storehouse of accumulated knowledge. But when the computer is upgraded with an entirely new operating system, a transformation to a new level of consciousness is afforded.

Client M. O'R. made a conscious decision to change:

"The changes came when I became so sick and tired of my own status quo that I actually started doing things differently. They did not come from a place of epiphany, more a place of 'enough already'. I made a decision to change". (M. O'R., client)

The first phase of Mezirow's Transformational Learning theory - a disorienting dilemma – is considered to initiate the process of transformational learning. Since individuals tend to resist change rather than seek it proactively, transformation usually follows traumatic experiences and is borne of crisis rather than choice (Hawkins, 2002). Transformation is a ten-phase experience springing from this dilemma and leading to progressive stages of engaging and evolving our habits-of-mind (Mezirow, 2000). This is not always the case, as shown in Client M. O'R's account, and Mezirow agreed that transformation need not always be epochal; it can be incremental and deliberately pursued. Her account suggests that 'readiness' to learn and change might be an important factor in transformational development. Lack of readiness can be implied by the degree to which clients resist personal change. A certain degree of resistance is implicit in client C.D.'s account:

"I felt a sense of relief at the idea of the possibility of letting things go and relying less on others' opinions (running alongside my normal feelings of anxiety etc)." (C.D., client)

Phases two and three of the transformative process represent the point at which learners either enter further into the transformative process or avoid it. The ego may respond fearfully to perceived challenges to its authority. This fear is experienced as an existential dread that can thwart transformation by preventing the letting go of certainties to allow for their critical analysis and assessment (Gozawa, 2005). This failure to 'let go' stems from the beliefs and attitudes with which individuals identify in a non-conscious way (Walsh et al 1980). Sometimes resistance to change is such that clients deliberately block insights. Client V.W.'s account suggests that she may not be ready for change.

"As I felt the dawn of recognition bubble up in me I consciously fought it back, knowing that if I confronted it, I'd have to do something about it" (V.W., client)

V.W. deliberately blocks feelings that she feels unequal to confronting. There is nothing rational in her utterance. Yet transformational learning theory places great emphasis on rational and reflective discourse in the construal of meaning. This discourse involves: *"...that specialized use of dialogue devoted to searching for a common understanding and assessment of the justification of an interpretation or belief"* (Mezirow, 1995:53). Reflective discourse thus described comes perilously close to the post-modern notion that we will feel and operate better when we have invented better stories and so involves the post-rationalisations of the ego. This approach reflects the prevailing fashion in academe for postmodern philosophy to the detriment of transformational learning theory (Gunnlaugson, 2005). Ontologically, narrative theory is very far removed from this study's findings. Narrative theory not only rejects the dimensions of soul and spirit in the person, but rejects the very notion of a self in any concrete way other than as an ongoing narrative (Guignon, 2004). While uncovering one's presuppositions and re-framing their meaning may have some initial value, it is a far greater insight for clients to see that any story is just that – a story. Stories are mere perceptions, representations and constructions, as indicated in client J.W.'s realisation when talking about his 'old story':

"I've learned to recognise my old story as it shows up". (J.W., client)

Transformative learning is facilitated when learners critically reflect on their distorted epistemic, socio-cultural and psychic assumptions to develop a more critical worldview (Mezirow, 1991: 144). It might be argued that what constitutes a 'distortion' of beliefs is a moot point, but early conditioning is something that clients re-visit, where appropriate, in coaching. This activity paradoxically led client M.H. to differentiate, or individuate, her own position, which in turn led to a strengthening of personal beliefs, or values:

"I have really looked at my beliefs since childhood and realised that so many of them either didn't belong to me or were based on assumption. I get into a lot less trouble with people these days due to questioning some of my beliefs. Also the beliefs that I do hold to be true for me are stronger". (M.H., client)

One way, as Chapter 5 indicated, to help facilitate movement in stages of mind is the taking of multiple perspectives:

"I have learned to analyse situations from many different perspectives. I am no longer stuck in a particular point of view. I can choose a perspective that works for me instead of against me". (K.M., client)

Transformational learning theory's emphasis on critical reflection and the 'abstract re-conceptualisation' of Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory have led researchers to question whether cognitive dexterity may not be a prerequisite rather than an outcome of transformative learning, given that these skills presuppose a relatively sophisticated cognitive repertoire (Merriam 2004). This repertoire equates to Piaget's fourth and final stage, 'formal operational', commencing around puberty (12-15 years) and continuing to stabilise into adulthood. Perhaps half of adults think at the formal operations level (Bee, 2000:145).

Client N.Y.' s excerpt suggests increased personal agency:

"I've learned to trust my own response-ability. I can choose how to respond to any situation" (N.Y., client)

N.Y. indicates that he has learned to respond in a variety of ways and is therefore able to interpret the notion of responsibility in a more personally empowering fashion.

Kegan (2000) distinguishes between “meaning-forming”, the activity in which we make sense of our experience, and “reforming our meaning-forming”, which is a meta-process affecting the very terms of our meaning-constructing. He argues for the closer union of constructive-developmental theory with transformational learning theory. This would result in a conception of meta-awareness comprising a locus of witnessing in consciousness that is able to make behaviours, emotions and desires objects of attention rather than unconscious, habitual responses. The first step in meta-awareness is to create distance between oneself and the issue at stake. This is what F.H. has learned to do:

“I’ve learned to take a step back and see the bigger picture in situations!” (F.H., client)

Kegan’s key idea is that development in constructive-developmental theory reflects a gradual process of disidentification where what was once subject in our knowing becomes object. It places the relationship between subject and object at the core of an epistemology where everything with which we identify we consider as “subject” and therefore cannot be set outside of ourselves for objective analysis. These ‘subjective’ elements are often unconsciously experienced. They cannot be seen because they are the lenses through which we see (Fitzgerald and Berger, 2002: 30) and therefore cannot be reflected or acted upon. Conversely, what we consider to be outside of ourselves can be analysed, reviewed and manipulated as “object” in our knowing: *“We ‘have’ object; we ‘are’ subject”* (Kegan 2000: 53). Transformative learning emphasises the development of abstract thinking in order to place what is in cognition ‘outside’ of our heads in order to more clearly identify patterns, biases and themes. Client H.M. describes disidentification through meta-awareness as “seeing himself from the outside”:

“Having to make a flow-chart of what happens when I get insecure really helped me see myself from the outside. Great new perspective.” (H.M., client)

Expansion of worldviews results in enhanced personal autonomy, a defining condition of adulthood (Mezirow, 1997). This goal arguably reflects a male bias in its assumption that thinking transforms into something independent and autonomous (Merriam, 2004). Merriam questions not only gender but cultural biases: *"Is a Western (male?) model of cognitive development with its pinnacle of independent, autonomous, critically reflective thought the only place to situate transformational learning? What about "connected knowing" and "interdependence" being the goal of mature thought?"* (p. 66). Client L.D.'s excerpt demonstrates feelings of interconnectedness:

"I now have feelings of generosity; the ability to focus on others". (L.D., client)

L.D.'s comment is also indicative of transformation. In Kegan's analysis, empathy of this nature is only available at his 'fourth' order of mind, representing a self who is self-reflective and self-motivating with the added capacity for deep connection with others. My own interpretation of this study's findings is that agency, or the self-confidence to act autonomously, is a necessary accompaniment to interconnectedness. Male client, C.G. suggests that he has become aware of an overly masculine, "battle stance" approach to life:

"I have learned that it has unfortunately been my "reflex" to think in positions and future battles rather than cooperation and common interests". (C.G., client)

Developing the ability to act not only with empathy but in the common interest is a characteristic of Kegan's highest ('fourth' and 'fifth') orders of mind. Male client, S.H. has learned to view 'vulnerability' in a new light, as a learning tool:

"I realise that it's ok to be vulnerable. It's a signal that I can learn something" (S.H., client).

Wilber (2006) argues that when autonomy and interdependence are operating in a balanced manner – male competitiveness and agency and female care and connectedness – psychological growth is facilitated. Client M.H.'s account shows a combination of autonomy and interconnectedness in the new attitudes and behaviours

she has learned. Control has shifted to an internal locus where responsibility is taken for her 'being in the world'. Like client J.W. above, M.H. has identified her 'stories':

"The way I am in the world and the stories I tell myself and others have such an impact and I am responsible for the impact I want to create" (M.H., client)

Transformational learning theory and experiential learning theory favour the rational, task-oriented aspects of learning at the expense of emotions and feelings (Vince and Martin 1993). The next section examines findings in relation to feelings and unconscious processes in learning.

1 c) I've stored a new lesson in what these feelings were about

Client M.L.'s report suggests that she is managing her feelings:

"Sense of what to do next, and that I've stored a new lesson in what these feelings were about and came from and how to deal with them". (M.L., client)

Client M.L.'s account reflects emotional literacy, a line of intelligence where people manage their emotions well and can interpret and deal effectively with their own and other people's feelings (Goleman 1995). Conversely: *"people who cannot marshal some control over their emotional life fight inner battles that sabotage their ability for focused work and clear thought* (Goleman 1995:36). Controlling emotions combines with mastering habits of mind to produce better productivity and contentment. This combination can be difficult to accomplish:

"The thoughts about fear started to surface after the call; the realisation that I am dealing with things with less fear than previously, but it is still there and likely to escalate with change". (S.W., client)

For S.W., fear and change are directly correlated: increasing change = increasing fear. Daloz (1986) recognized that development can feel like a risky emotional journey into the unknown since introspection can bring frightening emotions to the fore. Client M.H.'s account implies fear of acting on the new learning:

“Comforting and scary at the same time. The knowledge, that realisation, is only the start”. (M.H., client)

Client S.T. describes how she blocks affect through mindbody disunity. Talking of childhood abuse she links her behaviour to hiding her emotions through story-telling:

“Telling my story rather than getting underneath it. Keeps me safe. Coming from my head more than my heart.” (S.T., client)

Heron's (1996) holistic learning model presents feeling as the fundamental learning mode. His model depicts a hierarchy in which what is above is grounded on what is below. In this analysis, the practical (intention and action) is grounded on the conceptual (reflection and discrimination), which is grounded on the imaginal (intuition and imagery), which in turn is grounded on the affective (feeling and emotion). When these four modes are construed as a cycle, the affective mode is the wellspring of the cyclic interaction (Heron, 1992, 1999).

Feelings may need to be addressed prior to cognitions in the course of transformation. If feelings block the stream of consciousness then no transformation is possible. Client P.L. has closely examined his feelings:

“My feelings have changed because I know what will stop me. I feel that I need to attack these situations and know I will feel incredible when I have done them. It makes me crave these feelings rather than fear them”. (P.L., client)

Neuman (1996) found that recognising and processing feelings were necessary precursors to critical self-reflection. A quest for self-acceptance is aided by the control of feelings, according to client D.L.'s account:

“I am more with myself and my feelings, but in a place of acceptance.” (D.L., client)

Clients learn to overcome narcissistic drives and extend the ego boundary to include more of the not-self environment, especially enhanced connections in the social environment. Findings amplify the argument, developed in earlier chapters, that

participants have achieved post-formal and post-egoic levels of consciousness. Clear evidence of closer connection is exemplified here by client K.C:

"Yes, it's changing the way I am in a relationship. For the first time I am truly in a partnership with my partner." (K.C., client)

A further criticism of Transformational Learning theory is that it tends to marginalise feelings. For example, in the field of neurobiology, Taylor (1997) notes that, although rationality is significant in transformative learning, it is possibly of no more significance than emotion. He criticises transformational learning for its cognicentrism, to the detriment of both feelings and unconscious processes. He points to findings in neurobiological research where *"feelings are found to be the rudder for reason, without which it wanders aimlessly with little or no bearing in the process of making decisions"* (Taylor 2000: 234). Research in brain pathology indicates that patients with prefrontal cortex damage retain cognitive function but fail to reason or make the simplest decision, often making destructive life choices. When disturbing images were presented to these patients they were unable to show any sensory response compared to participants with no such damage. Without emotional memory and learning, brain functioning as a whole is impaired. Brain function includes the accommodation of both conscious and unconscious material. The next section turns to the unconscious.

1 d) Somewhere in the slowness

"LL said something to the effect of "it all seems wonderful and beautifully thought out; I can't fault it" when I was talking about moving to London because I've been offered a job there. I felt my energy change and slow when she said this, felt my mind pause before it revved up again. Somewhere in the slowness was an acknowledgement of how often I do this, and the awareness of its link to an old pattern I have of justifying everything before it even happens". (H.M., client)

'Somewhere in the slowness', H.M. experienced her insight. The slowness sounds like a spontaneous impasse, suggestive of the accessing of unconscious material. In education, Dirkx (1987:15) challenged the assumption made by educators that transformational learning involves processes that are inherently rational and intentional,

arguing for the importance of extra-rational dimensions such as the unconscious. Client M.L. journals to access her unconscious:

"I know that when I write, allowing my unconscious to spill out on paper, I sometimes have Aha moments that have much to teach me." (M.L., client)

As was noted in earlier chapters, journaling deepens the learning for coaches as well as clients:

"As I read back through my diary entries I could see that I was using skills that I had become unaware of. This raised my consciousness as a coach." (K.F., coach)

Coach A.D. confirms that journaling cemented the Co-Active learning:

"Keeping a journal locked in the learning for both the client and myself." (A.D., coach)

Client H.G. reports what she has learned. It concerns the unconscious voices of her gremlins and their ubiquitous effects:

"That I don't talk to people about my family/living situation; it seems too difficult/ complicated/will seem like I'm complaining; everyone has problems. I can't change this part of my life and I take this belief into other parts of my life at a deeply unconscious level, sabotaging potential change and recreating old patterns." (H.G., client)

Taylor (2001) emphasises "implicit memory", which deals with the non-conscious cognitive processing of past experience. Learning in this dimension heavily influences our views of and actions in the world. Situated outside of the limbic system and stable across time, these unconscious memories are constantly being engaged to respond to the world.

The next section presents findings as they relate to the inter-subjective nature of learning in the coach/ client dyad.

1 e) Having an outside observer

Client K.T. credits his relationship with his coach as contributing most to his learning:

“Having an outside observer who looks over time at my attitudes etc. and knows my strengths and so can give suggestions from an informed but disinterested viewpoint has helped most in my learning and discovery”. (K.T., client)

K.T.’s account shows why it would be difficult to examine findings from the perspective of individualistic traditional models of learning. This section presents findings that again highlight the importance of learning in interaction. Taylor (2008) found the key ingredient in transformational learning to be the relational context. With the championing of his coach, A. D. is changing his beliefs and channelling his energies into a brighter future:

“Much happier working on a future that inspires me. My previous beliefs were that it wasn’t possible. Sometimes I still think it’s not possible, but now I have other people – including my coach – who tell me that’s bullshit”. (A.D., client)

As well as enhanced autonomy, client S.D. explains that a powerful insight had repercussions for his family life:

“It is affecting my family life by me being more honest with what is important to me and how I impact that system I belong to. I now play by my own rules” (S.D., client)

Re-formulations of experiential learning theory, or “action learning” (McGill and Beaty 1995: 190) stress the interactive nature of learning and note how, in the field of education, the traditional emphasis on the individual is counter-productive: *“The individualistic emphasis of learning rebounds against learning and development for individuals...This is not only a lonely experience but developmentally poor practice”*. Findings indicate that both individual learning and learning in interaction are co-essential to the learning enterprise. Client B.C.’s extract suggests a combination of learning while alone and in interaction:

“My own self-discovery by reflection. Also, talking with an intimate friend in such a way to allow my feelings to be expressed is often instrumental in insight” (B.C., client)

In sum, experiential learning constitutes an accretion of knowledge that constitutes simple learning where something new is learned, and the learning may be systemic but the learner’s epistemological system is not necessarily metamorphosed. In this sense all learning constitutes an expansion of previous learning. Findings indicate that the role of the coach is fundamental to learning, whether developmental or transformational. While findings reflect transformational learning theory’s focus on expanded belief systems and the transformation of cognitive consciousness, the theory is inadequate to account for all findings. Critics advise that transformational learning theory revises its cognitively biased formulation to include dimensions of not only feelings and emotions, both repressed and conscious, but also transrational levels of soul and spirit. The next section presents findings that suggest that, for transformative learning to occur, it has to involve more of these realms of the whole person.

Section 2: “Second Wave” Holistic and Integral Transformational Learning and Development

This section presents reports that can be contextualised within newer formulations of transformational learning. Findings reveal the outcome of transformational learning to be shifts in personal epistemologies, or ways of understanding the self in relation to the world. These shifts, often pre-empted by “Aha” moments, deliver a transformation in the quality of *being*. Findings also re-confirm the importance of clarifying life purpose as a motivator for learning and action. The section has been divided into six subsections, again highlighting excerpts from reports.

2 a) “I am fine and the future is bright”.

“I am learning that I am fine and the future is bright! A peacefulness that everything will be OK. I am fine exactly as I am. Everything is as it should be. There’s no right and wrong, only different”. (H.L., client)

Evolution entails self-renewal, a theme taken up in second-wave transformational learning theories. The past decade has seen the rise of these more holistic and integral models of learning that build on Mezirow's original theory by re-dressing the emphasis on rational and linear aspects of transformation (Boyd, 1991; Grabove, 1997; Robertson, 1997). Self-renewal is a recurring theme in the findings, exemplified here by client S.H:

"I have learned a different way of being. I am and will continue to be a lot more positive and optimistic about what's possible for me in my life". (S.H., client)

The next account from client H.L.s demonstrates an expansion of self-identity beyond the cognitive that is affecting his whole life:

'Change has affected my career, my self-perception, and my vision of who I am'. (H.L., client).

Client S.B.'s learning also focuses on being:

"I've learned that my way of being with myself affects all of my life". (S.B., client)

For client M.M., changes already made are mere harbingers of changes to come:

"I'm learning and challenging myself all the time. My whole life has turned from a robotic-like existence to a dynamic adventure. I can't believe the changes I've made and will continue to make". (M.M., client)

These accounts reflect Claxton's (1999:8) contention that *"Learning changes not just our knowing and our doing, but our being too"*. Blatner (2004) applied Piaget's (1954) constructivist theory of child development to adult populations and concluded that transformation derives from accommodative learning, which goes beyond the accommodation of new ideas or belief systems to affect the individual's sense of self.

Client A.D.' s diary entry speaks of embodied learning:

"I have learned to be in touch with powerful parts of me" (A.D., client).

Client B.F. has learned to let his life purpose drive his actions:

"I've learned to take actions which are more on purpose" (B.F., client)

Client G.C.'s life purpose, or "Big A Agenda" acts as a beacon for action:

"My Big A Agenda" keeps me plugged into the bigness of my life and my future self reaches back to me, pulling me towards my vision". (G.C., client)

Client E.W. 's excerpt indicates that his life purpose provides an evolving source of learning:

"I have learned to stop and change course when necessary. My life purpose has grown and changed as I have. It serves me in a grounded way". (E.W., client)

Western models of learning underestimate the body in favour of the brain: *"In the West...we strongly underestimate the potential of the embodied mind..., a mind/body driving energy...we often mix the power of thought with an extreme application of the analytical brain function"* (Baets 2006: 181).

