

Abstract

In studying leading as a way of changing meaning, this research documents a journey of inner exploration amongst five self-nominated leaders in education. In contrast to change limited by outer dimensional structure, *changing meaning* in an inner dimension was seen as the necessary complement in creating real difference in educators and in educating. Over a period of almost a year, the leaders participated in an online project, travelling together through email dialogue focused around leading, changing and meaning. In this, they experimented with a changing way of researching, developing a personalised space of *changing* in which they could truth-test their thoughts and feelings about the multiple facets of *leading* and *meaning*. Such a space - interstitial to their outer working and inner personal lives, but deeply connective of both - was found useful in supporting coherent change processes in the participant leaders.

Frontispiece

Figure 1: *Two Forms* - Max Dupain

Used with permission.

Max Dupain

Australia 1911 - 1992

Two forms. 1939

gelatin silver photograph

50.2 x 38.2 cm

Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Changing Meaning: The Leading Way

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September 2003

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For my faithful companions on the journey,
especially James, Liz, Michael, Doug, Mark
and Robert Douglas.

Your wisdom lights my way.

In memory of Matthew and Emma
who have gone ahead.

*May you play the lead and
surf the edge of possibility.*

Love Always

*A change of meaning is necessary to change this world
politically, economically and socially. But that change must
begin with the individual; it must change for him....
if meaning is a key part of reality, then,
once society, the individual and relationships are seen to mean
something different a fundamental change has taken place.
(Bohm, 1987, p.107, 96 as in Sogyal Rinpoche, 1992, p.355)*

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Acknowledgements

The assistance of my supervisors is acknowledged with appreciation, as is the financial support of Central Queensland University. Deep gratitude is expressed to the leaders who participated in the project: thank you for 'being there'. My love is extended to the generations of Roelofs women who had the courage to lose sight of the shore in searching for new land and a better life for their children. I am because you were.

Declaration

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification. I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged herein.

Signed:

1. Introduction

As a teacher, I encourage the students I work with, aged five to fifty and more, to be *researchers*. In this, I challenge them to *search and search again*, to reiterate in their learning, to go around to make personal sense of their experiences as they interact with a multitude of resources. I ask this of them so their learning creates meaning - deepening their insights and reaching higher to new planes of complexity, giving their performances in living integrity. I want their cycles of learning - their *re-searching* - to bring them the richness and clarity of the inner self of *being* working with the outer self of *becoming*. I want them to learn to watch themselves learning, to be truly participative in their meaning-making. As a researcher and student of research, I could ask no less of myself and of all those associated with the research presented herein. The challenge has been to take a lead, to go round, to follow the emergent thread and witness its weaving, to dance - to make moving patterns of - meaning into life. In the years of this particular journey, I have been through many cycles, many performances. I have changed; meaning has changed - I have learnt to always *look and look again*. For all whom this research has touched, I believe the challenge generated from looking again, within and without, each and together, has made us a-new.

My personal search for meaning has led a Batesonian path in which differentiation from looking again leads to the ever larger, more inclusive and integrative patterns of the transdisciplinary. Like Gregory Bateson (1988, p.9), I dream of the '*pattern which connects*' and of creating post-conceptions more than verifying preconceptions (Bochner, 1981 in Singer, 1995). I would like to have his talent of 'connecting patterns and relationships abductively and linking ideas within a confluence of different circles in order to discover the logical extension of related constructs' (Singer, 1995, no page). As a learner here, I aim to go some way to developing this skill, acknowledging that it will come through relating,

within myself and with others, and through making new and connective patterns of reality - or systems of info-energy that Pearsall (1998) calls memory - rather than breaking-apart rendings (Wurts, 1994). In this, I will juxtapose different fields and blend their dynamics to find new ways of leading and changing meaning. As a knowledge worker and one of 'a new generation of symbolic analysts, ...strongly insulated forms of singular disciplinary knowledge' (McWilliam and Singh, 2002, p.8) are insufficient to me as I work across borders. While my home base has been science, I move across its fields, aligning the world views of physics and psychology, of biology and sociology, of mathematics and music, all the while reaching for the intuitive metapatterns that make and hold the world in human consciousness. To me, there is no danger in a changing mind, and there is much opportunity for learning rising from novel perspectives, *from looking and looking again*. I invite you - as both audience of and participant in this journey - to *re-search*, to take the risk of looking again, leading yourself into the simple complexity of changing meaning as we share the way.

The journey begins here, in its moment, with the problem I want to address through this research. I look at some parameters, choose a lens and pose several research questions before moving on to explain the framework through which this research is conducted. As this explicates changing ways of being and doing, I then examine a changing way of researching before detailing the process and outcomes of a research project that studied a microcosm of changing meaning in which a group of five leaders in education *researched* themselves.

2. Research Focus

Research Problem:

Here's my problem - the way I see it, from where I look, from where I come from as a teacher in a large state-run education system - and from where I want to go. I have a problem with change. I call it 'my problem' because I am personalising it here. Below, I am not presenting a defensible argument that a problem to do with change exists out there, at large, although I suspect it does. My problem comes of my experience and meaning-making, and I am simply telling *my* story - refreshingly real to me and mine. My assertions are mine - not any norm but a state of play in my idiosyncratic perception. My story is of how I see my problem of change from in here, from my participation and performance within as a teacher who needs to lead my always-changing meaning into being. Why? It's because I want the 'outside', in all its manifestations, to serve the potential I see 'inside' people better. The way-finding of re-searching, of *looking and looking again*, is justified for me. From the heart and mind within - not the ghost in the machine - my problem emerges, a problem concerning my people. My commitment to their learning and to their becoming who they can be validates my problem and necessitates, in my eyes, my leading a journey into changing meaning through this research.

This is how I see what I see around me. In a world where change is the only constant and the centre spins in the dance, 'education' as a state of being educated is an anachronism, a thing of the past. No longer is it viable for students to 'get an education' as a deposit in a bank (Freire, 1972) before passing into real life, like a neat production line. There is no certainty anymore as to what the deposit could be used for. Real life today is unpredictable, always on the edge of possibility of becoming more fully human (Freire, 1972); itself becoming subject as well as object. Life is a

participative process of educating the self throughout - the 'university of life' has new meaning. As such, I support Reason's (1994b, p.34) proposal for a critical subjectivity in which 'the mind will move beyond the world in which all is immersed in a seamless web, and beyond the world of separate objects, into a world of pattern and form, of relationships within an interdependent whole.' In what I can see of a world where the parallel of co-processing is trying to dance with the serial of linear processing, the institution of education is struggling to reinvent itself in the complexities of learning that goes on a lifetime. The steps of life's dance are continually changing as the world - and thus human - *umwelt* moves from stable and predictable certainties into a dynamic, ever-inventive flux formed on what Bohm (1983) and Wheatley (1992) term an underlying, holistic orderliness. Whereas education was once seen as an operational instrument of change, educating now needs to be characterised by the alive, now-ness of changing formed on coherent and shared values - leading all on a merry dance, a dance of possibilities that practice can scarcely prepare for. As Freire (1972, p.57) suggests, 'in order to *be*, [education] must *become*.'

In ventures into responsive change since I began teaching in the mid-1970s, educational institutions in my view - from where I looked, I taught in one Australian state, but was aware of reforms in other states, Great Britain and the United States - have sought to reform their structures, often after economic models (Hargreaves, 2003). Looking for productivity increases (and political kudos in state systems), education - as a system and a service - began to look superficially different (the lean, mean machine) but a lack of 'organic' and 'integrated' change to complement the 'mechanics' (Zohar, 1997) meant that it was often business as usual at a traditional chalkface, with the confusions of restructuring thrown in. Goodson (2001, p.48) noted that this new phase of educational change - in contrast to an earlier phase of change centring around professionals within systems - presented a situation where change was 'substantially pre-empted by external interest groups.' As Duignan (1997) in Australia put it, educational change was a fiddling of

external indicators. Change took on an element of prescription (Freire, 1972) where the choices and thus freedom of professional educators to reform education in ways they saw as responsible were proscribed by systemic mandates. To me, it was like a meccano set rebuilt, using the same struts and nuts and bolts. There were new systemic structures, new pathways, new credos and new slogans, but in true industrial fashion, teachers still stood in front of classes in rows, delivering time-worn packets of knowledge to receptive vessels. There was little dancing in sight; little querying of problematic steps or inventing new turns (like how to deal creatively, and on both personal and professional levels, with the knowledge and technology explosion and the shifting world of work); little claiming their own meanings in a changing world. Their professionalism discounted, it was as if educators were disempowered and became the oppressed (Freire, 1972) - quite unable to autonomously and critically question the change being done to them, and in this were creating a new generation of the same. In the same year, in the United States, Zohar (1997, p.2) spoke of restructuring and reengineering in organisations as 'merely surface solutions' without fundamental shifts and Caine and Caine (1997, p.3) lamented that 'much stays the same'. In my eyes as an educator, how disenchantingly true that was. Perhaps much stayed the same because educators were, in a sense, robbed of their power to create meaningful change.

Much earlier, Fullan (1991, as reported by Jones, 1999), perceptively noted that structural change alone often leaves the core of the problem unchanged, and to me as a school-based teacher, the progress of years has demonstrated this. Something - or someone - else is at the core of my problem of change. In my organisation - a state education system, there has been one restructuring after another since the 1980s, yet I observe that most of the administrators and teachers I work with, across a range of schools, continue to think and practise in much the same way, rarely at the leading edge - theirs or the system's. Somewhere along the line - for there is

still a top to bottom line - authentic change gets lost. The mandated business of education has been dynamically reformed with almost 'here today, gone tomorrow' speed - but inside systems, learning and teaching still seem to plod along as always, with the people involved often seeing themselves as oppressed, as victims or casualties rather than as self-empowered leaders and beneficiaries of change. For example, the insulation and isolation of the 'class' often continues, sometimes at surprising levels - in attending a peak-body conference of educational researchers in Australia, I found minimal representation from the local state education system, though the conference was literally on their doorstep. The reason suggested to me was that the academy and the education system were almost mutually exclusive, despite one keynote speaker pleading for more 'tweeners' to move between and create bridges (Luke, 2002). Further, similar to some classes at my school spending the majority of their days installed behind desks, with the teacher out the front, most offerings at this conference had the same one-way path format. Somehow, the core of the problem of change still exists and the moving, flowing and emancipating dance of educating still has to be learnt.

Fullan believed, like Zohar (1997) and Hargreaves (1998), that change and innovation are multidimensional. From where I look with my problem, I agree that more than one focus or orientation is necessary in change; just the one - the system - has demonstrably been shown to be not enough. To significantly change the act of 'education' into an ongoing process of 'educating', several integrated foci might be needed; for example, the system *and* the service *and* the people involved. As Goodson (2001, p.59) notes, 'change and reform must be seen as going both ways in relation to school and context, both into and out from the school. This movement *both ways* is reflected in the importance of teachers' personal beliefs and internal missions.' A pedagogy for the oppressed must happen '*with*, not *for*' as Freire (1972, p.25) pronounced and this must apply to change in educators as well as students. Perhaps the core of my problem lies in another

dimension to those so far reformed. To me, more than one dimension - more than one plane or level - raises the notion of movement as the lens of perception and mind of conception range through varied ways of knowing, thereby making holistic sense in an ongoing process. To see change as liberating, as something in motion - as moving both ways, in and out - has potential. In *education*, knowledge is banked in a safe and silent receptacle - the student (Freire, 1972). It is delivered by the teacher and received by the student who accepts it unquestioningly - a banking education does not encourage dialogue (Freire, 1972) - and who looks after it *just in case* (Spender and Stewart, 2002) it might need to be expended in the future, a transaction that is a once-off change of state. *Educating*, however, might be seen as not for knowledge, but for ongoing knowing (Laura & Cotton, 1999; Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scott & Trow, 1994; Nespor, 1994; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1998). It is a *just in time* (Spender and Stewart, 2002) process for focusing on multiple facets of learning and integrating them into an actively creating and reflexively meaningful self, a self that is always dynamically related to other. Now, we would need more than an efficient and effective system for that - we would need to see ourselves as educators differently; we would have to see ourselves as in motion too. To be *knowing*, we - and our students - have to move, have to shift perceptions, have *to look and look again* and make sense in many ways. We have to be active and participative in meaning making; we have to be always changing.

As an educator who is committed to *educating*, I *look and look again*, knowing that the core of my problem with change has to do with dimensions or conceptual parameters, with keeping them - and us - in motion, going round so much *doesn't* stay the same. We always have the capacity to think and feel in different ways, but we so often choose not to. I have to look at my problem another way, with new eyes, and this is what I see. If a major dimension of changing is outer, objective structure - the system or the way we *do* things in the name of educating, I propose that the 'core of the

problem' with change may be a neglected dimension of inner, subjective balance found in the way we *be* - in acknowledging who we are as human beings and educators. In my view, we are not predetermined 'givens'; neither are we always 'receivers' who seem to experience a lot of 'static'. We are learners and teachers; we are leaders and meaning-makers; we are always changing. We are thus dancers who can make up the steps of life as we go along; we are quite able to design our own patterns that connect. We know the problem has 'no simple, painless solutions' and that it 'requires us to learn new ways ...changes in attitudes, behaviours and values' (Heifetz, 1992, p.2). I see that my problem with change might be resolved in changing how educators see and *learn* themselves in leading. I believe the core of it lies within, in the dimension that - to the evidence of my eyes - is less travelled.

In writing of her work as a medical educator, Remen (1999, p.35) took educating back to its roots, where *educare* meant to '*to lead forth the hidden wholeness, the innate integrity that is in every person.*' (Emphasis in original.) She saw educators as healers, bringing together the dimensions of self - the ways we think and feel about self - into wholeness. In her work with doctors, she brought their outer and inner lives together in healing, for example, in helping specialist surgeons acknowledge and deal with being the outer expert on whom patients relied as well as the inner person who knew fear and fallibility. From where I look, I agree that educators might need to be healers, to bring the dimensions of change - for example, how the system sees it structurally and how practitioners experience it inside themselves - into a healthy wholeness. Further, I see that their focal points should initially be themselves and what change means. Ample attention has been paid to the outer dimensions of change - to the system and the structure - but too little has been given to inner dimensions, to how change is known within educators and to how people change. Further, too little attention has been given to integrating the dimensions of change. For example, change is often seen as something that happens, on the outside, *to*

educators and schools. Change is not seen as being in motion or as a phenomenon that educators can, from within themselves, invoke in the name of learning and healing - healing such as systems supporting rather than dictating practitioner change. At the core of my problem with change, I see the separated nature of doing and being in education, just as Remen saw in medicine with the surgeons who were expected to operate confidently but who were afraid of the responsibility and possible consequences. The system in education expects practitioners to move into change confidently, but does not allow them - and the benefit of their experience - real partnership in it. Practitioners are afraid of the consequences of change that has been mandated for them and do not wish to accept responsibility for it. There is little awareness that the more parts - the inner and outer; the being and doing - are integrated and harmonised, the more it is likely that the movement underpinning educational change will gather force and momentum (Goodson, 2001). There is little acknowledgement of educators at all levels as dancers, either in themselves or from others, and thus little dimensional integrity or healing coherence. There is little movement within; change resides on the surface only. Just as an *education* of quantity needs to become *educating* of quality, *change* needs another quality, to also go back to its roots: it needs to be moving, *looking and looking again*, initiating and responding, integrating multiple dimensions into a coherent and dynamic whole by becoming changeable itself. *Changing* is what I see we need as educators so that *education* may be transformed into *educating*.

To bring my problem of changing into a scale that I can act on as a researcher and educator, I chose to focus this particular research on leaders in education, or shall I say, *leading educators*. I chose to pin my hopes as a *re-searcher* on leaders who are leading a changing meaning, that of *educating* and thus of healing and making whole in a fractured world. Once the domain of structurally positioned leaders where power was at play, leadership appropriate to an emerging multidimensional and differentiated world of educating needs to be inwardly sensed and outwardly framed in a

different way, with less of the distinctive leader with follower and more of participative and distributive leading within learning communities. The oppressed that education created need leading where educating is about liberating self-empowerment. Thus leading becomes more than an act; it is also a *being* that becomes educative of self and others in a dynamic and dialogic learning process incorporating both the outer dimensions of doing and inner dimensions of being. Indeed, to Bateson (1988), learning *must* incorporate both outer environment and inner coherence; nature and mind. In Barker's view (2002), leadership development and growth involves a personal journey emerging from the 'self' of the leader and so is intensely personal and internal. I add that this journey moves from self into other, into serving the public and external - and back again in cycles of learning. (I also add that service as here used does not feature the exploitation that characterises bad leadership.) In being so refined, my problem became one of *changing in leading*; one of how to develop and acknowledge the complexities of both the inner and outer dimensions in those who know themselves as leaders; one of how to challenge and support their learning new meaning in leading. Like Sarros (2002, p.9), I wanted to 'explore leadership as a journey of self-discovery; and to endeavour to come to terms with the *heart* (compassion) and *soul* (vision, values, integrity) of leadership, as well as its work-related components.'

In this research, an example of generative leadership (Jaworski, 1996) and participative research (Reason, 1994b) - in which I saw myself as leading a changing meaning - some solutions were sought for the problem of *changing in leading*. To get a grasp on something so amorphous and always moving, I settled on three distinctions - three perspectives or ways of seeing - to define my research and give it conceptual dimension. I chose to study five educational leaders through a triune, multifocusing lens of *leading* - as outwardly and actively rolling motive energy forward from the leading edge of knowledge; and *meaning* - as inwardly and reflectively recycling energy to contemplate, make sense and evolve new knowing; along with *changing* - as

the intermediary, incorporative and moving phase of transmutation between the limits of leading and meaning. The classic t'ai chi tu (Bütz, 1997), the 'symbol of the grand ultimate' - better known as the yang/yin sign - provided a visual symbolisation of the integrative and multidimensional nature of how I was seeing the process of changing occurring in leading:



Figure 2: T'ai chi tu

The act of leading (white), always containing an eye of meaning (black dot), flows from the being of meaning (black). Meaning (black) always holds within it a seed of doing (white dot) as it rolls into becoming action. The cycle is never-ending, always in motion, as I intended this research to be. I wanted to focus my eye on the problem of leading in a changing way, all the while knowing that it and I, and all who participated in the research, would be always changing and leading into new meanings. Like yin and yang, *leading* and *changing* and *meaning* were ways of seeing, focusing and understanding - of giving dimension to and holding momentarily in the mind's eye - the movement inherent in life.

Rationale For Research:

Moving on is vital in changing to *educating*, as is moving in a holistic way. My problem arose because fiddling the external indicators is not enough. It creates too much *static* and not a clear enough signal that educating is different; clear through. Living things change in all dimensions, not just one

- there is little unilateral linearity, for example, in a flower blooming or a person dying. In the midst of *education* - a machine for life - becoming *educating* or learning-for-living, educators find themselves embroiled in a turmoil of dimensional dissonance. Dissonance, as Heifetz (1992) points out, is integral to harmony because conflict and tension are necessary for dynamism and movement, but in education the dissonance never seems to resolve into a moving, changing whole. To my eyes, there seems little coherence between the outer *doings* and inner *beings* in educational practice. For example, educational organisations reform but teaching culture stays the same, or innovators trial new ways but are stifled by systemic mandates. The time is ripe for research-for-life that presents opportunities to study the process of moving amongst dimensions, and hence of changing across multiple dimensions and moving on.

While much research on change in education has focused on organisations (for example, Senge, 1992; Wheatley, 1992; Zohar, 1997; Senge et al, 1999), the research reported here is people-centred and deals directly with individuals rather than with systems. Through more than twenty years experience as a teacher, I have come to believe that human systems are living entities and are no more or less than the people who comprise them, and that the core of my problem in changing lies within the unacknowledged hearts and minds of individual educational practitioners. Who each person is as a *being* seems, to the perception of my eyes, to be the dimension missing from the *doing* of educating.

To my observation, those who experience this dimensional dissonance most keenly are the educators who are natural leaders; that is, those whose levels of personal and social development - the 'strong' and the 'just' as Lévy (1997) would say - empower them to enact themselves as leaders regardless of how they might name themselves or of what their formal position in educational systems might be. Natural leaders in my sense are not to be confused with leaders espoused as 'natural' in trait theories of leadership, for example,

Gardner, 1989 as reported in Doyle and Smith, 2001. The strong and just everyman or everywoman may or may not consciously intend to lead - and this was contended by participants in the project reported here - but leading is nevertheless an activity they progress to. Within their being, they are seekers and feel the need to go forward to a better world, to find the way into new truths about themselves and their lives, including educating. They are not complacent and know in themselves the frustration of inner and outer dimensions not aligning and working as a whole and are willing to find ways of integrating self and the social world into a coherent whole. To me, these leaders - and through self-awareness and self-understanding everyone has the potential (Sarros, 2002) to be a leader - hold a key to significantly changing education - as practice and institution - because their experience of fragmentation and of mismatch between inner drives and outer actions motivates them to find a dynamic, moving-on balance, as in generative leadership (Jaworski, 1996) and creative leadership (Holmes-Ponder, Ponder and Bell, 1999). They have a need to develop relationship within themselves, to learn as did Remen's surgeons that who they are and what they do are facets of one I-identity, and in the process of doing this, develop relationship with their larger self-other entity, that is, the people within their social / professional sphere of service and influence.

As an example of the kind of debilitating dissonance which I have seen robbing good leaders of their strength and justice, below are some excerpts, used with permission, from personal correspondence with a colleague - a school principal - over the space of two years.

For the first time in a long time I have questioned myself about why I am here. The staff make a list of issues and concerns about my leadership. They feel that I allow them too much professional freedom and do not lead. Have they no idea that leading is not leading, but aiding people to find their own leadership within themselves?

I am in my own "leadership crisis" at present, wondering if the right thing is what I am doing or if I just feel that it is the right thing because it easier than doing the right thing.

Had 1/2 a day off, sick, yesterday. I seem to be getting sicker and sicker as the year progresses - not strain, not stress, just breakdown, I feel. Ah, well, maybe I need to consider a lifestyle change, instead of trying to cope with current one.

Have had a few suicides here lately, and the town is tinder point, at present - makes school and work a really interesting experience. ...I must go and do the Annual Report, as the 'biggies' are coming here next week.

I am finally getting back 'on the path'. It has been so difficult getting myself to move. Never in my life has anything been so difficult. It is true that when we (as in all of us) allow the light to dim that it takes another, whole 'this life' to reignite it.

I am still not 'right', as this place has taken its own life and is gradually sucking me dry!

The longer I stay here, the tighter the circle! I have asked to move to another school, even though I know I have not done my task here. It is hard to maintain myself and the environment around me.

Life here is on a down spiral, at present - work, health, mind, spirit!

While the example - and the apparent depression and loss of the personal power of the strong and just - may be an extreme case, it is nevertheless indicative of the tone of other stories from leaders in education whom I have had the privilege of associating. Another well-respected and much-loved leader recently retired early due to ill-health brought on by work; many have difficulty in coping with constant outer dimension change that seems to pay little attention or respect to their contexts and their person. In the example, the social stresses that needed community work and the attacks on self that indicated a personal work avoidance (Heifetz, 1992) were lost in the throes of systemic restructuring. The inner meaning-making dimension of this leader was buried under the paperwork of outer dimension change that had no care.

It seems to my eyes that the dissonance of leading in schools today sees those who would lead an emancipative inside-out *moving on* liable to suffering burn-out more than those whose participation in change is limited to a comfortable level of externalising apathy, blind acceptance or denial through powerlessness, or even tacit support through identification with

oppressors (Freire, 1972). Many of those who care so passionately for people - for justice - that they would ride a values-driven leading edge of possibility in educating do it tougher than those who wallow. (No judgment is placed on the latter here. Rather, it is a task of leading to *en-courage* their personal empowerment as self-leading change agents.) Further, while some leaders cope - and even thrive - with mandated change well, other leaders - particularly those who lead from the heart and soul (Sarros, 2002) and who put people before structures - find the way less easy or straight forward than those who acquiesce to *the system*. They are more change-makers and less change-takers; they have moral and ethical positions of their own; they have principles and values they live by - and in the case of my colleague in the example, a dedication to people and making a difference in educating.

That my problem with change - the lack of attending to and integrating the inner dimension - is borne out in the lives of many leaders is an indictment of the fiddling with external indicators where much stays the same. Leaders of the changing kind too often might be seen as casualties caught in between. Change, for them, lacks adequate dimension - it's crushingly *out there* - and they can lose sight of their inner purposes (Heifetz, 1992), lose their self-authorisation, and lose their way inside. In the extreme, they may lose heart (Pearsall, 1998) and give up leading, responding to the sustained dissonance and disequilibrium with *work avoidance* rather than engagement in *adaptive work* as Heifetz (1992) terms the inner-outer process of changing meaning. They may lose their strength and justice for the 'good fight' and fall into a downward spiral like my colleague, avoiding the hard inside work of personal change. To move on, leading must also involve healing, the making whole through making personal meaning about changing. If we see empowering educating for changing as a moral imperative, I believe inner work in educators, and particularly leaders, is a dimension in need of urgent attention. As it is, the 'good' leader - the compassionate and caring kind that humanity needs - is being sacrificed to structure and is unintentionally creating bad leadership. The good are often

tired and defeated: they lose their integrity (Onsman, 2002) - their holding together ability - and become care-less, providing less positive modelling and leaving the way open for the more opportunistic and the bad (Parry, 2002) who lead for their own self-serving purposes. (In the project reported here, good and bad leaders and good and bad leadership are explored in some detail, demonstrating the importance of moral issues to the group.)

In supporting and challenging leaders through a participative project, this research - my own leading - was seen as proactive in 'mobilizing people to tackle tough problems' (Heifetz, 1992, p.15); in instigating movement amongst dimensions; and as supporting and challenging educating as a process of changing. While leaders create 'holding' spaces for others to do the adaptive work of changing meaning, they are not often 'held' themselves (Heifetz, 1992). In the project of this research, I wanted to make a containing space to hold leaders - and for leaders to hold each other - as they did their own self-educative work; as they explored their own changing meaning and learned their way in a journey amongst dimensions. As leaders experienced their dimensionality and complexity more fully and with more integration, it was proposed that the nature of their leadership would reflect their personal movement as self-leaders, and that heartfelt and mindful *leading* characterised by multidimensional moving and changing would come to qualify them more than acts alone in the process of educating.

Significance Of Research:

Caine and Caine's (1997) lament about much staying the same is a sad reflection on educators' lack of effectiveness in educating themselves in change. Over a now long period of turmoil as the modern world mutates into something else, educators have been victims of their own education, believing that change is a given and means doing one way and then doing

another, neglecting the intricacies of relationship between outer and inner dimensions. *Educating* is a process of constant changing, not an act of change, and takes place within as well as without practitioners. Much stays the same when change is addressed unidimensionally, but nothing can stay the same when changing is a moving, complex, multidimensional way of leading and learning.

This research sought to be a model of learning and development for leaders in which educating is about changing. Its design was both *scientific* and *educational* (Kelly, 2003), that is, focused on creating change in leaders whilst they participated in studying it. It looked at change beyond the superficialities and proposed one solution to the problem of change through the conduct of a project with five self-nominated leaders. This project was seen as an avenue of self-leading learning and meaning-making aimed at supporting and challenging the participants in their changing quest. In this, the inner and outer dimensions of leading, as experienced by the group of leaders in email exchanges over a period of almost a year, were studied. The leaders shared in dialogue about leading, changing and meaning and developed a mutually supportive and educative space of *being there* that encompassed the personal and the professional and which brought greater coherence to their changing lives.

Aims Of Research:

This research aimed at exploring authentic change in leaders through studying leading and meaning, as outer and inner dimensions, and how these interacted in changing the living experienced by the five leaders in the project group. Further, I wanted to know if self-aware, participative research into the dynamics of multidimensional *changing* could both support and challenge movement in leaders, and as such, could support their educating themselves and relational self-others. Lastly, I sought to

know if the learning medium employed in the research project, an email list, was appropriate and useful in exploring outer and inner dimensions and in facilitating leading, changing and meaning.

Research Questions:

1. What did personal leading, changing and meaning 'look' like for the leaders in the project group, as articulated in their email dialogue?
2. In what ways did the participative project experience support and challenge personal changing in individuals and in the group?
3. In what ways did the participants in the project report the sharing of the learning journey through email dialogue to be useful in their personal changing processes?
4. To what extent did the shared learning amongst the group relate to other, outer dimensions in creating integrated changing in educating?
5. To what extent was the project medium of email adequate as a learning environment for the leaders?
6. In what ways did this project medium support inner dimension exploration and how could it be improved?

Limitations And Definitions Of Research:

The project of this research lived in an unusual and special space. At the outset, in recognising the time constraints of the leaders in the group, the project was framed to fit in amongst the other activities that filled their

busy lives. In seeking to avoid the mechanistic model of elements interacting externally and not deeply (Bohm, 1987), a *virtual organism* was sought in which 'the very nature of any part may be profoundly affected by changes of activity in other parts, and by the general state of the whole, and so the parts are basically internally related to each other as well as to the whole' (Bohm, 1987, p.3). Thus, taking an organic model, it was sought to deliberately locate this project in *interstitial spaces*, much like the spaces that exist between cells in living things. These spaces may appear to be empty, but are in fact filled with fluid and play a role in transferring messages and materials amongst cells (Villem, 1972). (This model was later extended in data shaping and analysis, with the group's body of dialogue then being seen as an organic cell.) In the project group, the interstitial spaces that emerged ranged from early morning moments before family members woke, to driving or surfing or walking times, to late night solitude. They were filled with introspective reflection and the shared, fluid meaning-making of dialogue.

Interestingly, Isaacs (1993, p.93), in referring to the *space* of dialogue, sees such transference of meaning between and amongst as generative of information or - as he puts it - *intelligence*: 'the active, fresh capacity to think, to gather between already existing categories. In other words, we can learn to listen either from the net we already have, or to the spaces between.' For the leaders in the group, the categories in their nets were centred largely around their work - for example, planning and implementing initiatives - and their families - for example - transporting children for sporting activities. In choosing asynchronous email as the project medium, it was anticipated that the dialogue amongst the group in virtual space would fulfill a similar purpose of transference in being a moving fluid - fitting in between the existing categories and mindsets of the leaders' lives - through which informative and intelligent connection could occur. These 'spaces between' were seen as generating connections or relationships on two planes, the first being amongst group members as a whole of parts, in a

way reminiscent of Vinge's (1993) 'packs' in which several parts shared a common mind, and the second being amongst dimensions, in this case, the outer and inner dimensions in all their shades, such as work and home, social and personal, shared and individual. Lévy (1997) calls space like this the 'knowledge space' in that it is non-territorial (not categorised) and non-capitalist (not commodified) but grounded in relational and fluid intrapersonal and interpersonal bonds. As such, for him, this space is less interstitial - in between - than supernal - above and beyond the ordinary spaces of life, but is nevertheless intelligent or generative of knowledge-of-living (Lévy, 1997) or what I call knowing. For the leaders in the project group, their spaces between and the relationships that developed within them allowed them to generate new knowing about their changing selves that lifted them out of the ordinary while at the same time, grounded them more securely. As excerpts of their dialogue will later demonstrate, they were refreshed and revitalised yet comfortable in belonging from being in the spaces they made and shared.

This research thus defined a space for leaders to voluntarily explore changing meaning, but was itself defined by symbols and metaphors of changing meaning. It emanated from the works of Dupain (1939) and Bohm (1983), some of whose art and words act as frontispieces to this thesis. Max Dupain's silver gelatin photograph of 'Two Forms' indicated, through visual metaphor, two ways of knowing the world, one as mechanist or objectivist and one as naturalist or intersubjectivist. In the first - the tool - human consciousness stands outside life and shapes the world as disinterested observer, as in the modernist project. In the second - the shell - consciousness inspires form from within (Stiskin, 1971) and is creative of - and responsive to - life, akin to the way I see today's natural leaders aspiring to. It could be said that one is a structure of outer dimension, looking from without, while the other is an inner dimension, forming from within. To me, this photograph symbolised the leader's journey from the linear and serial into the circular and parallel.

In a similar vein, David Bohm's (1983) writes of an explicate, unfolding order and an implicate, enfolding order, which he uses to signal more than one dimension to existence. Human consciousness lives largely in the outer, explicit dimension associated with the planes of the sensate world, but there is also an inner, more intuitive dimension where meaning is enfolded, implicit and not obvious. Most importantly for me, as a martial artist who appreciates the Chinese ideology of yang and yin, was Bohm's notion that consciousness is neither one order nor the other, but *both and together*. The Buddhist scholar Wilber (1997) understands this *both and together* as being simultaneously a *witness* observing from without and a *seer* enacting from within. In modern science, this translates as the act of observation creating a point or particle from wave potentials (Wheatley, 1992). In Jungian psychology (Jung 1971), it is understood that consciousness, both individual and communal, has a range of preferences for acting and knowing, but that at any moment all are at play and that the development of lesser preferences is essential for growth and balance. Leaders can be seen in a similar light: as multidimensional; as *both-and*; as those who *look and look again* at what they see but who also live genuinely within life as the distanced observer and the full participant.

The project was thus designed to fit in small but generative spaces within lives - to find small spaces in the busy lives of leaders where none seemed to exist, yet to enable an enlarged space or consciousness of the fluid connection between the explicit and implicit dimensions of leading self. Working within such constraints - while venturing on an open exploration of self in leading - a changing meaning was ambitious and many ways *around* had to be found. Nevertheless, all the participants demonstrated commitment to the project and loyalty to the facilitator and to their own personal journeys by remaining engaged throughout the life of the project and beyond, even when the going got tough. This indicated that 'good things come in small packages', in other words, that good healing could come in the

small spaces that the leaders gifted themselves. They gave themselves the time and the space to develop greater personal coherence - no mean gift to bestow on themselves. In writing about technological change and e-learning, Spender and Stewart (2002, p.97) proposed that teachers are learners too and that 'time-out is crucial at this stage of the education revolution' to 'make their own knowledge... as they go.' I agree with this, both in teachers' specific context and in the larger context of changing in leaders as dealt with here. Leaders need time-out for time-in, to do the making whole of healing, to make their own knowing. In retrospect, the changing meanings of the leaders participating in the project were not limited by its limitations of space and time. Rather, I believe they were enlarged because the leaders appreciated the preciousness of the space they created and sought, in spite of personal limitations, to make the most of it.

3. Research Framework

Introduction:

Necessarily, this thesis must introduce my world, that is, the world I create through conceptually framing my perceptions of existence. Only as the reader can glean some like mind, some psychological similarity as Duck (1994) terms it, will it be possible to make sense of how I have framed, conducted, reported and structured language in this research.

In reflecting on my worldview and in framing this study, the two seminal percepts that arise from within, most broad and most deep, are what I name and therefore conceptualise as ‘wholeness’ and ‘flow’. Both are quintessential in the life of any martial artist, as my previous reference to the yin and yang of the t’ai chi tu indicates. Wholeness is created out of the yin and yang of flow. To follow on from Bohm’s (1983, p.11) implicate (enfolding or in-flowing) and explicate (unfolding or out-flowing) orders of ‘undivided wholeness in flowing movement’, my knowing and understanding is that there is an underlying wholeness to existence which continuously unfolds and enfolds in the creation of what is commonly termed reality. In contrast to the mechanical, modernist worldview of cause and effect and thus of linearity and accreted knowledge, a world committed to more naturalistic conceptions of doing and being is better understood as consisting more of acausal synchronicities (Peat, 1987) and parallel processing (Lévy, 1997) in an ongoing, synergistic revelation of participatory knowing. According to Jung (1973 in Peat, 1987) synchronicity is ‘the coincidence in time of two or more causally unrelated events which have the same or similar meaning’ and for Peat represents the fusion of inner and outer orders. To me, synchronicity reveals the implicit in the explicit world, making the whole more visible. It also displays the together-at-once sense of yin and yang flowing in parallel. Doing and being are thus not separate -

only distinctive differentials of one meaning - and exist as an 'unbroken wholeness in flowing movement'.