The cyclical nature of learning expressed in Co-Active coaching is given a new twist by Albareda and Romero (1990). Their embodied theory links learning to seasons of the year: autumn is the time to prepare the physical body and let go of old thinking; winter is a period of silence and gestation; spring is the time to open the heart and pay attention to one's affective world; and summer is the time for intellectual and aesthetic elaboration of ideas. This cyclical perspective is useful in promoting the view of self-renewal as a continuum, a view reflected in the ontology of Co-Active coaching where clients are always considered to be in the process of creative becoming. Grabove (1997) emphasises the potential for renewal and rebirth as themes reflecting the non-

rational dimensions of transformative learning, where the learner: "...moves in and out of the cognitive and the intuitive, of the rational and the imaginative, of the subjective and the objective, of the personal and the social" (Grabove, 1997: 95). Kroth and Boverie (2000) also introduce a cyclical element to learning. Self-inquiry as a stream of self-awareness goes hand-in-hand with questions of life purpose. Without the continuing, cyclical interplay between directed purpose and inquiry into that purpose, life mission may become rigid. Their study found that the stronger and more focused a person's life mission, the more self-directed learning becomes.

Reports presented in this section imply that clients need to have a clear idea of their life purpose in order to motivate and direct the self-learning and action that will lead to personal transformation. There is appreciation too for the roles of relationships, personal contextual influences, and holistic ways of knowing in transformative learning. The next section presents reports that indicate holistic life changes as a result of transformative learning.

2 b) The rest of my life changes

Client M.L. views her life and learning systematically:

"I tend to view things systemically rather than in discrete areas, so the fact my career is changing means the rest of my life changes as well" (M.L., client).

Co-Active coaching considers itself a holistic model where change in one area of life will impact on all others. Client L.H.'s excerpt demonstrates this in relation to most of her life:

"Change is affecting several areas of my life. The core is family, in that my interaction with my family has changed entirely. As I don't spend my time trying to clean up their mess, I have a free head for other areas:

- Myself (mind, body and soul): sports, outdoors, me-time, reading, breathing...

- My husband: quality time that is not overshadowed all the time by "the big drama"

- *My business: having a clear head for my clients and for growing my business*
- *Money: enjoying what I earn and not feeling guilty about it” (L.H., client)*

L.H. has experienced change in the mind, body and soul of her being. As well as change in one area of life affecting all others, holism is also a Gestalt affair; the whole is constructed out of many parts, but these smaller parts create, via interaction, more than the sum of the separate parts in the dynamic phenomenon of learning (Baets, 2006:20). Client C.R. 's excerpt indicates an all-pervasive transformation of being:

“Absolutely. I have changed my entire being with that matter about which I had the AHA! I also notice how the effects touch other parts of my life and have generally a greater sense of ease and joy. It’s a fabulous ripple effect!” (C.R., client)

The next client’s account (S.M.) suggests a holistic change in his ways of both being and doing as a result of learning:

“Previous behaviours are abandoned...changed relationships, career directions”. (S.M., client)

A holistic approach recognises the role of feelings, other ways of knowing (intuition, somatic), and the role of relationships with others in the process of transformative learning (Taylor, 2008). The next section introduces reports that utilise the dimension of intuitive knowing.

2 c) A sense of deep knowing

Client S.H.’s account links intuition to pristine clarity:

“There is a sense of deep knowing, or being totally resolved – no more uncertainty and searching. All is still and clear, like a photo”. (S.H., client)

Client S.H.’s report is typical both of the use of metaphor, in this case imagery, and of the certainty involved in intuitive insight. Client M.L. talks of a sense of deep knowing which resulted in psychological closure:

"A recent one was when I had just woken up. A calm, deep realisation of the truth about a recent painful relationship break up. I had a message about the man which then resulted in a sense of deep knowing and that now I can move on from that issue". (M.L., client)

Intuition is reported as a way of knowing that is delivered without thinking, through images, or a clear sense of knowing, inner words, gut feelings, or physical sensations that can be unique to the person receiving them. C.L. felt the truth in his gut. Client H.G.'s cryptic comment emphasises embodied learning:

"Feelings and sensations that are present in my body became much clearer and I learned that I can use "listening to myself" to solve issues like "complaining wall". (H.G., client)

Client S.B.'s account is suggestive of transformational development since her intuitive promptings means she now "KNOWS" things:

"My attitude towards things has changed. I KNOW things. I have a certainty. I had to let go of previous perceptions and concepts". (S.B., client)

Within this space, new creative promptings can manifest, according to client M.O'R.:

"I learned to sit and allow myself to 'not know' the outcome. Giving myself permission to simply be and not achieve anything was actually my real AHA. I simply hadn't given myself the space to create. (M.O'R., client).

C.L. has learned to silence his cognitive 'chatter':

"I was like in a flow. My mind is calm, the chatter has stopped, my body is relaxed and I have a confirmation of truth in my gut, like an inner knowing". (C.L., client)

Learning through intuition means accessing imagination, fantasies, dreams and other forms of imagery to bring tacit knowledge into the conscious mind (Dirkx 2001) and is associated with the right brain hemisphere. EEG coherence data and the greatly

increased flow of blood to the right hemisphere during REM sleep both provide evidence of the predominance of the right hemisphere in dreaming (McGilchrist, 2009: 188). In contrast, approaches like experiential learning and transformational learning theory rely on memory and past patterns of critical reflection, thought and emotions. Intuition epitomises non-cognitive learning since *"Intuition provides the insight that sees through the filtering screen of thoughts, images and feelings to the formless context of experience"* (Vaughan 1979: 185). The involvement of the right brain creates a synergy between the hemispheres to produce whole brain functioning that is significantly greater than the sum of its parts (Heron, 1996). To cultivate whole brain functioning and its intuitive knowing, Claxton (1997) advocates the creation of mental space by slowing down the chatter of the mind – slow thinking versus no thinking. Slowing down the stream of consciousness can, with practice, provide a receptive opening for learners to make experiential contact with emotional, intuitive, imaginative, kinaesthetic and other forms of knowing (Gunnlaugson 2007). Embodied learning is facilitated by contemplative practices such as presencing (Scharmer 2000). This encourages learners to move beyond critical and reflective discourse to allow tacit assumptions to be exposed to self-transcending knowledge. Presencing involves attending to what emerges in the moment from all 'ways of knowing' but has yet to be embodied in experience. Education has traditionally encouraged the dominance of left brain thinking (Heron, 1996). In so doing it denies our inner knowings and therefore the very fabric of our being (Brew, 1994). In therapeutic studies intuition has been cited as an integral part of clinical practice. Benner and Tanner, 1987 argue that, while intuition is not usually directly communicable in language and so is difficult to train, it often arises out of previous experience. The next section presents accounts about learning derived from transpersonal dimensions of the self, which can be accessed by suspending thought, or 'not knowing' and surrendering.

2 d) *"We do not have to "break our heads"*

Client P.L.'s account emphasises non-cognitive learning:

"The "Aha" moment also gave me a lot of confidence in the way things evolve – knowing we do not have to "break our heads" in order to figure things out. Solutions just come, if we give them time and space". (P.M., client)

Insights can arise with the loosening control of the mind, according to client C.G.'s report:

"Usually not purposely thinking about something, but walking or cooking or just as waking up or going to sleep, all those times when your mind is working but often when you're not specifically controlling it (does that make sense!?)" (C.G., client)

Not controlling the mind, for client K.H., involves not pushing for solutions. This is not to say it is a passive endeavour, as explained by K.H. who has learned to mobilise different "parts" of himself:

"I am more calm when it comes to solving problems. I do not "push" for solutions, I know they will come. This does not mean I am passive. I understand now what parts of me to activate in order to allow the solution to appear". (K.H., client)

Clients S.M. and H.G. have learned to "just sit" with questions:

"If I just "sit" with questions, often resolutions will appear" (S.M., client)

"I learned to sit in silence while allowing myself to not know the outcome". (H.G., client)

Client E.W. confirms how he has learned to surrender to the moment:

"I've learned how to surrender to and "be in" the moment of instead of planning. (E.W., client)

For client S.B., surrender pertains to giving up control:

"Shift in control from needing to keep hold of everything to allowing things to be, knowing that whatever happens I can deal with it." (S.B., client)

Client F.L. has learned to surrender to 'what is', good or bad:

"I now am aware that there is another much more powerful place for me. And at the same time I feel I don't want to put up an act that everything is always easy and joyous in my life. It is about the awareness of feeling what is real and having the attitude of wanting to be with exactly that – with what is". (F.L., client)

Learning demands the ability to tolerate frustration and confusion; to act without knowing what will happen; to be uncertain without becoming insecure (Claxton, 1999:15). Not knowing involves the deliberate suspension of the cognitive faculties in the learning process. Suspension (Bohm 1996) facilitates the transition from identification with one's thoughts and feelings to simply witnessing them, which gives a preview of a different self-sense or more complex order of consciousness, as in Kegan's (1994) framework. In this analysis thoughts and feelings are split off from subjective consciousness to be externally examined, leaving only conscious awareness of the coming and going of all these phenomena, or the witness (see Chapter 8).

Being with 'what is' is a way of describing psychological surrender. Surrendering is a subject that highlights cultural differences. The more psychologically centred models of learning (psychoanalytic, psycho-developmental, psycho-critical, neurobiological) reflect a universal view, with little appreciation of social or cultural differences (Taylor, 2008). In the West, surrender has negative connotations because our cultural myth holds us as conquerors and allows room only for glory (Branscomb, 1991). Surrendering control is therefore an underdeveloped topic attracting sparse and disconnected literature (Moze, 2009). Moze's research compared the subject of surrender to theories of ego defence. She found that surrender and defences work in synergy in the process of personal development, where the moment when the ego releases its attachments results in surrender and by this means the ego is transcended. She concludes that surrender is a transformative psychological phenomenon that is oriented toward learning, works in service of the innate desire to grow, is motivated by curiosity, and is a distinct alternative to defences as a response to anxiety and conflict. If her analysis is accurate, then surrender could be a very important facet of transformational change.

Findings presented in this section have indicated that it is fundamental to complement intentional learning with the *"creation of spaces that facilitate the gradual emergence of*

the infinite potentials dwelling within us" (Ferrer et al, 2005). The next section points to reports that speak of learning from multiple dimensions.

2 e) *The complexity and multi-dimensionality of us*

Client M.L. praises her coach for coaching all of who she is:

"The mastery of our coach to be committed to the possibilities of all that we might be and her extraordinary skill to coach the complexity and multi-dimensionality of us."

(M.L., client)

Client M.L. was coached jointly with her husband. The Co-Active practice of encouraging intrapersonal epistemic diversity leads to insightful learning. Clients are urged to manifest their future self in as many ways as they can imagine – through song, poetry, art or whatever. Hence, N.G. dances his future self to 'tune in' to his body and increase his understanding:

"As soon as I started, at my coach's request, to dance my future self, I realised that this was a way I could really "tune in" to my body. I regularly dance to expand my understanding". (N.G., client)

Client E.W. has a song to embody his future self and guide action:

"When I lose my way, I've taught myself to repeat my future self's song to help me prioritise my actions". (E.W., client)

Client S.M. had a significant, visceral learning that seemed to come from a 'dark place' in his mind:

"I got a very clear picture – a realisation that I felt in my heart, my gut, my bones. It came from some deep dark place that I was afraid to visit" (S.M., client)

E.W.'s "Aha" moment came from 'soul learning':

"This realisation came from the deepest part of me; from my very soul" (E.W., client)

These reports are more reflective of education's original meaning than current understanding where it is about feeding information 'in' to people: *"The etymology of education (e-ducere) expresses its true purpose and function: to draw out the latent possibilities from the unconscious, to activate the energies in it, particularly in its higher sphere, the superconscious" (Assagioli, 2002:57).*

The transformative learning process is fundamentally extra-rational and intensely personal; 'sitting' (listening or waiting) with images requires one to descend into a kind of darkness (Scott, 1997: 46). Jungian depth psychology seeks to understand what is outside of the ego boundary, termed 'Other'. It does this by investigating the shadow side of ourselves, which represents Other within us and addresses some of the pathologies that arise from unrealised surrender (Branscomb, 1991). It is in the unconscious and the collective unconscious where emotional work begins the process of individuation, the separation of the individual from the collective (Cranton, in Mezirow, 2000: 191). While Cranton originally linked critical self-reflection in transformative learning to the process of individuation, she now sees individuation as a much more unconscious and intuitive process, more what Dirkx (2001) would term "soulfulness".

For these "second wave" transformational learning theorists, dimensions of the person include the unconscious, the collective consciousness and the "world of soul" (Hillman, 2000). From an Eastern perspective, Tang and Joiner (2006) propose "synergic inquiry" (S. I.) as a means of accessing the wisdom of the soul so that one engages with the world in a qualitatively different way. Expansion is posited as happening at logical and mythical levels. The mythical level is a symbolic dimension that supersedes the logical and encompasses our deepest beliefs, myths, faith and spirituality. Mythical transformational change goes beyond the logical dimension to include the whole being. One might say that for Tang and the post-Jungians, rationality represents the figure and the mythical or soul level of consciousness constitutes the ground.

The next section presents findings that reflect learning experienced in transpersonal, spiritual dimensions. These findings require a more integral framework of learning to be comprehensible.

2 f) Totally understanding of everything

L.S.'s quote is difficult to interpret from a rational analysis:

"I wasn't there. Everything around me was golden. Don't know how long it lasted but everything became gold. The feeling was just totally understanding of everything" (L.S., Buddhist practitioner and client).

This is necessary to account for reports like F.L.'s where spiritual energy is not confined to his body:

"The moment of insight is a general feeling, an enveloping sensation. My spirit feels like it is expanding very far beyond my body. My mind runs very fast and sharp". (F.L., client)

Emancipatory learning in this chapter connotes freedom from intrapersonal struggle:

"I am feeling peace. My whole body feels calm...almost floaty. A sense of ease...the struggle is over". (S.W., client)

"In this moment of realisation my mind, body and spirit feel peaceful and knowing". (T.K., client)

Client R.P.'s excerpt reflects a 'world-centric' stance:

"The learning is that I am part of a human quest for peace, love, acceptance, serenity and support". (R.P., client)

The first quote from L.S. about her spiritual experience of unity consciousness would be excluded from those transformational models of learning that concern themselves solely with horizontal extensions to the fragmented mind with no expansion of the vertical dimension into the transrational (Anthony, 2008:242). Recognition of the vertical ascent of consciousness would allow holistic approaches to learning to be more “comprehensive, balanced and inclusive” (Gunnlaugson, 2007: 331). She favours the adoption of Wilber’s integral paradigm, which emerges from the recent tradition of not deconstructive but “reconstructive postmodernism” (Kegan 1994). In section 1 b), client W.M. reported that he didn’t know a change in his belief systems was possible. This could be extrapolated to knowing of all kinds. A failure to acknowledge intrinsic learning resources means that transformation is thwarted. Reports in this and earlier chapters have shown knowing and being to be inextricably linked. As Brew (1994: 95, 96) argues: *“What we access or tap into is defined by our being. We cannot know what we are not. In that we deny who we are, so we cannot access what we know”*. Hence the spiritual aspect of development may be facilitated when individuals recognise spirit in themselves. An integral approach would take into account all paradigms of learning, all human potentialities and all levels of depth and profundity.

Taylor (2008) exposes a variety of what he terms alternative conceptions of transformative learning theory, including spirituality, positionality, emancipatory learning, and neurobiology. From an integral perspective these contributions are complementary and not competitive. They examine the same subject through different lenses. For example, in the field of neurobiology, recent findings suggest that, like the “Aha” moment, transformative learning engages a specific brain architecture. Taylor (2008) highlights a neurobiological perspective of transformative learning sees it invoking: *“the parasympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system, and the hypothalamic-pituitary pitocin secreting endocrine system to alter learning during periods of search and discovery”* (Janik, 2007: 12). So, brain structure changes during the transformative learning process.

Spiritual immanence as a principle of learning is proposed by Heron (1998) and is another example of figure and ground. In his view, experiential learning should work with a model of divine immanence, assuming spirituality to form the foundation and not the fruit of psychological processes. The ease conveyed in client T.K.’s report seems to

reflect Heron's view that the spiritual dimension can be accessed through opening to an inward source; and that this is a much needed complement and counter-balance to the insistence on some external, all-encompassing transcendental reality (Heron, 1998).

Methods to engage all human dimensions include the 'participatory approach' (Ferrer et al, 2005) and 'generative dialogue' (Gunnlaugson, 2007). These focus on the inter-subjective dimension of learning and engage all human dimensions. A participatory approach is conceptually similar to the Co-Active model in its tenet of there being no "expert" in the learning relationship. Generative dialogue also draws on all ways of knowing, is mediated by meta-awareness and fostered by practices like suspension and presencing.

Findings suggest that what is learned can be developmental or transformational within the UL. An accretion of knowledge together with extended repertoires of thinking and behaving represent personal development. Unlike the accumulation of facts, which are externally derived, personal learning looks internally for sources of knowledge and information. This can be a risky endeavour fraught with resistances to the point where transformation is blocked. For those who can collapse ego defences and surrender lie potentially great rewards for their self-identity and experience of *being*. This is the hallmark of transformational change. Findings suggest that the manner in which learning takes place and whether its effects are transformative involve personal epistemologies employed in learning. When learning involves total psychosomatic and spiritual dimensions of the self, the learning is profound and transformative. The environment for learning is enhanced in the intimacy and collaboration of the client/coach dyad as well as in personal introspection and reflection. How transformative learning manifests is evidenced in the expanded and improved sense of being, communicated in outward behaviour as well as internal feelings, with tolerance and compassion being learned for self and other. In addition to these insights into how and what individuals learn, findings presented in this chapter show the "Aha" moment to be a kind of intelligence in itself, an insightful learning delivered with speed and accuracy.

Gardner (1983) argued that any theory of intelligence should make explicit the core operations and end states of that intelligence. As it applies to Co-Active learning, findings suggest core operations and end states. Table 7.2, again using concepts derived from the data, presents the core operations and end states of the insightful learning to which the data point. It stresses the balanced nature of holistic learning, employing receptivity as well as agency, learning in interaction as well as in isolation, not knowing as well as deliberately calculating and utilising the wisdom of the body and spirit as well as the mind.

Table 7.2: Core Operations and End States of Insightful Learning

Core Operations	End States
Awareness, action, reflection, introspection, self-reflection	Cyclical self-renewal Expansion of being
Reflection on action	Transfer learning to other contexts
Curious, intuitive, non-judgmental analysis	Compassion and tolerance for self and others
Disidentification	Can operate upon that which is objectified
Autonomy and interdependence Agency and receptiveness	Psychological growth Balance masculine/feminine elements
Journalling	Accesses unconscious material Deepens the learning
Individual and intersubjective learning	Co-essential for development
Knowing life purpose	Directs self-learning and action
Holistic learning (rational, somatic, emotional, spiritual, relational ways of knowing)	Transformation of being
Access imagination, fantasies, movement, dance, dreams, poetry	Develops intuition Activates the superconscious

Engage right and left brain hemispheres	Produces synergistic Gestalt of knowledge
<p>Presencing</p> <p>Not knowing, surrendering, non-conceptual state of consciousness</p>	<p>Accesses pre-cognitive innate knowledge</p> <p>Accesses Witness level of consciousness: super-disidentification</p>
<p>Synergic inquiry</p> <p>Participatory knowing</p> <p>Generative dialogue</p>	<p>Promotes soul learning</p> <p>Co-generated learning</p> <p>Exposes the ego; fosters meta-awareness</p>
Integral approach to learning	<p>Knowing in all dimensions from body to mind to soul to spirit</p> <p>Spiritual states of consciousness produce feelings of love, cosmic awareness</p> <p>Accommodates all other legitimate approaches to learning</p> <p>Promotes transformation and not just development of the consciousness available <i>for</i> learning to higher levels</p>

Summary

This chapter's findings demonstrate that transformational learning and development represents a shift in which the whole self is experienced differently. This shift is fostered in the inter-subjective space of coach and client. As a psychosomatic, intellectual, intuitive and spiritual entity, the 'self' can potentially experience learning in many different ways. To address all of these human dimensions and potentialities would mean firstly to acknowledge their existence and then to employ learning methods that address the whole person. There is a cultural tendency to reach adulthood with a relatively mature mental functioning but with poorly developed somatic, vital, emotional, aesthetic, intuitive, and spiritual intelligences (Gardner, 1983/1993). Findings suggest that the acquisition of emotional literacy and the use of fantasy, images and symbols can provide access to transpersonal levels of intelligence. Transformational learning sometimes discloses non-dualistic, unitive modes of perception, requiring the adoption

of a paradigm like Wilber's integral meta-theory so that all dimensions of the self, including the spiritual line of development, may be encompassed. Only a broader definition of mind that includes its capacity to learn in the dimensions of soul and spirit would help to contextualise findings, reflected in more holistic and integral models of learning (Gunnlaugson, 2005). This definition is included in the model of coaching offered in Chapter 9.