As example, in contrast to the tool in Dupain's (1939) photo of 'Two Forms', the shell is a spire, 'the original geometry of the universe' (Skolimowski, 1994, p.193), which continually grows while retaining its meaning (Bateson, 1988). In other words, it is 'doing' while it is 'being': one dimension does not cause the other. Similarly, a further visual metaphor in this work is humanly constructed like the earlier mentioned t'ai chi tu, but also implies nature's spiral. The following diagram is from the art of Aikido, in which the participants interact in the way of yin and yang (circle/sphere), with their ongoing moving and changing creating a fluid but grounded reality (triangle/triangular prism) within a self-conscious, orderly universe (square/cube):



Figure 3: Aikido symbol

I aspire to live in such a natural world of flowing movement where changing is the only constant and hence what I write here is only a snapshot, a moment in time when I know as I know now. Thus I am mapping a moving field, a 'cinemap' as Lévy (1997) terms it, and invite the reader's participation in the flow, an inspiration through which to appreciate the world this research has emanated from.

Changing:

In the Old French, *changer* meant to ‘bend or turn, like a tree or vine searching for the sun’ (Senge et al, 1999). In all natural systems, *change* is an ongoing constant and for this reason, I prefer to use the word *changing* to indicate this continual movement. (Indeed, gerunds are used in many instances in this work to highlight and draw attention to movement.) In most dictionaries, there are over twenty instances of form and example to explicate change, but many refer to a once-off alteration of state. In a moving world, the alteration is ongoing and it is this sense that is involved when I use *change* and *changing* in this research. However, to add some qualifiers to illuminate the nature of changing as used here, I refer first to Quinn’s (1996, p.3) *deep change*, in which there’s no going back:

Deep change differs from incremental change in that it requires new ways of thinking and behaving. It is change that is major in scope, discontinuous with the past and generally irreversible. The deep change effort distorts existing patterns of action and involves taking risks. Deep change means surrendering control.

In this, cause and effect dissolve without a command-control consciousness. Changing synchronises new shapes of doing and being. Second, I refer to the terminology of *profound change*, as used by Senge et al (1999) to describe change moving towards the fundamental or foundation, such that it involves inner shifts combining with outer shifts in learning. Tacey (1995, p.x) adds that the important task of change is then to ‘relate this interior life to outward social change, and to continually attempt to build an intermediate realm of culture where inner and outer worlds can meaningfully relate to each other.’ To Handy (1997, p.5), this meeting of inner and outer, of self and other, of individual and community, is ‘probably the most complex issue of our time.’ I propose that this meeting, this intermediate and mutable realm, is the heart of change, as this research will demonstrate.

In Senge et al (1999, p.15), Deming notes that ‘nothing changes without personal transformation’. This introduces my third qualifier of *transformation*, which means to change shape, but be aware that I take it as changing inner contours as well as outer shape. In natural systems, searching for the sun involves much invisible chemistry as well as physically visible movement. In this way, living human systems, both individual and social, change in whole and not just in part. The mention of chemistry prompts a consideration of leaders as the ‘new alchemists’, to Handy’s (1999a) term. These alchemists bring about seemingly-mysterious transformations, but there is really no mystery as the change begins within and is carried out into the world (Goodson, 2001), just as genuine alchemists of old sought primarily to allow themselves ‘to be transmuted into *gold*’ (White, 1997, p.127). In White’s (1997, p.128) view of the alchemist, ‘the most important aspect of the art was participation of the individual experimenter in the process of transmutation.’ Jung (1964), in studying the psychology of alchemy, also saw alchemists as being on spiritual journeys of tapping into and liberating the inner self, and then keeping in tune such that Self becomes a referential inner partner. The art of leading, similarly, involves leaders continually turning inward to participate in and transform inner meaning. As their meaning moves and changes inside, everything outward becomes different.

Again using my colleague mentioned earlier as example, once he admitted in himself that he had become dysfunctional in his current role and environment, he was able to make the change of moving into a different school. Formerly, he would have seen leaving as not ‘making his difference’ and thus as failure. Boyatzis, McKee and Goleman (2002) report that leaders used to success tend to hang on in difficult situations, hoping to make them better. Alternatively, they may feel trapped and stay too long because leaving would not be socially acceptable. They may also fear that inner exploration might reveal disappointments and confronting uncomfortable truths with integrity might necessitate sacrificing hard-won

achievements. My colleague eventually made a shift in meaning in acknowledging the mismatch between his principles and values and those of the school community. He admitted he was not invulnerable, as some leaders assume themselves to be (Heifetz and Linsky, 2002), to the 'disease' of the community and to his own angst. He noted that 'this place... is gradually sucking me dry.' The healthy choice was to remove himself from that community and find another school where he was more comfortable. According to Boyatzis, McKee and Goleman (2002, p.86), 'leaders cannot keep achieving new goals and inspiring the people around them without understanding their own dreams.' In coming to observe and understand his inner self better, my colleague was able to avoid self-destruction (Heifetz and Linsky, 2002) and make an outer move to go on inspiring people in another place.

In a similar case, a dedicated teacher-leader (another colleague) found great difficulty in admitting that she needed time out to heal (verbal communication, 2002). In her eyes, her performance standard was dropping but, like my principal colleague, she continued to try to cope. Once she acknowledged that she was suffering from severe stress and that this was less a failing than an opportunity to reassess priorities, she was able to take leave and recuperate. In her time away, she was able to reflect on innovative ways to manage her working life to her high standards, thus avoiding burn-out. One initiative was to share the planning load by collaborating with other teachers of similar age groups from other schools, leaving her with enough time to relax in playing golf. Others have followed her lead and now work collegially. Both these leaders were loathe to admit that they were 'sick' in some way, again like Remen's surgeons. Their oppression was self-imposed by the images in which they held themselves - how they saw their roles and the expectations they set themselves. By learning to be both passionate, participating seers and dispassionate, observing witnesses of themselves (Heifetz and Linsky, 2002), they enabled an empowering transmutation. Doing the alchemist's work of tapping into

and liberating / acknowledging the inner self, as Jung proposed, their meaning moved and prompted the implementation of healing changes in their lives.

To elucidate such transformative change more, Zohar's (1997, preface, p.2) analogy is particularly useful:

Most transformation programs satisfy themselves with shifting the same old furniture about in the same old room. Some seek to throw some of the furniture away. But real transformation requires that we redesign the room itself. Perhaps even blow up the old room. ... Real change, fundamental transformation, requires that we change the underlying patterns of thought and emotion that created the old structures in the first place. ... Transformation requires change linked to meaning, that is, those who would make changes understand what is wrong and why it needs changing. Change and meaning are the two themes that come up again and again in my own work with companies, though they are seldom linked. They are also the two dominant themes troubling people in the wider culture. ... Real change must issue from those deep levels of our human being where we are in touch with meaning and value.

Changing shape in the research reported here *does*, as with the leaders in the above examples, involve leaders linking change and meaning. It is people-centred research about leaders changing meaning, and as such, is challenging to their perceptions and conceptions of self. Deep and profound transformations move personal foundations, albeit willingly, and can cause the pain (Covey, 1996) of temporarily losing self while self-organising into new, more complex shapes of deeper meaning. As Caine and Caine (1997, p.94) point out, 'change often hurts because we temporarily lose our sense of self. Letting go of an old belief means letting go of how we define ourselves.' My colleagues above wanted to avoid this hurt, but ultimately needed to do some letting go. Far from being a fixed and stable entity (Tennant & Pogson, 1995), the transforming self can be seen as an ongoing, unfolding process (Quinn, 1996) of fluid meaning, realised moment to moment upon coherent principles of self-reference (Caine & Caine, 1997), as in any orderly self-organising system. In the eventual process of changing, both of my colleagues earned and learned a sense of balance that they now actively value and maintain.

Individuals and societies often resist the pain and dislocation that comes with changing attitudes and habits (Heifetz, 1992) and it takes - as my colleagues demonstrated - a leader's heart-in-mouth courage to purposefully move into the pain of transformative change. However at the same time - as we have seen - changing relieves pain. Having the courage to participate in the pain of changing allowed my colleagues to resolve their pain of personal dissonance and thus to continue contributing as leaders. As Zohar (1997) describes it, it is the discomfort or pain of existing situations and of the existing self not being harmonious that motivates change. The contradiction and eventual balancing is between the hurt of staying the same and suffering, and the greater hurt of changing bringing the possibility of getting better. One consolation is that changing becomes easier with practice and with always keeping in the flow and making ongoing self-referential changes (Wheatley, 1992), like the flower reaching for the sun, rather than waiting until major pain brings chaotic change that overtakes the self, like it or not. My colleagues narrowly avoided heart failure in the one, and burn-out in the other, but now they monitor their inner states more closely and make adjustments in their lives as needed to maintain health both physically and psychologically.

Thus, initiating self into personally and socially responsible leading is about overcoming the fear of changing and learning to welcome its role in diminishing dissonance and developing ever greater harmony. Concurrently, it is about living with ambiguity and welcoming adaptive chaos as necessary to a healthy state (Bütz, 1997). In terms of the aikido symbol mentioned earlier, the self continually moves and adapts (circle/sphere) while being strengthened and grounded (triangle/triangular prism) by the integration and coherence of inner and outer dimensions, thus making for an ongoing orderliness and holism (square/cube) in the midst of chaos. I disagree in part with Beckhard's (1992, in Senge, 1999, p.14) thought that 'people do not resist change; people resist being changed.' People who are inwardly and

outwardly comfortable will not be open to the possibilities of change, imposed or self-initiated. In the examples of my colleagues, it was only when they admitted increasing discomfort that they could be cognisant of a need for changing. If any small pain is not strong enough, most will willingly suffer the pain they already know in a kind of passive resistance to change. There has, as already mentioned, been much attention given in education to outer change. Much of this outer change has been imposed on educators and has generated much resistance, in a way similar to Beckhard's (1992) thought. The resistance is to change, *per se*, rather than as a result of any critical analysis of the change initiative. My argument, however, is that this resistance rises in a significant part from both inner and outer comfort with, or sufferance of, the status quo and this is something that those who would lead must address in themselves in the first instance. The hanging on too long, the feeling trapped and the fear of disappointing revelations that Boyatzis, McKee and Goleman (2002) spoke of are symptomatic of a resistance to inner adaptive work. The oppressed come eventually to identify with the outer oppressor and can resist liberation by others (Freire, 1972). They can also, as my examples show, be victims of their own inner self-oppression by not admitting to being 'subject to the normal human frailties that can defeat ordinary mortals' (Heifetz and Linsky, 2002, p.71). Changing of the nature I am interested in comes from within and is born of the courage of self-liberation and self-development. The outcome suggested by research is that people who lead themselves to change from within have the fluid balance and resilience to handle change from without (Wheatley, 1992; Heifetz and Linsky, 2002).

Leaders accept a responsibility in changing meaning - the source of changing action - and it is first and foremost a responsibility to their inner selves. As my colleagues demonstrated, without changing personal meaning and thus the meaning they have with and in relation to others, leaders can not change how they live. As Caine and Caine (1997, p.vi) note:

...although actions are important, the thinking that influences and shapes what we do is far more critical. Changing our thinking is the first thing we have to do both individually and collectively, because without that change we cannot possibly change what we really do on a day-to-day basis.

Personal and social changing starts within the leader (Gibb, 1991) but on taking the first steps - fearful as we have seen they might be - leaders can take heart. Although Quinn (1996, p.9) suggests that 'we can change the world only by changing ourselves', Handy (1997, p.110) more gently proposes that 'we don't have to change the world; it is challenge enough to live up to our dream of what kind of person we could be. That, in itself, will make a difference.' Here I have shown that making a difference in self - as my colleagues found - is the seed of making a difference in the world. The final word on *changing* in this research, however, must go to Einstein's challenge (in Wheatley, 1992, p.5) which says that 'no problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it. We must learn to see the world anew.' In seeing and observing the world anew, I see the changing ways I write of, to follow, as explaining in more detail my way of changing meaning as a leader.

The Changing Way Of Being:

To place the inner and outer dimensions of self I have referred to into the contexts of Bohm's theory of an enfolding and unfolding wholeness in flowing movement, I have considered his conviction that 'each moment of consciousness has a certain *explicit* content, which is a foreground, and an *implicit* content, which is a corresponding background' (Bohm, 1983, p.204). Explicit content refers to that which we are aware of attending to as witnesses while implicit content refers to the less obvious meanings and motivations that we bring to our seeing. Bohm notes that we generally do not notice the implicate order (which I here term the inner dimension) because of our habituation to the explicate order (the outer dimension) so much so that we sense the outer, conceptualised and manifest world as our

primary experience (Bohm, 1983). We see, for instance, particles of matter - explicit content - but neglect to notice the enfolded, implicit content that it is our peculiar acts of focusing on points that creates the manifest out of wave potentials. In not expanding consciousness to include the implicate order - for example, our nature, our meaning and our role in any act of seeing - we observe the world as if it is separate to us; as if it is homogeneous to all; and as if we have no idiosyncratic participation in its making. We tend 'to think therefore we are', forgetting that different ways of seeing - of alternative and imaginative perceptions, conceptions and hence unfoldments of reality - are possible.

With reference to this breaking up of 'wholeness in flowing movement' into bits with a limited and constrained reality, Bohm goes on:

This then contributes to the formation of an experience in which these static and fragmented features are often so intense that the more transitory and subtle features of the unbroken flow... generally tend to pale into such seeming insignificance that one is, at best, only dimly conscious of them.
(Bohm, 1983, p.206).

In light of Remen's (1999) work with surgeons and of what I have said about the busy-ness of leaders' lives, the inner life of connection and wholeness and of playing with alternatives that can generate changing and healing realities tends to pale so much that it may appear non-existent. For leaders in particular, with constant multiple demands on their time, it is easy to understand a tendency to be taken up with the explicit doing and activity (Palmer, 1990) of the outer dimension, thus neglecting the more contemplative (Palmer, 1990) inner dimension of being. Yet Bohm (1983, p.172) is adamant that the implicate order of perception should have primacy in that it is particularly suitable for knowing his 'unbroken wholeness in flowing movement' in which the totality of existence is enfolded in each region or dimension of space/time - like the code for a whole human being is found in any single cell - and from which all unfoldments, or 'whatever part, element, or aspect we may abstract in thought', are explicated. He argues that 'the order of the world as a structure of things

that are basically external to each other comes out as secondary and emerges from the deeper implicate order' (Bohm, 1987, p.13). In other words, the whole can be perceived through the inner dimension and each projection into the outer dimension is merely one facet of that whole; one facet which, like my example of the deoxyribonucleic acid of every single cell in the human body, nonetheless holds the 'pattern' of that whole. This is a consideration of some importance to leaders. For example, every student and every staff member in a school holds within themselves the pattern of education in that institution. I ask if leaders can intuit and read that often implicit pattern language and can appreciate the idiosyncratic traits that each seer/witness contributes to that pattern. Research (such as that of Covey et al (1994) who advocate 'first things first') indicates that leaders are familiar with the kind of outward scatteredness and fragmentation in doing that Bohm speaks of and I suggest that a better appreciation and experience of the inner, implicit ground of being - of the inner patterns of wholeness from which all action rises - would serve leaders well in their leading. Again using the aikido symbol, being conscious of the warp and weft of the implicate order enables a knowing of pattern and relatedness (square/cube) - and hence grounding and focus (triangle/triangular prism) - amidst the flurries of the explicate order (circle/sphere).

Whereas the fragmentation that consciousness of only the outer dimension brings leads to a world of cause and effect, Bohm's world of underlying wholeness leads to an acausal and intelligent sense of flow, in which the inner and outer dimensions are continually reconciled, much in the way of yin and yang. He speaks of the unfoldments of mind and body as not causally affecting each other, 'but rather that the movements of both are the outcome of related projections of a common higher-dimensional ground' (Bohm, 1983, p.209), as mentioned earlier in examining synchronicity. Reason's (1994b, p.12, after Bateson, 1972, 1979) way of stating this is that 'order arises from the patterns of information flow rather than from physical relationships of cause and effect.' From the art of Aikido, I learn that 'the

mind leads the body', which is much more a statement of flow within the dimensions of a whole than a fiddling of external indicators, to again borrow Duignan's (1997) words. Mind's intention and body's action are related in the higher ground of meaning, in a way that is above and beyond the firing of neural impulses to contract muscles. Minds and bodies *mean* holistically, for example, it is difficult to think and feel an emotion without it being mirrored in body language. For leaders, there is an important implication in all this, for it would seem that only through an awareness and acknowledgement of the enfolded inner dimension can deeper relationships be found within the unfolded facets of doing than any superficial, supposed cause and effect relationship might offer. In my view, if leaders are conscious of the totality of the implicit and the explicit content of their leading, they increase the potential of synchronicities - of meeting meanings sparking new meanings - to occur. A final word from Bohm takes us into the heart of the research reported here:

As a human being takes part in the process of this totality, he [or she] is fundamentally changed in the very activity in which his [or her] aim is to change that reality which is the content of his [or her] consciousness.
(Bohm, 1983, p.210)

Bohm is proposing that changing is the heart of an existence which honours both the implicate, enfolded order and the explicate, unfolded order, or the inner and outer dimensions of being and doing. By participating in an holistic world, human beings are continually leading themselves into change (and therefore, as explained at the outset, all are potential leaders.) The project of this research thus sought to provide a forum for self-nominated leaders to focus on leading themselves in a journey of exploring their inner and outer dimensions, and therefore of experiencing their own changing of meaning in their leading, even perhaps reaching synchronicity, the flowing (Csikszentmihalyi, 1992) 'fusion of inner and outer orders in the meeting of surface and spirit' (Peat, 1987, p.87). As Peat (1987, p.115) further adds: 'The meaningful patterns of the world, which transcend all our attempts to

limit and encompass them, arise not so much through the mechanisms of external orders but through the unfolding of their own internal significance.'

Through this research project then, it was anticipated that leaders would have the opportunity to elucidate their own *meaningful patterns* - for example, their beliefs, values, principles, motivations and passions - through the self-leadership of going beyond the external order to unfold their inner dimensions and identify their personal and shared significances. For Csikszentmihalyi (1992, p.4) who terms the phenomenon of deep immersion in the whole of self *optimal experience* or *flow*, this meaning-making of inner and outer dimension relationships 'adds up to a sense of mastery - or perhaps better, a sense of *participation* in determining the contents of life'. This active sense of participation prompted some synchronicity and flow in the project that will be reported here. At this point, however, an examination of the major implication of living in a world of flowing wholeness - and that is *participation* - will be useful in further explicating a changing way of being.

Participation:

In the Buddhist tradition, as outlined by Varela, Thompson and Rosch (1991), the experience of flow is referred to as mindfulness or being present with one's mind and becoming one with one's experience. Being both seer/participant and witness/observer exemplifies this and Heifetz and Linsky (2002) point out the necessity of this skill in leaders. As leadership is an improvisational art, it cannot be scripted but must be lived from moment to moment by participating within while also observing the whole from without. Such mindfulness involves the circular nature of being - of being at the one time both mind and experience, both inner and outer dimension. Again, the t'ai chi tu represents this, if frozen in one moment and thus space. More accurately, the flow of yin and yang is a continuous self-referential and thus changing stream because each aspect is always

transforming into the other. Merleau-Ponty (1962, in Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 1991, p.4) puts it this way:

The world is inseparable from the subject, but from a subject which is nothing but a project of the world, and the subject is inseparable from the world, but from a world which the subject itself projects.

In other words, the objective world can only be comprehended with ongoing reference to the subject which projected it, and the subject can only be evidenced in terms of the world it makes. As explored earlier, the continual presence of matter (object) arises from a mind (subject) that sees. The manifest demonstrates that mind exists. Subject and object are not independent and should not be seen as having a causal relationship. They are more synchronous, continually emanating from and creating a whole through the participation of being in it. It is thus that I support Varela, Thompson and Rosch's (1991, p.8) conviction that:

...cognition [is] not the representation of a pregiven world by a pregiven mind but is rather the enactment of a world and a mind on the basis of a history of the variety of actions that a being in the world performs.

In this, human consciousness is not the separate observer of the modernist project, but an intimate participant in both the subjective and the objective (Heron, 1996) - once again as the Buddhist scholar Wilber (1997) puts it, the *seer* (see-er) and *witness*. An act of 'seeing' and thinking (cognition) does not access a separate world, but through participation manifests a world that is witness to the thinker/thought. To return to Bohm (1983), the mind unfolds a world in which it is enfolded. The inner and outer dimensions are thus immanent in each other. Reality is never without the mind that comprehends it, and is an interactive, dual process of being in it and articulating it (Skolimowski, 1994; Heron, 1996). My preferred term to refer to such mindfulness, such seeing through mind from within yet simultaneously also witnessing mind from without, is 'embodied mind' (from Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 1991). In an embodied mind there is no mind-body separation, but rather there is an active and unified wholeness

between mind and body - as in Aikido. This one-ness again invokes Bohm's (1983) 'undivided wholeness in flowing movement'.

The participative mind-body whole has a perceptual awareness of an all-now, all moving, all-participative, all one-ness. That said, the subjective human consciousness does need to set up conceptual differentiations to deal with an undivided whole. It has to project, through focusing and delimiting lenses, some distinctions to have something (objects) to think with.

Unfortunately, researchers in cognition indicate that the mind often out of habit takes these thinking tools/the world as the real thing and a totality in itself, and forgets its participation in it and the flowing, underlying wholeness (Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 1991). The busy leader, as we have seen with my colleagues, can become so involved in the world of the explicit and manifest outer dimension that he/she forgets that the implicit, inner dimension of self is participant to a whole. It is as if the inner self is separate from what happens out there in the working world. The evidence, thus, is that humanity can be trapped and fixed in its own symbols. One aim of the project in the research reported here was therefore to explore that inner self in relation to the outer world and in developing a more mutable and changing mind, to reclaim a sense of wholeness. The Buddhists' mindfulness is referred to as empty in that, as a Shambhala meditation master once pointed out to me, one gains insight by dropping insight. In thinking too much, in getting trapped in mental models, the ability to experience/perceive the phenomenal world without trying to make mental (and therefore linguistic) conceptions of it is lost. For the leaders in the project herein, the dialogue amongst the group acted as a lubricant to loosen their mindsets, allowing them to develop greater mental agility and flexibility. In the dialogical process of meaning moving through in which their fixation with particular conceptions lessened, deeper perceptual insights into themselves were able to bubble up. They were, for example, better able to sense/witness and then identify patterns in their behaviour. Being more aware of thoughts and actions of habits opened the way for

choosing preferred alternatives. For instance, one participant decided that he needed to contribute more in work groups while another questioned that she did contribute when she felt the moment was ripe. Instead of thinking that ‘this is the way I do things’, their minds and hence their actions were critically engaged in moving.

I believe the key to mindfulness, to flowing knowing, is to accept that we need to think to realise and to make sense of the whole, but that we should not get caught up in any fixed and limited conceptions of it. We need mind, but mind always in motion because the underlying reality of enfolding/unfolding wholeness is moving. Put another way, after the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, we cannot step in the same river twice (Badaracco, 2002). Mind needs to flow with the reality it is creating. We need to pattern our experience to construct meaning but to always be aware of its mutability. Perception and conception flow in the way of yin and yang so that *to know* becomes a momentary, ever renewing and renewable experience. The world is always being made afresh through the interplay of changing subject and object, through *knowing*. To use Maturana and Varela’s (1992, p.244) words, ‘as we know how we know, we bring forth ourselves’. For the leaders in the project who participated in dialogical knowing together, there developed more awareness of how they knew themselves, each and together. They were then able to make choices about how else they might like to bring themselves forth. (Indeed, one participant dreamed up a preferred range of alternative selves for the whole group.) Skolimowski (1994, p.3) poetically argues that ‘when the universe wanted the human to co-create with it, it invented the mind. And why would the universe do such a thing? Because we are part of the universe evolving itself.’ Human consciousness participates in world-making (Laura and Cotton, 1999), as does the world, necessarily a dynamic entity, participate in humanity-making, with each being co-creative (Heron, 1996) with the other. The mind sees the world and the world witnesses the mind. In summary, Zohar (1997, p.122, 127) says of the holistic, participative self that:

The quantum self lives in a participatory universe and it actively participates in the unfolding of that universe. It is an active agent of reality, a cocreator. ...The observer is part of the observed reality. The observer is a cocreator who helps to make that reality happen.

A sense of participation is thus vital to being fully in the world - and the project reported herein aimed to be provocative of this. To be actively within the world is a changing way of being to that where the subjective self was separate to what was objectively observed, as in modernist science. To conclude this study of transforming being, the path of participation in human history will be examined to illuminate how it is that we came to know how we know now.

Moments of participation:

As a framework for exploring how we have and are participating in knowing, Reason's (1994b) synthesis of humanity's moments of participation is employed. Reason uses Kremer's (1992a in Reason, 1994b, p.17) terms of 'original participation', 'unconscious participation' and 'future participation' to describe these moments in this way:

In the first phase human consciousness is undifferentiated from the natural world and people live in deep unconscious communion with their surroundings. In the second phase human beings progressively differentiate themselves from their environment, developing a separate sense of self and of community; in an extreme phase (which characterizes much of Western consciousness at the present time) participation is denied and people live in alienated consciousness. In the third phase the sense of participation is regained but in a new way so that human beings participate intentionally and awarely in the creation of their world. This last phase is on the whole more potential than realized.

Skolimowski's (1994) Mytho-Poetic cycle in Western cosmology could, for example, be described as *original participation*. This was a time of living in harmony with nature but without significant consciousness of the role that the human mind played in that nature. The logos of the emergent Graeco-Roman cycle brought the first separation of mind from nature. This was a

project which, through the Medieval-Christian cycle was eventually taken to extreme to become the Modern-Mechanistic Cycle in which, as Reason proposes, consciousness was alienated and the subjective mind simply not considered to be participant in a world of objects that existed outside of self. (The mind-body separation referred to earlier reflects this.) The mind was *unconscious of participation*. The evolutionary telos that Skolimowski (1994) now sees emerging has the quality of intentional and aware participation that Reason frames as *future participation*. (This is the kind of participation that the project, in seeking to bring together inner and outer dimensions, sought to promote.) As Remen (1999) and her surgeons demonstrated, the schism of mind-body separation heals as consciousness reaches towards a mindful awareness of wholeness in which signification is always relational (Lévy, 1997). In the words of a saying from South Africa's Xhosa people, 'I am, because we are' and in its corollary from a colleague, 'We are, because I make us.'

In suggesting how this future participation of aware and intentional co-creation might be more fully realised, Reason (1994b) takes up the notion of flow between extremities which he sees as akin to a dialectic between original and unconscious participation; that is, 'not a return to the earth, but a return of earth to itself' (Lévy, 1997, p.141). Reason notes that original participation denies differentiation (participants are unconsciously within the whole and are not aware of any distinction within the whole) and that unconscious participation denies communion (participants are unconscious of any whole that encompasses them). He proposes that neither are sufficient to future participation. Lévy (1997), from another angle, suggests that what he terms as anthropological spaces are less dialectically integrated than co-existent, but nonetheless refers to knowledge in the evolving knowledge space as involving dialectics, that is, it has some movement between and amongst in its creation. Lévy is implying, in the terms used here, that there are different spaces/moments of how we know. He does not see these spaces as occurring in sequence but in parallel. In the

space of knowledge he understands as emerging now, knowing how we know is a process of dialectical interaction amongst all spaces. This is congruent with Reason's position in which he believes that future participation, in being not either/or original or unconscious participation, must always be formed moment to moment in movement that creatively resolves 'the paradox between deep participation and separated consciousness'. (Reason, 1994b, p.29) In other words, future participation lies in being always deeply but consciously participative in the whole. Mindfulness in future participation in knowing how we know will involve being seer from within and witness from without simultaneously. Reason speaks of 'play' and 'dynamic process' and of 'flowing, changing, interactive pattern' as characterising future participation. Very apt to the dynamic movement of such participation, he describes what the Buddhists would call the middle way using the metaphor of steering a ship:

...steering the ship involves leading in order to learn and learning in order to lead; further that erring and correction; continuity and change go together. ...The dialectic involves both a movement between the two poles and a simultaneous articulation of the two poles. (Reason, 1994b, p.31)

Future participation will thus move consciousness of how we know forward through continually resolving the paradox of mind and body in a yang/yin-like wholeness. This metaphor also describes how it was anticipated that participants would make sense of their both continuous and changing journey in the research project reported here. In the journey, it was planned that leading would bring on the learning of meaning and new meaning to prompt different leading. The expected outcome was that the outer dimension of doing/action and the inner dimension of being/meaning would mutually create each other. The metaphor also speaks of Wheatley's (1992) interpretations of leadership and the new science, wherein she proposes a self-organising, autotelic universe in which dynamic and orderly systems (as opposed to static 'order') are created through deterministic chaos, that is, chaos defined and bounded by strange attractors of meaning. In terms of the metaphor, leading from meaning defines a learning of orderliness and this

learning dynamically influences the meaning in the system. Reason's (1994b) and Lévy's (1997) dialectics are equivalent to Wheatley's (1992) dynamic systems, but whatever the terminology used, the essential characteristics of all are aware participation provoking generative movement and thus relationship. To hark back to Bohm, it is the participation in the movement of relating the explicate and implicate - that acausal flow of information (Reason, 1994b, after Bateson, 1972, 1979; Wheatley, 1992) amongst dimensions of a whole - which creates meaning.

In the research project herein, it was anticipated that participants' continual, diversifying reiteration on themes would be significant in generating spiral movement (Skolimowski, 1994; Stiskin, 1971), for example, in iteratively clarifying and deepening relationships within self and with others to bring new realities. Even from the most superficial level of communication, this spiral motion became evident as what I saw as leading statements and meaning making statements accompanied each other, always changing in the leadership dance (Duignan, 1997; Senge, 1999) of moving pattern-making and bringing about a changing, more insightful self and new relationships with others. Clearly, to me, change is not a product of only the outer dimension. Rather, *changing* is an essential quality of a reality based on mindful participation in wholeness and flow. This, then, is the changing way of being in my world. As we have seen, this world is participative and therefore it is also is relational, with mind and body unfolding and enfolding in the flow. In moving beyond the individual into the social, as was proposed in the project through dialogue, it is also a world of self unfolding into other and other enfolding into self. Without the bond of causality, the nature of how conceptual distinctions (like mind and body; self and other) are related in the common ground of participative wholeness needs further consideration. In a world featuring synchronicity, it would be inappropriate to consider 'relationships' *per se* because the term has shades of stasis and possible implications of power and control. A changing way of being, as put forward here, implies a changing way of

framing how mutable distinctions are related. As I have done with *change* and *changing*, a changing way of *relating* will be explored to bring dynamism to *relation*.

The Changing Way of Relating:

Participation in an holistic world necessitates a reconceptualisation of relational boundaries such that living becomes ‘a process of relationships’ (Block, 1997, p.170), as something in motion. In this way, the separation of subject and object characterising the modern mindset is replaced by a simultaneous being a part of and apart from: there is active and ongoing *relating*. In Jaworski’s (1996, p.10) words, ‘it’s about a shift from seeing a world made up of things to seeing a world that’s open and primarily made up of relationships.’ This flow of relating unfolds and enfolds through the dimensions of human consciousness. Conceptualising relating as having dimensions - such as deep and shallow, give and take, rich and superficial, inner and outer - implies an immanent sense of self that is not restricted to any individual but is encompassed by the whole. In a moving world, self cannot be other than in relation and has to be understood as the *both and together* of yin and yang. The ongoing reconciling amongst dimensions means that the self and the process of relating are always in motion. For Josselson (1996), relationships *move* and, as Duck (1994, p.xiv) proposes, ‘are continually unfolding and in need of perpetual responsive action and construction.’ Projected identity - the outer self that unfolds from inner being - is therefore constructed through an individual but also through collective other, as in Jungian (Jung, 1977) psychology. For example, a sense of being ‘successful’ is created by both an individual self and a social self. In Wheatley’s (1992, p.35) terms, ‘none of us exists independent of our relationships with others.’ There is no ‘i’ without ‘we’ and vice versa. We are, as Lévy (1997) puts it, a ‘collective intelligence’ and I add that we are an

intelligence-in-motion. The patterns-that-connect that comprise intelligence need ongoing participation by both 'me' and 'you' to be created.

In the research reported here, the terms 'self' and 'other' are used as representative of conceptual (but nonetheless imaginary) dialectic facets or lenses, either within an individual, between individuals or amongst a social group. Like two sides of a coin, these faces of the whole are contradictory but are at the same time supplementary of each other. (In this way, the inner and outer dimensions come to represent multiple pairings of projections or unfoldments emergent of an underlying moving wholeness.) The inclusive term 'self-other', similar to Buber's (1987) 'I-thou' and Josselson's (1996) 'self-in-relationship', is taken to be an expression of the immanent whole. This whole can be understood through the conceptual tool of *both and together* as in yin and yang, as mentioned above. Through this active relating, the whole develops qualities of character through ongoing distinction. For example, 'friend' is understood in relation to 'enemy' and 'parent' is given distinction by 'child'. As explored earlier and as Wheatley (1992) frames it, 'particles' (or matter) can be manifested, or distinguished, only as they are observed in relation to something else; they are not independent. For Lévy (1997, p.93), there is a 'reciprocal involvement of the world and thought (the cosmos thinks in us and our world is saturated with collective thought).' The self is a part of other and can only be known in terms of other, much as light can only be described in conjunction with dark, and other implies a self from which otherness can be distinguished through differentiation. All projections are necessarily related and thus the neverending process of relating becomes a vehicle of changing; one that is infinitely redefining the distinctions of self and other.

The particular dialectic of self-other used in this research - as expressed through a group of individuals, with each person being comprised of parts in a personal interdimensional whole while also being a participant in a social interdimensional group - is useful to study human relating. For example,

participants saw themselves as having individualised home roles such as parent and lover but also saw themselves in social roles like counsellor and team member. As will be explained later in explicating the project design, the process of relating in the project herein occurred through the medium of word-based language and from a perspective of changing. It is noted here, however, that *relating* can be defined, in one way, as *changing* for it is always unfinished business. As Duck (1994, p.7) proposes, ‘any process of comprehending someone else will be an essentially unfinished task as we, and they, change.’ He explains in this way:

...relationships are processes where partners strive to understand one another's evolving personal meaning system and attempt to understand the other person in his or her own terms - that is, trying to access the other person's system of personal meaning. (Duck, 1994, p.5)

The psychological similarity (Duck, 1994) referred to at the outset of this framework is about this: the striving to know another as self, or more accurately, to identify another's meaning system in relation to one's own - a project which must always be unfinished as closure would imply sameness and hence no distinction. Thus, in relating, the other essential aspect to similarity is difference. Contradiction is necessary to awaken reflection (after Plato, 1941 in Heifetz, 1992) on self-other. The greater the differentiation relational partners can find, the greater becomes the distinctiveness amongst them - and the easier the communication (Duck, 1994), for partners are more able to identify what is self and what is other and how other is similar to or different from self. For the participants in the project, their dialogue was a process of relating and thus of explicating their distinctions in order to find their common wholeness. In terms of relationship, the people who completed the project were both different from and the same as those who began it. For example, the work relationship for one pair of participants was the same in terms of official accountability, but had become different in terms of their voluntarily negotiating team roles to address common goals. As Duck (1994, p.180) notes, ‘relationships themselves and the natures of relationships are profoundly contoured by the

extent to which one person can construct the vantage point of another person.’ For the pair of participants mentioned, the nature of their relationship changed in the process of each becoming more able to know as the other knew. The administrator and the teacher recognised that, for all that they were different, they were each able to contribute to teamwork of shared value. Ross (1994, p.181) puts this idea of psychological similarity - and difference - another way in referring to the sharing and variation in interpreting language, saying that both are essential:

For while we must share interpretations in order to understand each other, in order to communicate, we must vary in our interpretations in order to understand anything whatever, in order to assimilate meanings to our personal experiences.

As our pair developed greater distinctiveness, for example in how they thought and felt about various issues, they were able to understand and communicate with each other better. As their individual meanings and positions were clarified through ongoing dialogue, they became better able to construct and appreciate each other’s viewpoints for themselves. A deepening understanding of each other enabled shared meaning to develop, and with it, alternative ways of relating that reflected both their commonalities and their differences.

A changing way of relating thus has elements of distinguishing differences and of converging similarities. In the project of the research reported here, dialogue - a word-based medium of communication - was chosen because in its process meaning unfolds in distinctions while also enfolding in coherence. Such flow in meaning-making enables dialogue to be understood primarily as a mode of relating, more than as a mode of knowing or representing. Dialogue as active communication *is* a process of knowing, and in using words and thus concepts *is* representational, but first and foremost, it concerns relating. Within the words of dialogue, action and reflection - outer and inner dimensions - come together to transform the world (Freire, 1972). Dialogue is about the flow of sharing and variation

that Ross pointed out; about similarity and difference being revealed amongst participants; and most of all, about the meaning that emerges from within such dimensional movement. Further, and pertinent to the purposes and implementation of this research, this enfolding-unfolding dimensionality of dialogue is necessary to any being and thinking together, as Isaacs (1999) suggests in saying that the personal and private does affect the larger-than-personal and public. In Freire's (1972) view, the authentic and creative words of dialogue amongst people names the world - and changes the world - and thus gives humanity as a whole significance. More specifically, the process of dialogue names and changes the qualities of relationship in the world, for example, in how we see ourselves as like or unlike others. The process of *relating* inner and outer dimensions - such as the personal self and the social self - through dialogue must generate change.

Dialogue amongst people has motion and flow as words are exchanged. What it is about is thus hard to pin down and may best be known through distinction. Most prominently, dialogue differs from discussion, and argument, debate and the like. Zohar (1997) very neatly sums up 'dialogue' versus 'debate' as finding out and questions against knowing the answers; as sharing amongst reverent and respectful equals against the power play of unequals in winning and losing; and as listening to explore new possibilities - and perhaps finding consensus to agree or disagree - against proving a point and defending a position. Discussion is thus about breaking apart and opposing, individualistic parts (Senge, 1995) wanting - through advocacy, defense, and conversion (Gilley, 1997) - to seek consensus and a conclusion. Dialogue, on the other hand, is about holding immanent parts in a whole and exploring and extending their relationships of similarity and difference to deepen meaning (Caine and Caine, 1997; Gilley, 1997). Within dialogue, meaning is always open to further creative interpretation. The very roots of the word, 'dialogue', as meaning moving through (Senge, 1995) demonstrate it as a container (Isaacs, 1999) - something defined, something through

which leaders can hold - for infinite possibilities of meaning, all indefinite and all found through the sharing and variation of relating (Zohar, 1997).

As Bohm (1987, p.34) explains:

A dialogue doesn't mean just between two people; but rather the root meaning of 'dia' in Greek means 'through'. And the general picture it suggests is a stream running between two banks. It's the stream that counts. The two banks merely give form to the stream - the stream is common to the two banks. So there'll be a stream of thought or perception, or some sort of energy flowing between us, unfolding, and that would be the meaning of the dialogue.

Dialogue, in Bohm's (1989, in Caine and Caine, 1997, p.144) view, is thus a contained 'stream of meaning flowing among and through and between us'. This reflects his notion of being as an undivided wholeness in flowing movement, as explored earlier. When Caine and Caine (1997, p.144) refer to dialogue as 'a process in which participants gradually begin to shed masks, roles, and fixed ideas' and Noddings (1992, p.23) talks about it as a 'search for understanding, empathy or appreciation', it is easy to gain a sense of the emergent flow in dialogue. Indeed, Noddings (1992, p.23) adds that:

...in a genuine dialogue, neither party knows at the outset what the outcome or decision will be; ...it is always a genuine quest for something undetermined at the beginning.

In the project herein, dialogue was framed as a way of relating that promoted changing meaning. Necessarily then, the participants did not know where their quest/journey would lead them. Their dialogue was a stream contained within the group, but the meanings flowing within that stream were open to changing as the participants' ways of relating moved and developed. Bohm (1987, p.107) believes that present meanings are too 'programmed' - or worked out beforehand - and that this has brought trouble in changing. He proposes that 'we can't *produce* the change that is really needed to change the future of mankind' (Bohm, 1987, p.107), but that we can choose to look at it, explore it, find out where it isn't making sense and why, and it will change creatively. In his view:

...the attempt to make a plan to change society is not going to work, because society is the result of what it means to us, and the plan will not change what it means. You may plan the perfect socialist society in which there is complete justice and equity, but what the world means to these people is more or less the same as before you made the plan, and it will produce the same sort of society as we see now. (Bohm, 1987, p.107)

The climate for change, Bohm (1987) advocates, needs a certain environment, a certain place in which people who have the serious intention to change can come together and create that change, not by *planning*, *programming* or *producing*, but by living it through *processes* such as dialogue.

The project in the research reported here was not pre-programmed but developed through the process of dialogue. As such, it was - like dialogue itself - an unfinished project, and although it did have a nominal ending in time, its meanings are still always new and continue to flow through and to mutate in participants, both alone and together. It is expected that this will continue as long as the dialogical meanings continue to be related to the living experienced by the leaders, that is, as long as the flow of 'meaning moving through' their inner and outer dimensions is sustained. As Gilley (1997) points out, the participants in a dialogue process not only develop a clearer picture of a topic being explored, but also open up and deepen their knowing and understanding of themselves, each and together. As the flow continues, so does the potential of dialogue. In reminiscence of Buber, dialogue is a thus bountiful promise:

...where the dialogue is fulfilled in its being, between partners who have turned to another in truth, who express themselves without reserve and are free of the desire for semblance, there is brought into being memorable common fruitfulness which is to be found nowhere else. (Buber, 1965 in Caine & Caine, 1997, p.240).

In gaining a better understanding of what distinguishes dialogue as a changing way of relating, it is important to add that it is a discipline which involves learning skills to promote 'meaning moving through'. Dialogue is a

special, word-mediated way of relating and its practices of changing - or as Isaacs (1999) puts it, of *building capacity for new behaviour* - are worth examining here because of their relevance to the implementation of the research project and the participants therein. Isaacs describes these practices as listening, respecting, suspending and voicing. He explains, firstly, that listening is a beginning in becoming consciously aware of participation because it involves not only hearing the words of another, but also opening a space inside of one's self to receive, embrace and accept those words. Listening is expansive and, in coming to quiet the inner clamoring of self to allow other in, it enables a more direct perception of participation. Here again is relational flow: listening is receptive but at the same time, expansive. Lévy (1997, p.71) extends this in noting that:

Far from being fulfilled through some transcendent entity or limiting itself to the simple, passive recognition of difference, listening is itself an immanent process within the community, a creative circularity.

Listening thus allows someone that is outside self to enter into and participate in self. The relationship between self and other changes, as does meaning because it now being made together. Respecting, a second active practice proposed by Isaacs, also says something about participation and relation. Respecting is concerned with sensing the mystery of other that can never quite fully be comprehended, even though other is a part of the whole and part of self. Isaacs notes that respect also honours and protects others' boundaries in not intruding nor withholding or distancing self. Respect holds within it both similarity to and difference from others and in this, Issacs draws the analogy that the martial art of Aikido is well suited to the understanding and practice of dialogue, a point with which I concur. Participants in the project herein practised respect in their dialogue in that there was an aikido-like harmony whilst exploring similarities and differences. There was disagreement but no anger, and there was an attitude to conflict that saw it transformed into an opportunity for peace.

The third practice of effective dialogue is suspension. This is mooted by Isaacs as one of the deepest challenges facing human beings. It involves a suspension of belief and a withholding of judgement to enable change to happen. He argues 'that we cannot simply 'make' change happen as if we were separate from the thing we seek to change' (Isaacs, 1999, p.145). This implies that dialogue needs to cultivate conditions through which changing might evolve in order to be effective. The practise of suspension therefore means to stay in the perceptual mode, one that seeks to look with new eyes and that does not fall into habitual conceptions which inhibit change. Lastly, voicing is a practice which, as Isaacs (1999, p.160) sees it, is like abracadabra, which means 'I create as I speak'. In dialogue, voicing is learning to find the voice of self and speaking it authentically in a way that reveals what is true for that self, regardless of others' influences. It means asserting the I-identity without fear and in the knowing that it plays an essential part in the self-other. All four of Isaacs practices contribute to a dialogue of relational change and were practised by participants in the project herein. Mutual respect, through listening to each other's words and silences, was in evidence. Similarly, practising suspension contributed to the aikido-like feel within the group. Voicing was well developed in some participants from the outset, but less confident others stayed with the project and found that they had quite a lot to contribute.

We have seen that changing ways of being and of relating - such as dialogue - bring a flow to our emerging consciousness of participation. However, how we see and witness ourselves participating must also be *under movement*, as is said in Aikido. If who we are as individual and social selves is changing, our conceptions of ourselves - how we think and feel - must also be changeable if we are to maintain coherence and integrity. The very ways in which we *know* need to change: how we *know we know* comes under scrutiny and is taking flight, setting sail and entering the dance to become a changing way of *knowing*.

The Changing Way Of Knowing:

Being in the world in a certain way brings with it a certain way of conceiving the world. The Western mindset, for example, brought with it the quantifiable product of knowledge. It also brought a blindness to knowing how we know, with the mind being 'keyed to action and not to reflection' as Maturana and Varela (1992, p.24) put it. In their minds, 'not knowing what makes up our world of experience, which is the world closest to us, is a crying shame' (Maturana & Varela, 1992, p.24). As Bohm (1983) has proposed, we live as if the explicate, unfolded world of action is our only dimension. However, we do not speak what Freire (1972) calls the true word if we speak only of action. When we neglect the implicit, enfolding meaning making of reflecting on our world of experience, our lives are flat and planar rather than rich and multi-dimensional.

In schools, for example, the pace is such that the harried focus is on using the knowledge sets to hand to get the job done, with little questioning of the given or of how or why the job is as it is, or of how it might serve people better. No one has the time to reflect on how, for example, awareness of a knowledge management continuum iterating through data, information and knowledge (Petrides and Nodine, 2003) might assist in educational practice that is more rounded in the sense of incorporating inner and outer dimensions. Petrides and Nodine (2003, p.11) note that 'people, not systems, manage knowledge' yet in education it is as if the seeing and witnessing of people has been excised from knowledge management. Knowledge in a banking education is managed by systems. It is actively used, but seldom reflected on. However, as Petrides and Nodine (2003) propose, knowledge management should concern *people* and *processes* and *technology/information systems*. Mindful rather than mindset people going through the processes of externally and experientially making patterns of information out of data and internally developing knowledge that has

personal sense and meaning would more characterise the just-in-time educating described earlier in this report. Arising from these processes, people would design systems to manage knowledge but these systems would not be seen as an endpoint but as a point in a cycle of knowledge management. *Processes* and *patterns*, and *systems* and *cycles*, imply relationship. Therefore, it is more appropriate to use the terminology of 'knowing' over 'knowledge' to indicate that both active and reflective movement is occurring and that people, processes and systems are simultaneously at play. *Knowing how we know*, in being considered a flow rather than a fixture, will be examined more deeply.

In the emerging world as I am describing it within this report, the mind is different. It is a moving map which brings a flow of knowing. Knowing is seen as an ongoing patterning and sense-making process of qualifying what is and what might be and it is open to recreation in every performance of it. Active experience and reflection creates knowing (Maturana & Varela, 1992) and moving and changing are characteristic of knowing in this worldview. Knowing is located neither in static knowledge objects - for example, conceptions and theories - nor in subjective perceptions. It is in the yin and yang parallel processing of *relating* that knowing lies. Knowing is found in the qualities of relationships, for example, between what is done and thoughts/feelings about it; amongst people, processes and systems; or in how data becomes information, how information is transformed into meaning and how meaning addresses data. Knowing is thus much less tangible than knowledge because it can only be known properly through the movement of relating.

According to Reason (1994b, after Bateson, 1979), knowing is ecological - a system of interrelationship - and necessarily acausal. Knowing is created not by the force of cause and effect, but by differentials in flow creating *in-form-ation* or patterning of data. As Bateson (1979, in Reason, 1994b, p.35) asserts, the patterning 'emerges as we encounter experience, not through

measurement and quantity, but through *recognition* and *empathy* with repetition, modulation, rhythm and form.’ The meaning-making participation of self-aware people in these patterning processes makes knowing alive. (This is in contrast to knowledge, which is seen as a commodity.) As a process of knowing, in-form-ing - or making shapes - modifies consciousness by ‘decreasing entropy through creating order, resolving problems, or facilitating an adaptive response’ (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon, 2001, p.44). Being informed brings qualities of orderliness yet changeability to the mind as meaning is made. Knowing thus has a creative and *re-lat-ive* energy that develops mindfulness. A coming-to-know mind is flexible and non-attaching, and can both be actively in the world as experiencing ‘seer’ whilst also reflecting on it as meaning-making ‘witness’. Knowing both comes of relating and develops relationship.

To return to Wheatley’s (1992, p.10) thoughts about relationship in the quantum world:

...relationship is the key determiner of what is observed and of how particles manifest themselves. Particles come into being and are observed only in relationship to something else. They do not exist as independent ‘things’. ...These unseen connections between what were previously thought to be separate entities are the fundamental elements of all creation.

Without activity *and* reflection, without the ‘seeing’ of focused doing being related to the ‘witnessing’ of observing being, there can be no knowing as I have described it here. Patterns of relationship emerge and have meaning because we recognise our participation in their making. In our intimate involvement in knowing, we *know we know*. This meta-connection between actively experiencing and contemplatively reflecting on that experience, note Maturana and Varela (1992, p.25, original italics), ‘tells us that *every act of knowing brings forth a world. ...All doing is knowing, and all knowing is doing. ...Everything is said by someone.*’ Knowing as active meaning-making involves self-aware connecting and relating - nothing like the dry

facts and objects of knowledge seen as discreet from self. Rather, the flow of knowing inspires - as Maturana and Varela (1992, p.235) explain:

The knowledge of knowledge compels. It compels us to adopt an attitude of permanent vigilance against the temptation of certainty. It compels us to recognize that certainty is not a proof of truth. It compels us to realize that the world everyone sees is not the world, but a world which we bring forth with others. It compels us to see that the world will be different only if we live differently. It compels us because, when we know that we know, we cannot deny (to ourselves or to others) that we know.

When we know how we know, the consciousness of our participation inspires and even compels a changing way of knowing. The world becomes mutative and relative instead of fixed. In bringing forth a world instead of accepting a given world, the subjective observer-cum-participant plays a role in creating what is objectively observed. As a simple example, consider how we know colour. As an object, 'brown' can be dark or light, but there is still a consistent and agreed upon conception of brown as a certain colour. However, as Maturana and Varela (1992) point out, colour perception is created individually - in relation to how the perceiver's eyes and brain work. What's brown to one maybe gold to another - the relation of self to what's being observed and participated in is primary in making sense. Put Skolimowski's (1994, p.28) way, 'things *become* what our consciousness makes out of them through the active participation of mind.' Through the co-creative relating of beholding and articulating, of reflecting and acting, of being and doing, of witnessing and seeing in a continuous flux (Skolimowski, 1994), a fluid reality *becomes* - or *evokes*, *evolves* or *emerges* (Wheatley, 1992) - or is *recovered*, knowing the 'ever-present' as if for the first time (Wilber; 1997). Far from being passive, this reality compels and is always participative, always dynamic, and always moving to a momentary optimal state. Reality develops the unique and complex patterns of relationships here called knowing, but this knowing fluctuates creatively and responsively to the changing environment, never becoming so set that violent change is ever necessary. In Aikido, a fixed and attached mind is seen as dangerous as there is little potential for movement and adaptive

change. With a moving mind, there is no chaotic and antagonistic ‘outer’ change in which one knowledge or mindset is debunked for another. Instead, there is the continuous changing of a mindful knowing reality which, through active and reflective participation, honors the inner and outer and which creates a learning culture where meaning and truth are always fresh. In such a reality, for example, there would not be the problems of outer structural change and the fiddling of external indicators, as is evident in education at present. The mindful and knowing participation of the people who comprise systems would bring about more coherent processes of change.

In a knowing reality, accumulated knowledge could be considered an artifact of another age. If knowledge is to have any validity in knowing, it must be made anew every time it is used. In other words, it must not be *accepted* but *recreated* by the mindful participation of the people using it. In Maturana and Varela’s (1992, p.25) view:

...the phenomenon of knowing cannot be taken as though there were ‘facts’ or objects out there that we grasp and store in our head. The experience of anything out there is validated in a special way by the human structure, which makes possible ‘the thing’ that arises in the description.

To try to use knowledge without being aware of fresh input as seer or without seeking fresh insight as witness is moribund and entropic and leads to the decay that a fixed reality brings. Knowledge stored, static and unused is nothing but potential. According to Wells (1999, p.77), ‘artifacts, or knowledge objects, do not, in themselves, constitute knowledge.’ Yet, as stated at the outset, education is so often seen as just that, an accumulation of knowledge given and banked to last a lifetime. As Laura and Cotton (1999, p.3) see it, the concept of knowledge is so entrenched in educational institutions that it is thought ‘impossible to survive without it, when the truth is that we cannot survive with it.’ For leaders involved in educating, it is more useful to be cognisant of a learning in which there is a changing and generative flow of knowing, in which being and doing are equally immanent,

than in which there is simply knowledge to be gained. To know how we know gives learners the potential to change. As Vaill (1996, p.45) suggests, 'learning occurs in the process of expressing it', and thus implies bringing forth *knowing* through participating and performing- and in that, creating a world.

After extensively attempting to understand the nature of knowledge, Well's (1999, p.76) major conclusion is that 'attention should be redirected to the activity of knowing, as this is carried out by particular, concrete individuals.' He defines knowing as:

...the intentional activity of individuals who, as a member of a community, make use of and produces representations in the collaborative attempt to better understand and transform their shared world. (Wells, 1999, p.76).

Well's choice of words aptly demonstrates the relational aspects of knowing, and thus of learning as a way of knowing. Knowing usually generates the motivation to seek a higher level of itself (transformative being) and it is constructed through the social processing, making and distributing of representations (transformative doing or world making). Nespor (1994) calls this 'knowledge-in-motion'. As an example, Petrides and Nodine's cycles of data, information and knowledge as noted earlier could be seen as proceeding less in a circle than in a transformative spiral because the quality of knowing is continuously enhanced. Like Reason (1994b) tracing the path of participation over time, Wells (1999) has studied modes of knowing and suggests that, in our future participation, human consciousness will further develop metaknowing. Metaknowing is a fluid knowing about one's own knowing - the kind of cognition of effective action that Maturana and Varela (1992) propose - and thus must involve the outer dimensions of doing/action and the inner dimensions of being/reflection. Clearly, these implicate, relational enfoldments of the seer and the witness are not easy to develop through learning while education is framed as it is. The question becomes one of how to get to an educating of knowing, not of given linear process and product but of a circular participating and

performing in living learning where ‘as we know how we know, we bring forth ourselves’ (Maturana and Varela, 1992, p.244).

One possible answer may be found in the emerging notion of ‘knowledge worker’, a term that can be used to highlight the active aspect of knowing, that is, of being more than a consumer of knowledge products. According to Johnston (1998 in McWilliam and Singh, 2002, p.7), knowledge workers are skilled in ‘problem identification, problem solving and brokerage’ and cannot be managed through command-control mechanisms. They are best understood as performative self-managers whose processes of knowing create knowledge artifacts. To further explain how ‘knowledge workers’ work with knowledge, reference is made to Bereiter and Scardamalia’s (1998) rethinking of one bastion of traditional concepts of knowledge, Bloom’s Taxonomy Of Educational Objectives. As an alternative, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1998, p.686-689) list seven levels of approach in developing knowledge work:

- 1. Knowledge as individuated mental states.*
- 2. Knowledge as itemizable mental content.*
- 3. Knowledge as representation.*
- 4. Knowledge as viewable from different perspectives.*
- 5. Knowledge as personal artifacts.*
- 6. Knowledge as improvable personal artifacts.*
- 7. Knowledge as semi-autonomous artifacts.*

Bereiter and Scardamalia lament that education most often deals with the facts and objects of items two and three, leaving little space for the play of knowing that items four to seven suggest. It should be noted that the last item is not a reinvention of objectivism in the old sense but a recognition that witnessing-while-being-apart as well as seeing-while-being-a-part-of plays a role in knowing. These latter approaches to knowledge relieve it of its tedium and make it malleable in the hands of knowledge workers. Knowledge workers thus develop knowing into mutable artifacts, stuff to play with, take apart, reconstruct, to change and add value to through intrapersonal and interpersonal involvement in its performance and thus

recreation. Bereiter and Scardamalia conclude that educating could assist students to becoming proficient in knowledge working, but only in so much as educational institutions undergo fundamental changing in thinking about knowledge. I suggest that educational leaders, as makers of self and makers of systems, are well placed to travel a journey of reconceptualising knowledge in which, through their relational being and doing in inner and outer dimensions, much will *not* stay the same. A changing way of *knowing* compels difference (Maturana and Varela, 1992).

To outline what this way of knowing might look like, I refer first to Gibbons et al (1994, p.3) study of the dynamics of new knowledge production. In this, the authors propose some attributes of a new mode as being that 'knowledge is carried out in a context of application, ...is transdisciplinary, ...is [characterised] by heterogeneity, ...is heterarchical and transient, [and] is more socially accountable and reflexive.' In terms of the changing way of being I have espoused, the *participating in and performing of* knowing has the attributes listed above. This kind of knowing recognises no fragmentation of moving wholeness as all projections are necessarily related and reiterative. As in Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1998) approaches, the mindful knowledge worker is able to be within *and* without; to be part of while being apart. Educating thus needs to be a process of learning to be aware of and to practice this changing way of knowing.

Second, I refer to Lévy's (1997) dreaming of humankind's emerging world in cyberspace as being characterised by collective intelligence within a knowledge space. The way he describes this space of collective intelligence resonates with the way of knowing put forward here. To begin, Lévy (1997, p.139) defines knowledge in a way congruent with the above:

Knowledge, in the sense I am using the term, is a knowledge-of-living, a living-in-knowledge, one that is coextensive with life. It is part of a cosmopolitan and borderless space of relations and qualities, a space for the metamorphosis of relationships and emergence of ways of being, a space in which the processes of individual and collective subjectivization come together.

Knowledge, in his terms, has the quality of movement that I attribute to knowing; it has the motion that Nespor (1994) writes of. We inhabit knowledge as it inhabits us, through a 'space' of relationship. The way in which Lévy introduces the word 'space' returns us to the earlier consideration of changing ways of being. Interstitial space was seen as a space of being apart while being a part of and, similarly, Lévy's knowledge space has that quality. In addition to an emergent knowledge space, Lévy's defines three other 'anthropological spaces' of humanity. These are the earth space, the territorial space, the commodity space. As in Reason's (1994b) original participation, knowledge in the *earth* space is organic and shared. In the segregated and thus unconscious participation of the modern age, knowledge is categorised or *territorialised* and managed through transcendence - a repackaging which is to be distinguished from transformation and transmutation which changes knowledge itself - and later *commodified* through capitalism in the information age. As Lipnack and Stamps (2000, p.83) point out, 'shared knowledge is the dominant productive source of the twenty-first-century economics.' Reason's (1994b) future participation holds the same promise as Lévy's (1997) knowledge space; that of immanence where knowing and knowledge (as potential) have the characteristics described earlier. However, Lévy adds another thought that these spaces are not linearly linked. He does not see them as following one another but as co-existent. Reason, as we have seen, also foreshadows this in proposing future participation as akin to a dialectic between original and unconscious participation. Humanity's development is nothing so simple as one age or space or consciousness following on from one the other. Lévy's understanding is that humankind's spaces, once developed, are permanent such that all exist as different planes interacting with each other without structure. Thus, the knowledge of the earth, territory, and commodity spaces is immanent in the emergent knowledge space, a noolithic 'stone age of the mind' (Lévy, 1997, p.140) that ushers in the

participative knowing which metamorphoses and diversifies being through relationship. In summary, Lévy (1997, p.168) proposes that:

Within the knowledge space, collective intellects reconstruct a plane of immanence of signification in which beings, signs and things exist in a dynamic relationship of mutual participation, escaping the separation of territorial space as well as the circuits of the spectacle that characterize the commodity space. At certain rare moments in history or during our individual lives, we reappropriate the creation of signification; we speak for ourselves. The knowledge space could be considered the site of such a continuous resumption of speech, but speech that is effective, capable of changing reality.

As Maturana and Varela (1992, p.29) have said, ‘knowing is effective action.’ At times like this, we sense and ‘speak’ for ourselves - we are our own significance and truth, and bring forth a world of our making. In the knowledge space, we *know* because we experience and make sense in meaning. We *know we know* because we and our world are changed. To return to Bohm (1987), when we mean something different, we are different and our world is different. A changing way of knowing enables that changing meaning. The project of the research reported here aimed to develop a way of knowing in which the speech of dialogue is capable of changing reality such that, for the leaders involved, leading and educating became synonymous with interdimensional changing. How we create that signification of immanent knowing in speaking for ourselves and in representing ourselves in words will be further considered in examining a changing way of representing.

The Changing Way Of Representing:

Changing ways of being, relating and knowing require, in the emerging nature of the world, that symbolic representation also be reconsidered. Here too, pertinent to the research project with its email dialogue carrying the emergent changing meanings of the participants, the focus will be on language. After the Buddhist way, it is possible to perceptually know without the interlocution of representational language. Conceptual consciousness is mediated by reason (Lévy, 1997) and thus language in some shape or form is involved. As Ross (1994, after Gadamer and Wittgenstein) points out, we are *always within language* and Halliday (1993a in Wells, 1999, p.106) adds that 'language is the essential condition of knowing the process by which an experience becomes knowledge.' Human perception participates in and presents reality but it is through the symbolism of language that conceptions of that reality are constructed and re-presented in a communicable form. Representational language, therefore, is important to human consciousness of *knowing how we know*. The undivided wholeness in flowing movement that Bohm (1983) spoke of can be talked about, for example in dialogue, through the unfoldment or projection of symbols like words to represent it. However, as explored in earlier sections, human habit and a segregated consciousness has seen such *representations of reality* accepted as *reality*. Ross (1994, p.x) points out that 'language cannot be delimited as a proper object of thought, any more than can human being.' Herein lies the rub: how to recognise our immersion - our being always within language - without objectifying it; how to use language to represent meaning making without allowing it to become meaning itself; and so how to construct reality without mistaking the symbols for what they represent. Once again, the skill of being seer and witness is needed. Following Reason (1994b), it could be said that modernist separations have brought an over-emphasis on language-as-meaning, in particular the language of intellect:

All these separations on which Western epistemology is founded are closely connected to an emphasis on intellect as the primary means of knowing

and to the power of conceptual language. This results in the separation of intellect from experience, so that knowledge that come in propositional form is valued more highly than intuitive practical, affective, analogical or spiritual knowledge. (Reason, 1994b, p.12)

Separated consciousness has bred a separated language, as witnessed in the representations of science and technology in which there seems little connection to the heart and soul of humankind and little evidence that human beings are active constituents in what is being represented. For example, in scientific journals in the 'hard' sciences of mathematics, physics and chemistry, the machine-like language is such that it can appear that no human mind has played a part in what is represented. The way our language represents our meaning and so our reality seems to assure us that what we know *out there* is separate - and determined apart from us - to what we feel *in here*. This has been so much so that Varela, Thompson and Rosch (1991) believe that scientific progress in understanding cognition, from which all representational language stems, cannot progress until a basis different from the idea that there is a pre-given world which can only be recovered through representation is found.

In a world of moving wholeness, however, clearly languages of representing will need to become as changeable as the reality of which they are constructing conceptions. Ross (1994) speaks of human entanglement in language, but instead of the immovable Gordian knots of certainty in conception that can separate knowing from experience, what is now needed is a fluid entanglement, a continual interweaving through the parallel processing of meaning making. Language needs to be used more lightly and tentatively as the yin and yang of enfoldment and unfoldment proceed in parallel. Indeed, for Jung (1968, in Bütz, 1997, p.125), 'symbol is alive only so long as it is pregnant with meaning'. This is not to say that nothing definitive can ever again be said, but rather that language will become more relational, using terminologies of distinction and differentiation, of dialectics within a meaningful whole. Rather than saying *something is*, for example, whatever that is could more usefully be seen as *something in*

relation. Once again, what's dark without light? As Ross (1994) says, language is inexhaustible, but in so far as determinateness and indeterminateness belong together. Thus, in a changing way of representing, language will need to be more mutable in featuring emergent and relaxing facets of knowing, rather than the fixed facts of knowledge. Language will need to incorporate multiple, interactive and thus communicative ways of knowing that honour all aspects of participative consciousness. In Ross's (1994, p.52) conclusion:

To be is to be situated in a context, thereby definite and determinate; but also multiply located, in many locations and contexts, and the multiplicity provides alternatives and variations.

Representation will *move* into an ongoing representing of participative world making and language will blossom multiple meanings into diversified knowing.

A changing way of representing had implications for how language was used in the research reported here. Although there is some use of visual language, the body of this work is couched in word-based language, specifically the written word. (Further specification will be dealt with later in referring to the peculiarities of email, as used in the project.) Congruent with a changing way of representing, a challenge with regard to representation has been to use language as relational and connective flow, in keeping with the nature of being, knowing and doing described herein. Thus, in the conduct and reporting of this research, I have tried to shift the representing of meaning out of the realm of objectifying and categorising nouns (Isaacs, 1999) and into an arena of more active language. For example, I have used *relating*, *knowing* and *representing* in preference to *relationship*, *knowledge* and *representation*. Bohm (1983), in looking into the role of word-based language in fragmenting thought through its use of subject, verb and object, proposes that active, flowing verbs should be used as anchors rather than nouns of naming and fixing, as in the way author Scott Peck uses 'community' as a verb rather than a noun. In being

immersed in language (Ross, 1994), I have followed Bohm's line somewhat in seeking to frame language using active verbs and adjectives, and gerunds (Vaill, 1996), as active nouns, wherever possible. Thus, this research is about *leading* as *changing meaning*. Further, in studying leading, Hosking (1997, p.293) also advocates the use of verbs over nouns in order to see it as process, for example, in seeing leadership as a 'kind of organizing activity', central to the 'dynamics of organization'. I like to see leading as a dance to the swirling music of meaning and knowing. The use of active and metaphorical language is meant to alert the reader to the *changing* and energetic quality of this work and to remind that this is a moving map. There are ways and ways of representing meaning in knowing, and thus of interpreting what is written. (As an exercise in this, consider the intentionally multiple meanings of the title of this research.) Thus comes a questioning of meaning. We have considered knowing as a process, but what is *meaning* when it also becomes active? Like knowing, meaning has suffered conceptual fixedness but what happens when *meaning* is taken as actively *to mean*, as something open and continuously re-created and re-presented by those who participate in its making? In dialogue, meaning is said to be flowing through but what is the nature of meaning when it has movement? Clearly, a changing way of meaning also needs to be considered.

The Changing Way of Meaning:

In light of the possibility of multiple interpretations of what language represents as above, let us examine the word 'meaning'. Though it is usually taken as a noun, its construction as a gerund may indicate a heritage of action, that is, that meaning historically could be a process rather than the set reality the segregation of unconscious participation forces it to be. Meaning has suffered territorialisation and commodification (Lévy, 1997) to become narrow, rigidified and for sale through the media. Take, as an example, the meaning of '*la dolce vita*'. There is, by and large, only one 'good

life' advertised through the media. It is generally a life of affluence in which being rich is considered in self-serving dollar terms and not in terms, say, of a communal good or an appreciative good. It seems that, while interpretations of meaning may vary within a limited scope, it is in general presumed that there are given meanings. *La dolce vita* is not considered to be, for example, about a life where there is no starvation or no war. The meaning that the media presents of the good life is accepted as given. The good life is taken as having a certain space or territory (the domain of the well-off) and is presented as a commodity which can be purchased by those who can afford the price. The meaning of *la dolce vita* is not about quality of life, *per se*, but about financial affluence and its effect on a certain quality of life. Like reality, the meanings that words represent have taken on apparent solidity through habit of perception and conception - or through defending a patch or a good sales pitch - but in the emerging participative space of knowing, there is no space for consciousness that binds meaning. As contrast to a notion of meaning as fixed commodity, Taoist Alan Watts' (1999, p.26) thought is that 'reality is meaning, and therefore it *has* none.' The reality of the good life, again using the example above, is in its meaning for those who experience and construct it more than in any meaning encouraged and attributed by others not participating in the meaning-making. To Bohm (1987, p.131), meaning is a 'dynamic activity' and a 'change of meaning is also a change of being.' In a world of flow, 'meaning' must be a verb of movement, not an immutable noun. In Csikszentmihalyi's (1992, p.240) view, this ceasing of trying to fix meaning would bring relief:

Recognizing the limitations of human will, accepting a cooperative rather than a ruling role in the universe, we should feel the relief of the exile who is finally returning home. The problem of meaning will then be resolved as the individual's purpose merges with the universal flow.

In a changing world, there is no longer the problem of 'which meaning is the correct meaning' for meaning becomes an expression of flow, an Aikido-like blending of self-other; an integration of particle and wave (Zohar, 1997). Meaning is always in the making *between* and *amongst* and *together*. To

explain this in terms of word-based language, which was the basis of the research project herein, I turn first to the Russian linguists, Bakhtin and Voloshinov. Roberts (1994, p.249), in explicating Bakhtin's sense of meaning, says that he is 'fundamentally opposed to any notion of meaning as fixed in time or space'. Rather, Bakhtin's belief, as clarified by Roberts, is that:

Meaning is always a becoming... Meaning is the result of the dialogic give-and-take between the two, the inside and the outside, the self and the other.
(Roberts, 1994, p.249)

For Bakhtin, meaning is about dialogue between inner and outer dimensions for 'to mean is to respond constantly and open-endedly to one's addressivity' (Roberts, 1994, p.249), that is, one's self-other interactivity with the world. Only through this ongoing engagement does life develop any 'meaning and value' (Roberts, 1994, p. 243, after Bakhtin). (The good life, for example, could as equally be about having any food on the table as about dining in an expensive restaurant.) These words of ongoing engagement and interactivity shaping meaning resonate with the theme of *changing* in the theoretical framework developed for the project reported here. The changing nature of being in which inner and outer dimensions are conceptual delimiters in an enfolding and unfolding whole has been explored. It has been demonstrated that self and other are likewise two faces - like Janus - in relational being. Dialogue has been noted as essentially a process of meaning-making, always in flux, and that emergent knowing must be represented in moving ways. To achieve coherence in life - another possible meaning of the good life - changing ways in a changing world need changing meanings.