The next chapter looks more closely at all human dimensions as they unfold in the process of transformation. It posits a spectrum of ever-expanding developmental intelligences.

Chapter 8: "Aha" Moments along a Spectrum of Consciousness Development

In the previous chapter, findings shed light on how transformative learning arises in Co-Active coaching. The conclusion was that the ability to learn through an inward gaze and utilise all human dimensions was fundamental to transformative development to a higher level of consciousness. Findings such as these invite consideration of two main aspects of theories that address the evolution of consciousness. The first concerns reports which confirm an expansion of self through the engagement of all faculties, opening the self to transpersonal awareness; and the second pertains to accounts of the nature and form of those transcendental realities to which "Aha" moments can provide access. The first question has largely been addressed in earlier chapters and it is to the second question that this chapter is mainly devoted.

Key Categories

Key concepts identified in earlier chapters give rise to categories identified at these transcendent levels of reality. For instance, findings have consistently shown "Aha" moments to be experienced in the body as well as the mind. Reports describing feeling it or sensing it in the heart, throat, solar plexus, stomach etc. These embodied experiences are classically linked to clarity and positive affect and led to the category of embodied wisdom.

Reports speak of "Aha" moments emanating from intuition, coming from the soul, directing life purpose and gaining certainty of insight into deeper truths, leading to the category of soul level "Aha"s.

Other reports describe being filled with light, losing the self in nature and feeling a connection with "all", resulting in the category of mystical insights.

Finally, reports describe the crumbling of perception, still mind, peace, bliss, the living experience of form and no form led to the category of cosmic consciousness.

My own transpersonal experience, difficult though it was to put into words, is reported in section 3 of this chapter. It describes entry into an ethereal world that felt formless but strikingly real and might be described as a pure consciousness event (Forman, 1999). Together with other participant reports, a picture emerges of the nature of multiple levels and forms of reality. It may be inferred that some apprehensions and means of apprehending are innately given, and that these can gain acuity and depth through their development and deliberate training.

Background Literature

Findings presented here reflect the contention of theorists like Smith (1976) and Wilber (1977) that the ability to enter into and experience transcendental realms of reality is related to one's stage of consciousness. Stages are construed as inclusive of earlier stages, invariant and permanent, graded in nature, and possessing various degrees of holistic capacity in a progression toward ultimate reality. Findings seem to suggest that "Aha" moments can occur at differing levels of holistic capacity within a spectrum of potentialities of consciousness ranging from the levels of body, mind, soul and spirit (Wilber, 1977). Reports are therefore examined to explore not only the relationship between insight and higher states and stages of consciousness but to discover more about these stages in their own right.

In order to understand more about higher stages of consciousness, I identified and enrolled participants who were schooled in transpersonal and spiritual insights. This addition to the originally intended sample of participants is typical of grounded study, in that it follows where the data leads. These participants claimed that, through training and practice, they had stably acquired the ability to enter numinous realms of reality. In order to decipher their reports, I turned once more to non-Western literature that might provide an interpretive framework for this data. For example many reports again spoke of the awareness of different parts of the body in the experience of insight, and so I singled out the 'Chakra' energy system as an exemplar of just one alternative perspective that might shed light on findings. Later in the chapter, the Buddhist perspective of consciousness is briefly examined as a further example of how findings might be interpreted.

Finally, the core categories that emerged from this grounded study - embodied wisdom, soul wisdom, mystical insights and cosmic consciousness are my own labels. Since the majority of reports presented here attempt to communicate experiences that are ineffable, these categories are by no means definitive. They do not delineate strict taxonomies but are somewhat subjective and arbitrary regarding transpersonal insights.

Section 1: Embodied Wisdom: "Warmth and tingliness around my heart" introduces reports that point to embodied knowing during "Aha" experiences. Subtle energy theories provide clues both to the prevailing mental, emotional and spiritual conditions of clients' lives and to the means by which coaches can address and expand embodied wisdom to acknowledge, cleanse and renew the energies contained within them. The chakra system of consciousness is one subtle energy theory that offers an interpretation of embodied knowledge.

Section 2: Soul Wisdom: "You can experience your soul" reflects "Aha" moments at the level of mind, or soul. Participant reports describe the fulfilment that derives from release from the mental plane into the core desires of the whole organism. This section discusses 'second tier' levels of consciousness (Wilber 2006) that can access the subtle energy of the soul.

Section 3: Mystical Insights: "I AM LOVE" opens with my own reported experience which had the effect of convincing me of the need for direct, unmediated awareness of spiritual experience, without which one is ill-equipped to comment on matters spiritual. These moments require analysis with reference to transpersonal models of consciousness, which marry insights of Western psychology, with its contention that matter is the primary constituent of reality, with Eastern philosophy, which sees reality as comprising an interconnected, indivisible universe. Wilber's (2006) 'psychic, subtle, causal and nondual' terminology, which describes second-tier levels of development is useful in interpreting findings.

Section 4: Cosmic Consciousness: "The living experience of form and yet no form" briefly considers findings in relation to a Buddhist appraisal of consciousness. This perspective highlights the role of the ego, and mind in general, in blocking the unfolding

of spirit, especially access to 'amala' consciousness in which the universe is perceived to be interconnected and indivisible. It demonstrates the ineffability of spiritual insights.

Section 1: Embodied Wisdom: "Warmth and tingliness around my heart".

K.G. describes the accompanying feelings and sensations of her "Aha" moment:

"Warmth and tingliness in my chest region, around my heart. Simultaneous peace and excitement." (K.G., client)

Embodied ways of knowing have been discussed in other chapters but, here, reports suggest that the body can access higher states of consciousness. Leonard and Murphy (1995) argue for the primacy of the body in transformational change: "...*body, mind, heart and soul are coequal manifestations of the human essence. But where deep down human change is concerned, there is no more effective teacher than the body*" (p.145). The heart is mentioned frequently as the seat of the "Aha" event, and in N.M.'s case is related to a sense of wholeness.

"I feel it in my heart. I feel whole and at peace with myself. I'm not sure I can describe it any better than that". (N.M., client).

Client M.R. reports the physicality of her "Aha" experience, again specifically in the region of the heart:

"My eyes are opening wider and I'm feeling it in my heart – it's physical". (M.R., client)

Chakra energy theories view the human being holistically, possessive of both a physical *and* a non-physical body (Scott, 1997). In this analysis, different energies emanate from different parts of the body. Universal love is the value behind the heart chakra and the opening of the heart encourages balance and a mind/body connection. The heart chakra encourages balance within the self and in relationship to others and energy through this chakra connects mind and body, inner and outer, self and other to arrive at a profound sense of peace and fulfilment (Judith and Vega, 1993).

Chakras represent hubs of energy activity expressing self-identity running along the vertical axis of the body and are often described in a developmental ascension, from the survival and ego focus of the first three chakras to the transpersonal and transcendent aspirations of the upper chakras (Myss, 1996). This spiral of development can be directly compared with Wilber's (2006) basic tripartite division of development from body to mind to spirit where the body represents the first three chakras, the mind, chakras three and four and the soul or spirit, chakras five, six and seven: "*The 7 chakras...represent 7 levels of consciousness available to all human beings. (The first three chakras – food, sex, and power – are roughly stage 1; chakras 4 and 5 – relational heart and communication – are basically stage 2; and chakras 6 and 7 – psychic and spiritual – are the epitome of stage 3)*" (Wilber, 2006:13).

As well as feeling the "Aha" moment in their hearts, there is mention of the role of the throat, the seat of communication. Client S. L. found it difficult to communicate her insight because it had such enormous repercussions for her life. She had difficulty in finding the words to describe it:

"I had a lump in my throat as I tried to describe the enormity of my "AHA" moment!"
(S.L., client)

Intuitive insight for client B.C. can also involve the throat:

"Sometimes there is also a 'hit' in my throat." (B.C., client)

The throat chakra – the fifth chakra – is "*...the bridge between the heart and the mind, providing the ability to put what's in your heart or mind into words to be expressed to the world through the throat*" (Diener 1998). It is further associated with listening to one's intuition and represents the first level of consciousness, from which one perceives the functioning of another level of intelligence, and one's interaction with this other level of intelligence (Brofman, 2008).

Client M.M. reports an auditory element to insight, describing the energy accompanying her "Aha" experience in terms of hearing an inner voice:

"I feel positive – energized and sure. Almost like hearing an inner voice". (M.M., client)

The throat chakra is also considered to be: "...the energy centre through which you receive your "inner voice" and inner guidance by developing your clairaudient (clear hearing) abilities" (Diener, 1998:60). Scott (1997) calls for a distinction between 'auditory hallucinations' and 'inner voices', in the American Psychiatric Association's definitions of mental health and disease. She posits that auditory hallucinations are experienced in the lower chakras or levels of consciousness and inner voices at the higher end from the heart chakra upwards. Brew (1994) noted that among the random sample of her research participants the notion of inner voices was not an alien concept but one with which her participants seemed familiar.

Client M.L. reports a more ubiquitous bodily awareness during her "Aha" experience. In addition, she is apparently saying "no" to someone (or some people) close to her:

"The feelings were all over but I guess it was mainly in my ability to become "mobile" after being disabled temporarily. So legs/lungs/mental alertness. Best of all I could say NO and mean it!" (M.L., client)

M.L.'s report evidences another aspect of embodied knowing, the link between the "Aha" moment and the desire for action. The heart chakra is associated with the lungs and the parts of consciousness concerned with relationships close to our hearts (Brofman 2008). In the next extract from client S.B., release from negative affect is reported in graphic physical fashion. She is responding to a question about where in her body or mind she is most aware of the "Aha" moment and reports feeling release in her solar plexus:

'Solar plexus – release like when you're desperate to go to the loo – rushing release'. (S.B., client)

The solar plexus, or third chakra, stores thoughts and emotions regarding issues of self-confidence, self-esteem and self-acceptance and is therefore considered to represent the ego-identity in the chakra system (Judith 1996). The 'rushing release' expressed here can be inferred as meaning release from chronic negative feelings about the self,

or the collapse of an ego defence. The following account from client P.L. shows how awareness of energies in the body is a useful learning tool. His solar plexus is used to control procrastination and to promote feelings of strength:

"I visualized a fire in my solar plexus when I was strong and a purple liver, lifeless feel when I procrastinated". (P.L., client)

The solar plexus chakra is further associated with perceptions of power, control and freedom (Judith 1996). Client S.H. indicates that he, too, is becoming more aware of where in his body he locates his power base, again singling out the solar plexus. He uses this base to increase feelings of personal agency. There is also a hint of expansiveness in his report:

"Every time I need to feel powerful I go into my solar plexus and open it up to the experience." (S.H., client)

The stomach or abdomen is associated with the emotions of the solar plexus chakra. S.H. links his "Aha" experience with his abdomen and the effect of lightness and expansiveness that accompanies it:

"Lightness, expansiveness in my head and abdomen." (S.H., client)

The emotions connected to client C.G.'s insights are also experienced in the stomach:

"For me usually a sense of calm excitement in my stomach." (C.G., client)

Recent decades have seen scientific support for the system of chakras. In the early 1970's Dr Hioshi Motoyama theorised that chakras create a bioenergetic/ bioelectrical output. Using specialised sound recording equipment, he demonstrated his theory by providing measurable electrostatic energy emissions from the chakras (Gerber, 2001). This led Gerber to describe chakras as human biocomputers, energy transformers that facilitate hormonal, physiologic and ultimately cellular changes throughout the body. They are involved in the uptake of higher energies and of transmuting them into a physiologically compatible form, which extends to human cellular structure and activity.

For example, chakras have been linked to the endocrine system, which emits hormones directly into the bloodstream (Anodea, 1996).

The next client, S.L., clearly links spiritual and physical qualities:

“Mind (imagining lots of possibilities) connected to spirit (connection to what’s important) and dragging the body along (have to jump up and start walking around)”.
(S.L., client)

The energy surge that so often accompanies the “Aha” event, according to numerous reports in this study, may generalise to improvements in overall health for the participants, since from the holistic viewpoint, everything which is physical has an energetic correlate and vice versa (Gulmen 2004). McMurray (2005) introduces a vibrational element to consciousness (a subject expanded in Section 5). She maintains that each chakra has a frequency that is associated with a note on the musical scale. When the energy body is working well, vibrations are high so that when people reach the equivalent level of consciousness of Maslow’s (1987) ‘self-actualizers’ their vibration increases. Client D.C.’s account includes a musical analogy of rhythm as he describes the changes he has made as a result of coaching. Quotes like his show that states of consciousness determine perceptions of the world and reality:

“I’m more playful – like I’ve found my own internal rhythm and I’m showing it to the world. I’m free to have new perceptions and new experiences”. (D.C., client)

Other Eastern philosophies would interpret D.C.’s account in a completely different way from the Western mindset. Buddhist philosophy, for example, posits that we will emit a vibrational energy into the environment according to the world in which our perception is generally operating: from states of hell (depression) to anger (ego) to rapture (temporary happiness) to Buddha nature encompassing love, compassion and wisdom. Optimal energy flow in the body is enhanced by health in all aspects of one’s life, including not only the physical, but also the mental, emotional and spiritual. Client J.W. certainly seems to experience the “Aha” event holistically:

“My spirit, sense of self and inner confidence – it’s a mix of mind, body and spirit – like re-emerging from a deep sleep”. (J.W., client)

This section has presented examples of a large number of reports that identify “Aha” moments in specific parts of the body. Needleman’s (1990) analysis concluded that a special form of “attention of the heart” is instrumental in opening one’s spiritual eye or “growing one’s soul.” This is not a new notion but represents concepts that were known to many prior to the scientific age of modernity. The task now is to regain this awareness through a discipline of “recollection” that opens “the eye of the soul” (Plato), “the eye of the heart” (Sufism) or “the eye of Tao” (Taoism). The goal is an illusion-shattering wisdom that recognises our true transcendental nature (Walsh, 2006). The chakra energy theories of Eastern philosophy help to account not just for these but, importantly, for the overwhelming number of accounts that speak of the energy that accompanies insight. Mainstream Western psychology has yet to acknowledge subtle energies. In the future, the West may come to see that these subtle energy theories represent a vital biological component in the activity of consciousness (Wilber 2006). For coaches, a nodding acquaintance with subtle energy systems would contextualise what they already know to be true – the important role of the body in the experiencing of insight. The next section turns its attention to “Aha” moments at the level of mind, or soul:

Section 2: Soul Wisdom: “You can experience your soul”

Coach J.P.’s account shows that “Aha” moments can be continual and progressive, culminating in a liberation of the soul:

“Aha moments result from the accumulation of new awarenesses and set you free from the mental plane so you can experience your soul.” (J.P., Co-Active Coach).

J.P.’s utterance suggests a personal expansion of mental models of the world to the point where cognitions are superseded by the soul. Developmentally, the evolution of consciousness beyond the formal operational thinking of cognitions produces a subtle self, and it is within this realm of self that the soul arises (Wilber, 2000). J.P.

differentiates between the mental and soul dimensions of his being but this nomenclature is not universally accepted. Even the concept of mind is equivocal, construed variously as brain, ego, unconscious or soul, although it has been argued that the term soul was banished by 17th century mechanistic science (Sheldrake, 1987). Because of the ubiquitous use of the word 'soul' in the modern world, Rowan (2005) adopts the phrase 'psychic centre' to refer to the area in which subtle energies arise. However expressed, there is the notion that the everyday mind is transcended when knowledge comes from the soul. Client J.R.'s quote also implies that this level of consciousness is beyond cognition and, again, hints at peace:

"The message from my future self seemed to come from my soul: 'Enjoy being who you are. Let go of concerns because there's no need to worry.'" (J. R., client)

Client S.M.'s thoughts and will were absent from his transcendent experience:

"The "Aha" moment was experienced in a place far from the usual thoughts and images and yet provided a certainty of eternity." (S.M., client)

As indicated in the previous section, when energies are flowing freely through the heart and mind, subtle energies are accessed. Client K.G.'s account includes a depiction of body, mind, soul and 'vibes', suggestive of a mindbody-soul interconnection:

"During my most recent coaching session, I experienced the a-ha moment. I was aware that my whole body was suddenly truly at one. Thinking and feeling were no longer coming from separate places. I was experiencing vibes in the atmosphere and understanding them, I had become everything I was supposed to be, I had looked into my soul and become whole". (K.G., client)

The soul chakra is deemed to contain intuition about the individual's life plan: *"Through the seat-of-the-soul chakra, we receive our gut reactions and hunches and we liberate our soul to fulfil her life plan"* (Prophet and Spadaro, 2004:4). S.B.'s life plan is based on his 'life purpose' statement which he is now consciously living:

"I think that anytime you live 'on purpose' your whole life changes, becomes more focussed, richer, deeper." (S.B., client)

The dream state is a subtle state of consciousness (Wilber, 2006). The next account is from the journal entry of my client, V. W. During the coaching session she was describing to me a dream in which she found herself taking two very large dogs for a walk. One was very quiet and docile while the other was energetic and playful. I was supporting her in exploring her dream from a Gestalt approach. Each facet of the dream is considered to be a facet (often repressed) of the dreamer's psyche. Therefore the dreamer is invited to introduce each facet of the dream separately and talk about it from her/his/its first-person point of view. It could be argued that this allows each sub-personality to have a voice, and with this acknowledgement comes the possibility of re-integration into the conscious psyche. This is an extract from V. W.'s diary:

"The AHA moment came when I realised that these dogs were two different parts of me and I had been stifling one of them!" (V. W., client)

Client E.W. reports that life purpose has been illuminated from a soul level of knowledge:

"The biggest change is that my soul has found its purpose and I can trust it to direct my life". (E.W., client)

So, soul level "Aha" moments reveal the life purpose of the real self, and this is often experienced at not only a personal but a transpersonal level of consciousness, as explained by client B.L:

"My soul felt inspired by a mission and a purpose bigger than I am." (B.L., client)

Client S.D. records what happened after his initial life-changing "Aha" moment.

"A series of paradigm shifts followed and then I had a peak experience of being my self. I had different qualities of character when being my true self". (S.D., client)

Insights at the level of soul enhance interconnection in relationships. J.R.'s soul experience is intuited as inter-connected energy between him and his coach:

"I feel a stream of soul energy going to the other person and coming back, doing a circle". (J.R., client)

Coach A. D. shared a soulful moment with his client as they danced in the moment:

"When he and I danced together in the moment, there was a fusion on what I could only call a soul level" (A. D., coach)

A.R. notes that she is forging deeper interpersonal connections and her quote also highlights the notion of presence that has been expressed many times in this study:

"I am reaching out to people from my soul, engaging in meaningful discussion. I am more present". (A.R., client)

These reports are suggestive of transformational development. Client L.S. even uses the term 'stages of development' when talking about the role of "Aha" moments in her own personal development:

"Really helpful as transitions between stages of development." (L.S., client)

These shifts in consciousness would be expected in the transpersonal paradigm that provides an integrated view of the human being as holistic and capable of transformation (Hartelius et al., 2007). Psychosynthesis is a prime example of a transpersonal approach and, like the Co-Active Coaching model, hypothesises that each individual has a purpose in life. Whitmore (2004: 4) asserts that this is what distinguishes it from humanistic approaches.

Transforming is a question of realising intrinsic potentialities by quieting the conscious mind (seat of the ego) and awakening of the unconscious (seat of the self) (Tart, 1975:157). For this self to be contacted, Tart recommends that it awakens from its 'consensus trance': its holding to the illusion of one waking reality where thoughts are

conditioned by culture and society. One means of escaping consensus consciousness is through peak experiencing. As explained in Chapter 6, there is a distinction between first and second tier levels of consciousness (Wilber, 2000: 11-12). Individuals at first tier levels consider their own worldviews to encompass the only correct values, the equivalent, in many ways, of Tart's (1975) consensus consciousness. Second tier thinking represents a quantum leap in the 'self' line of consciousness into transpersonal levels. Individuals can at this stage grasp the entire spectrum of consciousness within themselves by stepping back to observe the bigger picture where all levels of the self are recognised and integrated. These meta-rational ways of meaning-making constitute post-conventional epistemologies and result in individuals sensing balance of both their belongingness and separateness as intrinsic parts of the evolution of the universe in all its aspects. This leads to a deeper sense of security of being than would be possible with a rationally generated self-identity (Cook-Greuter, 2005: 33).

While Cook-Greuter estimates that fewer than 20% of the population has acquired 2nd tier levels of development, reports presented here are suggestive of these levels. For example, participant accounts of the unity of thinking and being are representative of the 'centaur self' (Wilber, 2000), a concept introduced in Chapter 4 representing an important stage of second-tier development that paves the way towards the higher reaches of spiritual consciousness. At the centaur stage, rational thinking combines with imaginal thinking to produce expansion in the cognitive line of development. In the self line, one experiences a transpersonal 'supra-individual source of identity' that overcomes mindbody duality (Wilber 2000: 12). For Cook-Greuter (2002) simplicity is to be found on the other side of highly developed cognition. Cook-Greuter argues that, were consciousness considered to peak at post-formal levels, there would be the dilemma of endless multiple perspectives on any event. Simplicity is the reward, as she puts it, for ascending to 2nd tier waves of consciousness.

Reports presented in this section link concepts of future self, soul, life mission and purpose and the transpersonal potentials of consciousness. Mind in the sense of soul seems to stimulate insights that go beyond the cognitive to connect individuals with higher levels of awareness, deeper insights and the sense of connection to energies outside of the self. According to Wilber (2001), the soul level of consciousness still presents a duality between subject and object. While there is a communion with God,

there is still a boundary between self and God. However, in the realm of spirit, the soul and God commune, uniting in Godhead or absolute spirit where no boundaries exist (p. 13). The next section explores these spiritual or mystical insights, starting with my own.

Section 3: Mystical Insights: "I AM LOVE"

Reports in this section convey a sense that, ethereal as transpersonal experiences may be, there is a certainty and realness associated with them that transcends everyday experience. Post-conventional, or as some (Cook-Greuter, 2005) would argue, post post-conventional states of consciousness indicative of vertical shifts are evidenced in the following reports, which speak of connection to self, others, nature and the universe.

The section begins with the transcript of my own spiritual moment of insight, which I journalled immediately after the experience. This event resulted from an embodied mode of knowing in the form of deep breath work. Conscious breathing, together with being consciously mindful of nothing but present awareness as it unfolded moment by moment, proved to be the means of my accessing a previously unsuspected realm of reality. The context for this experience was with a "holistic fitness" teacher, J.L., and the following is a verbatim account of the context of the experience followed by an account of the experience itself.

My "Aha" Moment

He has been supporting me in breathing and being present for two hours. I am amazed at his intuitive ability to know where I'm holding breath, restricting, or contracting myself. He is encouraging me to not resist feelings but to be intensely aware of them as they arise. I am moved at one point to tears. He seems to sense and in some way share every emotion, all the while instructing me to "come back" (i.e. be present without conceptual thought or ego intervention).

"I am feeling dizzy and light-headed which is only to be expected after all the hyper-ventilation that this deliberate, open-mouthing breathing has induced", I tell myself. I wonder: "How come he knows every time I visit a thought in my head? He says "come back" each time. "Listen to the traffic". Over and over again, "listen to the traffic". "Mouth" he commands each time I inadvertently close my mouth. Then he somehow knows when thought is absent and says "That's it". He's breathing with me, for me, making exaggerated and somewhat inhuman sounds, now a horse, now a monkey. He has no ego. My own starts to drop away. And as I sit there open-mouthed, breathing like Marilyn Monroe singing "Happy Birthday Mr. President", I am suddenly totally, fully present. Like a silver sun piercing all at once through cloud, everything is illuminated...dancing. There is clarity, brilliant light dancing around me and within me. I feel electrically alive and a whoosh of bliss blasts up through me. I suddenly get it. I am being breathed. I no longer have to be just me. The power of the universe is breathing me. I can sink into it. I am safe. I am loved. I AM LOVE."

With tears of awe trickling down my cheeks I turn to J. L.; *"There are no words..."* I stammer. J. L. nods slowly and knowingly, summing up the whole epistemological quandary somewhat prosaically in his response: *"We know shit"*.

J. L. is here referring to the inadequacy of conceptual 'knowledge' and the false epistemological and ontological ceilings placed on consciousness by Western conceptualisations. My mystical experience couldn't be described as consciousness of another reality because there was no separate me to construct any concepts, including the concept of consciousness itself. A reflection on this experience is offered at the end of this chapter.

The next accounts presented come from participants who have experienced both states and stages of spiritual awareness. Co-Active coaching clients report on state-related spiritual insights and integral practitioners report on these insights that are typical of their stage of development. As mentioned in Chapter 3, in order to understand more about these stages, I sought out participants among the population of Integral Institute's website, a forum called Integral Naked (www.in.integralinstitute.org). This cohort of respondents has typically cultivated the ability to regularly enter numinous states thanks to their stage of consciousness.

States of consciousness can be altered chemically. Client E.W. was asked if he had had “Aha” moments outside of the coaching arena:

“Yes. The first huge AHA I had was after I had my first experience with lysergic acid” (E.W., client).

In response to the same question, client M.M. refers to his ‘trips’ with L.S.D:

“Yes. Plenty. Some good ones when tripping my brains out on LSD but I won’t go there...” (M.M., client)

Transpersonal theorist Stanislov Grof “went there” in his research in the 1960’s with LSD psychotherapy to offer evidence of altered states of consciousness. He noted that all his participants eventually transcended the psychodynamic level to realise transpersonal realms, suggesting intrinsic knowledge. Altered states do not create the experience they induce but rather they activate the deep unconscious to bring forth its contents for conscious processing. In this way, the individual becomes conscious of the “universal mind”: *“Identifying with the consciousness of the Universal Mind, the individual...has reached the reality underlying all realities and is confronted with the supreme and ultimate principle that represents all Being”* (Grof and Grof, 1980: 96-97).

Clients are aware of the special nature of transpersonal states. This is how client S.M., who has begun to regularly meditate, describes the “Aha” moment in an interview with me:

“The moment itself is a suspension of normal consciousness” (S.M., client interviewee)

Client K.L.’s account focuses on the energy component of transpersonal “Aha” moments:

“I felt the “Aha” moment way beyond the confines of my body like an electric energy enveloping my whole being” (K.L., client).

Client L.A.’s description of the effect of her “Aha” moment raises the related and now familiar theme of mindfulness:

"It's a kind of mindfulness that transcends the intellectual content of the brain" (L.A., client)

The state of awareness that can come from "Aha" moments experienced while fully occupying the present moment represents a level of consciousness in its own right, according to Aldous Huxley (1944) who argued that: "The eternal now *is* a consciousness".

The non-cognitive experience of spiritual insights is given expression by client M.L. as:

"A Truth revealing itself" (M. L., client)

Client F.C.'s mystical "Aha" moment resulted in the freeing of transcendent self-knowledge:

"My mind is calm...my spirit feels like it's free and it's guiding me" (F.C., client)

Recovering a transcendent dimension is evidenced in other reports. During N.O.'s "Aha" moment, the senses were integrated:

"All of me, mind body and soul, recognised it as a TRUTH." (N.O., client)

The idea of re-emergence is apparent in client M.L.'s account:

"I like myself more – being/finding me again." (M.L., client)

These accounts are reminiscent of Socrates' insight that *"All knowledge is but remembrance"*, where inherent potentials of consciousness are recognised as having been there all along, waiting to be returned to conscious awareness, or *re-cognised*. There is the sense of re-connecting with a self that was previously intuitively known but has become lost along the way. To explain this phenomenon of consciousness, Wilber (1990) differentiates between *deep* structures and *surface* structures in which such memory retrieval may occur. He posits that all deep structures are remembered while

all surface structures are learned. He contrasts transformation of consciousness, a vertical shift, with translation, a horizontal movement. The former marks an ascent to a higher level of consciousness which structurally differs from the latter which marks changes only within a given level: *“Each transformation upward marks the emergence in consciousness of a new and higher level, with a new deep structure, within which new translations or surface structures can unfold and operate”* (Wilber, 1990: 106).

The experience of light that was prominent in my own transpersonal experience is given expression in many reports and in many contexts – light illuminating ignorance, the sense of lightness and ease which accompanies “Aha” moments and the lightness of being that accompanies the return to a forgotten peace. This last finding is expressed in the next extract where Integral Naked interviewee L.H. explains her first transpersonal event, experienced some years earlier. Her description contains a paradoxical sense of an experience that is both old and new. It shows how spiritual “Aha” moments crack open the experiencer’s view of ‘reality’, and with it many other conceptions such as eternity, time and space:

“I am filled with this incredible light that shines down from my head all the way through my spine and into the core of the earth and I am amazed. I’m present in this body, I’m aware of my surroundings. I am not my surroundings. And this is totally new to me but it’s very, very, very old. I have been this before but I am this now and I will always be this”. (L.H., interviewee from I.N.)

The metaphor of light, in this case a lightness of being, is reported by client D.C:

“Like re-emerging from a deep sleep. I feel lighter, stronger and more loving”. (D.C., client)

I.N. interviewee R.P. describes a spontaneous event of a subtle level of consciousness. He is recounting a peak experience of love, the most powerful energy we know (Greenia 2002):

“There was a full moon. I was lying there, feeling a subtle energy, not fully asleep. I could feel her (my mother’s) love. I could feel my heart bathing in love. Felt my heart open and feeling the love. I just see how precious life is.” (R.P., interviewee I.N)

Reports also highlight connection with nature. Interviewee R.P. regularly walks in the countryside and finds that communing with nature breeds a consciousness of interconnectedness:

“I get to a place of feeling joy, losing the self into nature. Feeling that connection, a wave of joy washes over me” (R.P., interviewee from I.N.)

Connection is also experienced with a higher realm. In this next extract from client L.M., who was describing the sensations accompanying his “Aha” event, accessing the “bigger purpose” is a spiritual gateway. The metaphor of light is expressed on this occasion as floating up:

“My belief system in my mind, expanding it and letting other possibilities in, feeling a raise in temperature and spirit, feeling lifted up and floating and in touch with the bigger purpose”. (L.M., client)

This connection to a bigger purpose spurs client N.Y. into action:

“Being in service of something “bigger than me” is my lifelong interest and passion. Having this aha contextualizes the risks I’m more willing to take” (N.Y., client).

Spiritual experiences often speak of universal interconnection, as reported by client S.T., who was responding to a question about the effect of his “Aha” experience:
“All...making connection with all” (S.T., client)

This universal connection reflects Wilber’s (2006) theory that consciousness evolves from dwelling on self to include self and others, then to self and all others, and finally to all of creation, a world-centric stance. This is expressed by client R.P., whose “Aha” moment had the effect of teaching him to think of his own inter-relatedness to the whole human quest:

"The learning is that I am part of a human quest for peace, love, acceptance, serenity and support". (R.P., client)

The spiritual line of development has not been integrated into mainstream models of therapy, not least because practitioners cannot decide what spiritual means. In the field of clinical psychology, for example, Crossley and Salter (2005) conducted a grounded study among clinical psychologists to discover how they construed the term "spirituality". They found such diversity of meaning as to preclude coherence of the word, a state of affairs that they blame for spirituality regularly being overlooked within therapeutic settings. It might be argued that findings also reflect Wilber's (2006) contention that the word "spiritual" itself has four major usages: the highest level in any of the lines of development; a separate line itself; an extraordinary peak experience or state; and a particular attitude (Wilber 2006: 100).

While the modern Western mindset has traditionally recognised but one single reality - the physical, material world (Smith 1992), holonomic (or holographic) theories argue that reality is a multi-dimensional affair and there are numerous ways of accessing its different realms. Access involves ways of being and knowing that are intrinsically available to everyone. Information is assumed to be present throughout all parts of all systems, in some implicate or potential form, in a manner similar to the complex interference pattern in which information is represented in a hologram. In these attentional deployment models, what appears to be the accessing of new information is a case of knowing or remembering where and how to look within for knowledge that is already present (Braud, 2002). In this analysis, personal evolution mirrors the evolution of the cosmos in that there is an inherent drive to more hierarchically arranged wholes, with each whole being a part of a larger whole which in turn is part of an even larger, more inclusive and more organised one. Smuts (1926) asserts that this is because the cosmos is evolving and the human mind, as part of the cosmos, would exhibit the same hierarchical arrangement of wholes within wholes, from the most rudimentary to the most complex and inclusive.

From a personal perspective, my reported transpersonal experience was the most shocking element of the study's findings. Prior to this event, I fancied that I had enjoyed transcendental experiences over many years of seeking them and embarking on

practices to encourage them. However, I realised that my 'understanding' had been innocently ego driven and based mainly on the intellect. I was sure that my ego was not involved in the entry into the pristine clarity of interconnected reality into which I slipped. The ability to contemplate noetic, evolutionary and holonomic theories of consciousness became much easier after this personal event and impacted profoundly on my understanding of the results of this study. As I re-read reports relating to reality altering "Aha" moments, I identified with them in a totally new way - as "knowledge by presence" (Kuhn, 2000: 152) rather than as a representation corresponding to this knowledge. Before this experience, I had been 'at one removed' from the connotations of the findings of the study, although I had no awareness of this at the time. Consequently, I felt I could write with a little more authenticity on transpersonal states. This transient breakthrough glimpse, this 'peek' experience into unity consciousness indicated to me that such apprehensions are innately endowed. Mystical experiences are not uncommon (Gallup and Lindsay 1999) and they have the capacity to transform the self to a new stage: *"Mysticism is commonly understood to be the experience and then stabilization of increasingly subtle, complex phenomenologically distinct, post-egoic states of consciousness... culminating in the unio mystica or impersonal nonduality"* (Wade, 2000: 275). Reports evidence post-egoic, 2nd tier transpersonal stages during which a self-sense begins to expand beyond the personal, the "skin encapsulated ego", to encompass aspects, or even the whole, of humankind, life, the internal and external universe, and consciousness itself (Walsh, 2006). Wilber's (2006) categories are useful for contextualising from an Eastern perspective the excerpts presented in this chapter. For example, reports of being one with the entire natural-sensory world, often called 'nature mysticism', is reflective of his psychic stage. His taxonomy of the 2nd tier levels of the spectrum of consciousness comprises at least four broad stages of post-formal development of the self, described as psychic, subtle, causal and nondual. This argument will be developed in the next section, which again takes an Eastern approach to the analysis of findings, this time from a Buddhist perspective.

Section 4: Cosmic Consciousness: "The living experience of form and yet no form"

According to Buddhist philosophy, finding happiness lies largely in the ability to control the "monkey mind": the undisciplined consciousness that scrambles from thought to

thought, impelled by negative emotions and impulsive desires. Release from the monkey mind recurs in the data:

"My mind is still...the chatter has stopped...my body is relaxed..." (B.L., client)

For client L.H., the outcome of stilling the mind means that:

"Perception crumbles and is replaced by something clearer and more real" (L.H., client)

Reports dramatically demonstrate how the moment not only restores a sense of 'élan vitale', but that this can be experienced in all of the being, so that the "Aha" moment can be both vibrant and vibrational. Client R.W.'s "Aha" moment is accompanied by vibrational energies throughout his whole self in a manner he describes as integrated:

"This is resonating in all parts of me. It is a fully integrated feeling". (R.W., client)

Reports suggesting that consciousness is associated with sound or vibration are a common theme in the transpersonal literature. Wilber (1979:23) quotes Whitehead's philosophy of "organism" and "vibratory existence", which suggests that all the *"ultimate elements are in their essence vibratory...all the things and events we usually consider are irreconcilable, such as cause and effect, past and future, subject and object are actually just like the crest of a single wave, a single vibration"*. The final truth, according to Nichiren Buddhism, lies in the key to unlocking one's Buddhahood, and this is vibrational (the chanting of Nam-myoho-rence-kyo is considered by adherents to be the rhythm of the universe). From a neuro-biological standpoint, Pert (1997) argues that happiness is our default state when the biochemicals of emotion are flowing through the organism in a smooth and rhythmic movement. She concludes that *"...bliss is hardwired"* (p. 265).

Clients report transcendence of time and space during spiritual "Aha" moments:

"In the moment of the experience time no longer existed, blissfully peaceful" (E.W., client)

Bliss and peace are emblematic of spiritual insights. Client L.S. explains the effect of her spiritual “Aha” moment:

“It has led to a greater degree of trust that the universe (God?) is supporting what I have resolved to focus on. I have a much greater connection with my own spiritual core and a much greater sense of peace.” (L.S., client)

The next “Aha” experience indicates that loss of self-consciousness can lead to self-transcendence. Client B.M.’s account speaks of a unity consciousness where the dualism of the self/not self boundary dissolves:

“Words can’t capture the enormity of the experience. Strong, gentle, firm. I was expanded and part of all of it. No separation. I zoomed into focus and everything else faded. I was in this energy that filled everything”. (B.M., client)

B.M.’s account of nonduality represents ‘integral’ mysticism experienced as the union of the manifest and the unmanifest, or the union of Form and Emptiness, a causal state of nonduality (Wilber, 2006).