In considering a moving meaning, Voloshinov's (1994) writings are reminiscent of Duck's (1994) notion of psychological similarity; of being able to reconstruct another's mental models, and to Ross's (1994) idea that only in so much as differentiation can be made and distinction established can there be any hope of meaning. As with Lévy (1997), signification for

Voloshinov (1994, p.35) concerns orienting self with other in such a way that meaning is positional - it exists in relation to other - and is the 'effect of interaction'. In short, meaning is a dialectic:

To understand another person's utterance means to orient oneself with respect to it, to find the proper place for it in the corresponding context. ...Any true understanding is dialogic in nature. Understanding is to utterance as one line of a dialogue is to the next. Understanding strives to match the speaker's word with a counter word. (Voloshinov, 1994, p.35, original emphasis)

This notion of matching and complementarity suggests that the two 'sides' in meaning-making compose a single semasic relation, an interaction that is inexhaustible in its supplementarity (Ross, 1994). Therefore, this makes meaning an always unfinished project. The implication for the project of the research reported here was that, whilst meaning was flowing through in dialogue, the meanings the participants developed together would always be open to renewal as their lives and experiences continued on.

Making meaning, in this changing way, can thus never reach a state of finality. To mean is to be open to, and creative of, a flowing interplay of making sense with and of each other. Meaning does not stand apart from us, but is intimately enactive within and through us. We participate in meaning (Myers, 1995). Not only is this participation present in our inter-dimensional 'seeing' and doing with others, but in our intra-dimensional 'witnessing' and being in ourselves; our 'third sign' interpretation (Myers, 1995) that we bring to meaning events. As Wheatley (1992) has demonstrated in her wave-particle analogies, human consciousness cannot be a passive observer of meaning. There is no 'point' of meaning without the observer knowing that he or she knows, that is, that he or she is participating in meaning-making. In the language used in this research, meaning is thus relational and encompasses the whole through oscillating between yin-yang aspects of distinction such as being and doing, heart and mind, and inner and outer dimensions.

To examine what meaning might be like, and how it might be known as a flow and a practice (Remen, 1999) instead of a fixture, I will focus on *sharing* meaning. This involves a mutual participation in meaning-making, as opposed to the giving and acceptance of meaning that was evident in the example of *la dolce vita*. In order for communication as a sharing of meaning to occur, there must be some alignment or harmony, or ‘synchronicity’ as Peat (1987) calls it, in the flow of meaning potentials. Here, harmony is taken as dynamic patterning through differentiation and complementarity. Meaning potentials are waves of possible meanings. Some of these become meaning ‘points’ or ‘particles’ when human minds focus on them - and thus participate in them - when perceiving similarity and difference and conceiving how these distinctions are related. The deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) mentioned earlier in this work is an example of good communication. A spiralling strand, in its nucleotides, contains complementarity and orderly alignment, yet infinite potentials for expression. DNA’s shared meaning is the human being - in all our diversifications. Dialogue - the basis of sharing meaning in this research - is also, as explicated earlier, active communicating in which there is ongoing relational flow with endless potential. Interestingly, Isaacs (1999, p.10) notes that dialogue deepens the glue that links people together and that this ‘glue’ is genuine shared meaning. However, dialogue can only glue when people have participated in making meaning together. Further, this glue of shared meaning binds but does not stick, so we have the notion of meaning through dialogue as belonging to and being shared by those who participate in its ongoing making. For example, as Wells (1999, p.108) proposes, dialogical communication is collaborative and makes meaning for self and others:

Thus, as Bakhtin says, ‘to be means to be for the other, and through him, for oneself’ (1979, quoted in Wersch, 1998, p.116). More specifically, by contributing to the joint meaning making with and for others, one also makes meaning for oneself and, in the process, extends one’s own understandings.

Singer (1995, no page, after Bateson, 1972) extends this notion of meaning to making sense of data in research in saying that, for phenomena and the knower, 'one doesn't cause the other to have meaning. They have meaning together, in relationship to each other.' In other words, meaning has the harmonic patterns and synchronicities that allow sharing and communication. As with DNA and dialogue, meaning is multiple (Singer, 1995, after Bateson, 1972) or as Ross (1994) puts it, inexhaustible.

In the project of the research reported here, participants made meaning together and it was meaning that was never finished, always being open to new interpretations as the group's dialogue, and the group's lives, proceeded. This was important to the participants' processes of changing during the project. There could have been little progress if meanings were simply exchanged. To lead themselves to changing, the leaders needed to open their meanings to transformation. The 'changing way of meaning' means that meaning is always changing and I propose that leading has a role in this. A meaning-in-motion must have a beginning - a leading point - where the inertia of fixed meaning is overcome. In this framework, I will later present leading and meaning as a pair of distinctions, with meaning as the being/heart/inner dimension complement to leading as the doing/mind/outer dimension. These are framed as conceptual tools to study a whole in which there are many faces and layers of perceiving. Meaning is a flow, as leading is also a flow, but in specifying them as relational partners flowing into each other, I am seeking to unfold and clarify a particular 'whole' which I believe has promise in educational changing. The changing flow that acknowledges the projections emanating from - and the implications immanent within - a whole will be explored through the dimensions of leading and meaning together. However, it must be emphasised that this apparent juxtaposition is only a conceptual and representational convenience to aid understanding. Leading flows inwardly to meaning and meaning rises outwardly in leading, but leading and

meaning are seen as of one and the same numinous field (Jaworski, 1996), known in different ways through changing. At the level of holism, leading-and-meaning can be known as both parts and wholes, as distinct phenomena or one and the same phenomenon.

All the *changing ways* - of being, relating, knowing, representing and meaning - explored so far in this theoretical framework must be initiated. Changing ways do not occur spontaneously or independently of those who create them. At some level, for example, awareness of and participation in difference leads meaning into movement and this changing meaning leads to other distinctions being differentiated. In this cycle, some form of motive energy enacts and reflects in changing ways and I am terming this 'leading'. Like the other changing ways emerging in the world and examined herein, what it means to lead in itself is changing. I will now explore this changing way of leading and put forward that leading is what inspires changing meaning.

The Changing Way of Leading:

To situate leading in this framework as I have introduced it so far, it is necessary to link it into its contexts. I will make a case that leading is both being and doing and thus has aspects of inner and outer dimensions. This is in contrast to how leadership has most often been seen: as a function of the outer world, as something that is done primarily through actions. In what Doyle and Smith (2001) term as 'classical' leadership over the last eighty years or so, the four main generations of leadership theory - trait, behavioural, contingency and transformational - have some commonalities that I see as action-focused. These include that leadership is identified by position in a hierarchy; is focused on answers and solutions; and gives direction and vision (Doyle and Smith, 2001). Classical leading is thus 'out there' and has little concern, as was seen with Remen's surgeons, for what is

going on inside the leader. To set the scene for contrasting the classical view with the changing way of leading I am proposing, I refer to Tolstoy's *War and Peace* metaphor for leadership, as related in Grint (1997, p.1):

In whatever direction a ship moves the flow of waves it cuts will always be noticeable ahead of it... When the ship moves in one direction there is one and the same wave ahead of it, when it turns frequently the wave of ahead of it also turns frequently. But wherever it may turn there always will be the wave anticipating its movement. Whatever happens it appears that just that event was foreseen and decreed. Wherever the ship may go, the rush of water which neither directs nor increases its movement foams ahead of it, and at a distance seems not merely to move of itself, but to govern the ship's movement also. (Tolstoy, 1991, p.1289)

According to Grint's reading of the metaphor, the bow wave is the leader and the ship is the organisation or followers. In his interpretation, he believes it is clear that the leader is out in front, while at the same time there is an enigma surrounding the issue of whether she or he is pulling or being pushed from behind. However, much more in keeping with the metaphors of waves as leading edges used in this research, I see Tolstoy's tale in another way. Earlier, I mentioned Reason's (1994b) thought that steering the ship involves leading in a self-correcting way. Someone is surfing or steering that leading edge; someone is moving, making the wave while it makes him / her. That someone has incorporation, a whole self - a self of integrity because she / he exists as part of the water and wave. The inner self might be the heart-mind of the surfer or the sails or engine - the motive energy - of the ship; with the outer self being the body of water. (It would be difficult to know *surfer* without *wave*, or *ship* without *sea* - and to know either without a sense of movement.) Far from Tolstoy's ship being the organisation, I see it as the leader - a leader immersed in the sea-body of the organisation; a leader whose being and energy motivates and creates the leading edge or bow wave. In making waves, the leader is not an object discreet from the contextual body, but a distinctive flow ordering and responding to the larger flow. I have no sense of push or pull action, but of participating in the leading edge - the edge of possibility - where the mind and body, and the inner and outer, govern each other.

In studying leadership, Grint (1997, p.4) developed an essentialist - non-essentialist model to capture the range of leadership processes:

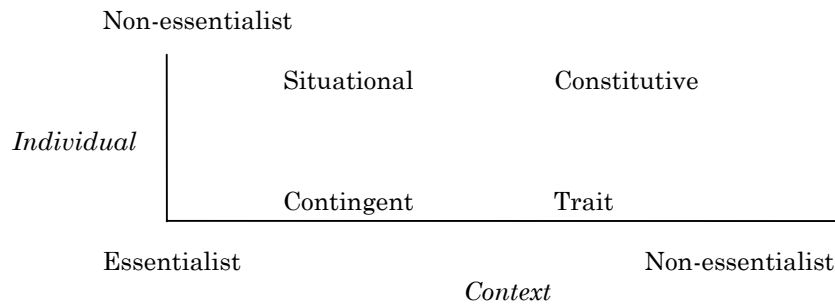


Figure 4: Grint's essentialist and non-essentialist leadership

In early *trait* approaches, he sees the 'essence' of the individual leader as critical, but the context is not. What the ship (and the designer and the captain - heroic behaviour all round) is like is all-important, but what's happening in the water is not - which could have Titanic consequences. In *contingency* approaches, the essence of the individual leader and the context are critical, but separate; the art of leadership lies in appropriately aligning personal skills to emergent contingencies. In the case of the Titanic, this alignment was not evident - the designer of the unsinkable ship with too few lifeboats could not respond or align to the contingency of an iceberg.

Situational approaches also feature context as critical, but the essence of the individual leader is seen as less essential. In these approaches, a range of leadership styles might be employed by a leader, depending on the situation. In the Titanic example, the captain certainly didn't have this flexibility in action in reacting to the iceberg, with the outcome that many lives were lost. If he were able to employ a less authoritarian style of power and responsibility sharing, the outcome may have been different. The most recent approaches to leadership Grint calls *constitutive*. They derive from constructivist theories and reject the notion of essences entirely:

[The constitutive approach] rejects the idea that we can ever have an objective account of either individual or situation because all such

accounts are derived from linguistic reconstructions; they are not, in effect, transparent reproductions of the truth. Instead the approach suggests that what the situation and the leader actually are is a consequence of various accounts and interpretations, all of which vie for domination. Thus we know what a leader or situation is actually like only because some particular version of him, her, or it has secured prominence. ...The critical issue for this approach, then, is not what the leader or the context is 'really' like, but what are the processes by which these phenomena are constituted into successes or failures, crises or periods of calm, and so on. (Grint, 1997, p.5)

Sadly for the passengers and crew on the Titanic, everyone had the same, romantic and invulnerable view of the ship. They were not able to see the situation and themselves as they really were. Grint's final grouping of constitutive approaches, however, has some resonance with the changing way of leading I am espousing. In leading, I simply ask myself when is a wave not a wave: when it's a particle such as a ship or a surfer. Leading is constituted or focused in the whole, that is, in the mind-ship-surfer and the body-wave-organisation. More seriously, the implied immanence of leading appeals to my need for movement and capacity of change, to my shape-shifting sense of leading as both *riding* and *being* that bow wave. Leading has been perceived in too static a way (Grint, 1997) and needs verbs of process instead of nouns to characterise it (Hosking, 1997). Grint (1997, p.9) suggests that 'we concentrate not just on what leaders do and what the situation is, but on the formative issues that lie behind these phenomena.' Leading thus has an inner aspect of being as well as the outer doing part. Leading is formed within and is generative of change, being constituted moment to moment such that the leader and the leadership are always in participative motion. As Grint (1997, p.17) says, 'don't trace the leader, don't even trace the followers; trace the mobilization.' In the research reported here, the project therefore traced through email dialogue the mobilisation of the participant leaders as they journeyed into changing ways of being and doing. As any surfer, sailor or virtuoso knows, these leaders found that being and doing are mutually responsive, meeting and transforming each other in an exhilarating flow.

To be congruent with a world of ‘undivided wholeness in flowing movement’, leading must be a relational stream found in the unfolding, inner to outer flow of self and other, and the enfolding, outer to inner flow. In the outermost extension of going forward and extending energy in the research reported here, I will refer to leading as a process of becoming, an active doing. However, implicate in this is also the enfolding aspect of leading where the innermost being makes sense or meaning of those actions. Leading, as used herein, is likened to leading in Aikido where the inner mind extends energy through the outer body to enact while at the same time is receptive and sensitive to the energy being received from without. Senge (in Jaworski, 1996) refers to Greenleaf’s belief that ‘leading [is] grounded in being, not doing’ but I see neither dimension as dominant. The doing does not necessarily come first, just as the being of meaning-making does not solely stir the action. More so, in a non-dualist world, each belongs to and is made in the other, which is what co-creativity is all about. In Aikido, it is said that the mind leads the body, knowing that there is no mind without body and no body without mind, and by extension, that there is no leading without meaning and vice versa. In the mind leading the body, it is a case of ‘both-and’ in which there is creative, immanent participation of outer and inner dimensions, of Bohm’s (1983) explicate and implicate orders, of leading and meaning together as one. To Bohm, this is ‘participating in a dance of mind’ (Factor introducing Bohm, 1987, p.vii). Both Duignan (1997) and Senge and colleagues (1999) also denote this as a dance [of leadership and of change, respectively] to indicate a moving, purposeful flow; an integrated and seemingly effortless flow of change which is evident in those with an artist’s expertise, whether it be in leading in dance, in surfing or sailing, in Aikido or in educating. (In this vein, it is easy to appreciate leading as performing; as an expression of creativity.)

In contrast to the classical view in which leaders are seen as heroes and authority figures, as in the earlier Titanic example, leaders are now being construed as dancers and performers. This is because the meaning of

leading is changing. In what follows, what leading is coming to mean is examined and how this meaning might primarily be seen as a process of changing is explored. Leading can no longer be seen in its historical, Western sense of showing the way and lighting a path. In a participatory world as envisioned herein, there is no path but that which is made - or constituted to use Grint's (1997) term - in the journeying. As the Spanish poet Machado puts it, 'Wanderer, there is no path. You lay a path in walking' (as given by Varela to Jaworski, 1996, p.134). Leaders of good intention do not have one right or good way for followers to go by, but they do have the courage and capacity to guide and to participate with fellow travellers in purposefully making shared and mutually transforming paths of meaning. Socially beneficial leading is an inclusive way of being and becoming in that it focuses on meaning and doing. Leaders express meaning through their doing; doing is a way of shaping meaning in being. The two dimensions exist together, as both-and (Zohar, 1997). They are lenses of the same whole. In essence, leading is about the constitutive and generative relating that flows between the inner and outer dimensions and so is characterised most by ongoing changing.

In examining a changing way of leading, any notion of attaining adulthood as the conclusion of growth first needs to be reconsidered. Zohar (1997, p.28) notes that, by the age of sixteen to twenty years, 'most of us have grown enough neural connections to coast for the rest of our lives.' At that age, the need to grow to survive lessens, and we gradually tend to only apply habitual responses to get by. For example, leaders may have the expectation that there will always be followers. Becoming 'set in our ways' from the onset of adulthood runs the risk of not being adaptable to a changing world. Following the example, in a changing world it may be more appropriate - and have greater survival value - for leaders to grow more leaders than to cultivate more followers. However, without a changing mind about what it means to lead, the leader cannot be responsive to or creative of change. A parallel to current notions of adulthood might be drawn from the fall of the

Neanderthals. As a mature species, these people lost their adaptive flexibility and were thus subsumed by the more creative and responsive modern man. Today, adulthood is psychologically seen as the beginning of the end rather than the end of the beginning. Many maturing adults see themselves on a downhill run in a world that is changing faster than they can. However, from a physiological point of view, neuroscience has shown that 'from the moment of conception until the end of life itself we have the constant capacity to grow neural connections' (Zohar, 1997, p.22). We have the capacity to keep learning and growing, if we choose to. According to the psychologist Erikson (1982, in Burns, 1995, p.97), more are choosing to do so in that we 'have come at last to acknowledge adulthood as a developmental and conflictual state in its own right rather than merely the mature end of all development.' In a participatory, relational world, adulthood may be reconceptualised as a continuing phase of growing and, particularly, of leading as will be explored below.

As children, we are largely led by those more grown and developed, but there must come a time of assuming self-responsibility in which we begin to lead ourselves, instead of closing ourselves off within mindsets. I propose that being adult in this changing world is about this: conscious self-renewal (Hudson, 1991) and self-leadership (Leider, 1996), or leading the self into new growth and ever deepening and broadening development as a human being. Being a leader is really a right and obligation of every one who would further humanity. That this ethic is being adopted in contemporary leadership is evidenced in the emergence and work of groups experimenting with creative and generative leadership (Jaworski, 1996), even as Manz and Sims (1991 in Grint, 1997) do in exploring 'superleaders' in a new vein: not as heroes acknowledged without, but as individuals whose courage to grow from within is heroic. Senge (in Jaworski, 1996) observes that the Western practice of seeking out individuals with leadership potential needs to shift to developing the leadership potential in everyone. This is not to abrogate responsibility as Grint (1997) warns, but to encompass a self-other

(accepting) responsibility *for* as opposed to the dependency-creative taking of responsibility *from* that can characterise the charismatic (Heifetz, 1992). In the latter case, charismatic leaders tend to ‘overcare’ (Childre and Martin, 1999), but such supporting of others to the degree of feeding dependency ultimately debilitates by smothering growth and by possibly setting up relationships of power. As a healthier alternative, leading needs to be about *good work* where, according to Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon (2001), excellence and ethics meet and where responsibility is to self *and* society. This self-other leadership is perhaps the most important way in which conceptions of leading are changing.

Leading is an awakening capacity and practice in any who see adulthood as a new phase of growth, and as such, as having potential in changing meaning to change the world, as Bohm (1987) proposes. Leading is created ecologically, in Bateson’s (1972) sense of pattern and meaning making. This is supported by van Maurik’s (2001, p.169) notion that creativity and leadership ‘are integral to each other, and [that] the boundaries between modern leadership and creativity run contiguously.’ Creative leading generates pattern and meaning, thus is in congruence with Grint’s constitutive approaches and with Manz and Sims’ (1991 in Grint, 1997, p.13) ‘superleader’ who ‘releases the energy and skills’ of people and ‘establishes a pattern of self-leadership’. For Senge (in Jaworski, 1996, p.3), ‘leadership is about creating new realities’. The world is seen ‘as a kaleidoscope rather than a fixed target or well-mapped terrain’ (Badaracco, 2002, p.11) by those who quietly rather than spectacularly lead. The superleader is thus not to be seen as an idealised superhero but as a leader who is fluid and transformative in a self-other way. Hudson (1991, p.xi) concludes, ‘adult mastery of change is critical to the renewal process that our entire society seeks.’ Adulthood in a changing world, then, needs to be about leading change in self and other. I concur with Schien (1996, p.68) that leadership will be ‘an emergent function rather than a property of people appointed to formal roles’ and with Work (1996, p.75) that effective

leading concerns 'change that leads to social betterment.' Rather than leadership by right, leading will be the right of all people who do the right thing in learning to change and improve themselves and society.

Seeing leading as a prerogative of all who continually grow and develop in self and with others, rather than as of position or ascription by followers, must bring a changing way of knowing it. In the holistic world described herein, to 'see' is also to 'witness'. To enact leading in a changing way implies a changing way of knowing and understanding it, and vice versa. Heifetz (1992, p.252) frames leadership as 'both active and reflective. One has to alternate between participating and observing'. Likewise, Palmer (1990) speaks of work in terms of action-and-contemplation, interlocuted by movement, much as I think of leading in the way I have introduced earlier; that is, as leading-and-meaning interlocuted by changing. Leading, *per se*, is an active, see-ing element of being, as meaning is a passive and witnessing element of doing. It is necessary to know the changing flow - the *process* (Hosking, 1997) - in the whole of leading-meaning to understand that authentic meaning is not inactive and effective leading is not untemperative. As meaning is always unfinished, so too do I see leading as always an unfinished process. Leading is concerned with changing and of laying the path in the walking (Machado in Jaworski, 1996, p.134). Thus, I consider that leading-changing-meaning is a sphere or field of potential through which leaders create the reality of themselves and others. According to Walsh (1997, p.296, after Bennis),

...truly effective leaders have set out not so much to be leaders as to fully express themselves. They are people who accept responsibility and do not blame others, people who are learners and seekers of self-knowledge.

As this reality of self-other is always in the making, leaders are always within a process of changing, a process of self-expression.

Coming to see the meaning of leading as changing is a very personal journey, as the project of this research confirmed. To me, embarking on this

journey and sharing it with others is the essence of leading because the movement and change encompasses the whole of a leader, from inner core to outer practice. The courageous and honest self-leadership of leaders incorporates others into self and as such, is both model and inspiration. In contrast to previous notions of a leader's outer actions as critical to his/her realisation and to others' acceptance of that leadership, I see that who a leader 'is' in being as the definitive element in leading - and this has nothing to do with ideas of being born a leader but everything to do with how a human being develops into a meaning-making adult of our species. For Handy (1999b), this is interpreted as the leader's search for meaning; the discovering of the unique contribution each has to make in the world and expressing it in life. In other words, successful leading is not outwardly defined, but arises from an inner dimension that seeks and acknowledges that self-other dance of leading-changing-meaning. To look more at what leading is like when it is about changing personal meaning, I will refer to a range of current voices in the field of leadership.

Quinn (1996, p.12) talks about deep change and describes people who participate in it in this way:

These people 'know how to get lost with confidence.' That is, they know how to learn their way into the new and emerging world. ...They are master change agents capable of making deep change in themselves, in their relationships, and in their organisation. They are internally driven leaders who understand the process of deep change.

He adds that such people may be found in any level of an organisation, as I also believe leaders can. They are distinguished less by their positions than by who they are and what they do. In keeping with the newer theories of leadership described at the beginning of this section, perhaps the most common elements in writings about emergent leadership are the ideas of leading as being accessible to anyone and as being something that comes from within. Senge (1996) refers to learning the inside-out while Covey (1996), in the same publication, talks about undergoing internal change, as

becoming the leader of the future by inside-out transformation. To Gilley (1997, p.xviii), 'the future belongs to leaders who are self-aware, conscious, committed, and courageous from the inside-out'. Note that while inner change is emphasised, there is also the element of other implied in 'inside-out'. In other words, the leading is relational as it involves outer-others as well as inner-self. O'Toole (1996, p.1) suggests that 'effective change begins when leaders effectively begin to change themselves', and I take note of the words 'begins' and 'begin'. It is through taking this inner changing to the outer dimension, of knowing leading-changing-meaning as a holistic field, that effective change begins to occur. Bordas (1995) and Heifetz (1992) speak of *purpose* and Covey, Merrill & Merrill (1994) talk of *principle* in leaders, both of which I see as qualifiers of the inner-out relating involved in leading. Successful connection, based on sound - that is value-clarified (Heifetz, 1992) - purpose and principle, has the outcome of developing more self-leaders. In this context, Pinchot (1996) speaks of many leaders emerging, but the words that seem most relevant to the changing way of leading proposed here are from Greenleaf's (in Spears, 1996, no page) acid test for those he terms as servant leaders: '...do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?'

In other words, do leaders grow more leaders? This brings us back to the 'everyman' notion of self-leaders and, in fact, some write of working out of a leader role, in the traditional sense, and into a leaderless state (Gibb, 1991; Bridges, 1996). A more accurate way of putting it would be a 'multi-leadered state'. In contrast to classical leadership where power and responsibility remain in the leader's hands, a multi-leadered state would be emancipatory and would promote 'an awareness of our own place in the making of leadership' such that there is less readiness to hand over responsibility and a realisation of personal power (Doyle and Smith, 2001, no page). This implies a notion of leading as a flow of emergence and relaxing, one in which leaders arise into action and fall back into reflective contemplation. It is

important not to take this serially or linearly, but as a dynamic cycling such that at any one moment there is always the parallel processing of leading and meaning-making going on, within self and with others. In this way, leading and meaning interpenetrate through changing. As such, it is appropriate to consider a field or space of leading-changing-meaning.

To consider the nature of this field, I turn to the new science of physics and the old art of Aikido. Wheatley (1992) brings the perspectives of self-organising systems to her understandings of leading. The self-organising system, whether it be the self-leader or a self-other system created by leaders, constrains its leading by meaning, as does any living system (after Maturana, 1998 in Senge, 1999). The purposes and principles of meaning lived by the system's leader(s) define leadership in the system. In other words, the leader's meanings are the strange attractors (Wheatley, 1992) which govern how the system works and which actively give rise to the scope and creative potential of deterministic chaos, or as I prefer to think of it, chaos bounded by the orderliness of meaning. Leading and meaning exist in a dynamic balance, always changing as an open, energetic system. The interaction between the dimensions of leading and meaning releases the energy (Bütz, 1997) of changing. Leadership, in this view, loses any semblance of being a decisive 'act' and becomes more ambiguous. In this, it is far more generative of, and responsive to, the changing self and others. As Zohar (1997, p.51) suggests:

Leading chaos and maximising creativity requires learning to thrive on ambiguity. Quantum leadership implies that control give way to some more subtle, intuitive feel for the situation and the creative potential of its indeterminacy.

Seeing leading in such an holistic and systemic way rather than as a link in an hierarchical chain of command and control makes it more pervasive if less clear. In this world of uncertainty, there is a sense of action but as well a sense of contemplation giving value-based - that is, meaningful - appropriateness (Palmer, 1990). Terry (1993) refers to leading in which the

outer action works with the inner meaning as authentic leadership. Senge (1999, p.10) speaks of the ‘inevitable interplay of growth processes and limiting processes’ such that leaders can work with movement or against it. Jaworski (1996) talks about alignment, a relational blending where the energies of leading and meaning work together. As Jaworski (1996) points out, achieving this integrity or balance can be likened to Aikido. I would go further to suggest that it *is* Aikido; the journey of this martial art goes beyond the practice of techniques to how life is led. The blending or alignment of energies working together in resolving conflict is one of Aikido’s basic principles, just as it is of leaders in whom the growth of leading and limiting of meaning, the interplay of outer doing and inner being, and the self and others come together in creative performance. In O’Neil’s (1997, p.3,8) words:

Any martial art is, first and foremost, a tool for self-discovery and personal development. Aikido - and the leadership practices congenial to its precepts - can promote lifelong learning, self-understanding, harmony of thought and deed, and resolution of strife. ... Just as Aikido students must master inner enemies before they can deal with outside threats, so must leaders find a way (do) of harmonising (ai) the mental, physical, and spiritual forces (ki) within themselves and the people around them, to achieve lasting success and happiness in both career and family life.

Further, Dooley (1999) specifically suggests that leaders learn Aikido to develop grounding, mindfulness and dynamic balance. I propose that leading-changing-meaning *is* a practice of Aikido in itself as it develops a unified awareness and flow. (Last, and particular to this research, Isaacs (1999) also promotes Aikido as well suited to dialogue, once again because its practice involves awareness and blending from a place of centredness or grounding.) The changing way of leading is thus a dynamic art; an art of changing meaning in the way of the ancient Chinese t’ai chi practitioners who promoted ‘dynamic energy, not dynamic tension’.

This framework began by examining a changing way of being. It has explored a range of other *changing ways* that arise from a changing way of being. These changing ways have demonstrated that a changing *being* leads

to a changing *becoming*. To conclude, I will look briefly at what a changing way of doing or becoming is like for leaders who, in their changing being, do not force movement with the push and pull of tension but instead stay centred while moving with the flow of energies.

The Changing Way of Becoming:

The becoming leader moves from within to without, taking the dance of leading to others. Yet, from what I have laid out here, an invitation to the dance of leading can involve no force other than that of meaning. There is no clash of energies, but a working towards an alignment of energies, both within the leader's self and with self-others, that can flower into an harmonious ever-changing dance. For example, in a situation of conflict within a staff group, the *becoming* leader does not provide a solution but works to move discussion into mediation and dialogue. Those involved in the conflict have the opportunity through sharing meaning to develop psychological similarity and to appreciate their differences as a source of strength. The leader leads the dance by providing the field space for antagonists to identify their mutuality and to find their own solution. The pain of conflict is not exacerbated by clashing but transformed in changing into positive avenues. Another metaphor of this ongoing process of *becoming* comes from Heider's (1985) *The Tao of Leadership* in which leading is thought of as water. The water of meaning that is the leader flows around the rocks of other yet in this, is very effective in inspiring those rocks to change. Using the same example, the leader moves clashing rocks into a flowing dance of shared meaning and thus solution. As Gibb (1991) notes, change starts in one, but involves many and in this section I will examine how this *becoming* of one to many flows through a leader's doing.

Returning to Fullan's belief, change itself is multidimensional and from this I infer that a leader's changing meaning must also become

multidimensional. The meaning of one must become the meaning of many. This is not to say that the leader's meaning must direct the group's meaning, as in more traditional views of leadership. Rather, the leader and the group - the one and the many - must develop a shared meaning. In the *becoming* of educating, Fullan supports this in calling for change that makes sense of what people, as individuals and with others, are doing and proposes that 'solutions must come through the development of shared meaning' (Fullan, 1991 in Caine & Caine, 1997, p.3.). Problems and conflicts are never unidimensional and require the resources of shared meaning to be solved. Leaders appreciate this and show the way to developing the capacity or multidimensionality necessary to robust solutions. Change in outer dimensions like structure is, as this conceptual framework has demonstrated, is insufficient to deep changing. As Caine and Caine (1997, p.11) note, 'the most potent impact on the shape the education system takes will be the meanings, purposes, and values that all of us decide are critical.' In other words, the sharing of meanings in the inner dimension is critical to the *becoming* and doing of changing. Wheatley (1992, p.16), from her new science perspective on leading, is more blunt:

Organizations lack this kind of faith [of rivers flowing], faith that they can accomplish their purposes in various ways and that they do best when they focus on direction and vision, letting transient forms emerge and disappear. We seem fixated on structures.

What leaders need to *do* in changing education is not to fixate on changing form or structure but to lead themselves and others into changing meaning; into finding common meanings that make sense for and are supported by all. This is in contrast to the outer dimensional structural change - and the meaning it imposes - that characterises education now. Together, stakeholders need to identify principles and purposes that all believe in their being and thus commit to and enact in their doing; in their *per-form-*ances of becoming. Rather than 'rocks' of structure obstructing flow, 'rocks' of shared meaning direct the flow of action and create fluid and changeable

forms. Such a flow of shared leading-changing-meaning has dynamic coherence and integrity.

Leading with this kind of integration has differentiation, diversification, and distinction flowing out around an inner balancing centre of common belief and value, or as Duignan (1997) puts it after Eliot's (1963) poem, the dance of leadership at the still point of the turning world. In continual change, the action of leading unfolds while the contemplation of meaning enfolds. In contrast to any view of leading as primarily doing, my view is that meaning-making is as important in changing. Caine and Caine (1997) have found through their practice in education that, although action is important, individual and collective thinking is far more critical to effective change. Their goal as leading educators is changing beliefs, that is *changing meaning*, in their own belief that changes in the doing of practice will follow. They echo Fullan's advocacy for dimensionality in change in believing that 'system change requires educator change, and that educator change is a matter of personal transformation' (Caine & Caine, 1997, p.26) . In other words, outer system change begins with an inner and personal transformation of meaning.

However, Bellah and colleagues (1985, in Weisbord, 1987) remind that change is not a linear process moving either inwardly or outwardly. The foci of different dimensions - for example, of leading and meaning - need the integration that both Fullan and I advocate. For change to be effective, they note that transformation would have to happen at a number of levels such as individual and state, consciousness and action, and that 'individuals need the nurture of groups that carry a moral tradition reinforcing their own aspirations' (Bellah et al, 1985 in Weisbord, 1987, p.179). In effect, leading itself should be seen as a multidimensional way of being-becoming, for example, as a social as well as an individual way of being; as an outer activity as well as an inner meaning-making contemplation. 'Others' such as systems and organisations need leaders as do leaders need others in

changing on macro scales. It could be said that organisations need leaders to *inspire*, while leaders need others to *aspire* to changing ways. The yang/yin of leading-changing-meaning must flow between a personal self-other and a social self-other, so much so that, as Wheatley (1995, in Caine & Caine, 1997, p.62) puts it, 'systems self-organize without strategic plans, without leaders being visionary for others, and without having to think it through ahead of time.' Dancing - and dancing together - in a swirling flow of being and becoming is indeed an apt metaphor to depict the multidimensional nature of leading-changing-meaning.

In further considering leading-changing-meaning beyond a personal sense and to a more social, organisational sense - which is what a changing way of becoming is all about for a leader - I turn again to the new science in looking at self-organising systems. Wheatley's (1992) proposition that meaning is the strange attractor around which non-linear systems shape themselves has already been examined earlier. For our purposes here, I add Caine and Caine's (1997, p.150) belief that 'a social system on the edge of possibility tends to self-organize around a set of compelling beliefs.' As a dance, leading-changing-meaning is a dynamic, always in perpetual motion. As such, Caine and Caine's belief in organising on the edge of possibility and Wheatley's advocacy for direction and vision giving rise to transient, self-organising forms without long-term structures like strategic plans seems a world away from the current world of educational organisations. One may wonder to what degree educators' mindsets influence the conception and realisation of organisational systems. The case may be that fixed minds fixate on structures as visible, tangible and apparently solid forms of organisation. Outer structures of organisation as separate to people and 'out there' may be so much a habit of minds with separated consciousness, and a leader's journey into the inner dimensions of meaning with others might enable different and more fluid forms of organisation to emerge. The leaders in the project of the research herein explored their 'in here' being and how their changing meaning influenced their becoming 'out there'. Participation

in being and becoming developed a mindfulness of how systems are organisations generated by people from ‘in here’.