In a similar vein, client S.H. paradoxically experiences himself as both a tiny speck *in* and a keeper *of* the universe. His account shatters his previous orientation towards space:

“I had this sensation of being hurtled into space going further and further out. And I turned and saw myself as just a tiny speck on the planet. I kept going, turned round again and saw myself huge and embracing the whole planet”. (S.H., client interviewee)

In the next excerpt from I.N., interviewee T.C. speaks of nonduality and eternity:

“It’s my very self and there’s my body, it’s exactly as my body has always been but now I’m aware of reality flowing through it and other things around me are reality”. (T.C., client)

In Western culture between 0.5% and 0.9% of individuals are considered to be at the highest stage of consciousness (Cook-Greuter, 2005). Cook-Greuter labels this stage

'global' or 'unitive' where the separation of self from others is experienced as an illusion, an invention to safeguard the ego's need for permanence and self-importance, as well as to defend against the fear of its death. Her analysis is reflective of a Buddhist paradigm. Western culture has effectively blocked the possibility of reaching this stage of awakening to transcendent reality since stages higher than one's own tend to be misunderstood, pathologised and viewed as threatening (Walsh 2006).

Descriptions of the 'moment' have connotations not only of being momentous but of containing the seeds of momentum, perhaps carried in a universal tide of consciousness, a creative force that is within and around us. This would be one explanation for I.N. interviewee R.K.P.'s account:

"Didn't see anything for a few minutes and I kept looking up in the Western sky and lo and behold, there it is, very high up in the sky and that was the big Aha moment. When I saw Venus it was as if...I guess the best way to describe it would be that my consciousness had been elevated and with it the whole consciousness of mankind was elevated. Like my being there in the space with Venus I'd kinda moved up my understanding...in a sense felt drawn up in my understanding of consciousness and in my being drawn up, the entire consciousness of mankind had been drawn up". (R.K.P., client)

Accounts like this are reflected in Wade's (1996) research on mystical altered states, when her participants described phenomenological elements such as a sense of realness, ecstatic unity, transcendence of time and space, paradoxicality and ineffability (p. 183). Western psychology has never appreciated the distinction between awareness and the content of awareness (Deikman (1982). The meditative practise of suspending cognitive activity results in the sensation of pushing back further into the consciousness of who one is, devoid of concepts about self, and one finally pushes back through thoughts, feelings and sensations into pure awareness, or witness. As Firman and Gila (1997:53) explain: *"There is an "I-am-ness" – a field of awareness through which the contents may pass. Sensations, feelings, thoughts, images, impulses, or intuitions all come and go in this field at varying distances from "I". "I" is able to know itself as distinct but not separate from these contents"*. Smith (2001) employs the analogy of a television to distinguish between pure consciousness or awareness and the contents of

consciousness. The screen of a television lights up with images, which might be compared to the perceptions, sensations, dreams, memories, thoughts and feelings that we consciously experience, and these can be considered to be the contents of consciousness. The light itself, without which no images would be possible, corresponds to pure consciousness. We are not usually aware of the light itself that produces the images but only the various contents with which consciousness presents us. Ultimately, consciousness amounts to infinite potential, receptive to any content that might be imposed on it. (Smith 2001: 265).

The light of which many reports speak has been prominent in many religious traditions. Kuhn (2000), drawing on ancient Arabic texts, explains the illuminative philosophy of Suhrawardi (1993B), a 12th century Persian sage. In this analysis light requires no definition because its nature is definitive: *“Light is that which is apparent in its own reality and makes other things apparent by its essence”* (Suhrawardi, 1993: 113, quoted in Kuhn, 2000:149). The ‘knowability’ of things is indistinguishable from their act of being and physical light is derivative of the light that subsists in its own essence, immaterial light. This material light is “light to itself” unlike material light which is “light in itself”. In this philosophy, light in its immaculate state is none other than consciousness itself (Kuhn, 2000: 149).

Findings demonstrate the inadequacy of the Western lexicon to convey insights of a spiritually transcendent nature, which defy conceptual definition. Client H.D. could find no words to describe his spiritual “Aha” moment:

“There are no words to describe it. This was like a near-death experience. Like being re-born, blissed out” (H.D., client)

H.G.’s “Aha” moment moved him beyond words:

“It felt like an indrawn breath, as I moved to a place beyond words.” (H.G., client)

The next account is from an interviewee, J. McD., a Co-Active coach, who was presenting to an audience on the subject of nondualism. It raises several issues,

including how personally momentous transpersonal experiences can be and how difficult it is to describe such occasions:

"I was trying to talk about nondualism. Head- frying territory. There's a room full of people not getting it and becoming hostile. One in particular was getting really ratty. My ego was taking a beating...Then my ego seemed to 'stop'. I could hear the words and could see the people but there was nothing. My body was there but in the mind there was nothing. There was just...brain-stall - information coming in, nothing coming out. Faintly unnerving (while there is a small part in the back of my mind that's still evaluating). Somebody said something. There was a jolt – and I came back. I guess it came from – what do you call it – prajna, heart wisdom? It felt like there was a moment of nothingness and then everything I expressed suddenly made sense" (J. McD., coach)

This coach has been meditating for many years and his account contains the notorious impasse. Later in the interview, J. McD. speaks of the challenges of Western cultural conditioning with its denial of such states of being and insistence upon intellectual reasoning. One of the prime objectives of Co-Active coaching is to attempt to 'disembed' clients from such cultural conditioning:

"My culture has been one based on intellect – reason one's way out of adverse situations. After a point, that doesn't work. The brain gives up. Out of that comes an intuitive understanding. What's uncovered is a peacefulness. Here and now-ness." (J. McD., coach)

These accounts reflect the notion that transpersonal consciousness is ineffable, beyond the cognitive mediation of symbolisation, especially language to describe it (Wade, 1996:210). William James and others proposed *ineffability*—that "no adequate report of its contents can be given in words"—as one of several key characteristics of the mystical experience (James, 1902/1985: 380). McGilchrist (2009: 188) contends that while novel experiences are comprehended in the right brain, problems accrue when the left hemisphere attempts to construe experience linguistically.

McGilchrist also argues that the right hemisphere is ontologically prior to the left. Transpersonal awareness "...seems somehow prior to [any] reflective-prereflective realm, presenting itself as more of a space or ground from which our more common experience and felt-sense emerge" (Valle and Mohs, 1998: 100). Accounts also emphasise the knowledge that emanates from sources beyond the mind and the ego. Much suffering is alleviated, according to Cook-Greuter (2005), "...when the automatic habits of mind and heart are unlearned and uncoupled from memory (what was) and desires (what ought to be) and replaced by mindful, non-evaluative attention to what is-now" (p. 35). Her analysis of ego development emphasises the ability of individuals at her designated 'construct aware' stage to distance themselves from analytic reasoning. At this stage, rational deliberation can be complemented with intuition and other transpersonal material. Turning inward at this post-egoic stage often leads to spontaneous experience of that direct mode of knowing, in which knower and known momentarily merge and the self-sense disappears.

Client T.M. experienced this reality where knower and known merge:

"This sounds crazy but I was just sitting there studying and threw a piece of paper in the bin. As I looked to the bin, suddenly there was no bin, there was no me. And I was the bin, the bin was me. My first taste of kyochi myogo, not as a concept but as the living experience of form and yet no form" (T.M., client)

Very different to Western conceptualisations of consciousness is the view of consciousness from within a Buddhist paradigm. In interview, T.M. explained that he was not seeking any escape from the mental realm – indeed he was engaged in academic study - when he experienced this event. In the Nichiren Buddhism that T.M. practises with the use of vocal meditation, unity consciousness, or cosmic consciousness, is called 'kyochi myogo'.

Nichiren Buddhism formulates levels of consciousness in a different way from developmental stage theorists like Wilber. Where Wilber's stages of consciousness proceed from junior to senior, with each new level adding to and embracing all the junior levels before it, the Buddhist paradigm of the "Nine consciousnesses" (www.sgi-uk.org/index.php/buddhism/9thconsciousness) sees each level as containing all nine. In

this sense it is more like a holographic than a stage model. Nevertheless, there are similarities between the approaches, with each providing a means of understanding subjective and precognitive existence and positing a spiral of upward development through spiritual practice, where one's self-identity moves upwards to higher realms of ever-expanding consciousness. The first five realms of Buddhist consciousness comprise the senses while the sixth functions to integrate and interpret input from the senses. In contrast, the seventh consciousness is directed towards our inner, spiritual world and spans both the conscious and subconscious aspects of life. It also contains the fear of death and houses the ego, where one's sense of self, or separateness, arises. Being locked in the seventh consciousness the ego assumes it will perish and cease to exist at death. *"Such a life is unable to see that the eighth consciousness is an enduring flow of life energy that will migrate between lives"*. The eighth and ninth consciousnesses that the ego sublimates operate at the level of the fundamental interconnectedness of all life. When the mind can contact the eighth level, the ego begins to crack. These levels comprise the subtle realm and are said to include archetypal processes, high-order insights and visions, ecstatic intuition, an extraordinary clarity of awareness, an open ground-consciousness that reaches far beyond the ordinary ego, mind, and body. The deepest level of consciousness is called the ultimately pure or amala-consciousness, since this level reveals the nonduality of all human beings and the universe.

Parallels can be drawn between the theory of the nine consciousnesses and concepts elaborated by Freud and Jung (Stacks, 1996). Buddhism's sixth consciousness, for example, has been correlated with Jung's idea of ego-consciousness, the seventh with Jung's concept of personal unconscious, and the eighth with Jung's collective consciousness or Tart's cosmic consciousness. Western culture only has a firm grasp of the first seven levels of consciousness. The concept of an eighth level of consciousness storing all of our internal causes and external effects (our karma) is not generally accepted academically. Wade (1996) is one of several notable exceptions who argues that validated empirical evidence for reincarnation exists and suggests a *"...physically transcendent source of mind – i.e., a personal consciousness capable of escaping the boundaries of the body"* (p. 23).

Some participants experienced spiritual “Aha” moments as a result of meditation, or resting in the now without conceptual interference. The result of meditation is that “*You become more open to contemplative insight – the mind just shuts up, and in the gap between these thoughts, prajna is born, or at least it can be*” (Wilber, 2001: 159). In the UR quadrant changes can be measured not just in neuroplasticity, as indicated in Chapter 5 (Harvey, 2008) but also in indices of breathing. Shear and Jevning (2002) reviewed contemporary scientific studies in the Zen and transcendental meditative approaches and found high correlation between reported experiences of pure consciousness and the complete suspension of respiration. They also found a number of studies showing biochemical indicators of significantly reduced metabolic activity at the level of cells, tissues and the body during entire periods of meditation. In keeping with the thesis of McGilchrist (2009) they also found unusually high inter-hemispheric EEG coherence during meditation. Spiritual “Aha” moments can bring in their wake a sudden liberation from ignorance or illusion, develop one’s spiritual horizon and give a new meaning to life. Kimsey-House (2004) argues that: “*Intuition in the form of “aha” moments tap into what our species already knows because someone, somewhere deposited the knowledge into the morphogenetic field*”.

Reports suggest that the nondual experience is pre-reflexive, beyond the ability of the mind to absorb it because it is not an object to be grasped by the mind. McGilchrist (2009: 228) posits that findings from brain hemisphere lateralization offers a hypothesis. Pre-reflexive consciousness is only available to the right brain hemisphere, the ground of all experience. However experience must be re-presented in the left hemisphere, the specialist in logic, linearity and ultimately, language. This obliges our conscious discourse to be under its control, thereby enforcing its world view in contrast to the world that is present to the right hemisphere. Various attempts are made to convey the lack of separation, described in reports such as unio mystica, nondual awareness, cosmic consciousness, etc. Cosmic consciousness was arbitrarily chosen to represent the phenomenon as a key category of this grounded study.

My own reported experience convinced me that, methodologically, “spirit” cannot be expressed or experienced in dialogue or thought, only in immediate apprehension through the eye of contemplation (Wilber, 2006). This knowledge was given expression by Underhill (1915): “*We know a thing only by uniting with it; by assimilating it; by*

interpenetration of it and ourselves...Wisdom is the fruit of communion; ignorance the inevitable portion of those who "keep themselves to themselves," and stand apart, judging, analyzing the things which they have never truly known" (p. 4). The spectrum of consciousness that represents depth in the UL means that awareness emanates from "body," "mind," "soul," and "spirit," with modes of identifying them via the "eye of the senses (eye of the flesh)," the "eye of the mind," and the "eye of the soul (eye of the heart)" (Schumacher, 1977; Wilber, 1990). While Shakyamuni Buddha was capable of the most sophisticated logical analysis (Owens 1976: 156-202) and "a thinker of unexcelled philosophical power" (Burt, 1955), "...he, the original Bhudda, stated repeatedly that the deepest secrets of the world and of man are inaccessible to abstract philosophical thinking" (Govinda, 1969: 36). Finally, reports indicate that participants are achieving the Buddhist goals of a fusion of wisdom and compassion. In the East, disentangling oneself from the world and realising unity, or One, is equated with wisdom. Subsequently descending and returning to embrace the Many is equated with compassion, and the integration of ascent and descent is "the union of wisdom and compassion" (Walsh, 2006).

Summary

This chapter has concentrated on reports that attempt to describe the experiences encountered when transpersonal levels of consciousness arise. Changes in perceptions of self-identity and one's place in the universe are the most striking aspect of findings; transformation changes ontological perceptions of being as opposed to changes in behaviour or material circumstances. Findings suggest that transpersonal levels of identity are attainable and insight is associated with them. Despite the ineffability of the highest reaches of consciousness, reports speak of peace, joy, bliss, wholeness and light. There is no way to know respondents' levels of consciousness prior to participation in this study. Findings suggest, however, that the process of psycho-spiritual (in addition to psycho-logical) development may, as Wilber and others propose, see a number of shifts in our self-concept throughout the life span. Participants appear to have expanded their consciousness beyond ego, beyond being self-oriented, to other-oriented, to eventually having a connection to the whole universe, a universe that can be experienced as nondual. Insights appear to be experienced at the levels of body, mind, soul and spirit, and when interpreted from an integral perspective represent

an upward trajectory of consciousness to ever more holistic wholes. “Aha” moments may be able to act as conduits for such shifts, constituting “breakthrough experiences” that interrupt consciousness to propel it forward into potentially higher levels (Wilber, 2008). Wilber provides a good analogy to the relational nature of Co-Active coaching when he describes these experiences as *“a mid-wifing process for some to get in touch with the deepest part of themselves and for that to happen in front of another human being”* (Integral Naked 25/01/08. www.integralinstitute.org).

Finally, this chapter has raised important questions as they relate to coaching. For example, how many people, like me prior to my reported experience, live in perpetual ignorance of these higher states of consciousness? How can coaches coach holistically if they themselves are unaware of the potentials of human consciousness? Put simply, how can people know what they don't know? A holistic model of coaching would have to recognise nondual states of awareness and be able to target a client's spiritual line of development, where appropriate. This has obvious implications for the level of consciousness of coaches. The final chapter addresses these issues in an attempt to build a theory of insight within a holistic and integrated coaching model.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on the whole study and embark on a second level of analysis of its most important findings. It is hoped that findings may be useful to various stakeholders. It is anticipated that these would include coaches, clients, those working in transformational development, whether as teachers, trainers or therapists, and parties interested in consciousness studies, particularly the psychology of insight and intuition. In this study, the “Aha” moment has been treated as ‘figure’ while Co-Active life coaching has represented the ‘ground’ and findings have been able to shed light on the nature of and processes involved in both. “Aha” moments appear to be indispensable in the learning that is necessary for the evolution and transformation of the self that is the goal of holistic coaching. The chapter begins by summarising the key findings from earlier chapters and discussing them further. A musical analogy is used to discuss the “Aha” of insight and the moment in which this takes place. The chapter offers a model of insight and intuition that stem directly from the findings. A second model is proposed which, based on findings, represents a holistic model of coaching that incorporates all human dimensions and potentials. The chapter concludes with a reflection on my own part in the design of and participation in the study and the subsequent interpretation of its findings. This reflection gives natural rise to the consideration of the methodological approach, its advantages and shortcomings. The chapter is divided into five sections to address all of these issues:

Section 1: Key Findings is presented in five sub-sections, 1a) – 1e), to highlight the key findings from Chapters 4 – 8 where participant reports were exposed. Findings are re-examined to identify their implications for both a theory of insight and a theory of holistic life coaching.

Section 2: The “Aha” Moment – A Musical Analogy interprets findings in a way that suggests the useful deconstruction of the terms “Aha” and “moment”. What emerges is a picture of insights at various levels of personal profundity depending on the mode of knowing which revealed them. The most revelatory insights come from meta-cognitive and non-cognitive epistemologies, causing participants to question the nature of ontology. In this analysis, what you know depends on how you know.

Section 3: Defining Insight and Intuition utilises findings to fashion a model of insight that extends the points addressed in Section 2, covering modes of knowing. It proposes a model of insight that ranges from the cognitive to the intuitive.

Section 4: A Superholistic Model of Life Coaching presents a theoretical model as the culmination of this grounded study. The model is rooted in the principles and practices of the Co-Active model with the addition of those important elements that contribute to “Aha” moments and transformational change as per the findings of this study. This means attending to all states and stages of consciousness and lines of development. The model specifically extends the Co-Active model to address the link between self-identity and spiritual awareness. Implications for the coach/client match with regard to stages of consciousness are considered.

Section 5: Reflections on Methodology, Morality and Future Studies considers the methodology used for this study and the ethical connotations of transformational change.

Section 1: Key Findings

1 a) Chapter 4 presented findings that demonstrate the importance of inter-subjectivity to the coaching outcome. Reports indicate that the Co-Active relationship warrants credit for much of clients' learning and development. This is perhaps to be expected from a model that is Co-Active, alluding to the egalitarian and collegiate nature of the coaching enterprise. The contract for the Co-Active relationship rests on a joint agreement, founded on the belief that clients can rise to the occasion expected of them, namely their intrinsic wherewithal to identify and execute the changes they desire in their lives. The Co-Active model demonstrated its versatility in stimulating both insight and personal development. The potential for insight is perhaps maximised because of the wide range of schools from which the model draws its ontology. These include behavioural, cognitive, humanistic and transpersonal approaches. Chapter 4 introduced concepts from participant reports that were to crop up again and again in the data. These included concepts of the phenomenology of insight, such as the energy that so often accompanies it and its fruits or outcomes, such as clarification of life purpose and action. Correlated concepts, such as coach support and the

experiencing of insight and self-coaching and continuous development, were identified in reports.

One key question the study has been seeking to answer is the ways in which Co-Active coaching contributes to the generation of “Aha” moments. Chapter 4 provided a range of contributing factors. Co-Active coaching offers a blend of spaciousness and dynamic interaction. The intimacy and presence experienced in co-activity has the potential to drive development through its provision of safe and courageous space. Within the circle of relationship lie practices which might be found in traditional counselling and clinical psychology such as offering a safe, non-judgmental environment and communicating empathy, support and understanding. Ontological maxims of the model, such as intrinsic wholeness, resourcefulness and creativity of the individual, translate into practices that assume that clients will set their own agendas and find their own answers. This ontology leads to coaching practices that may not be found in more conventional therapeutic models or even in less holistic coaching models. Traditional approaches are in this way complemented by a more robust set of undertakings on the part of the coach, including powerful questioning, calling forth (reminding clients of their unique qualities), truth-telling, challenging and holding clients accountable. Client participants who had undergone other personal development work like therapy and counselling reported that they had not been challenged to take risky action and subsequently to be held accountable for it. They accredited these practices with the success they had found in Co-Active coaching compared to these other interventions.

An important Co-Active concept that was frequently mentioned in reports is third-level listening. This practice not only encourages intuition, but embraces the ontology of the ancient wisdom traditions which see reality as interconnected and indivisible so that everything in the environment is included within present experience. This introduces a spiritual element into the model. A holistic model of coaching would therefore include these important constituents: co-activity, challenge, support, accountability, the conscious application of intuition and attending to the energy and dynamism in the relationship.

1 b) Chapter 5’s findings informed the ways in which insight can be triggered. While “Aha” moments can never be guaranteed, certain practices seem to encourage them. The engagement itself between coach and client, and the atmosphere of safety, trust

and courage that this engenders, is undoubtedly an environment that fosters insight. “Aha” moments are stimulated when clients feel heard and understood, an outcome of both coach and client dancing in the moment, going with the flow of the coaching session, and being present.

Stimulating insight was linked to how a client’s ways of knowing are engaged by the coach. In the mental arena, this includes separating the self from self-sabotaging gremlins and detaching from belief systems more generally through meta-cognitive practices that uncover both conscious and unconscious beliefs and attitudes. These practices open up new and more deliberate choices in meaning making for clients. At the physical level, somatic and intuitive ways of knowing are stimulated in the process of fulfilment, balance and process coaching. Practices involve the use of fantasy, imagination, role-play and close attention to and presence in, current felt awareness.

On a developmental level, findings indicate that many respondents are at post-formal operational levels of meaning making. This is evidenced in the multiple perspective taking that caused participants to adopt new ways of thinking and being, with the ability to overcome egoic demands featuring widely in reports. In addition, reports evidenced the growing ability to be more authentic, to think for oneself and to increase acceptance and understanding of self and others. Being in the current moment without conceptual overlay is a key trigger for insights. Reports showed this practice to encourage “Aha” moments that break through ego defences. Krishnamurti and Bohm (1999) portray the “little self” as the centre of the egoic “separate self”, a repository of memories. We identify with these memories as if they existed outside of the moment of now and represented some knowledge of an actual outside past. This “memory self” stands somewhat outside of present experience as though the self has present experiences instead of being present experiences. The self is then experienced as an entity behind present experience like an observer standing outside the ‘now’, resulting in a self dislocated from the present moment. However, “Aha” moments can re-connect people with the present moment, a process that enhances authenticity.

Present moment connectedness derives from the mindful direction of attention. Training oneself to be ‘in the moment’ or mindful involves becoming fully aware of what is happening and one’s place within that space, non-judgmentally and without defences or conditions (Kabat-Zinn 2005). With consistent mindfulness practice, not only can

conditioned patterns disappear, but new stresses are less likely to be created and stored (Harvey 2008). In this respect mindfulness reflects the aims of Gestalt psychology (and process coaching) to appreciate the here-and-now present relationship. Gestalt therapy holds that: power is in the present; experience counts most; and therapy is too good to be limited to the sick (Polster & Polster, 1974: 6-7). This last point is a *sine qua non* of Co-Active coaching. Mindfulness meditation "...provides the practitioner with a proactive, positive approach to working with their clients" Kostanski and Hassed (2008: 20). This is a useful element in a coaching model for two reasons: coaching represents a positive psychology and mindfulness promotes the spiritual line of development, a crucial line in a holistic approach.

Journalling was found to be a useful trigger for insights, especially of an unconscious nature. Finally, the value of self-coaching is highlighted as a pivotal context for insights. Chapter 5 concluded that the encouragement given to clients to self-coach in between coaching sessions together with the intimacy of co-activity represents a more action-based method than alternative approaches to personal development and insight. In Co-Active coaching, insight is transformed into action. These findings have implications for coaches and clients (or any professionals working in the field of learning and development who are willing and able to work holistically). They suggest that the engagement of meta-cognitive skills be encouraged. Also to be encouraged are other non-rational and non-cognitive ways of experiencing the self, with an emphasis on creative imagination and embodied wisdom. Clients would be encouraged to journal and to practice the mindful direction of attention. This is expressed in psychosomatic mysticism (Louchakova and Warner, 2004) as meditation on intentionality.

Advanced levels of consciousness wherein "Aha" moments have their genesis are also evidenced in reports of dialectical thinking and an embodied awareness that forges mindbody unity. These intelligences utilise the engagement of fantasy, visualisation, dream analysis and other contact with subtle energies. The result can be "Aha" moments that provide access to perceived internal truths, independent of the thinking that is conditioned by convention (or, as McGilchrist (2009) would argue, the thinking that is re-presented and codified by the left brain hemisphere). The fruits of these practices produce insights which appear to come from an apparently uncensored core (or, as McGilchrist (2009) would argue, from the right brain hemisphere) and mark an

important transformation whereby the previous way of viewing reality solely from the self's perspective through the medium of language is transmuted.

The importance of defining personal values and life purpose was highlighted in Chapter 5 as a key facilitator of insights in fulfilment coaching where the aim is to identify these. The skill of the coach in intuiting energy when clients discuss personal values is an important contributing factor in helping clients to decipher their life purpose. The engagement of all competences, including non-verbal, in the fashioning of values and purpose and subsequently in their enactment is vital. The 'future self' guided visualisation typifies a vehicle that facilitates insight. Chapter 5 showed that engaging metaphor can be especially useful when clients are facing fear or resistance. The use of pictorial, symbolic imagery allows the client to enter into an experience that is safe in the sense of bypassing the rational and critical mind. Raising awareness of the images that lie behind emotions and feelings means that connection can be made with the inner forces of the psyche. Hillman's (1975) "imaginal" approaches, such as dreamwork, free association, fantasy, active imagination, and other forms of creative activity may be related to access to the soul. Imagination bypasses ego consciousness to access and come to know deeper dimensions of the psyche. Dirx (2001) advises entering into a conscious dialogue with these images so that the person is not dominated by them but is able to create the opportunity for deeper meaning and more satisfying relationships in the world.

One of the questions posed at the outset of this study was whether there was learning potential for coaches as well as clients in the coaching enterprise. Coaches reported that they had deepened their own learning in the process of journalling. Reflecting upon the skills they had been using during their coaching sessions made them more acutely aware of those skills and practices that worked best. Journalling proved to be an effective trigger to insights on the fringes of consciousness for clients and coaches alike. This endorses the view (Zeus and Skiffington 2000) that, while clients learn in the course of coaching, so too do coaches.

1 c) Chapter 6 demonstrated that even a single "Aha" moment can function to bring about change. This finding is replicated in other studies. Maths students felt more confident after a single "Aha" incident (Liljedahl, 2005) while quantum changers had

their whole lives transformed after a single epiphany (Miller and C. d'Baca, 2001). The "Aha" moment takes many forms, experienced in cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, intuitive and spiritual dimensions. It functions to increase confidence, motivate action and change perceptions of self and reality, and in some cases to access an apparently pre-linguistic intelligence.

While "Aha" moments have, above all, a first-person, internal, experiencing ontology, new methodologies from the RH quadrants of the material sciences corroborate their singular nature. Of considerable potential relevance to the findings of this study is the review of neuro-science studies undertaken by McGilchrist (2009) and alluded to throughout this study. The most profound "Aha" moments contain reports of phenomena that are all linked to right hemisphere competences. The right hemisphere keeps an open attention for whatever may be, without preconception (McGilchrist, 2009). Attention is crucial in this study. Coaching directs attention to the implicit as well as the explicit. It utilizes metaphor, imagination and humour in its interactions, all specialities of the right hemisphere. The very nature of the coaching relationship with its emphasis on empathy, interconnectedness and mutual recognition typifies the right brain's way of operating in the context of a lived world of relationship and not a world that is viewed fragmentally and mechanically (McGilchrist, 2009). Neuroscience also offers some support for a 'eureka' centre in the right-brain hemisphere, to which access is thought to be improved by positive affect and a diffuse attention. Affect is determined by chemical neurotransmitters, which are intelligently linked throughout the body as well as the brain so that the mind, especially its unconscious contents, is nonlocal (Pert, 1996). Reports suggest that affect can also precede cognition in the moment of insight. Neuroscience confirms a split second of impasse prior to the registering of insight and its manifestation, in line with phenomenological accounts. Right-brain functioning may be related to an increase in subtle energy, especially kundalini and this heralds a shift in the evolution of humanity according to some authors (e.g. Kumar and Dempsey, 2002). Findings showed that, with its ability to spark a rise in subtle energy, the outcome can be an alteration in the perceived reality, not just of self and others but also of both time and space. For stakeholders, findings imply that subtle energies should be contacted and encouraged, since they function to access a pre-conceptual, pre-linguistic innate intelligence. The engagement of the right brain through visualisations and other creative pursuits should also be engaged for the same reasons.

1 d) Chapter 7 presented findings that highlight the learning that derives from both “Aha” moments and coaching more generally. These findings expose the degree of learning that is facilitated by insight and suggest that it can be of a transformational nature. I came to this conclusion after consideration of the difference between adult development and transformation, terms that are loosely applied or disputed (Kegan, 2000). The key question is: in transformational learning, what is the form, or forms, that transform in the process. Kegan’s (1982) developmental stage theory of orders of consciousness was grounded in similar questions and posits transformative learning across a lifespan, reflecting continuous and progressive growth that marks an epistemological transition, moving learners from one paradigm of knowledge to another (Taylor, 2008). Different stage theorists concentrate on different aspects of human faculties in learning. Kegan’s psycho-developmental model emphasises development of the mind, where Mezirow’s (1978) psycho-critical perspective emphasises the role of critical analysis. Reports indicate that learning cannot be confined to a brain-based activity but must involve the whole person.

While learning is traditionally considered to be a cognitive activity, this study shows the role of emotions and other epistemologies that can open the mind to what cannot be perceived by thought. The engagement of these other lines of intelligence is evidenced in reports of personal balance, autonomy, closer connection in relationships, spontaneity and the authenticity that derives from knowing one’s true self and living one’s life purpose. Specifically, findings suggest that the hyper-rationality of established transformational learning theories should be rejected in favour of an approach to learning that engages all human potentials. These potentials include emotions and intuition.

Emotions have been shown to play a key role in learning in neuro-biological studies, Without emotional memory and learning, brain functioning as a whole is impaired (Taylor, 2001). Emotional memories are explored in process coaching and findings suggest that resistance to learning can be defeated through the recognition and surrender of unconscious emotional memories. The wisdom of the body can yield “Aha” moments great and small. Like the Gestalt therapist, the Co-Active coach is trained during process coaching to *“Stay in touch at all times with the person’s directly felt*

concrete experiential datum – and help the person also stay in touch with that, and get into it” (Gendlin 1974:22). Gendlin's (1969, 1974, 2003) notion of focusing on the 'felt sense' can be applied to the coaching relationship. He extends the inter-relational stance to include self-sentience - we sense not only others, but also ourselves in relation to the presenting situation. Our bodies “...sense themselves, and...in sensing ourselves, our bodies sense our physical environment and our inter-human situations” (Gendlin, 2003:101). “Aha” moments derive frequently from the felt sense that comes out of the inter-human situation that is Co-Active coaching.

Another potential of consciousness that yields “Aha” moments is intuition. The potential of intuition is not recognised in our culture (Petitmengin-Peugeot, 1999). Petitmengin-Peugeot construes intuition as the immediate, pre-representational and pre-discursive experience of the world in which all our cognitive activity seems to be rooted. Rather than being an exceptional mode of thought, intuition in this analysis is the original genetic level of all thought. Despite offering the most intimate immediate and spontaneous relationship to the world, its suppression in Western culture means that this intimate intelligence has become the least accessible to us (p.76). Findings reflect her contention that this intelligence comes to the fore when the mind is emptied of habits of representation, categorisation and abstraction. Chapter 7 emphasised the importance of not knowing, or surrendering the need to know to rest in an impasse of ignorance. In this space of slowing down the stream of thought and physical activity, ego defences may be surrendered by relinquishing one's stories; paradox and uncertainty may be tolerated by giving up the need for certainty, and the result is the ability to find answers from within. Not knowing led to the most penetrating intuitive insights.

The unconscious accompanies intuition in being a breeding ground for “Aha” moments. Cranton (2002) links the roles of these faculties in her version of transformational learning. Beyond formal prescriptions of the steps to take according to this theory, Cranton's analysis echoes tenets of Co-Active coaching, proposing that transformation may rely more on an intuitive and tacit understanding of the co-learning context (p. 66) and that “*Insight, intuition, emotion, relationships, and personality may also play roles*” (p. 65).

Importantly, “Aha” insights provide perceptions of unity over duality, between head and heart or mind and body. It is this connection ‘trans’ or beyond cognitive repertoires that marks the fulcrum point of possible transformation. The whole system – left and right brain thinking and utilising the wisdom of the body and the mind – predisposes the experiencing of transformational learning. This means a permanent shift in consciousness to a higher level. At the highest transpersonal levels, “Aha” moments can reveal nondualistic or unitive modes of perception.

Findings would suggest that a vertical ascent in consciousness to a permanently expanded level is the outcome of transformational learning. Those that describe insights deriving from intuitive, inner knowledge could be argued to be reflective of 2nd tier levels of consciousness. They shape a deeper self-knowledge at post-rational, post-egoic and post-conventional stages of development (Wilber, 2006). The effect of transforming to 2nd tier levels of consciousness is that worldviews expand to be more accommodating and less reactive, with enhanced compassion and tolerance for self and the wider community (Cook-Greuter, 2005). In integral terms, more and more of the self can be understood from a meta-perspective and in this way can be accepted and included in the whole spiral of ascending consciousness of self-identity.

It follows that these seats of identity and wisdom must be addressed in a holistic model. Findings on learning are especially valuable if Moustakas' argument is correct that *“in every learner, in every person, there are creative sources of energy and meaning that are often tacit, hidden, or denied”* (Moustakas, 2001). This study's findings have helped to make transparent these creative sources.

1 e) Chapter 8 showed that transpersonal insights lead to radical experiencing and remarkable changes in self-definition. The “Aha” moment propels individuals to states of transcendent consciousness, regularly delivering peak experiences, a form of spiritual awareness. Maslow (1987) and Assagioli (1964) compared peak experiences to higher states of consciousness, finding them to have similar features. Assagioli considered spiritual consciousness to be more real, substantial and enduring than normal everyday waking consciousness. The sense of realness as a central component of spiritual “Aha” moments is widely featured in reports, including my own (Chapter 8, Section 3). However, a temporary glimpse of alternative realities is just that – temporary. A ‘peek’

experience such as the one I described is argued to be a state and not a stage with a stage producing the ability to access these realities more or less at will.

On the basis of the findings presented in Chapter 8, it is proposed that a holistic model of coaching must include the spiritual line of development. Transpersonal models see insight as representing a generative and universal energy outside of the boundary of the individual, reflecting the view of Eastern wisdom traditions, which construe transpersonal experiences of unity or nonduality as the basic consciousness. Findings suggest that insights can appear within a spectrum of capabilities of consciousness in an ascending gradient comprising mind, body, soul and spirit. Findings also suggest a link between these levels of awareness, or consciousness, at which the moment takes place and the meaning respondents attribute to it. The outcome is often reported as a change at the level of identity and improved relationship (to self as well as others) and sometimes a complete reappraisal of the apparent separation of self in relation to all other entities in the universe. From the perspective of an integral researcher, “Aha” moments can represent an illusion-shattering wisdom that recognises our true transcendental nature (Walsh, 2006). The next section looks at the value of deconstructing the phrase “Aha moment”.

Section 2: The “Aha” Moment – A Musical Analogy

At the outset of this study the researcher dimly considered the “Aha” moment to be a ‘singular’ event – a brief and sudden switch in perception or understanding that could result from both externally presented stimuli and internally from a switch in psychological understanding. However, the phenomenology of insight produced by this study’s findings suggests that the phrase might usefully be deconstructed in order to better appreciate its complexities. Insight is indubitably a qualitatively different phenomenon in both textural feeling and in physical fact, rendering “Aha” moments qualitatively and materially unique. The event is an extraordinary phenomenon, containing elements of both insight and impasse, which contribute mutually to the experience of the phenomenon. In this analysis, insight represents the figure, and the moment in which it arises, the ground. Another way of saying this is that the “Aha” represents the fruits of the knowledge gained while the moment provides the environment in which the fruits germinate. It would seem that the length of the moment,

or the impasse, correlates with the profundity of the insight. Findings might also be interpreted to suggest that the effects of the moment are linked to the way in which it was experienced.

As discussed in Chapter 8, the genesis of the “Aha” moment may be experienced as arising in one specific psychosomatic location, but it can quickly chime across the emotional-cognitive bodymind in concert. The event strikes a chord, causing a thought or a sensation to ‘land’ (in Co-Active parlance), creating immediate somatic, cognitive and affective ripples.

Striking a chord introduces a musical analogy, which is appropriate in comparison to respondents’ descriptions of the “Aha” event. If the accompaniments of the event were represented as the different sections of an orchestra, then, the more sections that come into play, the stronger the resonance of the “Aha” event and its likelihood of contributing towards personal transformation. This energetic resonance throughout the mind and body yields insights of varying degrees of profundity, experienced as originating both within the individual and as external to him or her, deriving from a more universal consciousness.

In a piece of music, the musical notes only make sense in the context of the space between notes. Similarly, “Aha” moments seem to happen in the space between thoughts, in the ‘impasse’. Space was a recurring theme in the study’s findings. At its simplest, this represented pause for thought reported by participants. Periods of reflection or simply observing a train of thought allowed insights to arise. When participants consciously prolonged the pause by sitting with questions without engaging the cognitions to find answers, this provided the space for “Aha” moments to emerge.

Other “Aha” moments occurred that had no reference to any specific object but appeared as a jolt of recognition, or re-cognition in the sense of reconnecting with a knowledge that has always existed, as described in Chapter 8. These insights were often reported by participants who had become conversant with embodied knowledge and mindfulness and meditation practices. The event is especially memorable when the insight is perceived to derive from non-ordinary states of awareness that lie outside of cognition. Intuitive and transpersonal insights involve a whole body awareness that is

immanent before the brain has registered it. It starts to bubble up in the moment of impasse between stimulus and response and manifests in the intuitive right brain (McGilchrist, 2009). There is a strong link between the brain and the heart. The right brain hemisphere accesses distantly related material in both the conscious and the unconscious mind. When material in the unconscious mind is acknowledged and accepted, the heart opens up (Vaughan, 1979). Findings showed that these are the insights that challenged and occasionally transformed participants' perceptions of being and of reality, often revealing the unity of consciousness, with no duality from without or within. This suggests that the import of the moment varies greatly along a continuum of different epistemologies, or 'ways of knowing'. In other words, ontology is dependent on epistemology. The way we know determines what we know and is directly related to the experiencing of being, in all its embodiments.

To further extend the musical analogy, vibration is a recurrent theme in findings. It might be argued that participants used the blunt term 'energy' so ubiquitously because, like the term consciousness, there is a dearth of Western language to describe these non-conventional states and sensations. This was the reason for turning to Eastern wisdom traditions, which recognise energetic realms in addition to the material world of the gross body. For example, in Sanskrit, there are over twenty words to express consciousness (Petitmengin-Peugeot, 1999). Energy in relationship to health is referred to as Chi in China, Prana in India and Lung in Tibet and is akin to the term spirit in Western thought (Mitchell, 1998). Within the field of chakra energy studies, individual chakras correlate with notes on the musical scale and, as was mentioned in Chapter 8, it is argued that, when the energy body is working optimally, vibrations increase to the level of development of Maslow's (1987) 'self-actualizers' and beyond (McMurray, 2005). Momentum is created when such harmony occurs. This can be inferred by reports of participants wanting to act immediately on the insight. In such circumstances, felt energy is described as light, expansive, electrifying and producing an increased motivation and appetite for life. The crucial nature of making choice in the moment, or coming to the realisation that there is no other reality than this-moment-now, has long been acknowledged in Eastern mystical traditions and by some Western philosophers and authors like Goethe who proclaimed that "*The moment alone is decisive*" and Ippen who said that "*Every moment is the last moment and every moment is a rebirth*". What better motivation for taking action to fulfil life purpose?