In the natural world, orderliness or organisation is a process and product of *principles* of integrity or wholeness responding to environmental factors. It is not about ad hoc or superficial solutions with little meaning or relevance for the whole. The locus of control in the system lies within organisms rather than without. As an example, take a red cedar tree. Its principles might be seen as growth and reproduction and its emergent system, in response to the seasons, is a cycle of growing, leaf shedding, flowering and fruiting that best supports those principles. Outer dimension elements, such as periods of dark / light and fluctuations in temperature influence the process, but do not dictate any particular structure. Form is the tree’s response. Similarly, it could be said that systems within education should have functional principles that respond to the social environment through emergent forms. This is an inside out process, an ordering process which Caine and Caine (1997) suggest can be influenced, but not controlled from the outside. The principles determine an optimal, responsive form. For example, an emerging principle in education in one Australian state is to increase the rate of retention of students in the educational system to give them additional job and enterprise skills. This is in response to community concerns about the loss of potential and productivity in the huge number of unemployed young people. However, more-of-the-same schooling - in other words, the same form and structure - is not appropriate because that very structure has often been the reason that many young people have dropped out of schooling. Educational leaders need to work inside out to choose and develop new, responsive forms that encourage young people to stay at school for personal development and to gain work and leadership skills. As the meaning of what it is to be educated changes, the organisation of education - and thus schooling - needs to change. Instead of being ‘out there’ institutions, schools need to become systems on the edge of possibility, that is, responsive to the changing ways in which people mean and thus organise

themselves ‘in there’. In this example, Fullan’s multiple and relational dimensions of change are in evidence. There are external factors in education, for example, the changing nature of society, and there are internal factors of meaning, such as the changing purposes of education, that guide the way organisational systems develop and change responsively. Form comes from within, and pertinent to this research, changing meaning would lead to change in form, whereas external change leads only to accommodation; to changing the furniture around instead of redesigning the actual room or field space, to use Zohar’s (1997) earlier metaphor.

However, there is a need in inner-outer being and becoming to deal with the fickle unpredictability of the environment in which systems and organisations exist. Systems in nature have to respond to anomalies like drought and flood. The red cedar tree cited earlier, for example, conserves energy and potential in drought periods by flowering minimally. If human systems are also seen as natural, leaders have to develop ways to protect organisations from extremes in dynamics. In state education systems, for example, leaders have the challenge of dealing with the vicissitudes of changing politics - and thus of different ways of reading and responding to society - whilst staying on the edge of possibility. Neither becoming entropic through staying the same - as education has - or losing orderliness by dissolving into chaos is a useful response. Wheatley proposes a way forward:

In human organizations, a clear sense of identity - of the values, traditions, aspirations, competencies, and cultures that guide the operation - is the real source of independence from the environment. When the environment demands a new response, there is a reference point for change. ...the total system remains stable, capable of developing its own rhythm of growth.
(Wheatley, 1992, p.94, 95.)

Meaning, as expressed in terms such as identity and value, as well as those mentioned earlier, can be the stable source from which orderly organisation leads forth, with ongoing variability in response to environmental idiosyncrasies. This does not imply that meaning is fixed but that changing meaning is the ‘in here’ motivation for the system’s ongoing expression

rather than any 'out there' environmental factors. For the red cedar tree in drought, the meaning principle might become survival instead of reproduction and there are options for how to enact that meaning. In educational organisations, the meaning of education might move from social reproduction to developing potential for diversification, but it is coming from within as people and society change. This is different, for example, to an educational system being at the whim and mercy of external and often self-interested power brokers, as with the race to the moon saga in which education became a tool in a contest for world supremacy. Meaning brings orderliness and coherence to the dynamics of systems because it allows principle-based, conscious, ongoing choices about how organisations are configured. Thus, for education as a self-organising system to significantly *re-form*, an awareness of meaning and a purposeful framing of principles might be the starting place where leaders begin to *become*. The inner dimension of meaning - identifying the source - is where the work of changing happens initially and from where appropriate expressions emanate and organise. As Caine and Caine (1997) advocate, meaning is where 'the field of learning' that permeates the larger system is generated.

A new way of thinking and feeling about organisation as 'in here', shaped inside out by leading people, may go a long way to enabling changing in educating. Values, beliefs and emotions are already present in educators as theory in practice, but when they are brought by leaders into conscious awareness and identified as principles of meaning, perhaps through projects such as in the research herein, the potential for change in educational organisations may well increase. The inner dimension of meaning can be the key determinant of the outward expression of organisation. Different meanings of what organisations *are* as systems lead to emergent change. Education as an organisation is different, for example, when seen as a self-organising system of people - as in a learning community - rather than as 'the system' of given, impersonal structures. Thus, new ways of framing organisation, ways that grow from the inside, from values and beliefs giving

rise to principles of meaningful purpose, may lead to new shapes being activated (Hawley, 1993). The kind of organisation arising from leading-changing-meaning, as sketched in the next section, shows that form can be relational/fluid rather than structural/fixed. As example, in a proposal to meet the needs of students leaving school early, leaders in one school district in Australia planned an alternate school - a different place with different rules - for students who couldn't cope with mainstream schooling. They planned to change the furniture, in Zohar's (1997) terms, but not the design of the room. In consultations convened by the leaders, all young people - students at school and dropouts in the park - objected to the plan. They revealed that no one wanted a school for 'no-hopers'. They wanted a new design: a different kind of learning place open to all; a place where anyone could develop talents that were smothered in mainstream schooling. The leaders were humbled by the thoughts of the young people who were interested in building a society of equal opportunity and a society where diversity is valued. Form, then, can focus on meaning principles to do with the qualities of connections rather than what is connected. The young people in the example led the project leaders in wanting connections that developed community rather than separation that fostered segregation. Relationship as a form was more important to these emerging leaders than structure. In this case, the orderliness - or relatedness - of systems has to be seen dynamically as process-in-motion more than product (Wheatley, 1995 in Caine & Caine, 1997).

In considering organisations as systems ordered by the relational principles of those who comprise them, Hock is quite blunt and definitive, seemingly focussed on parts to be connected:

It's time to abandon the command and control structure in organizations and begin with a definition of purpose and principles. ...The most hard-nosed and pragmatic thing you can do is understand your own internal model of reality and challenge every one of your beliefs about what an organization is and how it ought to function. ... This is difficult and terrifying, because you are calling into question your whole identity, your

sense of your value in the world. But it is the only alternative that will work. (Hock, 1998a, no page.)

A softer and more fluid relational approach is taken by Caine & Caine and by Nespor:

...we are capable of an alternative center of order, built not on structure but on relationship, while the structure itself is called into question. ...Self-organization as a systems concept, then, describes the overall response of the system that occurs as a result of the way in which each part monitors and adjusts according to its sense of core relationships. That is, self-organization is the result of the ways in which the parts 'learn'. (Caine & Caine, 1997, p.248, p.66.)

... 'communities' aren't just situated in space and time, they are ways of producing and organising space and time and setting up patterns of movement across space-time: they are networks of power. (Nespor, 1994, p.9.)

Both approaches acknowledge changing as originating in meaning principles, but the latter more surely demonstrates that the process of this new ordering is critical. The process could more aptly be termed community development - as the young people in the example above clearly identified - than organisation development, where 'community' is a doing (verb) word more than a naming (noun) word. When 'community' is the meaning of any group, the focus of principle and process and hence of organisation lies clearly with people, both in themselves and in relationships with others. In fact, De Mello (1997, p.6) notes that the structure of organisation *is* people and that 'as we each and together heal ourselves through finding new meaning, our organisations will be different.' The young people surveyed about an alternative school demonstrated this: they had another meaning and a redesigned 'room' in mind. As we have seen through earlier sections, new meaning in self is very closely related to meaning with others. None of the young people in the example wanted to see themselves as 'no-hopers'. Neither did they want to see anyone else labelled as such. They identified with each other's needs and fears and empathetically enacted 'community'. Thus, in leading-changing-meaning, individual and community are seen as inextricably associated. Meaning is relationally and fluidly expressed in the

actual ordering of organisation, through guiding principle and enacted process of self and other. In the example, the cohesiveness of meaning amongst the young people will be influential in a different kind of facility developing. It will be an 'alternative' to a mainstream school, but alternative in very innovative ways. Whyte (1994, p.21) takes a leader's position in saying that 'human ability to innovate and follow an individual vision depends also on a sure foundation of continuity and community.' Whitmeyer (1993) adds that community is not a turning away from personal growth, but a transformation of introspective interest into interest in others. Even at a young age, as we have seen, leaders can demonstrate this. Thus changing meaning grows from 'change in meaning' to include 'change in what meaning itself is'.

Meaning is a relational texture, embodied in people through the enaction of principle and process. As such, it permeates, more than structures, organisational systems. It is the reference source of emergent order and form, and the essence of creative changing. In the changing way of becoming, leaders live and learn that changing organisations begins and continues in changing meaning, both individually and communally. The flexible orderliness of living self-organising systems comes of *leading-changing-meaning*. Changing is indeed more than a fiddling of external indicators. To sum up this framework about changing ways, I will look briefly at *the leading way of changing meaning* as a whole.

The Leading Way Of Changing Meaning:

Only the most courageous may apply to name themselves leaders in changing meaning. As Aikido-ka, their way (do) is to harmonise (ai) energies (ki), to change meaning. This is not easy in the present world of conflicting and contradictory energies where the traditional clashes with the chaotic. The Buddhists' 'middle way' of peace is hard to find but even Sir Francis

Bacon believed that the new could not be written without erasing the old. Jung's (1968, in Bütz, 1997, p.103) way of putting it was that 'no new life can arise ...without the death of the old', and another way is that 'no-one discovers new land until they lose sight of the shore'. Metaphorically, these positions refer to changing consciousness, much as Einstein proposed, and therefore changing meaning. As Lévy (1997) points out, each of humanity's developing spaces - for example, territorial space; commodity space - continues to exist at some level, somewhere in us and in our history. *Changing* makes new spaces - such as Lévy's knowledge space - and I propose that a *harmony space* of energies working together for mutual benefit is evolving and emerging. For example, the young people in the alternative school consultation wanted to work *with* each other to create community not *against* each other to create hierarchical structure. Today's leaders are those who acknowledge existent spaces but go beyond to make spaces of new meaning for themselves and with others. The project in this research, in inhabiting the *spaces between*, created one such new space of harmony: a dialogue space for sharing and changing meaning. To *mean something different*, as Bohm says, and to live that meaning is the challenge of our time. For leaders in education in particular, the self-nominated and self-accepted charge of leading is great in that they take responsibility for guiding those who would learn their own responsibility and self-leadership in changing.

Yet for all the complexities of leaders' lives, changing can be so simple. Beyond bravery, the leader's courage and authenticity in leading-changing-meaning is in *real*-ising that, as Remen (2000, p.29) says, 'finding meaning does not require us to live differently; it requires us to see our lives differently'. Changing meaning 'in here' is a matter of perspective; of how we *see* and *witness* our lives in a different way. Often when meaning changes, we choose to live life differently 'out there' because this brings a greater integrity or coherence as Bütz (1977) puts it. Inner dimensions and outer dimensions blend in an harmonic tension (Bütz, 1997) - thus creating

a harmony space. Change begins in inner meaning and being but journeys into outer leading and becoming. At the same time, leading once again becomes an opportunity for new meaning. Once psychologist Maslow (1968, in Zohar, 1997) suggested that self-actualisation was the pinnacle of human development, but like Zohar, I believe that actualising *self* - that making and living personal meaning - is primary in life; its most important aspect. Meaning motivates life, yet we so often choose to be led instead of leading from our own meaning in harmonising our energy with others in both becoming different and being one, in creating diversity yet finding unity. To lead is the simplest yet hardest thing to do. There is a very real tension in needing to take the lead - to go apart and to be different and other - but in doing so, also to cohere - to come together to heal and celebrate the union and harmony of our meanings. Leading is taking the risk of believing that going apart will ultimately bring reunion. In educational organisations, leaders risk chaos in going apart from stable structures and into deep change, but the potential reward is in creating new self-organising and harmonic spaces for *educating*. Mindfulness does not attach to fear and leaders with principle and purpose can focus their minds on allowing new 'bodies' or forms to emerge. As the young people demonstrated, leading can make new 'rooms' for learning.

As Zohar (1997) suggested at the outset of this journey of changing ways, simply changing a room's appearance does not transform meaning. Leaders have the courage to do more than swap the furniture around; to do more than shuffle the meaning pieces in a tired decor in the way of outer change. Put another way, if memes 'encode instructions for action through imitation and learning' (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon, 2001, p.47), leaders develop new memes to adaptively pattern action rather than adopting other existing ones. Leaders have a way of change meaning altogether, in the way Tennant and Pogson (1995, p.114) describe:

The transformation of meaning schemes is somehow less fundamental than perspective transformation proper. The former implies development

and progress within a taken-for-granted world view. The latter implies development resulting from the exposure and deconstruction of a given world view and its replacement by a new world view. This distinction is important ...because it signals two very different types of development and learning: reflective learning, which leads to a transformation of meaning schemes, and transformative learning, which leads to a transformation of meaning perspectives.

The theoretical framework developed herein to inform this research has proposed such a transformation of meaning perspectives. It has explained a new world view, a new way of *being* that brings emergent capacities in new ways of *relating, knowing* and *representing*. The transformed perspectives generated by such being have informed *meaning* and *leading* that are characterised by changing in a way that holds the tension of *becoming* different to others while ever being one with others. This theoretical framework has demonstrated that, for educators seeking to reform education, the *leading way* is found in *changing meaning*. To return to Bohm (1987, p.96), when we ‘mean something different... a fundamental change has taken place’ and the only way to live will be to lead. The problem in education has been that change has been superficial and in the outer dimension. The solution put here, in theorising a leading way of changing meaning, is to include the inner dimension of how people think and feel in order to develop fundamental and deep change. As Bohm proposes, such changing will pervasively change the world. Part of this new world that is relevant for the project herein is leading a *changing way of researching*.

The Changing Way Of Researching:

In relation to the current study, to lead a life of changing meaning is to live a transformative life. For leaders who are changing meaning, nothing is untouched and everything is always becoming different while becoming more harmonious. To me, leading is *researching*, which in turn involves taking the spiralling path of searching and *searching again* which deepens and broadens and changes meaning. Yet I am constantly reminded of

Wilber's (1997, p.282) words that 'seeking of any sort, movement of any sort, attainment of any sort: [are] all profoundly useless.' That is, what is being searched for already lies within and the proper role of research is to recover and remember our essential unity in diversity. In my view, *searching again* is not about fiddling external indicators or manipulating structures, but about going deeper into exploring internal meanings. To lead and to research, then, is not to travel without, but to turn the journey within to discover that inner-outer unity in which people are already always moving. It has been primarily my inside perception of change that needed to change so that my outside world could follow. In my world of changing meaning, as I have described it in the theoretical framework, my research as a leader must be centred in integrity; that is, in bringing the inner dimension and the outer dimension together, to creatively renew meaning again and again in recovering a whole that can known in many diverse ways.

To begin looking at a changing way of researching, that is, research that is changing in itself and research that creates change, I turn to Robert Quinn's (1996, p.xiii) sober thoughts on change:

Change is everywhere, and we are surrounded by circumstances that seem to demand more than we can deliver. We are all regularly lured into playing the role of powerless victim or the passive observer. In such roles, we become detached, and our sense of meaning decays. We look at everything in a superficial way. We see little potential and have little reverence. To choose to play either of these roles is to choose meaninglessness or the slow death of the self.

As a leading researcher, I choose not to be a victim of any entrenched system of research practice that dictates how research may be conducted and reported, and how change may be ordered and controlled. Yet, I have been made very aware in the course of this research that conventions deserve respect for those who have gone before and have been humbled by the need for discipline and intellectual rigor borne of mind and heart. As Doecke and Seddon (2002, p.97) point out, any knowledge worth having is the result of complex mediations [and is] the product of sustained

intellectual ‘work.’ Still, my research education has been a contested space (Doecke and Seddon, 2002) in which I have declined the straightjacketing of the academy’s cultural apprenticeship in favour of stretching my wings in changing ways. Integrity has become a balancing act which, I concede, it should be: it should live in change, on the edge of possibility. Finding any space at all was only the first challenge - locating a university and supervisor who would take a risk on me took several years. Justifying a new space in terms of the old, indeed even in its own terms, was a challenge: I was a ‘tweener’ (Luke, 2002) in a new sense - an inhabitant of ‘no man’s land’, or so it feels when I see beyond while standing in the present. Thus, I choose also not to be an observer in research, but to participate as a full person in its making and its meaning as change agency; to live fully in the space it creates. To be a vehicle of change, research, for me, demands that I am involved, that I feel as well as think; that I am a part of, not apart from. As Berg (1989, p.206) points out, ‘the kinds of social research that rally passion are likely to offer paths for social change. Innocuous, unimpassioned research is less likely to inspire or motivate people or changes in structures.’ Paradigms change most readily, in Kuhn’s (1970) view, when motivated people seek creative solutions to problems. I have great appreciation of the potential of research for changing meaning and great reverence for the research journey into self and others. For my own integrity, I must live in my research: my personal ‘structure of feeling’ (Lingard, 2001) demands it. I need to be a *seer* as well as a *witness*.

My chief guide on this new path of researching has been Peter Reason, a scholar with whom I have found a synergy in the changing way of researching. In his work as far back as the 1980s, he was interested in research on the edge such that inquiry ‘may develop a life of its own which can take us by surprise’ or could be ‘a continual invention of response to the possibilities offered by the situation’ (Reason, 1988, p.227, 231). For him, inquiry involves the participation of whole people and could ‘be seen as living processes of coming to know rather than as formal academic method’

(Reason, 1994a, p.325). Research, for Reason, is thus a way of life, and a special way of life at that as it moves deeply in the inner dimension. He sees the purpose of human inquiry as less a search for any ultimate truth than as an opportunity to heal, and ‘above all, to heal the alienation, the split that characterizes modern experience’ (Reason, 1994b, p.9). He seeks research that brings the outer and inner dimensions together such that we recognise our participation in world-making. Inquiry is to *make whole* and thus *holy*, such that ‘meaning and mystery are restored to human experience’ (Reason, 1994b, p. 10). Reason believes that participative inquiry, in recreating and transforming meaning, has the potential to create a different life and a different world:

I see this approach to living based on experience and engagement, on love and respect for the integrity of persons, and on a willingness to rise above presupposition, to look and to look again, to risk security in the search for understanding and action that open possibilities of creative living. I have felt at times that such a genuine human inquiry is one of the greatest virtues of humanity, and might be the greatest gift that Western consciousness has given the world. ... [that] personal engagement, passion and profound risk-taking are central to inquiry, and that science and life are not separate. Reason, 1994b, p.9.

Reason’s personal engagement, passion and risk-taking as a researcher have led to a practice of greater participation and embodiment in inquiry. For example, his meetings with co-researchers begin with t’ai chi for grounding, thus bodily acknowledging their participation in a greater unity. (The martial art of t’ai chi can be used as a moving meditation and its practice harmonises personal energy with the greater universal energy. In the process, the practitioner experiences a greater connection with the whole which is called grounding.) Reason believes ‘the Western world-view is changing towards a realization that our existence is based on participation and communion rather than separation and competition’ (Reason, 1994b, p.1), and as such, that we need to learn the practice of participation. Bolman and Deal (1995, p.3), whose research into leading has led them into soulful journeys, add that we need to move past the ‘deep sense of moral loneliness and moral illiteracy’ we have created through ‘the

isolation of individuals'. In my view, research is an activity of developing humanity through participation and as Schratz and Walker (1995) propose, should heal the isolation through each and together touching the invisible parts of ourselves where change takes place. Heron (1996, p.3), a colleague of Reason's, adds that 'the basic explanatory model for creative, original research is that of self-direction [as] self-directing persons develop most fully through fully reciprocal relations with other self-directing persons.' I concur with this from my point of view that researching is a form of leading in changing meaning. It is in this environment, and in the moral strength of researchers like these, that I couch my changing way of researching as a way of leading that changes meaning. I will now briefly touch on some characteristics of such researching.

The participative, socially constructed way of researching:

Reason (1994b, p.3) admits that those who are committed to human inquiry, as it is proposed here, live in a 'gap between vision and actuality, always on the edge of what is truly possible'. Situating the project of this research in interstitial space - a space of changing - is similar. My experiences in life as a teacher have shown me that this gap between the reality we dream of and the reality that exists has the character of the Chinese ideogram for danger and opportunity. If looked at in a certain way, this gap is a terrifying abyss in the reality checks of the mentally ill, but in another more healthy perception, it can still be dangerous but at the same time an opportunity for transforming reality - for bringing the present into a preferred future. The point though is, in the nature of self-other described in the framework for this study, we need others to make the most of the gap; to make the jump to greater wellness and to recreation in wholeness. No matter who we are as inquirers in life, we need others as our mirrors to know ourselves well. As Thompson (1984, in Day, 1995, p.366) astutely points out, on one's own 'one will only see what one is ready to see, one will only learn what is on the edge of the consciousness of what one already knows'. To be truly on the edge of

possibility, researching as a changing way needs participation and, as ‘no man is an island’ (Donne, 1623), must involve more than one.

Participation in inquiry is taken to be the kind of involvement in research that creates the ‘future participation’ that was attributed to Reason in the framework in outlining a changing way of being. Future participation will mean an experience of self as socially constructed with and through others, ‘an ecological self distinct yet not separate, a self rooted in environment and in community’ (Reason, 1994b, p.37). Through future participation taking ‘many forms in the process of emerging from the tension between original and unconscious participation, ...there will be a unity within this diversity’ (Reason, 1994b, p.33). Thus, in research, the dialectic movement of differentiation and unfolding, and of collapsing and enfolding, amongst self-others is what will create the future participation that Reason dreams of. Further, in the way of yin and yang, this movement of changing and of creating many different ways of knowing, will bring epistemological robustness to research (Reason, 1994). Many seers and witnesses bring many lenses and thus greater clarity and richness in how we know.

For Reason, the methodologies of participative human inquiry can therefore be seen ‘as disciplines which can train the individual and develop the community towards a consciousness of future participation’ (Reason, 1994b, p.41). He identifies three methodologies as *participatory action research* (Reason, 1994b, p.46-48), suitable for wider community research (Reason, 1994a, p.336); and *cooperative inquiry* and *action inquiry*, both suitable for smaller groups. While cooperative inquiry emphasises the dialectic in action-reflection cycles (Reason, 1994a), action inquiry brings all into the immediate consciousness of participants, with action and reflection interpenetrating (Reason, 1994a). As Reason explains (1994b, p.50):

The process of action inquiry sets the practitioner right in the contradiction between deep engagement, participation and commitment to the moment; and simultaneous reflection, standing back, self-awareness. Thus action inquiry is a discipline relevant to those most deeply committed to

participatory approaches to inquiry, and persons who wish to play leadership roles in cultivating this process with others.

Research as living is embedded in the contradictory or changing ‘space between’. It is the meeting point of being and becoming; of contemplation and action. Research is potential; it opens the way to new spaces of knowing and of harmony. As leaders participate in a life of changing meaning, their actively inquiring research is in being able to be within (seers) and also to be without (witnesses), on both individual and social levels. As transforming human beings, they operate at a metalevel of *leading-changing-meaning*. Reason (1994b, p.50) succinctly points out that ‘this kind of research is a challenge to personal development and may only be possible with those of integrated personalities’. This may superficially seem a kind of egg and chicken statement, but at a deeper level can be taken as saying that the researcher’s leading and meaning are constantly changing and moving into each other. By participating fully, the gap between vision and reality loses its distinction and becomes a leading edge flow that is both potential and real. Returning to the metaphors of sailing and surfing, leaders as researchers are good surfers.

The open, generative way of researching:

To me, surfing the leading edge in researching changing meaning has to be what Csikszentmihalyi (1992) describes as optimal experience. To be the surfer and the wave, experiencing the flow of simultaneous action and contemplation, to return to Palmer’s (1990) words, is to be on the edge of possibility. One might wonder what keeps a leading researcher’s consciousness in such a high-energy but orderly state. No external factor is sufficient to motivate awareness to such a sustained degree. As action researchers Fisher and Torbert (1995, p.97) point out:

It is difficult to create and sustain a group for which there is no obvious necessity, for which there are no external rewards, in which no one has any unilateral power or authority, and which is dedicated to doing something that each member will find difficult to do.

In leaders, I believe the motivation to research life is intrinsic. It comes from within, being born of the will to mean, to have significance through leading interpenetrating meaning. In Collins' (2001) definition, this is being 'a Level 5 leader - an individual who blends extreme personal humility with intense professional will.' Researching is thus generative and alive, developing meaning through leading. Rowan (1981a, p.85), another colleague of Reason's, suggests that 'research can come from growth motivation. It can be based on anxiety-free interest, and oriented towards personal fulfillment and fullest humanness.' Researching in this way leads the participative self and others into new realities: research generates change. As Clandinin and Connelly (1994, p.418) add, 'when we come together in research projects, all of us begin to live and tell a new story of our collaborative work together.' For qualitative researchers Alvermann, O'Brien and Dillon (1996, p.117), 'in writing about our own and others' experiences, we create (rather than simply mirror) those experiences.' In memory-worker Haug's (1987, in Schratz & Walker, 1995, p.40) opinion, 'we search ... for possible indications of how we have participated actively in the formation of our own past experience.' Researching, for these leading people, is about together making meaning and generating reality through the activity and reflection of inquiry. As pointed out earlier, it is through openness and differentiation that change has a chance. In this, I refer to Myers' (1995, p. 584, 586) words to support researching as *leading-changing-meaning*:

I hold a different value for meaning, seeking multiple significations for a phenomenon, believing that difference, rather than consensus, has a better chance to support a critical, democratic form of ...research. ...I want my text to be generative and full of potential meanings, rather than tightly-defined by points of reference that must be held by all as absolute truths in order to get the correct meanings.

In his interpretative research, Myers seeks meanings that unfold more meanings. Seeking differential and distinctive meanings opens the way to changing from absolute truths to mutable truths.

As with Reason in pointing up the participative and active nature of researching, Bateson's (1988) work stands as a model for open and generative researching where becoming different is also about being one. Through his extensive research in biology, he came to the position that in the distinctiveness but complementarity of mind (inner dimension) and nature (outer dimension), there is a necessary unity, much as has been repeatedly advocated herein. In addition to the researchers mentioned earlier who recognise that research creates change, Bateson went further to intentionally make research serve changing ways of knowing through inventiveness: he aimed to abductively create new patterns of meaning. Quite apart from the view of participants' growth and development, his way of doing research, to be explained below, generates change - as I believe it should for participants in action research. I further believe that Bateson would see research into *leading-changing-meaning*, such as in the project herein, as what he describes as a *stochastic process*. In this, leading (*a non-random selective process*) focuses meaning (*a somewhat random stream of potential*) through change, 'never [in] quantities, always shapes, forms and relations' (Bateson, 1988, p.9). The research herein is thus generative in that it changes the 'patterns which connect' (Bateson, 1988, p.9).

According to Singer (1995), who as a researcher has studied Bateson's work exhaustively and sought to use his techniques, Bateson employed techniques of unusual juxtapositions and abductive treatment of data to generate information and establish new patterns of relationship. To Mant (1999), such making connections by leaders concerns intelligence. In the research herein, leaders-as-researchers put forward individual meanings and in the process of developing shared meaning were generating such new information and intelligence. Singer believes like Bateson that, 'research is an active process. We do not collect data, we interact with it' (Singer, 1995, no page). In Bateson's (1988, p.153) own words:

We are so accustomed to the universe in which we live and to our puny methods of thinking about it that we can hardly see that it is, for example, surprising that abduction is possible, that it is possible to describe some event or thing and then to look around the world for other cases to fit the same rules that we devised for our description.

Bateson (1988, p.153) described the possibility of abduction as ‘a little uncanny’, but noted that it is really widespread; for example, in metaphor, dream, art, science, religion, poetry. The difference in his research is that he, as an interactive participant in his own research, used it consciously as a tool to open and expand possibility, to weave patterns that connect. He was part of the pattern - a seer as well as an observer. Likewise here, I have sought to participate in research to enlarge, not reduce, patterns of meaning with leaders. I wanted a research reality that produced an enlarging intelligence of what meanings *inclusively* could be and might be; not of ‘correct meanings’ that *exclusively* were or had been.

Congruent with the changing ways elucidated in the framework described here, Singer (1995, no page) says of Bateson that ‘all knowing has to do with discrimination and all learning is predicated on detecting and acting upon differences’ and further that ‘the differences we perceive are located in the relationship between things rather than within things.’ In the project herein, the participant leaders were *sharing meaning* and this sharing involved exploring the relationships amongst their individual meanings. For Bateson (1988, p.7), in the world of the living, ‘*distinctions* are drawn and *difference* can be a cause’. Change, for Bateson, is not a product of cause and effect, but a process of differentiation giving rise to new relational distinctions. It must always involve the inner dimension (*mind*) and the outer dimension (*nature*) because of their *necessary unity*, because of their distinction and relation, an idea we have seen in many forms herein. Changing the way we see things - the way mind interactively understands nature; the way of science at its purest - generates new categories of relational sense: *information* as Bateson calls it; *meaning* in my nomenclature. In Bateson’s (1972, p.489) view, ‘the unit of information is

difference. In fact, the unit of psychological input is difference.' To Bateson, the array of possible distinctions (potential meanings) is infinite, as are the ways in which human consciousness can select and constrain (lead) into information, always becoming different and always being one, as another biologist Maturana (1998 in Senge, 1999) put it. As we have seen with dialogue, meaning is always moving through the 'banks' that constrain it. In the project herein, the leaders' dialogue moved their meanings through by creating distinctions while containing them in their common experience. In this way, they abductively generated new patterns of meaning; for example, of what it meant to be a leader. In Singer's (1995, no page) words, '[the] search for meaning generates structure, patterns and categories' and importantly to the view held here, 'there is no such thing as true knowledge or a real picture of that world that is independent of any knower.' Inner meaning unfolds into the outer world of form and, as the participants in the project recognised, the leader's meaning - whether it be Hitler's or Gandhi's - is very much within the structures of the world. As Singer also points out, differences do not exist without a consciousness to recognise difference. In Bateson's (1988, p.106) world, 'what happens ...is meaningless if [one] is not there to be affected by it.' In the two leaders cited, war and peace came from within but was enacted without by the people who participated in their meanings.

To Bateson, then, 'no data are truly 'raw', and every record has been somehow subjected to editing and transformation' (Bateson, 1972 in Singer, 1995, no page). It could be said that researchers, in the act of participating, value-add to the data in perceiving it and operating with it. Thus, for Bateson, information is immaterial - that is, not material - and lies not in the data itself, but in how researchers *know* through relating to the data. In a changing way of knowing, researchers recognise their participation in their in-form-ing. Through informing or meaning in recursive cycles of distinguishing and relating, researchers transform themselves in an ongoing changing. In other words, researchers *lead* and their focus, after

Bochner (1981, in Singer, 1995), is not on a world of given matter but on an iterative and emergent world of mutable form. In the Batesonian mould, 'every picture can tell a multiplicity of stories' and our research stories should 'address the multiple layers of mutual influence in any relationship' (Singer, 1995, no page). In this changing way of researching here, I have sought to do similar to Bateson and Singer: to generate 'post-conceptions' (Bochner, 1981 in Singer, 1995) that explore beyond the given and open the way for generating new meaning and changing. As a leading researcher in the project herein, I have sought to make larger and more integrative patterns of relationship and to create multi-dimensional stories that support and challenge a changing meaning in leaders' lives.

The risking, vulnerable and trusting way of researching:

In Bateson's (1998) view, contextualised (*patterned through time*) lived-in experience is at the core of transformative research. Experiences over the course of time create patterns that connect past and present and future in a changing flow. Data might not be raw in the sense of being unmediated, but they are raw in that they come of the real lives of participants. Likewise, Reason (1994b) believes in an inquiry in which the fundamental base is experience, where *to know* is to know in body, heart and mind. His research is raw in being lived fully rather than only being mediated through paradigms created by others. He talks of 'learning to reclaim the body, to live in the body rather than using it as a tool to carry around the mind. It means learning to use words and concepts as tools of consciousness, rather than as consciousness themselves' (Reason, 1994b, p.37). In this embodied kind of researching, the whole person is participating, and when the whole of a person is involved, the sensations of body and feelings of heart are as much at play as the thoughts of mind.

For leaders-as-researchers, there is personal risk in researching that invites others to participate fully in the life of self. It means moving out into the

open, being raw and vulnerable and willing to experience life fully in all its joys and pains. The risk of changing is great in that, as Schratz and Walker (1995, p.38) suggest, 'research that starts from the position of treating people's perceptions and feelings seriously may find itself creating situations in which these same perceptions and feelings are put under threat of erasure.' As with Zohar's (1997) metaphor of changing rooms, the risk in research is that the room itself might change: perceptions and feelings themselves may be transformed. Studying what is *out there* might change what is *in here*. The risk of *failing* to change, too, is great in that, as Fay (1977, in Schratz & Walker, 1995, p.38) notes, 'giving up ... illusions requires abandoning one's self-conceptions and the social practices they engender and support.' To give in to illusions is to become *stuck* - a term used by psychologists to denote an inability to move on - in an unchanging and fixed reality. Fullan (1997b, p.230) also warns of *not* giving up illusions, of closing in to become 'balkanised cocoons of like-minded individuals'. He suggests a researching that confronts differences and works through the discomfort of diversity to becoming one. It is risky research to ask participants to become different, to abandon the crutches of familiar comfort in direction and meaning in order to acquire a new self-identity (Fay, 1977 in Schratz & Walker, 1995). In a changing way of researching, the outcomes are uncertain: participants may embrace or sabotage the changing self and others, but it is certain that all will be changed in some way through the experience. In the study herein, the journey itself was purposefully framed as uncertain - that is, there were no clear outcomes that were sought for participants - so as to encourage an exploration of the nature of changing. In such an action inquiry, the participating leaders were studying and *witnessing* their own processes of changing as they were living and *seeing* them.

Specifically referring to action inquiry, Fisher and Torbert (1995, p.55) suggest that what is required is 'the risk and often the pain of personal

development change', a position with which Reason (1981a) concurs. Fisher and Torbert (1995, p.48) further propose that:

Practising action inquiry brings us into contact with our fear because action inquiry is never entirely safe. Action inquiry is inherently risky. It is risky because it is played in real time with real relationships. It is risky because it is played in relation to one's own awareness and the unknown; and it therefore introduces us to alien experiences. ...Action inquiry is also risky because it usually sacrifices unilateral control over outcomes in favour of openness to the influence of others, and of decisions to which the parties are mutually and internally committed.

Thus, in being risky, a changing way of researching such as action inquiry involves participants being open and vulnerable. As Gibb (1991, p.69) suggests, 'true inquiry is, in itself, an act of trust and faith.' In asking myself why leaders would take and provoke personal risks and trust, I trusted in their intrinsic motivation to grow, to change and to have significant and renewing meaning. My feeling is that risk and vulnerability are necessary to meaning, in conjunction with trust, which in Gibb's (1991, p.41) words is 'to believe in my unlimited powers to create the world in which I live, and to transcend what is.' It is as though, in an alive and procreative world, one has to be fully and completely *in it* to have a life of meaning. Bateson (1988) points out that there can only be meaning if there is a context. In my view, taking risks and trusting are the contextual vessels of meaning: they provide the pattern space in which self and others can mean. The dialogue practice of suspension, as noted earlier, encourages such a space of meaning to emerge through 'holding' beliefs and values whilst engaged in an exploration which may eventually change them. In the study herein, the leaders-as-researchers who participated took risks in revealing themselves through relating their experiences of life and developed a trust amongst themselves that protected each other's vulnerabilities. This allowed their space of sharing meaning to enlarge and illuminate the self and others. Together, they developed the potential for changing meaning; for changing the patterns of their lives to something more deeply authentic for them and others.