The next section utilises findings to fashion a comprehensive model of insight.

Section 3: Defining Insight and Intuition

As discussed in Chapter 2, the phenomenology of insight and intuition have not been widely researched. Outside of cognitive studies, little is known of the conscious experience of the moment of insight. Theories range from the mechanistic to the physically transcendent but most of them fail to respect the different perspectives they take on insight or intuition. This section offers a way of interpreting findings that differentiate between the two related ideas of insight and intuition. Findings evidence that insight is more likely to grow in fertile soil, a mind that has pro-actively tried to clear the way for it. Practices such as observation, reflection and mindfulness clear the way. However, "Aha" moments can also arise *ex nihilo*, as illustrated by this study and others', like Miller and C'de Baca's (2001), findings from their 'quantum changers'. Philosophical approaches also differ as to whether transformational insights are all-at-once or staged affairs. Krishnamurti (1979) argues for the former description. Insight is a natural occurrence and searching for it implies that one has to learn about it from some authority that can lead the way: "*Learning implies authority...with insight there is no authority*" (pp. 23-24). In contrast, stage theorists like Wilber consider states producing insight to be stage-related. In this analysis, the experience of states will be largely dependent on one's stage of consciousness, as will the interpretation of the insight.

Insights bubble forth from consciousness in all its forms of expression, or states. States of consciousness are universal – waking, dreaming and deep sleep (Wilber, 2006) – and so anyone can experience insight in any of these states. In the waking states, insights derive from external referents as in perceptual studies or studies of problem-solving discussed in Chapter 5. They can also arise in the context of self-reflection, self-examination and self-awareness, as shown in reports in all previous chapters. All of these insights, whether external or internal to the self, share a genesis in information, reason and analysis. They are equivalent in many ways to contemporary and inferential forms of intuitionism proposed by Wild (1938). As discussed in Chapter 2, the former represents the ability to access fallible 'truths', while the latter describes the post-modern view of truth as subject to convention and lacking in any universality or

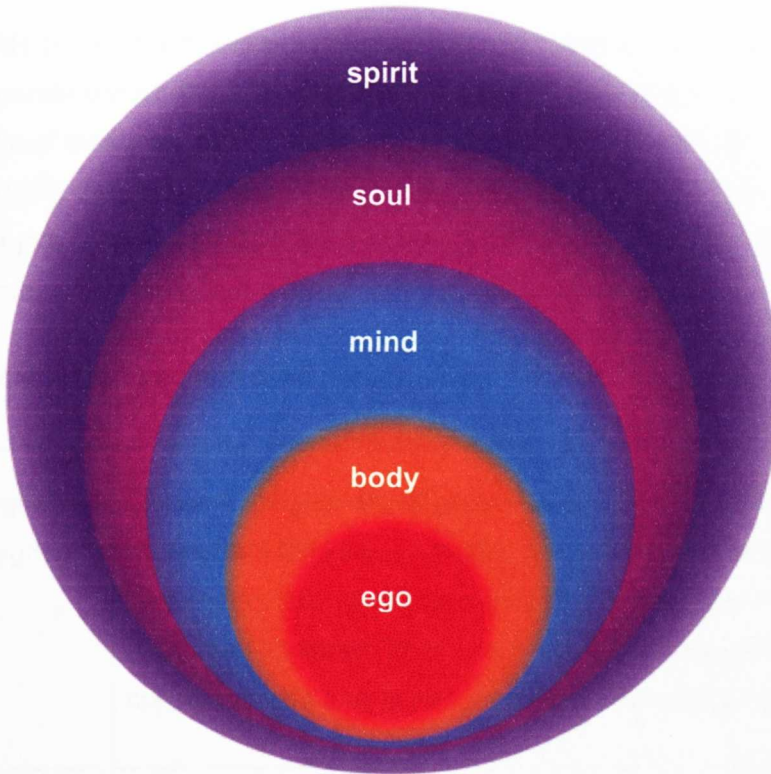
permanence. This means that these insights derive from the conditioned mind, the point at which conventional psychology quits its investigations: *“Conventional psychology stops with the construction of Piaget’s Formal Operations in a Newtonian world”* (Wade, 1996:17). As a result, the accessing of multiple realities beyond those of the conditioned mind entails ways of knowing that are beyond the hypothetico-deductive reasoning of the conventional materialist paradigm.

However, intuition has been argued to derive from a cosmic force, the accessing of collective consciousness (Scott 1991). This posited collective consciousness influenced the founders of the Co-Active coaching model, particularly the work of Ross Peterson, Fritz Perls, Rupert Sheldrake and the cosmologist Brian Swimme. Peterson inspired the use of intuition, imagination and fantasy as methods in Co-Active coaching. Perls inspired the use of “here and now” methods of clients getting in touch with feelings in perspectives and process coaching (and, like Perls, eschewing interpretation), and Sheldrake influenced Co-Active coaching through his work on the energy in posited morphogenetic fields. Kimsey-House (2004) sees intuition not as a quality but as a field and hypothesises that *“A true Aha moment taps into a latent knowledge that we’ve had all along because someone discovered it somewhere and this field can channel it”*.

With this differentiation between what insight can phenomenologically bring forth and the state of consciousness that pre-empt it, a theory of insight is offered. The theory distinguishes between insight and intuition. It proposes that insight relates to the knowledge gained from the “Aha” moment, the fruits of its revelation. Intuition, on the other hand, is just one of the modes of consciousness in which insights can arise, so that insight derives from intuition, whether internal or external to the person. When insight functions cognitively, it is based on the intuitions built from experience (often subconscious), triggered by mechanisms of memory retrieval. Such an insight occurs at the level of the ego. When insight functions somatically, at the level of sensation and emotion, it is based on the intuitive knowledge that emanates from a unity of body and mind. When insight functions at the subtle or psychic intuitive level, it emerges from the soul. When insight functions spiritually it may be based on the lived unity of self and all other environmental entities in a temporo-spatial vacuum of non-duality. In this vacuum, form and no form are no longer separate things. So “Aha” moments range from ego to

body to mind to soul to spirit. This interpretation of findings is illustrated in Figure 9.1 below, the "Aha" model.

Figure 9.1



The delineation I have used in the “Aha” model reflects the spectrum of profundity of the insight based on its source in consciousness. “Aha” moments of insight can be drawn from a whole spectrum of consciousness, including those arrived at cognitively, and can therefore be verified by empirical methodologies and those that have their source in transpersonal realms and so are not open to empiricism. The further along the evolutionary developmental scale that is the spectrum of consciousness, the more certitude comes with the experience of insight, and the more profoundly it impacts on clients’ lives. So the spectrum covered in the model links the depth of the insight along a spectrum of awareness related to the spectrum of consciousness. At the apex is a classical intuitionism that reveals transcendental realities. Contemporary and inferential levels of intuition give way to classical (Wild 1938) as the spectrum is ascended. In all cases, insight is accompanied by emotions (Burton, 1999) and therefore bodily awareness. Similarly embodied awareness may be linked to subtle energy so is a form of intuitive knowledge. Finally collective consciousness and morphogenetic memory

fields propose that knowledge accessed belongs to a vast cosmic inheritance. So, to separate out all of these aspects is, in a sense, to create false boundaries; but, for the sake of clarity in communication, it is suggested that the proposed model would address the complexities of the terms insight and intuition. The spectrum model of insights presented in Table 9.1 elucidates the forms they take and the functions they serve.

Table 9.1 A Spectrum Model of Insights: Their Forms and Functions

<p>Cognitive Insights:</p>	<p>Concern insights deriving from externally presented stimuli. They can derive from thinking, as in problem-solving, pattern recognition, perspective taking etc., and from the suspension of thinking, in the elongated impasse. They can predispose a cognitive transformation of consciousness to a higher and more embracing level.</p>
<p>Personal Insights:</p>	<p>Relate to inner worlds that clients self-consciously explore. They can overcome gremlins, incorporate shadow elements, give voice to sub-personalities of the psyche, find emotional acceptance of self and compassion towards others. Galvanised by imaginal practices. Can advance personal identification transformationally to post-egoic and meta-rational levels of development, i.e. 2nd tier consciousness.</p>
<p>Embodied Insights:</p>	<p>Can register in emotions prior to cognition, and can arise in the course of focused bodily awareness, or bodily movement. While these insights may be linked to intuition, they nevertheless have their perceived genesis in identifiable regions of the body, especially the heart. Learning to trust the wisdom of the body forges mindbody harmony instead of duality.</p>
<p>Intuitive Insights:</p>	<p>Can land in a non-existential way. They are correlated with absence of angst and feelings of absolute clarity and certainty, semi-divorced from the thinking mind. They are often experienced as a return to a know-</p>

	<p>ledge that is innate but has been forgotten, or may have their source in the morphogenetic field of consciousness. Intuitive insights bubble up in the context of surrendering not just the ego but in surrendering the need to know. Not knowing, unlearning and deliberately suspending thinking encourages intuitive insights. So too does the engagement of the whole brain which means engaging the right brain through visualising, meditating, role-playing, free drawing, painting, dream analysis etc. Acquaintance with energy centres in the body allows for subtle, soul-level energy to be mobilised in the service of life purpose.</p>
<p>Spiritual Insights:</p>	<p>Are usually experienced by the prepared mind (Wade, 1996:117), but not always. Preparation takes the form of mindfulness, the non-conceptual experience of being and in meditation. Spiritual insights reveal separation to be a vast illusion. Form and no form cease to be experienced as having closed boundaries and therefore represent non-duality. The same creative conscious force is simultaneously around us and within us. Deference or adherence to external authority evaporates at this level of unity consciousness. A divine simplicity is experienced. Eternity is experienced as resting in the now, with no boundaries.</p>

This delineation would simplify the confusion around whether insight and intuition are the same or different entities and would clarify whether the insight is of a mainly cognitive, personal, emotional, intuitive or spiritual nature.

With the volume of reports in the study pointing to the potential of “Aha” moments to drive the spiritual line of development, the next section considers the inclusion of this line within a superholistic model of life coaching.

Section 4: A Superholistic Model of Life Coaching

The Co-Active model served very well as a vehicle for this study. It covers most of the spectrum of consciousness and, with its process coaching which emphasises here-and-now awareness, shares the spiritual principles of approaches like Gestalt and other

transpersonal psychologies. It ventures beyond body, mind and emotions to include 'soul' work that can drive life purpose. This study's findings have been able to give empirical confirmation of many elements of Co-Active coaching that its founders experientially considered would be useful in personal change and development.

However, while spiritual issues may arise in the context of Co-Active coaching, the deliberate coaching of clients' spiritual lives does not feature in the model. In this manner it falls arguably short of a truly holistic approach to coaching. The intention in this section is to present an interpretation of findings that result in a coaching approach that clearly acknowledges the role of insight and the methods by which it can be stimulated. This culminates in a coaching model that recognises the importance of insight in personal transformation and explicitly targets, where appropriate, all human dimensions in line with the model of insight presented in the last section. It could, therefore, be described as a 'superholistic' model. Borrowing heavily from the integral paradigm the model includes consideration of the developmental match between coach and client.

The superholistic model includes all of the principles and practices of Co-Active coaching so these will not be re-iterated here. However, in addition, the appreciation of the role of insight in personal development is fully acknowledged in the model. So, too, are the ways in which it can be triggered. This means providing the conditions for clients to access non-verbal and intuitive ways of knowing. Meta skills are essential to development according to the findings and create numerous "Aha" moments. While meta-cognitive skills offer perspective and self-awareness, they go beyond cognitions to include the cultivation of emotional sensitivity, empathy, body-awareness, imagination, inspiration, improvisation and intuition (Blatner, 2004).

The role of intuition in the delivery of personally profound "Aha" moments was a major element of the study's findings. Journalling was found to unlock unconscious intuitive insights. Practices such as journalling are encouraged in a superholistic approach. So too are ways of engaging creative means of knowing such as attending to dreams, visions, fantasies, body and movement work, art work. Experiential and non-verbal practices can tap into realms that cannot be readily addressed through verbal, intellectual means. Heron (1996) advocates 'brain friendly' learning techniques, which

appeal to all of the senses. These include 'switching' between affective, imaginal, conceptual and practical ways of being. Findings in this study reflect the benefit of inducing insights via such techniques and therefore would be incorporated in the superholistic model.

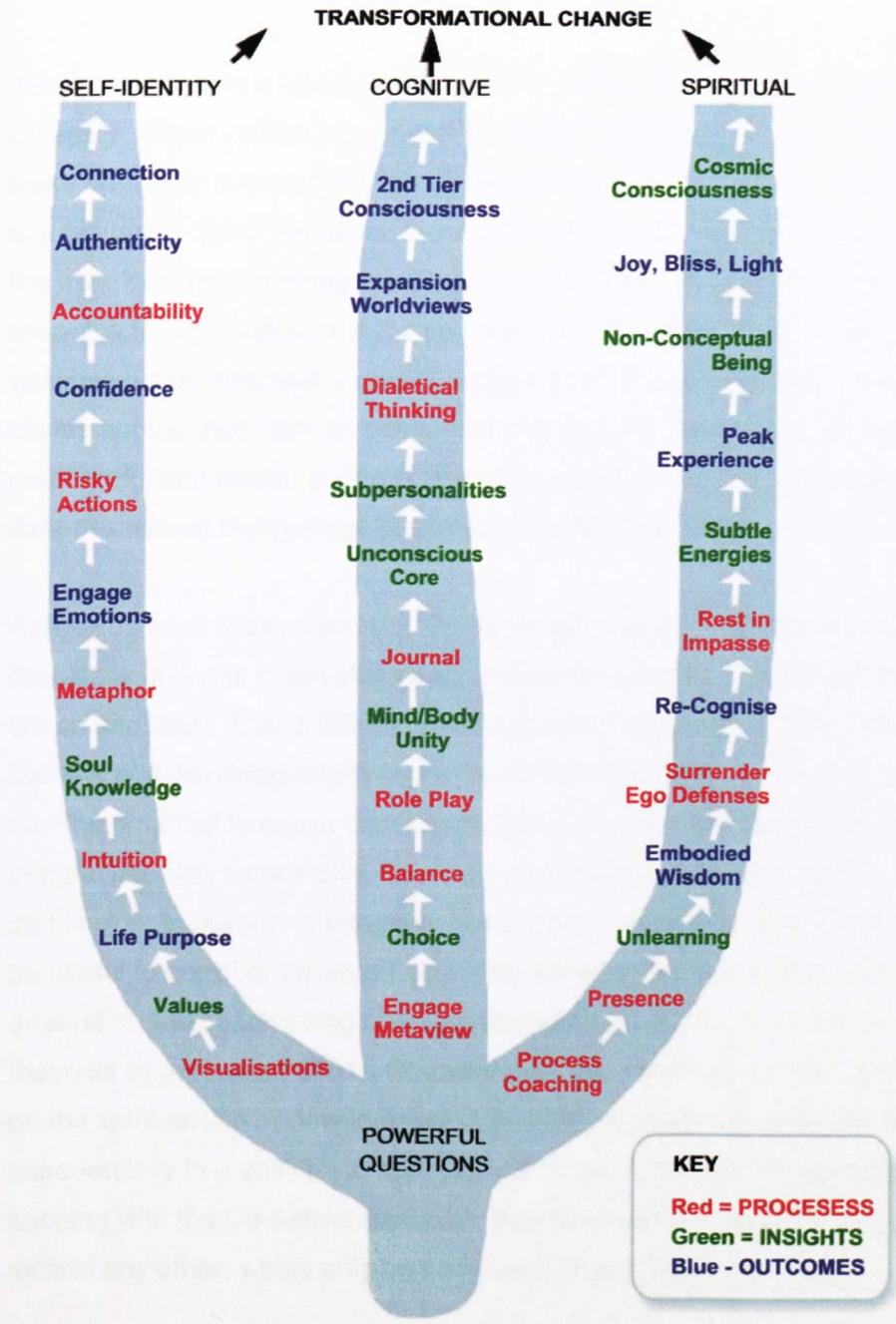
Findings also showed the importance of metaphor in cutting through filters, defences and censorship structures that might themselves be essentially word-based. So, as an additional avenue for knowing, for processing, and for expressing, the symbolism of metaphor and the images that flow from it can greatly increase the likelihood of transformative insights.

A superholistic model attends also to the impasse and all the possibilities for "Aha" moments that happen within it. Coaching for insight would activate the impasse in the ways shown in the data. This ranges from taking a moment for pause, observation and reflection to the suspension of thought and defeating the rational mind through non-verbal intelligences, to surrendering ego and meditative practices. The longer the impasse, the more penetrating and transformational the insights are likely to be.

These practices evoke transpersonal insights that connect clients to their most deeply held personal values and also connect them with others to give a sense of supra-individuality where consciousness of identity is not limited to the horizons of the individual. The model would recommend that coaches identify and target those lines of development that the client wishes to address. Overall development is not linear. Different developmental lines (e.g., cognitive, moral, interpersonal, spiritual, emotional, artistic, kinesthetic, etc.) proceed in a relatively independent fashion through the various levels or stages of consciousness (e.g., pre-conventional, conventional, post-conventional), so that a person can be at a fairly high level of development in some lines, medium in some, and low in others (Wilber, 2006). Findings suggest that "Aha" moments had most impact in the lines of self-identity, cognition and spiritual development. Figure 9.2 is an illustration of how the superholistic model of coaching would operate, based on this study's findings. It offers an interpretation of how transformational change is achieved in these lines of development. It describes the nature of the coaching relationship which takes place in an environment of spaciousness, safety and dynamic interaction. It takes one of the key findings, that powerful questions drive "Aha" moments, and tracks the manner in which powerful

questions can lead to transformational change. It describes the processes used by the coach, the type of insights which arise as a result of the questions and the outcomes that clients might expect along the way to transformational change.

Figure 9.2



SPACIOUSNESS, SAFETY, DYNAMIC INTERACTION

A superholistic model is framed within an integral paradigm since data reflect the ability to encounter insight along a range of consciousness potentials, which embrace matter, body, mind, soul and spirit. The integral paradigm also clarifies the nature of states and stages. "Aha" moments provide a crystal clarity that can fast-forward clients' growth and

development. This is because they have the effect of 'waking us up' to a larger picture of reality. Wilber (2010) argues that evolving through states is the means by which we wake up, whilst evolving through stages is the means by which we grow up. Waking up is a feature of "Aha" moments, the figure in this study, while growing up is the result of the transformative learning provided by a Co-Active environment, the ground. Both are essential for the evolution of the self and both are evidenced in findings. Superholistic coaches would emphasise consciousness in all its states. Not only are superholistic clients approached from an ontological position that holds them as naturally creative, resourceful and whole, but an epistemology that covers the whole spectrum of human dimensions and their energetic exchange with the universal environment.