Bolman, through his research with Deal on leading (for example, Bolman & Deal, 1995), has an interesting insight into the risk-vulnerability-trust cycle. He believes ‘it’s very difficult to get anywhere without intimacy and trust which enables us to take risks’ (Bolman in Boehlke, 1996b, no page) and sees potential for trust and risk in empowering relationships. It is as though qualities such as intimacy and trust bring another dimension to what can come of research together, in that the vulnerability of taking risks and of trusting adds a *tension* to toughmindedness. Bolman (in Boehlke, 1996b, no page) argues that, with risk and trust, the ‘possibility exists for deepening of conversation to enable people to grapple with issues which are real and which are corporate in terms of a business point of view’. An example he gives is of conversation around values and purpose and suggests that:

...if that's a central part of what leadership is about, which I think it is, then you're going somewhere. Those are often issues that groups don't deal with well. They're muckier and fuzzier than the numbers... Tough stuff to get at. Bolman in Boehlke, 1996b, no page.

What Bolman is saying is that leaders-as-researchers need a kind of tough love - an embodied heart and head - to be change agents. As Heifetz (1992, p.243) adds of the limit-setting love of leaders that keeps eyes on the work, ‘compassion... is rarely soft.’ In the project herein, the participating leaders confirmed this in their explorations of what leading meant to them. In taking risks on each other and trusting that their vulnerabilities would be protected, their meanings of themselves as leaders were enlarged and became more multi-dimensional. One became more aware, for example, that he could be an *enforcer* and a *pappa bear* and that both these roles were useful in *moving on* those they worked with. Thus, a risking and trusting way of researching that involved the whole of themselves - their heads, hearts and bodies - supported a changing meaning both in themselves and in others.

The truthful, valid way of researching:

The changing way of researching, as espoused here, goes deep: deep into participants' hearts and minds and deep into knowing. So much so in fact, that Gibb (1991, p.xxvi) suggests 'if we think about the data on which a science of total human experience might be constructed, it includes ...the subjective self-reports of trained *inner explorers*'. The researcher who is leading a changing meaning must explore inside self as well as outside others. Reason (1994b, p.11) believes that in a participatory world, there will be a 'move towards forms of knowing that are self-reflexive, that are both deeply engaged and rigorously self-critical.' For example, Roman (1992) sees it as a crucial task for researchers to elaborate the structural power relations that form the basis of how research is conducted. Through understanding the underpinnings of research culture, the researcher has the opportunity to transform his/her research in ways that have integrity for self and significant others. Consistent with the changing way of knowing put forward in the theoretical framework herein, the researcher is intimately involved in the performance of researching. In coming *to know* place-in-space as a researcher and *witness* - that is, coming to know where he/she is situated in power structures - the researcher and *seer* performing research is simultaneously changing those structures through his/her participation. The inner explorer in such a deeply participatory world is presented with a challenge in researching: to find a personal truth that is valid for others. *To know* personal truth in a changing way of researching is empowering and liberating, as Freire (1972) would say, because validity comes from within and yet involves those without who are part of the self. This seeming contradiction demonstrates the necessary unity of inner and outer dimensions; like self-and-other, truth-and-validity has a Janus face. Thus, Heron (1996, p.13) frames the challenge as:

... to redefine truth and validity in ways that honour the generative, creative role of the human mind in all forms of knowing. This also means, I believe, taking inquiry beyond justification, beyond the validation of truth-values, towards the celebration and bodying forth of being-values, as the transcendent and polar complement to the quest for validity.

Heron is proposing that researching must move from trying to validate external verities of *doing* and *becoming* towards also incorporating (literally embodying) participants' internal, personal and mutable truths of *being*. Truth, in valid research as put forward here, is multi-dimensional and temporal. It emerges through the processes of changing meaning and involves self and other; it involves *being* and *becoming*. Validity becomes an ongoing quest for meaning with integrity - notably not to be found in either outer public knowledge or in inner self-declaration alone, but in the moment-to-moment participation of truth making. It comes of the ongoing reconciling of personal meaning and the reality being created of that meaning. As truth is being made, validity is being confirmed. Indeed for Jagger (1983, p.387 in Roman, 1992, p.579), the test of adequacy for any research is its usefulness in developing a 'scientific reconstruction of the world' from its *own* viewpoints; that is of the participants. In other words, in valid research the world as constructed truthfully expresses the meanings that motivated it. When participants' representations of reality - for example, of what it means to lead - are constantly being tested for their accuracy in expressing meaning and for their usefulness in helping transform that reality, truth is in the making. Dialogical research, such as in the project herein, democratically encourages empowerment through truth-making reflection on how the participants' situations and roles reproduce or transform relationships (Roman, 1992). The leader who was an *enforcer*, to use an earlier example from the project, was also validated as a *pappa bear*. The first image was reproduced by virtue of this leader's position within the school, but the latter image arising through the research dialogue brought another truth about the leaders' relationships with those he worked with. Being validated as a *pappa bear* by those around him was liberating for this leader. As his *knowing* of himself changed, more of his true, caring self emerged in the school environment. That knowledge, very temporary in itself, initiated further truth-making: how to care without

taking responsibility from people. This will be touched on further later in this report.

In researching the leading way of changing meaning, I thus agree with Reason (1988, p.11) who states that ‘no longer can we claim to hold true knowledge - *episteme* - and we must accept our understanding as *doxa*.’ Truth as ‘*doxa* (opinion and belief)’ rather than ‘*episteme* (certainty and knowledge)’ (Polkinghorne, 1983, p.9) requires validity procedures that move to map and integrate the inner meaning-making and outer action-making dimensions of knowing. Polkinghorne (1983) warns that researchers who work in such contexts of pluralism cannot assume the validity of their tools of inquiry. He says that:

They need to begin their work at a deeper level where the assumptions and relationships of the systems of inquiry themselves are examined. This deeper level provides a much broader range of choice in the use of particular methods and designs, but it also places a responsibility on researchers to understand and explain the assumptions they have incorporated into their approaches. (Polkinghorne, 1983, p.9.)

As I have pointed out, truth making involves the being-and-becoming whole of a person and thus validity must follow suit: assumptions must be explicated and critically examined by self and others. The critical subjectivity that Roman (1992) implies earlier acts to increase objectivity and enhance validity. Increasing awareness of how *seeing* is actively creating reality allows the simultaneous *witnessing* reflection of meaning making. As this integrative process of truth-making brings becoming and being more into alignment, validity increases. As Reason (1988, p.228) adds, researching can only be valid if ‘we have developed and used some systematic procedures for being self-reflective and maintaining a high level of collaboration.’ For example, in the research reported here, the truth-making has involved countless cycles of validation with critical friends - supervisors, friends, trial contributors as well as the participants, making it truly a collaborative work. The truth of the leading way of changing meaning as I am representing it here is being refined and made more *true*

by the validating reflections of all those who are involved. As one participant in the project reminded, although one can fool oneself indefinitely, one cannot fool all the people all the time. In the case of the research herein, the truth does not belong to me but lives in all who participated in it and thus validated it. Meeting the challenge of an embodied truth brings the responsibility of making truths that are negotiated and shared; that is, not one truth, but multiple truths (Bateson's patterns of patterns) that are created and validated through relationship. The truths of every inner-outer explorer must be contextually negotiated with others to have any believability. Such self-other criticality is necessary because, like the participants in the project suggest and as Reason (1988, p.228) points out, 'the human capacity for delusion and collusion is quite enormous, and we are quite capable of fooling ourselves if we do not take care.' In researching that supports a changing meaning, leaders must take care to avoid the balkanisation of like-mindedness, as Fullan (1997b) suggests, and to encourage difference and a diversity of opinions amongst participants, as has been touched on previously, as a way of validating the research. The action of seeing being balanced by the reflection of witnessing in self and with others enables a validated truth.

Embodying a commitment to validation is not easy for participants leading each other in changing meaning through research. In such research, validation rests more with the people who are engaged in a study than in any method used (Reason, 1981b). It involves the multiple perspectives of real people, not just facts and theories (Torbert, 1991). In all this moving mass, participants - as human beings trying to elucidate and name their complex truths - could develop a 'false consciousness' of 'interrelated illusions', as Fay (1977) describes (in Schratz and Walker, 1995, p.38). In my view, the degree to which the participants find and hold the clear and valid path of illumination, rather than of delusion, collusion and illusion, depends of the qualities and commitment of those participants and of their participation. I agree with Reason (1981b, p.245) who believes that 'valid

research rests above all on high-quality awareness on the part of the researchers.' Leaders-as-researchers need to live with ambiguity but at the same time, always seek clarity. Reason (1988, p.229) adds that being 'approximately right' is better than being 'precisely wrong' and that, in inquiry:

...it is also better to initiate and conduct inquiry into important questions of human conduct with a degree of acknowledged bias and imprecision, than to bog the whole thing down in attempts to be prematurely 'correct' or 'accurate'.

The leading and changing researcher studies meaning as well as action, and in exploring the inner and outer dimensions, goes in and out and round and round. There is an awareness and practice of working together and of 'going round the research cycle several times' (Reason, 1981b, p.246) to 'achieve a validity of a cumulative nature - yielding a deeper and more extensive truth than that given by a linear approach' (Rowan, 1981b, p.105). Difference is honored, with a 'subtle interplay between different forms of knowing' (Reason, 1981b, p.249) giving rise to contradiction and reconciliation in research that is truthful and valid and which changes meaning. And finally, in this leading way of changing meaning, the researcher appreciates that meaning is moving and leads out to invite the research's audiences to participate in its validation through testing it against their experiences (Schratz & Walker, 1995). Clearly, such a changing way of researching cannot be contained or confined in fixed spaces so I turn now to examine how leaders might construe an emancipative and changing space of researching. The project of the research herein aimed to demonstrate such a changing space of researching and will be reported later.

The Changing Space Of Researching:

I begin with a dilemma of our time, a legacy of separated consciousness (Reason, 1994b). In Josselson's (1996, p.13) telling words: 'There are few places in which we find each other now, little time for being with.' In this research, wide-ranging changing ways have been put forward and pivotal to such changing ways is yin/yang complementarity through participation. In my view, changing ways of inner being and changing ways of outer becoming must accompany each other in the leading song and dance of changing meaning. In the journey of changing, leaders must create the path as they walk it; they must make the space for finding each other and for being with each other to enable changing. This space must exist across dimensions in order to link and join the inner and outer; to make a whole that is rich and deep and coherent, but most of all, conscious of its participation in its making.

Human beings are habituated to the spaces they have made. As Lévy (1997) points out, new spaces evolve (often with much resistance from the comfortable) and overlay existing spaces. To my mind, these seem to be compartmentalised and operate separately to a large degree and this balkanisation in effect limits the emergence of new spaces and of links and networks between and amongst spaces. An example of this in the research reported here has been the recommendation to me as a new researcher to choose a particular 'sandpit' to play in. In other words, I was encouraged to fit into the existing cultural spaces of research. In the changing ways I was proposing, it was necessary to resist *not* the emergence of new spaces, but the forces of enculturation that prevented their emergence. In Rowan's (1981c, p.114) view:

It is increasingly clear that there are many different ways of being in this world, many levels of awareness about alternative 'spaces' that we may occupy either permanently or temporarily, but the trouble is that we have few clear or shared ways of identifying these or talking about them.

Yet, as consciousness of participation increases, changing spaces do have the chance to flower and bloom into a diversified yet ecologically integrated metaspace (or metapattern, as Bateson would put it) where there are a multitude of distinctive spaces networked together. Remen (2000) recounts a tale of the daffodil which couldn't bloom for the rock above it. That rock was the inner fear of growing out into a new space. Once that fear was met, the space appeared. With participation between and amongst dimensions, new spaces bubble up or can be found in between existing spaces because participants share their inner and outer journeys: they talk about them; they participate in dialogue about their evolving spaces. The daffodil meets the rock and both acknowledge their difference and their belonging: the flower blooms in the friable soil. In the case of this research, as I acknowledge the validity and value of existing spaces as a researcher, the research community as represented in my supervisors were more willing to entertain the changing ways and changing spaces I have been advocating.

Through researching, that is simultaneously growing and walking the path, leaders who are changing meaning make the space for other spaces to meet and share their similarities and differences. The practice of suspension in dialogue, for example, creates a moratorium on discussion and opens the way for distinctions to coexist. In the dialogue of coming to share meaning, there is the orderly dynamism of being alive and aware of participation. As Reason (1994b, p.31) suggests, life in between, in the evolving interstitial spaces is exciting:

Every thesis calls forth in some sense its antithesis, and the play between these is a flowing, changing, interactive pattern that arises, moment to moment, as a dynamic process that grows out of the tension of contradiction. This 'in between' is usually much more interesting and important than the static structure of polarised extremes (Watts, 1963).

Schratz and Walker (1995) add that human thinking generalises too readily. Just as we are ready to make comfortable compartments or spaces, we are ready to be bland and apathetic in one-size-fits-all thinking. Schratz and Walker (1995, p.105) believe that 'a key function for research is to slow

down or even block this process.’ They encourage research that resists closure, that scrutinises and searches; in other words, that is uncomfortable and ambiguous because there are no spaces to hide. The researcher does not engage in either ‘*us against you*’ balkanisation or ‘*we’re with you*’ melting into the crowd, so to speak. I agree with Schratz and Walker’s position in that researching must be considered an unfinished work space for leaders; a space for dealing with the difficult (whether it be difference or similarity) and of celebrating the connections, such as the all important relationships of participation; and mostly, a space in which there is the potential for changing meaning. In this, I support Treleaven’s (1994, p.141) view of the changing research space:

...my interest lay in facilitating the development of a listening space in which... participants themselves would shape the inquiry, so that appropriate structures and processes would unfold over time: ‘I don’t have a plan which I carry out, step by step. I move step by step and the design takes shape, with no image of the final form’ (Stevens, 1970:118).

Leaders, thus, have the challenge of changing the spaces of researching towards changing meaning. The question then goes begging of where and when to find the interesting, important and incongruous in-between spaces of changing while living on the edge of possibility.

To me, the breathing space for leaders researching a changing meaning comes, as does all change, from within. In reconceptualising the research space, leaders need first to perceive time and space in another way, more in tune with t’ai chi which ‘emphasizes the essence of change rather than time, and the essence of relations rather than space’ (Liao, 2000, p.120). In the active language used herein, I think of changing as a process of ‘timing’ and relating as of ‘s-*pacing*’. The dimensions of space/time - as relational processes like *timing* and *spacing* rather than fixed entities - are not absolute, as Einstein showed, and not relative, as quantum mechanics later demonstrated (Bohm, 1987). They are malleable and open to reconfiguration by those who participate in their making. Leaders have the opportunity for changing the meaning of space/time. For example, Hock (1998b) talks of the

apparent compression of time and events, with technology enabling what feels like better than real time transfer of information. I look at this slightly differently in that time measurement is consistent, but the quantity of events and communications that can happen in a given unit has vastly increased. This gives the impression of foreshortening time. To me, separated consciousness has compressed more of what we do into what we believe are fixed units of time so that everything seems to happen so fast; so fast that '*change*' is disembodied and apparently leads us instead of we, as embodied mind, leading change. The structural, outer dimension change described herein, for example, is seen as apart from the minds, hearts and bodies of those driving it. Space/time seems to have no relation to human being. However, what leaders of a participatory consciousness do in action inquiry is loosen the bonds of time by knowing it differently, for example, as Csikszentmihalyi's (1992) integrated flow. Leaders who are changing meaning might live *in* space/time instead of *for* it. Space/time is the field of researching in which they are alive.

For such leaders, human being is closely related to space/time: these leaders' beings are integral to it. They understand themselves as processes of timing and spacing rather than fixed entities. Any principle ordering such relational instead of fixed space/time must therefore concern the quality of relationship. How we use and what we make of our space/time together determines what that space/time is like. Josselson (1996, p.156) talks of 'participating together in the space between' and advocates that, 'we must take time for the unpressured telling of our stories one to the other.' This is because the quality, as opposed to the quantity, of relationships develops with process. For example, collegiality amongst leaders and fellow staff members emerges with developing trust; it does not occur simply through formal positions such as being assigned to the same school. Senge (1995) suggests developing interrelatedness through conversation and community, while Duck (1994, p.xiv,3) perceptively makes the link between space/time and relationship:

...relationships are solidly based in the ways in which we represent the world to ourselves and to other people, using dialogues, conversations, and talk. ...For me relationships are continually unfolding and in need of perpetual responsive action and construction.

...the creation and maintenance of a relationship are continual processes of mutual comprehension and transformation through the agencies of meaning and talk.

The creation and maintenance of relationship is an interesting way for leaders to consider ‘measuring’ space/time. The creative space might normally be filled with activity, but there might also be co-existent time for ‘emptiness’ to contemplate the relational process itself; thus is meaning made. Dreher (1996) believes that such empty space is essential to ongoing creativity and to orderliness that is responsive. Walsh (1997, p.297) sees making this time in between as a leader’s challenge: ‘My challenge as the leader... is to do everything I can to hold open a space in which a community of growth and self-discovery can flourish for everyone.’ If quality of relationship is the measure of space/time for leaders, their changing space of researching must order itself around relating. In other words, if connecting the inner and outer dimensions in self and others is primary in changing meaning, leaders will make a research space/time to accommodate participants’ activity and contemplation. In the project of the research herein, a design challenge was to do just this: to make time in the participating leaders’ busy lives to create a new space of changing meaning. It was sought to alter the timing and spacing of their lives to enable their participation. To do this, a virtual space of researching was used to create real relationship.

The Virtual Space Of Researching:

In terms of what has been said above about changing space of researching in terms of being relational, it may seem an oxymoron to now raise the possibility of a virtual space of researching: surely virtual space has no

reality, no real opportunity for relationship on a truly human scale. Leaders changing meaning, I suggest, are able to perceive in a different way and can entertain the potentials of virtual space as a valid space for real researching and relating. I believe that virtual space can embody humanity as much as face to face relationship. Language, for example, can represent meaning and dialogue can develop shared meaning equally well in virtual and concrete media. True, the quality of cues and clues to relating, such as distinctions of similarity and difference in body language and verbal nuance, are different in virtual space but no less useful in determining and sharing meaning. For example, through my experience in emailing lists as part of the pilot for this research, and in the research project itself, I have found that cues such as frequency of mailing, frequency and speed of initiation and response, time of mailing, sentence structure and length, grammar, spelling, choice of language and degree of formality in forms all contribute to the nuances of communication, giving very personalised flavours to the shared space. This experience is confirmed by other researchers. Howland (2000, in Lipnack and Stamps, 2000, p.87) argues, for example:

... you can get signals from e-communication about how people are doing in the same way you can from physical body language. ... We realized that you can see it. The same way we get voice tone changes in spoken language, you can see it in sentence structure. The speed of response or lack thereof is another indicator of where a person's coming from.

To me, researching in virtual space involves a kind of remote embodiment or distributed humanity in which there are personality and meaning clues once-removed from face to face meeting, altogether little different from telephone calls, writing letters or works of art. An important thing is that people make the time - adjust the *timing* of their time - to communicate. The actual nature of the space is less relevant than the existence of the space itself in which to relate: the *spacing* of people is also important. In the project of the research herein, using an emailing list for dialogue enabled leaders to choose a time for relating in a space between the normal spaces of their lives. For example, one participant was an early riser and used the

time before the family awoke to make a space of relationship with other participants through writing and replying to email. Another was a night owl who made time for 'being there' after the business of the day was done. Away from the outer personas and pressures of work and family, these participants were able to engage in truth-making with others at an inner level that was both raw and deep.

Interestingly, Lipnack and Stamps (2000) see the possibility of virtual trust developing from this humanising of virtual space. I believe this is possible as such colonisation of virtual space brings relationship through multiple, complementary dimensions. For example, the virtual space of the project in this research encouraged risk taking because it was not face-to-face while on the other hand, it also made participants vulnerable because they were exposing parts of themselves not normally shown in the outer world. A high degree of mutual trusting was involved in the inner work of changing meaning, but the reward was that virtual trust in the inner dimension soon became very real in the outer dimension as well. In one case, it changed the nature of the work relationship between two participants. David Sibbet (2000, in Lipnack and Stamps, 2000, p.69) says that 'we're recreating the complexity of the natural world in cyberspace and re-embracing deep, social archetypes.' Lipnack and Stamps (2000, p.84) themselves add that virtual teams, that is teams working in virtual space:

...possess human capital in their members and social capital among their members. They utilize physical capital that is outside people through their meeting facilities and communication infrastructures. They also generate knowledge capital amongst people:

- Inside, who have their own corporate memories and shared cognitive models.*
- Outside, where information is shared in commonly accessible databases.*
- Between one another, as they connect networks and pools of knowledge together while developing enduring relationships.*

Here again the inner and outer are working together in multiple layers, within and amongst people and resources. The relationships can be deep and rich enough for an ecological trust to develop in a space that has lost its sterility and become real for human beings. I agree with Sibbet in that I

believe that virtual space can become a natural human habitat. For leaders, there are thus *ways and ways* of facilitating human touch through researching and the diversity that includes virtual space brings an increasing opportunity for and degree of ‘time to be with’, something that is so often missing in the too-busy physical world.

In using written email as the dialogue carrier in this research, it is proposed that virtual space, or cyberspace, may be a viable solution for leaders in creating the breathing space for time to be with, being in between the more frequented times and spaces of everyday life whilst still entangled in it. As I have argued earlier, I regard such interstitial space as real, as a valid and truthful and even expansive place for human relating. After Bohm’s (1988) thoughts, this is unfolding boundless space, enfolded by bounded human consciousness into a liveable place. The now common-place email, a representative of virtual communication and so often seen as adding another layer of busi-ness, offers potential for making new spaces of human habitation. The leader researching changing ways of meaning realises this and may utilise the humble email and other forms of virtual communication in co-joining the inner and outer dimensions through relationship. The growth of professional communities online is witness to this.

Email could be seen as an asynchronous (Phillips, 1995) space of self-other relating, a space to ‘talk’ independent of time, with Lanham (1993, in Phillips, 1995) actually seeing it as an oral medium, a point with which I agree from experience. There is the immediacy of people just talking and making meaning together, rather than being removed and consciously composing as in writing. Even more reflective and stream-of-consciousness email talk has a flow that defies the normal conventions of writing: the tool of communication is largely invisible - below the level of consciousness - as the participants relate to one another. People in dialogue rarely compose their language consciously as they are focused on the meaning moving through and email, as spoken word, is a medium of dialogue. Therefore, it

must also be understood as a space of relationship. In the project of the research herein, for example, shared meaning was constructed through email dialogue and silence - an absence of initiating or responding to emails - played a role in that meaning making just as silence does as a form of relationship in face-to-face talk. Reality could be said to have existed in the spaces between the words: it was as if silence witnessed the meaning made through the dialogue. Email, then, as dialogue of talking or of writing can make virtual space creative and relational. For leaders, such space in-between and the relationships that develop in it can foster changing ways of meaning.

Even if hard-headedly considered an unreal medium, that is, a simulation not constructed directly from first principles (Rafe in Turkle, 1996) through using the senses, I believe the process of emailing focused on exploring developmental issues amongst a group of self-leaders can allow genuine and even therapeutic (Turkle, 1996) self-other, inner-outer relationship to develop through playing with words of thought and feeling; through the 'push' and 'pull' of meaning being generated through dialogical exchanges. Moreover, I think email as used in this research *is* using what Taoists call 'original principle' (Liao, 2000), being shaped by interdimensional yin/yang flows towards the *t'ai chi* - or 'grand ultimate' - of shared meaning. The use of 'words only' implies that meaning must be negotiated in email. Language can only represent meaning and is thus always an approximation. In email dialogue, words are exchanged in a process of allowing meaning to emerge; of polishing meaning from the raw material of language. We have seen that apparently bland, flat words actually bring multiple tracers of the participants, as noted earlier, and meaning is found in and across dimensions. For example, tracers like silence, phrase length and frequency of contribution can 'speak' much about a participant. Further, through the electronic trace of email, that is, its re-visitability and recycling of dialogue through digitally recording talk, differentiation (Turkle, 1996) in self and / or other may occur through patterns and habits becoming apparent. As Rafe

(in Turkle, 1996) points out, simulation may deepen understanding of complex phenomena. In being able to 'witness' the record of email over time, participants in email dialogue may be able to 'see' in deeper ways. This was the case in the email of the project herein: being able to reflect on recorded talk enabled more in-depth contemplation and highlighted patterns of thought. Email might be considered as an unreal and simulative medium but it can make spaces of real relationship because it supports both doing and being. It involves social activity in exchange but also allows individual contemplation. Thus, complex meaning can be made and shared as outer and inner dimensions are inter-relate. In the *time-out* of cyberspace, as with any novel space, there is the potential for self-other relationship to diversify and increase in depth and richness. As a new space expands, patterns of meaning grow to fill it. In the project herein, for example, an interstitial space was created through email and participants filled it with their shared patterns of meaning - meanings that there were no opportunities to develop in their normal lives.

With opportunity, however, there always lies a danger. A virtualisation of self and other may occur in email relationships when there is little conscious effort at grounding, that is, connecting body, mind and heart in truth-making. An effort to acknowledge constraints as well as growth potentials can help avoid the disembodiment of inner and outer dimensions being separated. To me, any space can be a danger if not integrated with the whole. Virtual space and email are another dimension of human existence, but we couldn't live solely in either, just as we could not live solely in any one space or dimension in the physical world. Human beings have multiple realities, but such complexity only coheres and integrates if there are metapatterns - patterns of patterns - as Bateson (1988) suggests. This complexity of human being is probed in the virtual field by Turkle (1996, p.24) who insightfully notes that 'we have used our relationships with technology to reflect on the human.' Through real-in-the-moment simulation and role play, new and changing self-other relationships can be explored.

These may be fact or fantasy. That is, they may be closer to real / inner dimension self with the everyday persona removed, or they may unrealistic, an opportunity to try out alternative outer dimension personas, the ‘many within selves’ (Turkle, 1996, p.256). In the project of this research, participants became more *real* to both themselves and others because, in coming to trust each other, they showed more ‘sides’ of themselves to each other than they otherwise would in various relationships. For example, one participant shared not only her professional self as leader, researcher and manager, but her self as mother, daughter, partner, dramatist and high achiever. The participants became more aware of their many-selves, both inwardly known and outwardly projected, and sometimes made alternative choices as to which ‘real’ was most valid and truthful for them. The changing meaning was sometimes painful and at other times joyful, but nevertheless demonstrated that expanding the space expanded the self into other because participants became aware of the constraints they had formerly chosen. Following the example above, increasing the space in which to be known enabled her to allow herself to be known in more ways. It is not likely that she would talk about the pain of youth suicide in the office, but in the space the participants created, she felt able to share this pain with others and find empathy. Importantly, I believe the journey succeeded in changing because of its multiple nature: multiple meanings and layers becoming a shared meaning. There was no run-away virtualisation because of the grounding and metapatterning amongst the participants - the patterns that held individual lives enlarged to become patterns that held all. Their ‘flights’ in the virtual world were balanced by ‘fights’ in the material world. They ensured that both inner and outer were honored and were playing for real.

With the aid of the virtual such as email, self can be more fluid, distributed and asynchronous while still being grounded and holistic. To look more into the nature of the virtual but grounded-in-reality self in the process of changing meaning, I refer to Turkle (1996, p.49) who points out that:

In simulation, identity can be fluid and multiple, a signifier no longer clearly points to a thing that is signified, and understanding is less likely to proceed through analysis than by navigation through virtual space.

While such virtual life creates a ‘permeable border between the real and the virtual’ (Turkle, 1996, p.246), Rheingold (in Turkle, 1996) believes that this very permeability is necessary to any development of self-other community online. As pointed out above, the subtle (inner dimension) needs to meet the superficial (outer dimension) for relationships in interstitial space to have any meaning and integrity:

To make a community work ‘at least some of the people [must] reach out through that screen and affect each other’s lives.’ (Rheingold in Turkle, 1996, p.246.)

I add that such touch may or may not be physical, but that it does make a difference in inner and outer lives. The leaders in the research project never managed to meet face to face, but they touched each other’s lives in ways that enabled a changing meaning. Significantly with regard to this, Turkle refers to Dibbell (1993, in Turkle, 1996, p.252), who notes that ‘meaning always lies in that gap’ [between virtual and real]. This gap is somewhat like the space of the participants in the project and somewhat like living on the edge of possibility: there are potentials which, in cohering inner and outer dimensions, bring both opportunity and danger. For the participants in the journey of the research herein, somewhere in their email space, integrating touch brought new meanings into their lives: these leaders were changing meaning. The participant in the example above, for instance, learnt that other mothers were similarly touched by youth suicide. The bond of empathy that developed and the sharing of knowledge and strategies amongst these participants strengthened them for the future.

With such exploration into meaning through an expansion and integration of dimensions, inner and outer, virtual and real; with such a changing and

unfixed self-other, a consideration of responsibility is needed. As Turkle (1996, p.254) explains:

In the physically embodied world, we have no choice but to assume responsibility for our body's actions. ... The possibilities inherent in virtuality, on the other hand, may provide some people with an excuse for irresponsibility, just as they may enable creative expressions that would otherwise have been repressed. ... The challenge is to integrate some meaningful personal responsibility in virtual environments. Virtual environments are valuable as places where we can acknowledge our inner diversity. But we still want an authentic experience of self.

As self comes to acknowledge embeddedness in relatedness (Gergen, 1991 in Turkle, 1996; Josselson, 1996) and knows other as an aspect of self, multiplicity within identity engenders responsibility for all parts of the self-other, while not taking responsibility from any one part (Gibb, 1991). As Lifton (1993 in Turkle, 1996, p.258) suggests, self 'is capable, like Proteus, of fluid transformations but is grounded in coherence and a moral outlook. It is multiple but integrated. You can have a sense of self without being one self.' The process / experience of shared self, such as the research project provided, gives opportunity to explore both the richness and responsibility of self-other within and among a group. The members of the project group, while respecting personal boundaries and self-responsibility, formed a kind of mutual responsibility. With the youth suicide example, the mothers of the group assumed a shared responsibility for prevention, such as in listening more carefully to all young people. In another case, a shared responsibility was to each other; that is, to 'being there' for each other. Turkle (1996, p.261, 263) concludes that:

As we sense our inner diversity we come to know our limitations. We understand that we do not and cannot know things completely, not the outside world and not ourselves.

Each of us in our own way is incomplete. Virtual spaces may provide the safety for us to expose what we are missing so that we can begin to accept ourselves as we are. ... We can use it [life on the screen] as a space for growth. Having literally written our online personae into existence, we are in a position to be more aware of what we project into everyday life. Like the anthropologist returning home from a foreign culture, the voyager in virtuality can return to a real world better equipped to understand its artifices.

For the participants in the project herein, their email journey invited the risk of exposing self but at the same time offered the opportunity to get to know the self and others at a deeper level. The journey was fascinating for these leaders not so much in trying out virtual personas as in becoming more aware of the multiple personas they projected in their daily lives. Through their sharing of meaning, they became more able to consciously choose how they wanted to construct themselves in various settings. Further, as Turkle points out, they were better able to reflect on the personas that others presented and this enabled choices in how to relate to others. Interestingly, Phillips (1995, no page), in concluding a treatise on learning through technology, asked the question that Turkle has sought to answer, that is, 'How can we use computers to facilitate human contact?' I support Turkle's thoughts, as introduced above, and suggest that email dialogue as a virtuality / reality continuum provides an interstitial space/time for inner and outer to meet and grow, thus to be a research medium of transformative, changing meaning for leaders. In this research, an online project was conducted to study leaders in changing meaning and this study forms the latter part of this dissertation.

4. Researching The Leading Way Of Changing Meaning

Introduction:

To achieve integrity - that is to be valid to those involved in its making, including those who are participating as audience/readers - the theoretical framework, the design and the method of this research needed to reflect its developing ethos of changing meaning. In short, I needed to exemplify the leading way I espoused. I needed *research-as-design* (Kelly, 2003) through creating distinction and thus evolution as the work progressed. In this, I had to faithfully live a generative and transformative *way* to give credibility to the work. This meant stretching myself as a scientist, a teacher and as a leader to stretch the limits of research practice. This involved developing and fostering a new research space-time; one that reflected the participants in being created by them. The goal of design was thus not to challenge existing research practices but to support an emergent practice.

Much as Lévy (1997) spoke of human spaces as co-existent and interpenetrating layers, I believe research spaces can co-exist, with juxtaposition giving the potential for Bateson-like abduction. In a changing way, I believe many new spaces will flower, each valid and truthful for those who live in them. These will generate multiple and integrated ways of knowing. Therefore, research *practice* is best seen as *practise*, as *being* and *becoming* in a leading way of changing meaning. I do not research to study what is, but as a leader, strive to *search and search again* to seek ahead and to participate in what might become as meaning changes. For example, another avenue of research I am involved in is a program aimed at connecting body, mind and heart in young people. I participated as a student in this program, but then my leader's task was to teach that program through the lenses of my experience as a martial artist and my knowledge of *my* students' needs. I could not teach it as I received it: it was

necessary to the leader in me to bring an edge of possibility to researching and developing it further. I could not adopt meaning; I had to make it anew to know. Thus, in my world, knowledge is not received but constructed out of the past and the future. My present is less a static construction than a living entity grounded in experience but focused in movement. In practising research, I am performing change through transforming meaning. The research herein, then, may seem different but it is intentionally so to create a difference. As with the example, the project existed on an edge of possibility as the participating leaders performed their own personalised and changing meaning.

Both Reason and Bateson (1972, in Reason, 1988) see today's most important task as learning to think in a new holistic and interconnected way. Reason (1988, p.231) emphasises research as a task through which to *be* in a new way and claims that 'human inquiry and the development of a collaborative consciousness is one way towards a sane human existence.' Being in a new way has been the my task in the theoretical framework and project of the research herein. Researching in a new way offers us the path and potential of changing towards a participative humanity simply because *searching again* brings another chance to recreate human being. Every time we look and participate again, we have the opportunity to remake our meaning and thus ourselves. Reason's (1994b, p.2) thesis is that 'participative forms of inquiry are one potentially critical linchpin in the transformation of consciousness through which we in the West are moving and need to move.' Consciously participating in changing meaning is, to me, what life's research is all about. In leading the self, we have excluded ourselves from the magic of 'abracadabra' (I create as I speak) for too long. We have relied on given, outer structures to define our *being* and have neglected the unpredictable 'nowness' of inner meaning *becoming* reality. In explicating the thoughts of his co-researcher Heron, Reason's (1994b, p. 36) words evoke a mystical sense of belonging in the world:

...once we allow ourselves to return to a direct experience of feeling the presence of the world, we can re-vision our way of thinking and thus change our experience of perception.

In the context of this research, this means ensuring that participants are able to move into an inner-and-outer, both and together, actively and reflectively balancing way of thinking/feeling that changes perception and cognition from fixed *mindsets* to mutable *mindmaps*; that changes a given *being* into a fluid *becoming*. The primary outcome of participative research is ‘a change in the lived experience of those involved in the inquiry’ (Reason, 1994a, p.333). I can only count my research a success if it touches the lives of those who participate; if it changes the meaning of their being and becoming in some significant and positive way. In short, participants’ *searching and searching again* should bring changing ways of seeing and witnessing, and thus enacting their lives. Thus, in the project herein, the participants themselves needed to judge the success of their journey of changing meaning and were provided with opportunities to provide critical feedback.

In this changing way of researching, I have had to learn the survival skills that Schratz and Walker (1995, p.4) list for social researchers:

Being intellectually agile in moving from one way of thinking and talking about research to another; maintaining commitment and enthusiasm when pressure is being applied by those who perceive what you are doing as threatening; sustaining some concern for the process when the demand is for a mundane product; finding ways to incorporate those who make evaluation demands as participants in the program rather than accepting their view of themselves as consumers of it; thinking of research as providing space for reflection rather than as a means for extending the scope of coercion...

Developing these skills has been necessary as taking a lead in researching a changing meaning has not been an easy path; but then no worthwhile change is. In coming to a Buddhist-like middle way of working with the prevalent culture, I feel I have left behind the heart and soul of the work - its *esprit* - to gain acceptance in the academic world, but it has been the price needed for a voice to speak. In writing this dissertation, the spiritual

dimension is lacking in the words, but it was present all the same in the experience and journey that has been this research. For me, the project has been a leading way of changing meaning in which it has been a privilege to work with the participant leaders. Their spirituality has some chance to 'speak' through quotations, particularly of poetry, later in the data and analysis sections. Addelson (1991, p.30) argues that as researchers, 'we should acknowledge metaphysical commitments as part of the content of scientific understanding' and, in my holistic world of seeing and witnessing as described in the theoretical framework, I would suggest that we can do no other. Mystery and science are equally part of human being and to negate either is to be less than human. As participant observers who create reality in and by what we see, what we see is distinguished by who we are. Every journey of researching, therefore, is a unique way of knowing. There is a ghost in the machine, so to speak, and for every outer structure we project there exists an inner meaning-maker who performs it. The magicians in the case of the project created herein have been a group of five leaders in education, including myself as facilitator. Together, we made a space of researching in which to explore a leading way of changing meaning through email dialogue.

The following three sections outline the methodology crafted for this study such that it could support a leading way of changing meaning. First, the method section examines how this inquiry is situated with regard to the field of qualitative research methodologies. Second, the design section examines the parameters that were used in shaping the inquiry. Third, the project section outlines the process of how it was conducted.

Methodology:

Methodology is *the way of the journey* (Polkinghorne, 1983). *Method* can be defined as a 'going-after' of a journey and *logos* as the principle guiding the journey. In other words, *method* and *logos* concern the process and reasoning of the research journey. Thus methodology is about 'the examination of possible plans to be carried out - the journeys to be undertaken' (Polkinghorne, 1983, p.5). Polkinghorne suggests that the methodology of a research study is unfinished business: it is about the possible and probable, but leaves the way open to what may become. It is in the very nature of searching again and again that the way forward has a distinctive logos or guiding principle, while at the same time is open and cumulatively defined by iterative cycles of learning as the searching goes on. In the project herein, the logos was to explore the changing meaning in a group of leaders. The paths that journey took were chosen by the participants as the *searching and searching again* progressed. The leading edge of consciousness in participants is thus continually being invented as an inquiry progresses. New ways of perceiving and conceiving unfold as participants learn their way through enfolding new meanings. This might be likened to an ocean wave: there is a leading edge on a rolling wave. What comprises that edge is perpetually changing: always water, but never the same water. In the case of this research, the logos of the leading way of changing meaning, as developed earlier in the theoretical framework of this study, was the guiding light for a changing way of research. However, it was to be the participants who provided that lead, as will be demonstrated in examining the project data.

The research was *a journey of the way* for me too. I was a participant long before the others joined me. I saw all around me in my work with adults and children that the inner self needed to connect with outer actions, and felt the need to support that. For example, I knew a leader who was so affected by what he saw as injustice towards children that he developed two parts to

himself to try to cope: the outer side who selflessly gave to others and the inner side who felt incredible pain because others' hurting hurt him. This person was an intuitive feeling type who had yet to learn to process his feelings and apply detachment and thinking judgement to them. He suffered from heart disease, physically and emotionally. I saw that leaders were the obvious choice to invite to partake of a journey; they, most of all, needed that space to make the inner-outer connection because I believed they could not lead in an energising and healthy way without it. In addition, as put forward in the theoretical framework of this study, self-leadership is a worthy aspiration for any human being. I talked with many others through their written word in several media. In my *trial* years (see project section to follow), I talked with a range of people first hand (face to face), second hand (letters and email) and third hand (through published works and sometimes subsequent correspondence) about leading a changing meaning and found, in writing a series of 'gyres' about these interactions, that meaning did go round. Old insights were rediscovered in new ways; people did want to touch each other beyond the everyday. As one commentator in an email list conversation reflected on talk about meaning, 'It will be a while before I am adept at 'dancing' in conversation with a group, and I want to so very much to do so with you.' In short, he wanted to learn the art of making meaning go round together, as in dialogue. I found hope that humanity can intentionally change meaning, be creative of it, and so in my research I needed a responsive method for such a *way*.

As might be expected, given the emergent quality of the research I proposed, finding a methodological homebase was difficult. In studying Denzin and Lincoln's 1994 handbook on research methods as an authoritative compendium on qualitative methods, their 'fifth moment' in research practice where we are between 'stories', with the old no longer being adequate and the new not yet in place became an important lynchpin in my study. As indicated previously, the emergent moment or space will be multi-voiced and multi-knowing, and as such, the methodology for this study

became part of this emergence. Thus, in being creative more than responsive, the participants brought new and distinctive voices and ways of knowing to their research space. What developed was beyond the disengagement of positivism and post-positivism, and not a hybrid of critical theory and constructivism, but a new approach. Research practice in these latter frames was primarily concerned with the past and present, whereas I wanted to be focused on the emergent future in the now. In leading to a changing meaning, I did want participants to tell their stories; to connect their inner and outer dimensions to increase their critical awareness and the transformative action of who they were as leaders. I did want them to understand the construction of their leadership, both as a person and a professional practitioner. More than these objectives, however, I wanted them to know their meaning as fluid and changeable and always being created. Thus, the philosophical hermeneutics (Schwandt, 1994) and dialectics of interpretation and constructivism were not enough, even though I anticipated 'passionate participants' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.112). Neither was the intellectual dialogue of critical theorists enough: passion has heart and I wanted our dialogue to *make* meaning into a changeling, transforming the embodied whole of participants through using mind and body unified. In these ways, I wanted participation to less be about critiquing and reconstructing what is and has been than about a creative liberating of what might be. Thus, the methodology developed for this study needed to allow this and so it was open to change with the progress of the work. For example, I found at times that the more intellectual dialogue around a theme turned into metaphorical story-telling, poetry or image to recreate the inner into the outer adequately. One participant commented that sometimes we were like a self-help group, but that was fine because we were making the connections people needed to be able to go forward.

Participatory research and action inquiry is regarded by Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p.206) as the most humanistic of research traditions in that it

‘attempts to make qualitative research more humanistic, holistic, and relevant to the lives of human beings. This worldview sees human beings as cocreating their reality through participation, experience, and action.’ In this active and people-centred research method, I identified in particular with the approaches of Bateson (1988) and of Reason (1994a, 1994b) and his colleagues, as examined earlier in the section on the changing way of researching. A participative action inquiry which creates the *pattern that connects* held integrity for the aims of the proposed investigation and promised to be the best way for leaders to explore the research questions set for this study. It enabled them to talk about *real things*, as participant Peter said in this study, and to lead to a changing meaning.

However, large group ‘participatory action research’, as a particular example of this approach, seemed to belong in the realm of the critical theorists. ‘Co-operative inquiry’ seemed too many-sided, as it involves negotiating amongst persistent power bases, and thus lies in the realm of the reconstructionists. In the self-leadership proposed in this study, the inquiry was to be more about reclaiming personal power. The living-in-the-moment nature of ‘action science and action inquiry’ was a better homebase because the process of self-study in action cultivates a broader awareness and flexibility in behaviour (Reason 1994a, after Torbert, 1991). This, at least, implied a methodology in which meaning might move. I took on the ethos, if not the techniques *per se*, of action inquiry chiefly because it is ‘a simultaneous study and transformation of the present - a study that transforms the present’ (Torbert, 1991, p.228). Torbert specifically identifies and links several dimensions of conversation with corresponding territories of experience to ‘sidestep one’s own and others’ defensive responses to the painful process of self-reflection’ (Reason, 1994a, p.332). This method thus seeks to increase the congruence between what we do and how we talk about and understand that doing. It is rather ‘in your face’, so to speak, and needs participants of some personal strength and resilience to be able to

confront themselves, to consider the possible gap between their outer actions and inner meanings, and to act to close that gap.

While I agreed with Torbert's (1991) aim of widening attention - or witnessing - intentionally and cultivating a living awareness - or seeing - in the midst of real-time action, I proposed a softer route of shared personal exploration through dialogue cycles. This approach would actually ask more of participants than dealing with a new consciousness of perhaps jarring and oppositional incongruence between their inner and outer worlds. I was after the subtler insights that juxtaposing inner and outer dimensions in a trusting atmosphere would bring. In line with my world view, I didn't want fractured meaning, but moving, developing, holistic meaning: coherence was my goal more than congruence; a *pattern that connects* more than just a pattern. Specifically, I sought to facilitate a changing meaning and a changing way of doing that would simultaneously unfold and enfold into each other. I wanted a method of transformative challenge and support that demanded the trust of surrendering personal, ego-based power and of becoming part of an inquiring whole. Each part needed to be disinterested in defending self and committed to extending self into other such that each identity became more distinct through appreciating one's own and others' similarities and differences. I needed a truly *participative inquiry* in which those involved participated more fully and awarefully in themselves as well as in others. The inner and outer dimensions of being and becoming needed to extend from a personal to a communal self that was negotiated through dialogue. Together, I believed we could stretch and transform the boundaries of our meaning as leaders.

Fisher and Torbert speak of action inquiry as 'behaviour through which persons build the process of learning, which can make possible transformation for themselves and their organizations' (1995, p.12). Action inquiry, then, had potential for changing people *and* structures and for addressing both inner and outer dimensions as this study proposed. Fisher

and Torbert further speak of the challenge and the risk of research played out through real lives and real relationships. In this study, then, participants needed to be volunteers who could willingly accept the risk of an open exploration. Fisher and Torbert also imply support through communities of inquiry where participants become good friends who ‘*explicitly* test their differences and become *more different* from one another - stranger and stranger - even as they also develop shared aims, respect and love at the deepest level’ (Fisher & Torbert, 1995, p.230). This was in line with a commitment in this study of changing meaning: that of distinction creating difference while at the same time fostering relationship. To sum up, participative action inquiry was a useful approach in the present research, but the actual process was still something that would grow with the participants during the project. Thus it came about that an email *dialogue* of changing meaning was employed as a tool of inquiry in which participants did more than ‘telling’ to understand. Together they were actively ‘knowing’ (Richardson, 1994) through exploring, discovering and changing in a process that I considered was *research on a roll*. In creating a virtual space of embodiment where doing and being could come together and where body, mind and heart were involved in cycles of coming to know, the participants led themselves on a journey of researching changing meaning.

Design Considerations:

Studying what might be and become, more than what is and was, has meant designing research as a living entity/organism. Buddhists suggest that we should live more fully in the present, appreciating the moment. However, this moment of presence is always changing. It is always in a living process of balancing yin and yang energies and always seeking that dynamic balance of the orderly self-organising system. Research has traditionally looked from the present into the past, teasing the past apart in order to understand this present. I propose instead that re-search or *searching again*

can also seek the future so that we may live more fully in the present, aware that we are made of our past experiences but are in the process of growing who we will become. I think of it as *research on a roll*. Much as our body's energy centres, or chakras, spin in the same direction as the t'ai chi tu, research on a roll involves weaving energy threads together into an emergent, higher energy and an holistic consciousness. Such research spins *patterns that connect* in participants. Thus, my research design needed to be open to the influence of the future while the participants were in the process of creating it. The project needed the strength and passion of ideals - a broad stroke of dreaming the future - to begin but then to propose little else until the participating leaders walked their path, searching again for what their changing meaning might become. Like Treleaven (1994) in initiating a project not dissimilar in nature to the study I proposed, I didn't have a step by step plan to follow. Rather, I took some tentative steps and then took many more with the participants, sensing that the design of the path would develop more clearly as we walked the journey. In initially planning a path that provided opportunity for the participants' energies to interweave in patterns of their making, I believed that together we would design the research and redesign ourselves in the process.

To begin with, the inherent design principles or ideals (see *italicised* words below) were mine, borne of the changing way of researching emerging from my theoretical framework. Nevertheless, the principles were recognised at some level and accepted by the other participants since they responded to my invitation to 'changing meaning as an opportunity for adventure' and voluntarily elected to go the journey, uncertain as it was. In the initial dialogues with prospective participants, it seemed that such recognition acted as a kind of self-selector in participants, indicating a certain phase or cycle of personal development in which the ideals made sense and could be committed to. In responding to the research proposal, they appreciated the ethos of the research questions and acknowledged the necessity of their full-*self participation* in exploring personal leading, changing and meaning in

that the success of the journey would depend on their qualities. They were interested in deepening themselves and welcomed the opportunity to connect with others beyond the superficial in *constructing* the research and their changing meaning as leaders as they went. As with Torbert's action inquiry, this participative inquiry was a challenge in personal development and appealed to those interested in further integrating their personalities (Reason, 1994a). The *open* nature of the research caused some frissons in that participants were unused to this almost intangible kind of research design and unaccustomed to *generative* research that sought to study the living process of change rather than to report on existent states. For example, they were more accustomed to empirical forms of research and found it a novel challenge to be invited to have input into designing a study around themselves. However, through what was perhaps their ego-strength and emotional resilience, they appeared to become more comfortable, or at least familiar with, the ambiguity and to sense the opportunity for difference. As participant Doug commented:

I don't really know what to expect out of this project or what, if anything, I am expected to bring to it. That concerns me but I'll get over it. I do know that with Sandy involved it will be a time for us to reflect and as such I look forward to it - time permitting. Doug 21-5-00

Faith and *trust* in each other were involved: my faith that we could make this path without any formula, and others' trust that *the way* would be their way through the terrain mapped by the focus on leading and changing meaning, and that I, as facilitator, would not lead them astray or waste their personal and professional investment in the journey. A key factor in this initial mutual respect was that I knew each of the participants to some degree in their professional capacity and in their personal lives, although most did not know each other. I had worked in some previous context with each of them and, on the basis of this prior experience, they chose to trust me. This indicated to me that participants in this kind of participative action inquiry may prefer at least some comfort with each other in the outer dimension before *risking* the inner dimension. However, it also indicated a

certain state of self- development and strength in self that participants could be *vulnerable* and come to trust others with very little initial foundation; also that they were not precious of themselves and could take risks with virtual strangers. They were ready to reveal personal, momentary *truths* about themselves that showed a reflective personality and this bare honesty would enable *valid* researching for the participants. The fact that I already had knowledge of participants from other circumstances was a valuable cross-check on participants' contributions. Perhaps this indicates that some truth-testing, or storming, might be a phase through which new-to-each-other teams must travel and this would need to be a consideration in other studies which seek to replicate this design.

The eventual design that emerged reflected the ideals that initially shaped it but the study became a process and product of who the participants were as people. In aligning with these ideals, it may seem as though the participants were paragons - personally and professionally well-developed people who would not be in need of an inner-outer research journey. However, the study was designed to support leaders in changing meaning and thus I was appealing to those who were ready to lead further and deeper, both personally and professionally. By the nature of their willingness of participate and to participate fully, the people involved proclaimed themselves leaders. The study design would be successful if it involved those leaders in the making of the research, thus giving an embodied practise. Even at the outset, the participating leaders demonstrated a keenness and commitment to involvement:

...feel that I could certainly ride the wavelength with you and whoever else will be involved. I gather this involves more of a commitment, but feel ready to undertake that... not quite sure what will be involved, but is guaranteed to be interesting I'd say. Kris 16-2-00

I think the concept of the project is magic and it is like a gift to help me carve out some time for reflection and exploration before I succumb to becoming a unhappy technocrat! Jenny 16-3-00

I'd be happy to lend my support to your project... And yes, even though I don't have the time, but who needs sleep anyway; and I don't know how to do it, but it's always fun to learn new things; and I know I'm not good enough, but I've known that for a long time; so I'm in. For an interesting journey. And a bit of fun. And an opportunity to fill an imaginary space with talk about real things. Peter 2-5-00

Peter assumed the mantle of leading lyricist amongst the participants and, two months later, wrote some poetry that spoke of our embodiment in the research journey:

*It's still a wonder to have this conversation hanging in virtual space.
Available when needed, silently supporting.
It's like diving into the Noosa surf for the first wave of the summer...
a bit uncomfortable at first,
a shock of awareness of my whole being,
bracing...a thrilling reminder of my whole self
a sudden sharp sense of forgotten parts. Peter 20-7-00*

Towards the end of the project, Jenny was able to add these words to emphasise the grounding role of the research in her life in that the group's connection - virtually mediated though it was - gave her leading 'dance' a still point at the centre of a turning world (Eliot, 1963 in Duignan, 1997):

I can't describe it but I know it is really important ... more happens off the list than the words I send... the words are the tip of the iceberg but being in this group provides the stick for a lot of fairy floss in me that otherwise would float off and melt Jenny 16-9-00

I sought a design that would facilitate the development of a space in which participants could shape the inquiry; and this was achieved, as exemplified above, through their personal commitment to changing meaning.

Project Implementation:

The ‘trial years’ of this research, so-called because they were a trial of process but also a trial for me, were from its inception in 1997 to the commencement of the project at the beginning of 2000. I look back on them now as a melting pot time, in which a great variety of ingredients were brought together to shape the work. Under the auspices on an existing open mailing list in which I already participated (*spirit_at_work*), I was allowed informally to trial the methodology that was emerging for the project, and to try out some of ideas I thought participants in the project could explore as leaders changing meaning. Through negotiation with the list administrator and with the agreement of the list community, I was able to facilitate dialogue about ideas such as ‘self as leader/follower’ and ‘self as joy/pain’. I also interacted with an increasing number of critical friends through their written and lived work. These people ranged from book and web authors to academics, educators, and personal friends, and brought diverse perspectives on the one tripartite area: leading, changing and meaning. I asked their interest in participating in the eventual project, although some volunteered without being asked as the research interested them. For example, an organizational leadership author and consultant in the United States asked if he could be involved. In 1999, I cast the net more specifically in a bid for participants who might have the opportunity to meet face to face, believing that this would enhance the quality of the research experience. An email circular was sent to regional schools outlining the project and asking for expressions of interest from people who might like to participate. The rest of that year was another kind of trial for me, in changing supervisors and in rewriting the research proposal to something more formalised and academically appropriate.

Eventually, at the beginning the of next year (2000), I sent formal invitations (couched as *a challenge to adventure*) along with the research proposal to the nine leaders whom I considered might respond positively.

These were people whom I gauged, through interactions and responses to previous approaches, to have sufficient interest in the ideas and process of what I was putting forward that they might be motivated to make a commitment to the research project. Two were from the trial mailing list and lived in the United States, six were colleagues from varying fields in education (for example, corporate office, tertiary institution, schools) who had shown interest, and one was a school-based respondent to the circular. After a delay in obtaining university approval to proceed, I sent the seven Queensland-based leaders a revised timeline and a follow-up to my *challenge to adventure* in the form of 'reasons why not' (to participate) at the end of April to rekindle interest. One overseas invitee had already declined to participate and I felt the other would not respond because of changing personal circumstances. These 'reasons why not' seemed to prick each leader's conscience but I trusted they would understand that giving *reasons why not* (like 'I haven't got time') were often avoidance or denial actions (Brennan, 1993). I chose this approach because I was already aware that the uncertainty and unpredictability of open-ended research could evoke anxiety (Treleaven, 1994). However, I trusted in the altruistic motives and excitement of the prospective participants that they would support me (and themselves) through participating in the project. I also trusted that they could ride the ambiguity involved to face the fear of facing themselves - the prime 'reason why not' that had been suggested. This appeal yielded four acceptances from the colleagues group, giving the desired five participants with the inclusion of myself as facilitator. Following research into group function (for example, Lipnack and Stamps, 1997), five was seen as the optimal number for a small online group. With due appreciation of Treleaven's thought that the invitation phase is integral to the formation of the group, I then set up a closed mailing list, *changing-meaning*, under the auspices of Central Queensland University. The project proper commenced with few technical hitches in mid-May, 2000 and ended up running, formally at least, for nearly seven months (30 weeks) until the end of November that year.

Each of the four respondents was given an information sheet about the project and a consent form giving conditions and requesting confirmation of their voluntary participation. All were returned, giving a team comprising five white middle-class people, three females and two males. With all group members being employed by a state government's education department, Jenny worked in the corporate sector, heading up a research and development team, while all others were school-based. Kris was an itinerant teacher providing learning support across a circuit of several rural schools. Doug was deputy principal in a medium sized primary school in the same area, while I was teacher-librarian at that same school. Peter was a medical researcher who had moved into science teaching at a nearby high school and who was, at the time of the project, applying for a head of department position. While all were mature and experienced educators in mid-career, none were jaded or overly cynical, in my experience of them, and had sufficient personal motivation to change meaning that they were willing to join in.

In email-based introductions to the group, Kris (18-5-00) found the prospect of participation *'quite exciting'* as it was first time she'd been part of anything like this. She became our gardener: *'I love growing things, plants, pets, children, kids' self esteem, relationships and fungus in the back of the fridge too.'* She was moving into new areas of learning herself - such as t'ai chi and brain-gym - which she described as *'relevant and fascinating and challenging.'* To Kris, it was *'important to attend to the little things - people, jobs, changes - that are right on our own doorstep, before stepping out into bigger things.'* She took this literally and metaphorically, seeing herself as *'a gardener who does a lot of digging around in my own backyard - where there are always ongoing cycles of change, renewal and decline.'*

Peter (19-5-00) saw himself as *'still enrolled in the school of continuing life education, ...offering a still fresh view of the chaos in which I work'*. He

thought it was *'typical of men to define themselves by their achievements'*, so began with a *'first attempt at changing meaning'* by introducing himself through family relationships and recreational pursuits. He went on to say that his attitude to life was *'to act as a radical subverter of dominant paradigms. I am interested in building structures that respond to and generate diversity and change, while being aware that probably the only genuine way to influence change is by personal example.'* He concluded that *'it's good to be connected.'*

Doug (21-5-00) saw himself *'as having a number of roles in life including husband, father, lover, educator, coach, enforcer, instigator, problem solver, listener, amateur counsellor, friend, dreamer and a range of others.'* In my experience of him, Doug was a homebody who seamlessly carried his warm paternal nature into his work of supporting members of the school community to achieve their potential. Doug had some challenging life experiences in his younger years, but said that *'I have learnt so much from them that I can use in helping other people and myself that I wouldn't have it any other way.'* He saw himself as accepting responsibility for his life and pragmatically chose to learn from experience and move on.

Jenny (11-6-00) described herself as *'a seasoned bureaucrat'* who was *'deliberately seeking time to reflect on my work via this group.'* She felt *'a little changed out'* by workplace restructuring and *'was far more comfortable with the language of growth and development'* in the project. She said, *'I do have a resonance with change as it is dealt with in the Chinese Book of Changes - very diverse cycles where the ebb and flow and timing etc. are constant rhythms within unpredictability and diversity. Different from the strident yankee management literature's urgency and the fracturing discontinuities which assault us (me) in our/my workplaces.'*

As expected, the group's process and mood took many paths over the life of the project. To provide some initial form, I had proposed a schedule of

interaction within a week and a timeline of activity throughout the project as a guide, but we soon developed rhythms that suited our lives and who we were, as was possible in the interstitial and virtual time and space we had available to us. At the beginning, I proposed a theme-a-week plan (see below) to keep the team's dialogue rolling but within two weeks realised that I had to relax into a longer, more sinuous timeline to mould around and flow with the participants' lives as busy leaders. Keeping the notion of 'time and space between' in mind was very necessary for us to be able to proceed. Though I believed each participant was 'thirsty' for 'time out' (*a gift* in Jenny's words) to reflect and connect, a major challenge in these leaders' lives (and the reason for this project) was finding the time to 'drink'; that is, to have 'time out'. However, being self-leaders and recognising at some intuitive or conscious level that they needed to connect inner self and outer work in order to lead well, they were willing to 'carve out' time as Jenny put it, or go without sleep, as Peter suggested, to be 'connected'. Thus it was that, instead of a business-like, structured dialogue around a theme each week, followed by individual and shared weekend reflection and recapitulation, the team ended up weaving a rich and multi-stranded dialogue in which each theme ran its course and sometimes led into the next, with others (particularly 'leading') recurring time and again.

From my preparatory work for the project, I had developed an extensive list of possible themes for leaders to explore in changing meaning. These were framed as 'self as ...' topics (for example, 'self as participant', 'self as transformative') to assist participants in focusing on personal as well as work-initiated meanings. With the *spirit_at_work* trial (in which none of the current leaders participated), I paired some of these themes, for example 'self as leader-follower' and 'self as pain-joy', to add further dimension to the explorations into inner-outer changing meaning I sought to generate in that group. In studying what being a leader might mean, for example, a useful contrast would be to also examine the idea of following. However, it became unnecessary in the final project to refer to this list as, after my initial

suggestion of ‘self as leader’ to begin our journey, I offered the group the opportunity to suggest appropriate themes and taking turn-about to explore those nominated took us the life of the project.

At the outset, each participant was asked to share their general perceptions of the research proposal (which they had been sent) and of the project as they understood it at that point. This was to develop shared understandings and to provide opportunity for rapport to be established through beginning to talk with each other. It was also to record their understandings of ‘change’ and ‘meaning’ as a base of reference for us all. All of the four joining me were unsure of what the project would involve and what it would require of them, but they were willing to stay with it and play a part in shaping the journey. On the latter, Peter was most lucid and moving:

I am interested in building structures that respond to and generate diversity and change, while being aware that probably the only genuine way to influence change is by personal example. My experience has been that I act as an initiator... and once new ways of being are in place I am already interested in a new project, often in a radically different part of the community space, but generally linked to underlying disaffection with competitive capitalism, greed, insensitivity to connectedness and any whiff of baseless certitude.

My thinking at the moment is being influenced by emerging understanding of the chaotic order of the Universe, quantum theories of reality and an ongoing struggle to accept fundamental randomness and relativistic meaning. As well as the mundane aspects of finding a sane path through an insane world, all the while meeting biological imperatives to ensure the continuation of my genes. Peter 19-5-00

I further suggested that participants might like to keep a personal reflective journal of thoughts about the process of the project and/or about personal reactions to the explorations to share at some taking-stock junctures, but by nature of convenience and participants’ openness towards each other, we found it easier if all of us recorded everything to do with the project ‘live’ through the list. (It was actually a requirement of participation in the permission form that ‘that all mail to the group must be sent through the list’. There were a few exceptions in which there was one to one conversation towards and after the formal ending of the project.) Towards

the formal ending of the project, participants were invited to respond to the research questions, with each having the opportunity to make personal judgments about the success or otherwise of the research journey. Their responses feature later in the outcomes. During the process of shaping the data presented by the project for analysis, some nine to twelve months after its conclusion, participants were sent the whole data document and later a summary of it, along with an invitation to make critical comment about how I had represented the groups' dialogue and changing meanings. Although response to this form of member checking was limited, any comments received were included in the data shaping and analysis.

As facilitator of the project, I had an active role in rolling the project forward and keeping up the impetus to explore challenging areas in participants' lives as leaders. This role turned out to be sometimes provocative - as when I raised the issue of inertia possibly affecting the group at one stage. Kris came back with the response that 'inertia rules OK' - and sometimes affirmative, as in once speaking of listening to what felt like a comfortable and full silence in the group while participants were perhaps mulling over meanings. I found my input to the group was frequent and sometimes tangential but deepening in its content, but I believed it played a positive role in keeping the group on the leading edge of changing meaning rather than becoming trapped in complacent troughs of exchanging rather than exploring. Peter light-heartedly exemplified this role in his comment on my facilitation:

And your generous presence, Sandy, clucking and chirruping, scratching over the dry fragments of New Times Roman to lay bare the juicy worms of meaning. Peter 10-8-00

Jenny later added, at a time of exchanging perceptions of each other, the following about how she saw my role being played out:

I value it [the group] but I have to say you are the teacher role... all knowing... wise... precious... constantly summarising and articulating the shared meaning... driving us to consider new angles... and yes in a sense...

dominating the space... yet without you it may just be space?? Jenny 14-10-00

Of course, because meaning is made and re-made by going round, the larger part of our moving was due to the natures of the leaders themselves, in being willing to extend and to enfold their meanings. (This was obvious in our inertia/cooking theme, which will be described to follow.)

However, I was unsuccessful in bringing about a face-to-face group meeting to add a physical grounding to our virtual travels. Despite suggesting what I hoped were convenient ways for us to meet, participants could not manage to all get together at once during the formal life of the project, although I had a one-to-one meeting with one participant (Kris) to talk about the project. One other (Doug) I saw often, and one occasionally (Peter), through work but there was little opportunity to talk in depth, which is the normal course of interaction in education workplaces and which was one prompt for the project in the first place. My reflection on this situation was that the leaders were willing to meet, but while email dialogue could be tucked 'in between' they were hesitant to sacrifice the time they give to their families for a face-to-face meeting. I could appreciate their sense of responsibility. Although we were without the benefit of physically getting in touch with each other, the group did develop a touch of a different kind. This was an internal cohesion based on trust of each other and a loyalty to the journey such that list mail went on sporadically for a further five months *after* the conclusion of the project, with the last mail being mid-May, 2001.

My personal assessment is that because we touched each other deeply, through self-revelation and respect of other, our relationships among ourselves changed and continue outward to change our relations with others, demonstrating to me that being connected makes connection. For example, Jenny reassessed her ways of relating to others in the workplace. In my view at least, our mutual bond continues to exist in circumstances beyond the project. Although I do not know of the extent of any interactions

amongst other members of the group, for me personally, it has been a pleasure since the project to share t'ai chi with Kris, to participate in a futures conference with Jenny, to extend the parent-teacher relationship in working with Peter in my children's science education and in working at a deeper level of trust with Doug on a daily basis. In all, the project experience has enabled me to properly 'team' with these leaders.

The greatest change for me has been in *knowing* these people better through our inner-outer journey of coming to more keenly appreciate the similarities and distinctions in our meanings. (This makes me look more closely at other people and wonder at what wonders I have been missing in only relating to them on an outer dimension.) Leider and Shapiro (1995) described what they considered to be the keys to good health: self-disclosing, revealing, and 'courageous conversations'. These words also describe the mutual knowing I am referring to, and it is my belief that they do support mental, emotional and physical health. To me, to be known both inwardly and outwardly is to be *well* in a certain sense, and after this project, I fully agree with Pinchot's thoughts (in Leider & Shapiro, 1995, p.128) that 'any and all positive change - whether for individuals or organisations - takes place from the inside out.' I have felt most privileged to participate in changing meaning with the leaders of the group.

Although the project had a sense of being boutique research in being tailored by the participating leaders for their needs, its general process could be easily replicated by others interested in facilitating participative learning journeys online. However, in line with the changing way of knowing outlined in the theoretical framework for this study, each new 'generation' of the work would need to lay its own path. In *searching and searching again*, those who participate would be performing their own journey.

Data Processing:

The 1200 KB (compressed size) of data, that is, the contents of the 300 emails exchanged by the participants, resided in date order in a dedicated mailbox on a personal computer and was text searchable by the email software. As a facilitator responding to everyone to keep the project rolling, I was responsible for nearly two-thirds of the emails, each averaging 3-4K (compressed size). The other participants' mail was less frequent but longer and averaged 4-6K in compressed size, with Jenny contributing 41 postings, Kris 32, Doug 21 and Peter 10. For every three weeks of the 30 week project, Jenny posted 3 emails, on average, and Kris, Doug and Peter posted 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Sources informing data shaping:

Making coherent sense of the data presented in six months of email dialogues while keeping within the theoretical framework of the research was an interesting challenge. I needed to identify a form to shape and understand it that was organic; that is, that was emerging from within the material rather than being enforced by me. In my search for an appropriate form, I found three reference sources that I felt could serve the data well. One resource was Tufte's (1997) work on visual explanations, with his admonition that 'the supreme and enduring test of all information design [is] the integrity of the content displayed' (Tufte, 1997, p.70). Thus, shaping data for analysis needed a design that was faithful to the *ethos* of the data. Finding a form - almost an embodiment - that reflected the research framework in being consonant with the theories therein and which maintained the integrity of the data. I was fascinated by the complexity behind Tufte's simple models. In particular, one seemed to move at first sight. This was a diagram showing the history and development of popular music. The mind's eye was drawn from early roots through branching and interweaving flows to create a breath-taking picture (sound waves on paper)

of both the interrelatedness and diversity of modern music. To me, the design in which the information was presented added another dimension to the data in that it could be understood clearly, coherently and at a deeper level than a more conventional design like a table or graph might allow. The way the data were treated added value to what was being presented; that is, the model showed that there was more in the data than first met the eye. For example, it clearly demonstrated the relationships between different styles/musicians. This diagram showed me that, as Tufte (1997, p.55) says, 'to document and explain a process, *to make verbs visible*, is at the heart of information design.'

In dealing with the project's data, I wanted to make the verbs of *leading*, *changing* and *meaning* visible. Earlier in the framework section, I have indicated a preference for using gerunds over nouns to demonstrate movement. In designing a process to analyse data, I needed to visually convey a sense of flow in the data that would extend and emphasise the leading, changing and meaning therein. In other words, as with Tufte's music design, I wanted to process the data in a way that added another dimension to them; one that was in itself a primary form of analysis. Tufte showed the rich fabric of music development; I wanted to show that the fabric of leading, changing and meaning is always in motion, always being rewoven. This was a considerable challenge given the medium of two-dimensional flatland, as Tufte called on-paper representations. I came to the conclusion that while my design could suggest and imply movement, I could only moment by moment freeze frame the action and contemplation and the changing they brought. It would then require an element of the readers' participative imagination to play the data in real time in their minds' eyes to *see* the moving interchange of leading and meaning. This requirement was satisfying to me because my belief is that participation - even by audience - is necessary to any knowing, as put forward in the theoretical framework.

The martial art of Aikido provided my next resource, one that was useful in visualising the data shaping process and which was conceptually appropriate given the nature of the theoretical framework. In Aikido, the geometric shapes of triangle, circle and square (see Figure 3 in framework) are used to symbolise the integrated components of the living universe: the triangle represents the grounded human being, the circle is the moving yin-yang world in which humanity continually balances reality, and the square is the whole; the coherent and orderly universe. I contemplated the three sides of the triangle that support the human being's dynamic balancing act of life and saw these sides as themselves moving and integrating together, giving a strong shape of stability and strength. Commonly, I believe these 'sides' would be what people term 'body' (or heart), 'mind' and 'soul'. However, I chose to use these sides of the triangle, along with the circle and square, as visible organising elements in my design for analysing data in a different but not antipathetic way. In terms of this research, I saw the triangle as representing, in sympathy, the triune of *leading- changing-meaning* as a whole of parts, as the often-outer *leading* mind *changing* to and from the mostly-inner heartfelt *meaning*. The circle, or more accurately the sphere if properly considered in three dimensions instead of 'flatland', was inscribed by the movement within the triangle, or pyramid, with the yin-yang extremities arising from and containing the ongoing changing between leading and meaning. The square, or cube, still represented the wholeness and orderliness inherent in a dynamically balanced system.