As well as lines of development, the superholistic coaching model acknowledges the relevance of levels of development. This poses questions about the match between coach and client. Laske (2006) raises questions about the ethics of coaching where the client is at a developmentally higher level than the coach. In his view such a mismatch has the potential to cause developmental delay or even arrest in the client. From an integral learning perspective, Louchakova (2005) argues for a match between teacher and learner in relation to integrally holistic learning approaches. Further research would be useful to corroborate what I intuitively suspect; that the best coaching partnerships depend on the coach being one step ahead of the client, as recommended by some theorists (e.g. Rowan, 2001). Certainly, with the emphasis of the superholistic approach on the spiritual line of development, superholistic coaches would have to be experientially in a position to address this line with clients, where appropriate. In keeping with the Co-Active approach, the client sets the agenda so the spiritual line, or indeed any other, would only be addressed if desired by the client.

Integral practitioners cross train the spectrum of consciousness and practices might include weight training for the body, 'shadow work' for the mind and meditation for the spirit. I have found with my own clients that attending to the spectrum fosters "Aha" moments and hastens personal development. This would be a fascinating field for empirical research and my intuition is that the hypothesis that such cross-training produces a Gestalt effect greater than the addition of its parts would be upheld.

Superholistic coaching practices are summarised in Table 9.2.

Table 9.2: Superholistic Coaching Practices

Consider developmental match coach/client
Coach consciousness in all its states
Attend to the energy dynamics in the relationship
Deliver an even balance of relentless support and risky challenge
Identify and reintegrate shadow elements of self
Surrender ego defences
Engage the 'felt' sense
Develop meta-awareness
Develop mindfulness and presence
Encourage journalling
Elongate the impasse: silence, reflection, not knowing etc.
Use and encourage the use of metaphor

Develop brain friendly learning techniques
Invite nonverbal ways of knowing
Develop and use intuition in self and client
Address the total person at the levels of matter, mind, body, soul and spirit
Overcome artificial dualities: persona and shadow; mind and body; feminine and masculine; mind and matter; observer and observed

Section 5: Reflections on Methodology, Morality and Future Studies

The focus of this study was the phenomenological experience of insight in the UL. In investigating it, I tried to let the phenomenon speak for itself through the words of participants rather than forcing any preconceived hypothesis on reports. In addition, I tried to follow objectively where the data led. From an integral perspective I attempted to compare the findings of this UL study with findings from alternative fields of inquiry represented in the other three quadrants. Each quadrant represents a particular perspective taken on the study of insight. In this manner the study escapes the criticism made by Levitt et al (2004) that insight is an obscure concept because researchers fail to distinguish between the different perspectives they take on the subject. I have attempted not to privilege any field of study since any holon, including the "Aha" moment, is argued to co-arise simultaneously in all quadrants (Wilber, 2006). The aim has been to look for areas of agreement and convergence across various fields of inquiry to arrive at a more integrated understanding of the nature and function of insight.

No matter how objective one tries to be, the researcher's attitudes, preconceptions and deeper motivations come into play. This section lays these bare, at least as far as conscious awareness will allow such an undertaking.

The grounded study commenced with the canvassing of initial descriptions of "Aha" moments from key informant interviews. Descriptions talked of "Aha" moments in body, mind and spirit. In the next wave of research I included a question about where the "Aha" was experienced in body and mind. I deliberately did not include 'spirit' in case diary keepers felt 'obliged' to talk about spirit. However, many diaries entries indicated that mind represented insight at the levels of soul and spirit. In grounded study fashion I therefore revised the question in the next phase of data-gathering in the questionnaires. Specifically, participants were asked to describe what 'spot' the "Aha" moment was hitting in body, mind and spirit. Perhaps this inclusion of spirit was too leading in that participants may have felt obliged to comment on "Aha" moments in the spiritual dimension. On the other hand, I simply headed where the data led. In addition my faith in the reports lies in the nature of the Co-Active relationship where openness, honesty and truth-telling are practised. From this point of view, I doubt whether clients would have deviated from this path simply to 'please' me, the researcher.

I admit that my predilection for Wilber's integral paradigm may have obscured other ways in which I could have interpreted the data. Nevertheless, I found the frameworks offered by this paradigm very helpful in making sense of and categorising findings and I endeavoured to ensure that findings were not distorted as a result of my adherence to the integral paradigm.

One way of assessing the validity of knowledge is proposed by Harman (1992). He argues there are three ways in which to discern validity: one can check one's knowledge, findings, and conclusions against those of others through the ages (i.e., compare it against a long-enduring tradition); one can ask how would the world be if everyone in the world behaved in accord with one's findings (i.e., what would be the fruits of such knowledge?); and one can look for an internal feeling of certainty, a noetic, intuitive, and persistent feeling that one's knowledge is true.

Applying these criteria to this study, the following assessment might be offered. Firstly, early data gathered was so alien to me that I was obliged to refer to the mystical literature which describes states and stages of consciousness that have been known through the ages. These traditions hold that the idea that consciousness is purely material is delusional. The data here suggests that the risk of delusion is reduced because the coach encourages the engagement of states other than the waking state, the state which is the dream, according to Eastern consciousness studies (Walsh and Vaughan, 1980: 37).

Secondly, were the fruits of the knowledge to be applied universally, or at least in the coaching community, the results might be expected to be radical. Coaches and clients would be made aware of the totality of the spectrum of consciousness intrinsically available to everyone. They would also learn how to access higher states and stages. This would be beneficial not just in the quest for insight but in the pursuit of personal transformation, for coach and client alike. This is not to say that everyone would be amenable or ready to make transformational changes but they would at least know that these are possible. Wilber (2006) estimates that it takes around four years to ascend from one level of consciousness to the next but believes this process can be speeded up through meditative practices. This study's findings would reinforce this stance. "Aha" moments speed up the process of development, especially when they come from intuitive sources, which in turn are encouraged through mindfulness and meditative practices.

Harman's third proposed test of validity relates to an internal feeling or intuition that the knowledge is true. This acid test was one that I unwittingly passed. The fact that I achieved my own insight in a transpersonal realm was an artefact of the research endeavour and not an initial objective. Nevertheless, it proved invaluable in my ability to more deeply understand the reports contained in the study. The patterns of reports of transpersonal states of consciousness rang true with my own inadequate attempts to explain it to such a degree that my confidence in the veracity of transpersonal realms of reality was increased.

One of the criticisms that might be levelled at this study is its relatively small sample size and the fact that clients are actively looking for personal growth and so may be

more open to insights than the population at large. However, this is a qualitative study designed to elicit in-depth descriptions. Interestingly, the holographic theories that have been presented in this study may solve this problem: “...in the new paradigm, since there are many interconnections, the world would be expected to display considerable holographic properties. Observations made in one domain would be expected to be mirrored by observations in other domains. The results of studying one small sample of experiences would be expected to reflect those of many other small samples. This is good news to advocates of an experience-centered approach, for it suggests that representative sampling may not be as critical as previously thought.” (Braud, 1994c: 304-305).

One important issue raised by transformational learning and development is the ethics involved in the domain. Kegan (2000), for example, criticises transformational learning in adult learning institutions where individuals have not given permission for such learning and may not be at a sufficiently evolved level to understand it. They may instead feel threatened and unsettled by having their worldviews invalidated. This is not, of course, the case in coaching populations where the designed alliance dictates the areas that clients with their coaches will explore.

I would argue that, where appropriate, transformational development should be encouraged and supported. This is in part because the findings repeatedly evidenced the personal pleasure, peace and indeed bliss that stem from transformational insights. I was also struck by the similarity in descriptions of the future self visualisations. Qualities like confidence, poise, elegance, peacefulness and contentment were reiterated so frequently that I intuited that these are universal desires. From a wider perspective, I agree with those researchers who argue that the ethics of withholding transformational potentials outweighs the risk of upsetting those who are not ready. As Brew (1994: 96) argues, “*Society cannot be what its members are not...in coming to know ourselves we transform ourselves. In transforming ourselves, we transform society*”. She concludes that there is a moral imperative to choose to advance in the direction of personal transformation.) argues that the Western rational approach contains

Western society, with its intrinsic either-or dualist mentality (Vachon 1995) implicitly prevents transformative learning since it 'logicalises' all phenomena while denying the existence of anything mythical or spiritual. To the extent to which these dimensions remain untapped, transformation is inhibited (Tang 1997). The superholistic model counter-balances the biases of the West, including a cultural bias against intuition and right-brain thinking so strong that it keeps it suppressed (Vaughan: 1979, Wade 1996: 153).

This study's findings demonstrate in large part the opposite of a dualistic mentality with its reports of unveiling unity consciousness. For Wilber (2006), the core of the moral argument for transformation is that, in a globalised world, world-centric views are desirable. Evolving to higher, more embracing and inclusive levels of consciousness would feed the universal good. Findings strongly suggested that many participants are at 2nd tier levels of meta-cognition in consciousness, which represent a quantum leap in transformational development (Cook-Greuter, 2005). Perhaps these participants represent the vanguard of a more universal expansion in consciousness: *"New possibilities for a qualitatively different, more reflective, and more wisely intentional mode of consciousness are emerging, creating a world in which meta-cognition is taught as a group of skills and thus wisdom becomes more expected. This progress may take hundreds or thousands of years, but the seeds have been planted"* (Blatner, 2004:7).

My superholistic model owes a great debt to Wilber, who has been criticised for prizing the nondual state as in some way superior to material reality (Ferrer, 2005). Whether or not this is a valid criticism, the point is that while 'material reality' represents the norm, other 'realities' are potentially available to those who are made aware of them. The Western scientific mindset should be supplemented with consideration of normative values, purposes, global and existential meanings, and other qualitative aspects of human experience (Smith, 1992: 84-86).

Those who are not made aware of transcendental realities either seem to stumble upon them unexpectedly (Millar 2004, Millar & C d'Baca, 2001, Wade, 1996) or spend their lives in ignorance of them. If I, as a reasonably well educated, well travelled individual, was previously ignorant of transpersonal states of consciousness, the likelihood is that

so too are many others. This is why findings such as those produced in this study are so important.

This study has offered findings that help signify the holistic human potential. I had no idea at the outset that I would be venturing so far into transpersonal domains. A key feature of the superholistic model is the focus on those transpersonal levels of consciousness that coach and client might wish to address. This would go against the grain of Western practices, where ways of seeing the world as interconnected and indivisible in terms of the material and the transcendent are not culturally taught. Nevertheless, as Bohm (1987) argues, since we are enfolded inseparably in the world, with no ultimate division between matter and consciousness, "...*meaning and value are as much integral aspects of the world as they are of us*" (Bohm, 1988: 67). From this perspective, it is especially gratifying that it can offer a glimpse into worlds other than the material. This is especially true if, as Braud and Anderson contend: "*Many of the most significant and exciting life events and extraordinary experiences - moments of clarity, illumination, and healing - have been systematically excluded from conventional research.*" (Braud and Anderson, 1998: 3).

It is sincerely hoped that the findings of this study may be helpful to anyone working towards the development of others by opening their eyes to the fullest potentials of consciousness across a spectrum of epistemologies. Experimenting with these epistemologies is likely to trigger "Aha" moments and thereby personal transformation. "Aha" moments are special states of consciousness that have the potential to drive transformational development to higher, more evolved stages. They help us to wake up *and grow up.*

Appendix 2

Participant Information – Clients Keeping Diaries

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. Please find attached both an “Information Sheet” which explains the purpose of the research and a “Consent Form” which I would ask you to sign and return to me prior to the commencement of your participation in the research. The requirement is for you to take a few minutes to journal your thoughts according to the guidelines below at the end of your coaching session. This should be done for a minimum of six sessions. Your coach will also be journaling at the end of the same sessions. These entries will form a diary which should be sent directly to me at the end of the period.

The aim of the research is to investigate the processes in coaching that lead to change and in particular the “aha” moments of insight that shift perception. The research seeks to “unpack” such moments by addressing these issues: under what conditions do “aha” moments occur; what happens immediately beforehand; crucially, how is the phenomenon experienced by the client; and what attitudinal and behavioural changes ensue as a result?

By “aha” moment, we mean a moment of sudden realisation, a shift in the way you see something, a peak moment when you wake up to something new in your mind. This phenomenon is sometimes called a “paradigm shift”.

Please take a few minutes at the end of your coaching session to observe how you’re feeling and what you’re thinking and make a note of these. You will find a benefit in the very act of journaling your feelings, thoughts and observations. The only skill you need to use is to simply be an observer of yourself, with no judging.

Please record your observations to these questions:

Questionnaire to be answered by the **client** after each coaching session.

Coach : (initials are fine)

Client :

Date :

<p>1. <i>What created most impact in the coaching today?</i></p>
<p>2. <i>Did you, during the session, become aware of old 'mind stuff' (like attitudes/beliefs or habitual patterns of thinking)? Please describe any instances.</i></p>
<p>3. <i>Please describe any new thinking you've become aware of. What did you learn about yourself? What are you taking with you?</i></p>
<p>4. <i>Have you experienced any 'aha' moment(s) or epiphanies today? Please describe what was happening just before the "aha", how you experienced it a) in your body and b) in your mind.</i></p>
<p>5. <i>Have your feelings or mood changed since the beginning of the coaching session? How? Please describe your experience of the change.</i></p>
<p>6. <i>What 'skills' have you used since your last coaching session (e.g. self-reflection, noticing/managing Gremlins, awareness of what happens in your body in different situations?)</i></p>

7. What did you learn about the power of coaching today?

General Comment?

Appendix 3

Participant Information Sheet – Coaches Keeping Diaries

Thank you for your interest in this research. In order to participate, you must be using the co-active model of coaching, so participating coaches will either be a CPCC or at least have completed CTI training. Please find attached both an “Information Sheet” which explains the purpose of the research and a “Consent Form” which I would ask you to sign and return to me prior to the commencement of your participation in the research. The requirement is for you to take a few minutes to journal your thoughts according to the guidelines below at the end of your coaching session. This should be done for a minimum of six sessions with the same client. These entries will form a diary which should be sent directly to me at the end of the period.

The clients you have suggested will be contacted by me to invite their participation in the study. Should they decide to participate in diary keeping along with you, the guidelines for this journaling will be sent to them by me. Clients will forward their completed diaries to me. They may decide to complete the questionnaire (see attached) in which case they will receive this from me and return it to me directly.

The aim of the research is to investigate the processes in coaching that lead to change and in particular the “aha” moments of insight that shift perception. The research seeks to “unpack” such moments by addressing these issues: under what conditions do “aha” moments occur; what happens immediately beforehand; crucially, how is the phenomenon experienced by the client; and what attitudinal and behavioural changes ensue as a result?

By “aha” moment, we mean a moment of sudden realisation, a shift in the way you see something, a peak moment when you wake up to something new in your mind. This phenomenon is sometimes called a “paradigm shift”.

Please take a few minutes at the end of your coaching session to observe how you're feeling and what you're thinking and make a note of these. You will find a benefit in the

very act of journaling your feelings, thoughts and observations. The only skill you need to use is to simply be an observer of yourself, with no judging.

Please record your observations to these questions:

Questionnaire to be answered by the **coach** after each coaching session:

Coach :

Client :

Date :

<i>1. What is your intuition telling you about this coaching session?</i>
<i>2. What 'landed' most with the client?</i>
<i>3. Was there an incidence of an "aha" shift or an epiphany in the session? What coaching techniques or skills were you using at the time?</i>
<i>4. How would you say that this "aha" moment was experienced by a) the client and b) you?</i>
<i>5. What was the client's aliveness during the coaching? Did it change during the session?</i>
<i>6. Have you identified a long-standing assumption/ attitude/ belief held by this client? Please describe it. Did it change during the session?</i>

7. *What was his/her level of resistance? Did it change during the session?
What made you aware of it?*

8. *What other observations are you aware of?*

9. *What did you learn as a coach in this session?*

General Comment?

Appendix 4

CO-ACTIVE COACHING QUESTIONNAIRE

Many thanks for agreeing to complete this questionnaire. Please sign the attached "Consent Form" and return it to me prior to your participation in the research.

The questionnaire will be asking you about coaching in general and the "AHA" moment in particular. By "Aha" moment, we mean an epiphany, a moment of sudden realisation, a shift in the way you see something, a peak moment when you wake up to something new or re-newed in your self.

Please answer all questions that are relevant to you. Even if you didn't experience any "Aha" moments, fill in what you can and return the form anyway.

I would like to conduct some interviews about this subject later in the year. If you are willing to be interviewed please fill in your telephone number or e-mail address.

Tel:

E-mail:

1. A little about you

Please circle appropriate answer

1.1 Gender:	Male	Female
1.2 Age Group:	16 - 24	
	25 - 34	
	35 - 44	
	45 - 54	
	55 - 64	
	65 - 74	
	75 +	
1.3 Coaching:	Are you being coached now	YES NO
1.4	If yes, for how long:.....	
	
1.5	If no, for what period of time were you coached?.....	
	
1.6	How long ago?.....	
1.7 Was your coaching organised by your company?		YES NO

2. Results of Your Coaching

This is to discover the place of the Aha moment in the whole scheme of coaching. We want to see what coaching skills and structures, if any, you continue to use.

2.1 What were your aims in hiring a coach?

Please answer on additional sheets if necessary

2.3 What element (s) of the coaching played the biggest part in your ability to make the changes you wanted?

2.4 Please describe any activities that you were introduced to in coaching that you still use e.g. self-coaching, visualisation, Gremlin management, vision and values, life purpose, future self. Which of these is the most helpful in having you sustain changes in your life?

2.5 How helpful were any "Aha" moments in delivering the changes you wanted?

2.6 Were there any changes / outcomes that you wanted that were not achieved as a result of your coaching?

3. The Aha Moment

In this section please recall as clearly as you can one of your BIG "Aha" moments; take a moment or two to see if you can re-experience it right now. Now give as much information as can about it.

3.1 What is the immediate impact of the "aha"? What are you aware of?

3.2. What are you feeling in your body and where?

3.3 What 'spot' is this hitting (in your mind, body, spirit?) Please describe fully

3.4 How familiar / unfamiliar is this feeling? (If familiar, please elaborate)

3.5 What is accompanying this feeling, what are your thoughts?

3.6 How strong is the feeling (Please score on a 0 – 10 scale with 0 being hardly any sensation of feeling at all to 10 being the strongest feeling you ever had).

4. Events surrounding the “Aha” Moment

This section is designed to explore the context of the “Aha” moment. Please re-collect one of your biggest Aha moments and see if you can re-experience it in the here and now. Now turn your attention to these questions:

4.1 What has your coach just been saying / doing to bring about this “Aha” moment?

4.2 What is the subject you are discussing as you experience this moment?

“Aha” Moments During Coaching Sessions

4.4 Did you experience “Aha” moments prior to being coached? Please describe the circumstances.

“Aha” Moments Outside of Coaching Sessions

4.7 Have you experienced an “Aha” moment in between coaching sessions or after you finished the relationship with your coach?

4.8 If yes, please describe the circumstances surrounding your “Aha” moment. For example, where were you, what were you doing or thinking, who was around you. What (if anything) provoked it and how did you experience it?

5. Long Term Effects of the "Aha"

5.4 Is change affecting one area of your life (please state which area)

5.5 Is change affecting your whole life? Please explain in what ways.

Here we want to discover the role of the Aha moment in your life.

6. Personal Development

6.1 Have you undertaken other types of personal development work?

YES NO

(Personal development could be counselling, therapy, NLP or other personal development workshops).

6.2 If yes, did you experience an "Aha" moment (moments).

6.3 In what ways (if any) did these "Aha" experiences differ from coaching "Ahas" (e.g. how experienced, effects on attitudes, effects on behaviour etc.

I would be very grateful if you would fill in and return this questionnaire within a week to me at leighlonghurst@hotmail.com. Many thanks.

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