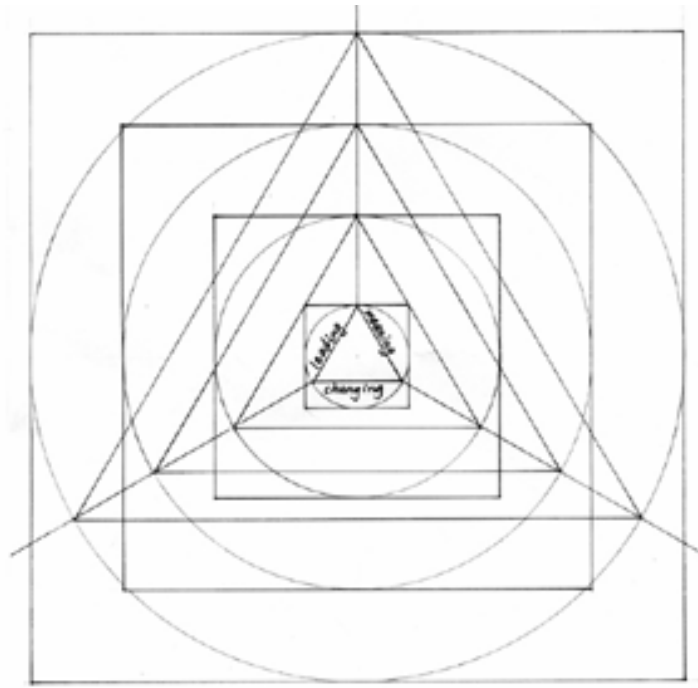


Figure 5: Representing leading-changing-meaning

My initial ventures into developing a design to inform readers of the ethos and activity of the project data were made on paper. I drew many concentric sets of nested triangles-in-circles-in-squares and labelled the inner-most beginning triangle's sides with the words 'leading', 'changing' and 'meaning' (see Figure 5). I later noticed this was very similar to Bohm's (1987, p.91) triangular representation of enfoldment creating unity of *matter* (the visible world enacted), *energy* (of potential - carrying information, as Pearsall (1998) notes) and *meaning* (the invisible significance implied). In my diagram, I was also seeking to enfold a unity, that of leading-changing-meaning, from the body of data. I then began playing with the early contributions of the participants in their email dialogue. I applied a content and structural analysis to the data because I needed to find out how it embodied the participants. In seeking to tease out how the data was expressing the participants' leading, changing and meaning, I was looking at what the wording was saying and also at how that wording was arranged and connected in phrases, sentences, paragraphs and across emails. I was

on the trail of Bohm's (1987) implicate order, searching the data for the enfolded intention and matter of leading, the energy and transmutation of changing, and the significance of meaning. In the fabric of the data, I was looking intuitively - often more from the inner nuance than the outer structure - for the connective threads of leading, changing and meaning that were woven into it.

I noticed, for example, that in Kris's (18-5-00) introductory mail she spoke of her love of growing things and I took this as a motivation and intention of action, a *leading* value for her. Nurturant 'growing' was an idea and activity that *moved* Kris. It was something she wanted to share with her fellow participants in the group and something she wanted to do in her life. In other words, 'growing' was a form of self-leading, that is, of going forward and making new, for Kris. In a following paragraph, she returned to the concept of 'growing' by referring to her thought that digging in our own backyard was the beginning of the getting of wisdom and explaining that it was *'important to attend to little things - people, jobs, changes - right on our own doorstep before stepping out into bigger things.'* She said this made sense to her because she had been a gardener since a young age, *'digging around in my own backyard - where there are always ongoing cycles of change, renewal and decline.'* I took this latter contextualisation as her *meaning* making as it was stating the significance of growing and gardening for her. In the normal run of busi-ness in educational institutions, there is rarely the opportunity - that is, the time and space - to engage in such reflective sharing, but explicating her meanings in the project setting gave Kris's sense of 'growing' greater distinctiveness for herself and her fellow participants. Specifying her 'reasons why' worked in a similar way to the 'reasons why not' mentioned earlier with regard to securing participation in the project. The 'reasons why' of her meaning-making unfolded the dimensions of why 'growing' was important to her. In this linking of the outer to the inner, Kris was also unfolding the dimensions of herself and revealing her groundedness to co-participants whom she was already willing

to trust. As one of those participants, I appreciated this rounding out and deepening of Kris as I could then relate to her in new ways. Kris's thoughts on growing beginning on 'her own doorstep' before moving out into the wider world I took as a connecting statement about *changing*. For Kris, 'growing' about the home - an inner dimension - was a good basis for then 'growing' in outer dimensions beyond the home. To her, change began at home and her sharing of this personal position gave the other participants food for thought in their dialogue about the nature of changing. Months later, in the very last emails of the journey, Kris related how her experiences of 'growing' and changing meaning had helped save a young person's life. In this case, changing a young person's suicidal path began with intervention at home; with change from within rather than expecting structural change from without to solve the problem. By then, in the shared meaning of the group, there was a high degree of empathy for this grounded approach to changing.

From the outset in dealing with the email data, it was thus possible to identify threads of leading, changing and meaning interwoven in the group's dialogue. In examining each email contribution, I then went on and recorded what I considered to be participants' initial leading and going forward statements on the *leading* side of the triangle. Their contextualising meaning-making statements, which often followed their leading statements, were recorded against the *meaning* side of the triangle. Their interlocuting statements of connection and movement between leading and meaning were placed on the *changing* side. After I had worked through a quantity of emails and followed several threads of leading, changing and meaning from various participants, I colour-coded like phrases around the sides of the triangles that I saw as connected by theme. Following on from my example above, I thus linked 'growing' (leading) with 'gardener's cycles of change, renewal and decline' and 'honoring cycles through ritual' (meaning) with 'change begins at home' and 'natural balance' (changing) as being thematically related. I called the theme 'organic gardener' as this term represented the essence of that dialogue.

As I worked through the data, the patterning in the participants' dialogue that I had noticed in dealing with the early emails seemed to continue. For the most part, participants would begin a contribution with an introductory lead, then explain what they meant more fully and conclude with reflections on how it all affected them. For example, in week 9, Doug (3-7-00) attempted *'to come up with a succinct meaningful view of leadership'* for him. He led off with the statement based on his outer dimension experience as a leader that *'leadership is about deliberately or accidentally assisting others to make meaning in such a way that they reconceptualise or refocus so that (for them) a direction/goal is set for them to pursue.'* He went on to explain a twist in meaning that *'the term "leadership" implies a deliberateness, but that is not the case.'* In continuing his inner dimension meaning-making, he noted that the modelling of an appropriate behaviour or ideal raises a question of intent: an intention to model or just the way the person is providing an unintentional model. He thought that the latter did not intend to provide leadership but nevertheless did. In this deliberations, Doug was negotiating (moving) his position with regard to leadership being deliberate or accidental and was demonstrating the flexibility of open-mindedness, an attribute of changing. In the group, this indeterminateness - this changeability - prompted the contribution of further 'rounds' or cycles concerning the meaning of leadership. This group of contributions were linked thematically as being about 'leadership and meaning'. Thus, leading (going forward), changing (renegotiating) and meaning (making sense) seemed to flow through and around the participants' dialogue, patterning the stream in a way that readily lent itself to coding and categorising.

The distractions of trying to represent living dialogue on flat paper brought my third source of guidance for data shaping. I tried to identify a lingering familiarity in my growing diagram (which began as Figure 5) and realised that it resembled a transverse section of a living cell, with my colour-coded thematic connections looking like the endoplasmic reticulum:

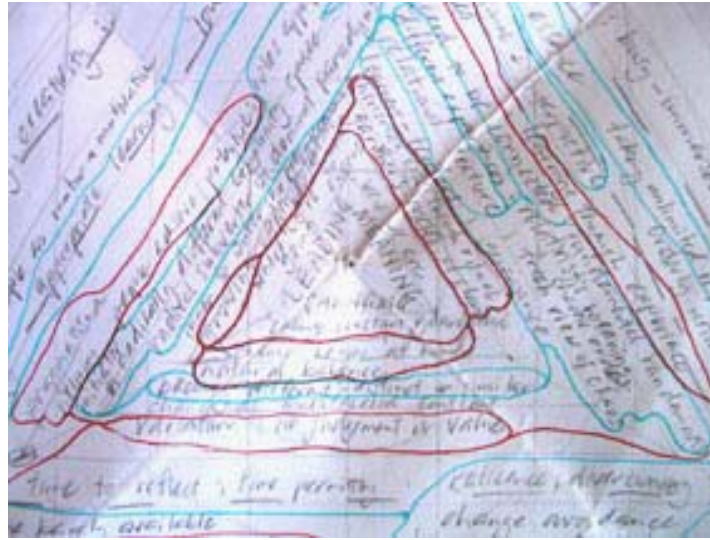


Figure 6: Representing Data

In a cell, the endoplasmic reticulum is a network of membranes that act as traffic pathways for materials in cells and as an ultrastructural framework for keeping all parts of the cell in proper relation to each other such that orderly organisation is maintained (Weisz, 1973). My conception and representation of leading-changing-meaning could be likened to both a pathway and a container, dynamically ordering movement. Thus, my emerging design for dealing with data had an organic look and feel about it. The 'leading-changing-meaning' dimensions I had created functioned as a *triangle* should, giving form and connection to the data. Tufte's strategies of design helped me in considering how to represent my data to enable me to find the moving *circles* within it. Altogether, I felt had found a design that was *square*, that is, grounded and bounded by the universal principle of orderliness, but open to moving and changing and the dynamism that is life.

Changing form:

The recording of the triangular patterning of leading-changing-meaning and the circular patterning of themes on my hand-written diagram (beginning as Figure 5) became unwieldy as I worked through more emails, so I needed to find an alternative design that would incorporate the conceptual elements of the first. I lacked any sort of modelling software to create the kind of multidimensional designs that Tufte had made; ones that added *time* to *space* and readily suggested a fifth dimension of *relationship*. My best solution, to get my diagram into some more usable digital form, was to transfer my data processing to another 'flatland'; that of a digitised table of three columns. The three columns were labelled 'leading', 'changing' and 'meaning'. I put 'changing' between 'leading' and 'meaning' to show it as an interlocutor, a go-between. From the data processing, I noted that contributions about 'leading' and 'meaning' seemed to flow into each other, much as in yang and yin always being in motion and forever reconciling each other. Placing 'changing' between 'leading' and 'meaning' was an appropriate way to indicate that flow between. It also emphasised the position of the theoretical framework that, just as we are always within language, we are always within change. Thus, continuing with the example above, Doug's original words (3-7-00) were initially shaped into three interconnected categories or 'threads' as follows in Table 1, with contributions on the same theme from other participants added after:

All that was in the reflecting that went towards trying to come up with a succinct meaningful view of leadership to me. That is that leadership is about deliberately or accidentally assisting others to make meaning in such a way that they reconceptualise or refocus so that (for them) a direction/goal is set for them to pursue. The term 'leadership' implies a deliberateness but that is not the case. We have talked about people modelling a behaviour/ideal that they think is appropriate but the question is the intent of their actions. Modelling of course implies an intent but when that is simply the way the person is then modelling is not the intent which of course means the person is not trying to provide leadership. Yes it serves as a model but their intent may not have been to model. Doug 3-7-00

Leading	Changing	Meaning
<p>(Doug's contribution)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leadership is about deliberately or accidentally assisting others to make meaning in such a way that they reconceptualise or refocus so that (for them) a direction/goal is set for them to pursue <p>(Other participants' contributions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exactly the roots of my apprehensions: comes down to hoary chestnut of ego • deliberateness is in intention to help others fulfill their needs • leadership: the image is most often of the fearless one going forth, modelling courage outwardly for others; practice most often is in helping others recognise and use the courage already within themselves • don't have to manhandle world into mould we dream of: intention enough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modelling implies intent, but when simply the way is, then no intention to provide leadership • what [intention] brings to flower in any individual is always a surprise • trust in [intention] and desires will come to fruition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • term 'leadership' implies a deliberateness, but not the case • modelling appropriate behaviour/ideal: question of intent of actions • serves as model, but intent may not have been to model • have had an irrational suspicion of [ego] from an early age • depends on whether ego is the small, isolated version or the mature many/one version • intention (focussing our mind/body) is the motive energy of the universe, the pattern around which orderliness emerges • wounded healer/timeless warrior archetype • perhaps the only true intention for the leader is the intention of the other • unconscious drives: intention shapes both our energy and energy around us; usually only recognise it after the event

Table 1: Data sample 1

It is important to note that I was not seeking to be definitive or to impose a structure by carving up participants' dialogue into discreet chunks. My intention was merely to map a living flow that had a life of its own (Reason, 1988). I wanted to demonstrate the parts-and-whole and make the body of dialogue accessible and sensible to readers, and I recognised that my interpretation cum representation was only one view. Like the project itself, I saw the shaping I was doing in data processing as a coming to know, as Reason (1994b) termed it. As a cross-check on my representations in processing the data, I sent the data document, completed along the lines described above, to participants in March, 2002 and asked for their comments on the accuracy or otherwise of how I had portrayed their leading, changing and meaning. A reply was received from Jenny, indicating that she 'really enjoyed the revisiting' but with no additional critical

comment. No replies to this request for additional participation (and thus time and space) were received from Kris, Doug or Peter.

Although I did at times summarise for brevity, I retained the participants' original wording as much as possible, but recorded only phrases to convey essence and encourage a light touch in reading. Original grammar and spelling were retained, with only a few exceptions where slight alterations were made to improve sensibility. In my treatment of the data, I wanted to allow my eye to flow amongst the dimensions of leading, changing and meaning to encourage movement in my mind. In this, I sought to make meaning of the whole of the body of data. However, I did not distinguish contributions from one or another participant as this was a shared exploration and I wanted the data processing to reflect this. In so representing the participants, I showed that the dialogue belonged to all of us as a whole: it was our journey and we, as leaders, were aiming at sharing our learning and changing meaning to unfold and round out the dimensions of ourselves. In contrast to fostering alienation (Reason, 1994b), we were trying to create a space of holistic healing - a meeting of inner and outer dimensions - in which self meant all of us. In merging our voices in the data document and going beyond 'the isolation of individuals' (Bolman and Deal, 1995, p.3), I was emphasising our mutuality in dialogue where 'meaning moved through'. If necessary, I could backtrack to the source data to identify 'voices' individually through having kept a record of which emails were sent in each week. Although I was mapping the participants' journey as a whole in the data processing, this audit trail was important to be able to let individuals speak for themselves in the data analysis which would follow.

Reading the data:

To 'read' the table of the data document as a whole, I referred again to Tufte and borrowed from his repertoire of visual designs. He spoke of *confections* as 'an assembly of many visual elements, selected... from various Streams of

Story, then brought together and juxtaposed on the still flatland of paper' (Tufte, 1997, p.121). Tufte suggested that the multiplicity of elements illustrates, presents, enforces and combines to tell yet another story, as I had seen in his popular music soundscape. Similarly, in making sweetmeat 'confectionary', elements such as taste, texture, density, and colour are compounded to create contrasts and comparisons amongst differences, yet the mixture as a whole would have its own identity and integrity. In linking the elements of 'leading', 'changing' and 'meaning' from the participants' dialogue around the triangle of my first 'flatland' and later across the tabulated columns in my second, I had mixed and compounded, that is, *confected*, another story from many stories. In assembling and juxtaposing 'leading', 'changing' and 'meaning' elements as streams of story, I had been able to identify *my* story of *our* data. Thus, my processing was a making of confections to help me better understand the dimensions of the leading-changing-meaning story embedded in the data.

Tufte (1997, p.105) also employed the design strategy of *multiples* to 'reveal repetition and change, pattern and surprise - the defining elements in the idea of *information*.' For Tufte, multiples could depict comparisons, enhance dimensionality, create visual categories, represent and narrate sequences of motion, and amplify, intensify and reinforce meanings. In my data table, I had thematically grouped related contributions in my confection of 'leading', 'changing' and 'meaning'. Some examples of themes were 'time and medium' and 'stories and dreams'. However, within each theme and within each element of the confection, I had inadvertently formed multiples, similar to those of Tufte, that revealed further *patterns that connect* in the data. For example, in the 'leading' column in the second identified theme of 'chimera/shape-changer', the statements included '*open potential*', '*no preconception*', '*radical subverter of dominant paradigms*', '*initiator in radically different community spaces*' and '*[playing] roles appropriate to people*'. These statements together brought dimension and connection to the idea of shape-changing in leading: they *multiplied* my perspectives. This

particular theme confectioned the participants' initial contributions about their personal starting points at the outset of the journey. Together, the 'leading' statements formed a multi-dimensioned pattern - a multiple - which emphasised for me the fluid qualities of the participants as leaders. As a group, they could initiate movement and they could respond to movement as necessary and by choice. Such a multiple enhanced the dimensionality, as Tufte suggests, of the participants and enabled me to read a further story in the data document.

As another emergent design or pattern in the data, the successive themes that I had identified in processing the data could be read as what Tufte called *parallels*. Parallelism, he suggests, 'helps bring about clarity, efficiency, forcefulness, rhythm and balance' in prose and adds 'that complex organisation can happen even in the 'one-dimensional flow of words'. (Tufte, 1997, p.79). My parallels were identified in the thematic rows of my table succeeding one another, for example, 'organic gardener', followed by 'chimera/shape-changer' and then 'sensible stabiliser' and so on. Studying the themes running along side each other in *parallel* through the body of data demonstrated the trail of participants' interests and concerns over the life of the project. For example, the groups' ongoing engagement with leading and leadership was readily apparent. (Table 6 to follow shows themes in the data, but also demonstrates how they paralleled each other.) I was able to see how we explored a variety of stories but came back often to deepen our central story of changing our meaning as leaders.

In summary of how Tufte's visual designs were employed in reading the data:

Confections juxtapose email excerpts from 'leading', 'changing' and 'meaning' to enable the identification of connecting threads and to generate new information, including metalevel themes. Confections were read across

the three adjoining columns of 'leading', 'changing' and 'meaning' within each theme:

Theme	Leading	Changing	Meaning
1	<i>confection</i>		
2	<i>confection</i>		
3	<i>confection</i>		

Table 2: Confections

Multiples group ideas to provide perspectives and show developments in one strand, such as 'leading', 'changing' or 'meaning'. Multiples were read down each column, again within each theme:

Theme	Leading	Changing	Meaning
1	<i>multiple</i>	<i>multiple</i>	<i>multiple</i>
2	<i>multiple</i>	<i>multiple</i>	<i>multiple</i>
3	<i>multiple</i>	<i>multiple</i>	<i>multiple</i>

Table 3: Multiples

Parallels show the general development of the group's thought over time. Consecutive themes were read as parallels:

Theme	Leading	Changing	Meaning
<i>parallel</i>			
<i>parallel</i>			
<i>parallel</i>			

Table 4: Parallels

The data processing exercise of graphically shaping and organising data rendered the project email from the five participants into a manageable, readable and coherent document. I used the conception of *rendering* over *reducing* because I was not wanting to make participants' changing meanings 'smaller' but to allow their deeper meanings to come to the surface, to be more explicit. Neither was I wanting to decontextualise their

meanings by seemingly excising their inner-most heartfelt thoughts, but to highlight them and let out them to shine along with their outer dimension actions in leading. I had lived in the contexts of the group and those contexts were thus a part of me and of how I made sense of what happened in the project. In depicting the data visually in another shape to that of the raw email, I lived in the leading-changing-meaning of the group all over again. The active reflection of developing confections, collating multiples and observing parallels through visual representation brought another plane of meaning to that which I knew from within our the 'seeing' of our *searching and searching again* dialogue, both deepening and heightening my sense of participation. In the 'witnessing' that followed of *looking and looking again* in shaping and reading the data, I could see more of how our leading-changing-meaning journey travelled.

The whole data document was too lengthy to include within this report, but a sample is given over (Table 5). This sample shows the confection for one theme, that of 'inertia - cooking', which was initiated in week 3 of the project. After the initial exchanges, further material on the theme emerged iteratively in four other weeks. The right-pointing arrows indicate the weeks in which related material was identified.

Leading	Changing	Meaning
<i>inertia /cooking - week 3</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • invest energy • momentum/rolling/creativity • self-organising system • responsibility of wielding the spoon • uncomfortable with spoon until know the ingredients and sense the mix to know how to respond • check temperature • recipe has potential to make great food for our souls <p>-----> week 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analogy to system/organisation: pod/team within <p>-----> week 11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • really seem to be getting a good mixture together (thinking of an earlier metaphor!) and developing some confidence and trust in the medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need more energy to flow • cooking/whipping needs persistence to move/change form • heat applied: things begin to rise • fine quality of ingredients essentially determines the outcomes • in the beginning, need time to get comfy and nicely mixed • need a readiness/preparing period before we get to the real cooking <p>-----> week 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • just growing a system <p>-----> week 13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • our ingredients have come together in the mixing, but now comes the baking in which things are transmuted; but the outcomes are delicious - soul food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • slow motion • stuck in treacly time • busy/immersed in glue of life • feel part of the mixture • group synergy • taste test outcome: see how ingredients reacted together • job of the chef: to encourage the flavours and textures to emerge and to blend in delicious synergy <p>-----> week 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows that lots of ingredients, sensitively mixed, are needed for a recipe to be make great food • are there any more or less essential than any other?: the common principle and hence shared goal has to be the beginning <p>-----> week 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no agendas other than cooperative/shared one of know ourselves and our practice • richness we are becoming because we trust in each other's self and professionalism • unity in diversity

Table 5: Data sample 2

Assigning material to the different columns of 'leading', 'changing' and 'meaning' was a subjective process to do with what I perceived as the qualities embedded in the texts. My participation in the project enabled me to ground this work in our lived and shared experiences throughout the project. For example, energy flow was the principle quality I perceived in the opening words of our 'inertia/cooking' theme. In the texts assigned to

'leading', the participants held a tension - a stored energy or momentum - in their words that spoke of their wanting to show the way but also of their need for preparation before pulling away from the known. In the 'changing' column, I placed texts that I thought reflected their intentions and initiatives, that is, their tentative movement to start the flow and manipulation of energy. The 'meaning' column was where I assigned the explanatory and reflective texts of energy flowing around that were their making sense of how they were developing/motivating the energy to break through the inertia of time.

To explicate further using an example of one participant's text, Doug wrote to me that *'at this time I feel I am part of the mixture and you, for now at least have the responsibility of wielding the spoon. We ain't in the oven yet but when we are I'm confident that with the heat applied (group synergy - time and other commitments notwithstanding) things will begin to rise. Then, to work the analogy to death you or us will need to check the temperature and finally taste test the outcome to see how the ingredients reacted together'* Doug 28-5-00. He acknowledged that I had the *leading* energy in having the 'responsibility of wielding the spoon.' He went on to anticipate that this would be *changing* 'with the heat applied' as others exerted their energies and that 'things will begin to rise', his explanation or *meaning* being that the participants would develop a 'group synergy' or rise in energy levels through working together, if they gave themselves time. In essence, his *changing meaning*, ascertained through reflectively 'check[ing] the temperature' and 'taste test[ing] the outcome', would be 'to see how the ingredients reacted together', that is, to see how their energy flow in *leading* as a synergistic team might be different to having one leader in a team. Another 'eye' would no doubt have identified other qualities and constructed different patternings of the participants' texts but the art was not so much in identifying any one, 'accurate' interpretation but in rendering the data as faithfully as I could into a shape that could be usefully worked with in analysis.

In interpreting this confection overall, I saw that the group's multiple of 'meanings' about the stickiness of time was an impetus to 'changing' the way the participants interacted, for example, that an investment of energy - 'leading' - as *persistence* and *heat* was needed to get things to *change form* and *rise*. At times over the next ten weeks (Week 3 to Week 13), the participants reiterated and refined their art of cooking, to come up with ways of leading each other that were *soul food*. That they were thus leading changing meanings of how they were 'cooking' - of what they were doing within the group and at work - was made more apparent and more visible to me through graphically representing their dialogue in the table. These lenses allowed me to see the data in a value-added way.

Themes:

A list (Table 6 over) was compiled of the themes in confections that emerged from the data document. These thematic patternings existed within the data, but my eyes and my judgement had to learn to see them through 'reading' the graphic representations I had made. No doubt, other eyes would have seen differently but in qualitative research such as this, the subjective is both essential and intentional. Many storylines were possible, but this was *my* story of *our* story. Some patterns arose from themes nominated for dialogue by group members, for example 'time', while others like 'sensitivity / feelings' became apparent - to my eyes as participant and facilitator - in reviewing the body of data as a whole. These confections I have identified, traced over time and labelled with a theme name I feel represents the content. To use the 'inertia / cooking' theme again as an example (see row 5 in Table 6), the first dialogue about cooking was noted in week 3, but was continued in the emails of weeks 5, 10, 11, and 13, as shown in brackets.

leading	changing	meaning
organic gardener - week 1 (3, 5)		
chimera / shape-changer - week 1 (2, 3, 4, 5, 6)		
sensible stabiliser - week 1 (2, 5)		
sensitivity / feelings - week 2 (5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 23)		
inertia / cooking - week 3 (5, 10, 11, 13)		
time and medium - week 3 (5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 26)		
teamwork - week 3		
permaculture - week 3 (6)		
self-as-leader - week 4 (5, 6, 9, 23)		
dialogue and making sense - week 4 (5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 16, 18, 21, 23, 24)		
management and leadership or 'ducks in flight' - week 4 (5, 6)		
'the system' - week 4 (5)		
metaphor - week 5 (6)		
group leadership - week 6		
stories and dreams - week 7 (8, 9)		
confidence and risk - week 9		
leadership and meaning - week 9 (11)		
fear and vocation or 'naming a calling' - week 9 (10, 11)		
holiday reflections or 'embodied alchemists' - week 10		
I/B/E leadership vs personal leadership - week 11		
conflict - week 11		
love, fear, hate and leading or 'illumination' - week 12 (14)		
chooks - week 13		
resilience - week 14		
time - week 15 (16)		
changing meaning - week 17 (18, 19, 21, 22, 25, 27)		
self-organising systems - week 16		
chords or 'harmonic resonance' - week 19 (36, 37, 38)		
do we need leaders? - week 20		
flow - week 22 (41)		
learning needs or 'adult learners' - week 22 (23)		
work as the empty lunch box - not really - week 23		
heart and soul and EQ - week 24		
quiet reflections - week 25 (27, 41)		
youth suicide and leadership - week 43		

Table 6: Themes in data

Reading the consecutive themes as *parallels* showed that leading was a recurrent theme: 'self-as-leader', 'leadership and management', 'group leadership', 'leadership and meaning', 'I/B/E (institutionalised, bureaucratic, enforced) leadership vs personal leadership' and 'do we need leaders?'. To me, these parallels swept full circle, beginning with what it is like on an isolated and individual level to be a leader. As example, Peter wrote of his *'direct engagement with the institutionalised practice of leadership. ... I've found the process exhausting, distracting from my work of teaching, excessively prescriptive and ultimately health threatening. ... I seem to influence people through a weaving of fuzzy people-skills, not an excel spreadsheet. Does this mean I am something other than a leader...or is it just the rules of the social game of the time'* Peter 30-5-00. The sweep then travelled through different faces and interpretations of leading in the outer dimension and returned to inner, more personalised and heart-felt meanings such as Jenny's feeling that *'maybe leadership is a necessary imaginative key: a myth that inspires and sustains efforts but at the end of the day remains a myth borne of the reality of ego'* Jenny 25-9-00.

Looking at the parallels over linear time, the same inner-outer-inner pattern were apparent in the body of themes as a whole. The first tentative steps made by the participants were timid - exploring what might be in the making - then breaking out with more confidence to negotiate what leading was to the group, followed by themes chosen by the participants (*'fear and vocation'* from Peter; *'the role of pain in change'* from Kris; Doug's wondering *'if personal meaning could be found in an I/B/E setting'*, the anomalies of *'work as the empty lunch box'* from Jenny, with *'time'* from me) interspersed with ruminations on the meaning of leading and changing meaning, before winding back to inner places to look into the *'heart and soul and EQ'*. In terms of the progression, the participants were hesitant and insubstantial to begin with, both as a group and as individuals with inner thoughts and convictions not usually shared, but as a result of our forays together, however, each came back to an inner meaning that was stronger and more

focused for being shared. For example, our very first theme concerned a desire to ‘grow people’, each in our own way of leading. Our final theme was about the compassion, empathy and personal strength needed to support young people associated with suicide. This demonstrated a commitment to ‘growing people’ in a very concrete way. The leaders’ field as educators obviously spread beyond the confines of schooling. It seemed that, over the life of the project as witnessed in the parallels, all the participants had a story to tell and essentially it was the same story: a story of dedication to serving people which, to my mind, distinguished the participants as leaders in the way I have defined them. As participants, we were each one, then together many but at another level, still one: an enlarged one or Self. I was reminded of Watts’ (1997) words that ‘there is no *self* without the existence of an *other*.’ To me as a researcher who was both seer and witness, the inner-outer-inner journey brought us from individual meanings to a shared meaning such that the inner was transformed through the period of the project cycle: when we returned to where we began, our meanings were changed (enriched, enlarged, confirmed) and we were different (distinctive, confident, supported) as leaders. Even at this primary level of reading the parallels, my interpretation was that the data showed the shared interdimensional journey of the project to have been useful to the participants in terms of changing meaning.

The *multiples* show considerable looping over a long time period in some themes (for example, ‘*time and medium*’ was reiterated about once a fortnight) while others were more contained ventures concentrated in one week’s dialogue (like ‘*hooks*’). To make the tracking of the more complex multiples easier, all the data relating to a particular theme (telling our stories in multiple ways) were recorded in one location. (For example, ‘*stories and dreams*’ was initially a theme in week 7 and was revisited in weeks 8 and 9, but all data was compiled under the week 7 entry.) This made it possible to examine the multiples and confections in any one theme together. The multiples were read down each column of ‘leading’, ‘changing’

and ‘meaning’ and the confections were read across the three columns. In thus having the opportunity to study both the multiples within each theme and the confections made of juxtaposing ‘leading’, ‘changing’ and ‘meaning’, I went on to prepare summaries (to follow) of the data associated with each theme to give a more concise picture of the journey. In this second-level lens of reading the data and making sense of it, I knitted participants’ contributions, often using their verbatim wording and phrasing as indicated earlier, into short statements of what I saw each theme as encompassing.

Data summaries:

These data summaries acted as a distillation of the group’s email dialogue. The initial data shaping into aspects of ‘leading’, ‘changing’ and ‘meaning’ was, as previously indicated, sent to the participants for perusal, and subsequently, the data summaries as a further shaping were also sent to them in May 2002 for member checking, with the invitation to respond with comment about the accuracy or otherwise of my representation of our shared meaning in the collations. I wanted to know if I had properly spoken in ‘our voice’. Jenny again chose to reply, and even to extend on our meaning, and her words have been added to the summaries. Interestingly, at two years from the commencement of the project, the group’s dialogue was still fresh, alive and meaningful to this participant, and could easily be picked up where it left off. Peter also sent feedback but at a more generalised level:

You've certainly busied yourself in scratching over the husks of conversation. It's interesting that spontaneous themes emerged, although I felt at times that you were guiding things around some particular points, and so finding some structure is not really surprising.

The themes that resonated with me were patterns on a metascale...the play with metaphor... fantasy and imagination...all about qualities of the experience. And definitely enhanced by locating interactions in cyberspace.

Appreciating the space was a big part of it for me. Peter 14-6-02

It appeared that Peter appreciated the collated summaries and noted the themes ‘resonated’ with him, although some seemed more contrived than others. His implied guidance by me as facilitator was not intentional, but I accepted that it was possible in integrating the whole of the dialogue as we progressed. In both Peter’s and Jenny’s (to follow) responses, their witnessing statements were welcome as they brought new perspectives to me as the researcher. Interestingly, the revisit through the data summaries prompted Peter to remember his appreciation of the space for dialogue. This indicated that, for him at least, the project aim of providing and assessing the usefulness of an email-based time and space was fulfilled.

The summaries are presented below as part of my making the *patterns that connect* from the data. They are my readings of the confections of ‘leading’, ‘changing’ and ‘meaning’; of the multiples of each of those strands; and of the parallels observed through the themes. I ‘spoke’ as much as possible in the ‘voices’ of the participants by employing their wording and phrasing. For example, in the summary of the first theme, the italics indicate participants’ original speech. Beside each theme name, I have indicated only the first week in which the theme appeared. The arrows show cases where the theme iterated over a period of time, as indicated earlier in Table 6. Jenny’s feedback is inserted after each theme summary.

• **organic gardener - week 1→**

Leading off with this theme of *inner-outer growing*, the meanings were at first organic, talking about the *gardener’s cycle of change* and that *ritual* and *relationship* were involved. A multiple of ‘meaning’ enlarged the idea of ritual, taking it to be needed in life to *make a sense of place in the world* and *give meaning* and *connection*. The sense of growing changed from a *natural balance beginning ‘at home’* to being a *multifaceted constant* in everything.

• **chimera / shape-changer - week 1→**

In setting out on a research journey into the unknown, leading statements (those taken as introducing a new idea or substantially extending a previous one) expressed a sense of open potential, with no preconception other than to be different, but appropriate. Meanings showed a valuing of ignorance in

enabling fresh views of experience, accepting orderliness within random chaos such that meaning was relational. In changing and becoming different, learners-teachers became both more distinct and more similar. This sense of plasticity in leaders extended to being playful, leading to shaping and being shaped, recreating the magic of change in which there was ebb and flow and the constancy of rhythms within unpredictability and diversity, in contrast to present fracturing discontinuities in the workplace.

I think the group demonstrated these behaviours throughout.
Jenny 19-5-02

• **sensible stabiliser - week 1→**

In contrast to the passion and playfulness of the shape-changer, another leading view was of the pragmatism needed to help people achieve their potential. In learning through experience, this meant to promote responsibility for choices, accepting variation without being judgmental or value-laden. A later view criticised restructurings done in a rigid frame because it implied a lack of respect for variation such that there was accommodative change, but not change in meaning. This leader wanted to give this 'my way' change a break, feeling a little changed out by strained and stale rhetoric.

This is an important message but expressed a little vaguely. The message I recall was one of recognition that the grand and energizing vision had to hold within it a pragmatism that allowed people in different situations to make practical meaning and more importantly practical action possible. This requires great clarity about what bits are negotiable and what bits are not if the direction/vision are to have significant impact. Jenny 19-5-02

• **sensitivity / feelings - week 2→**

Leaders began to voice their sensitivities and feelings about themselves, the group and their work early on and continued throughout the project. It was pointed out that playfulness can also be the reticent indulging in diversionary tactics, but by the second week, leading was characterised as having empathy, loving people and allowing appropriate learning while accepting unlimited responsibility without taking responsibility for choices from individuals. A concern for change avoidance became a question of how much trust people had in each other. One leader considered irresistible spaces that invited moving beyond the personal to taking responsibility for the group and there was a question of being change slaves or change masters. Change was thought to be relentless, challenging leaders to have the wisdom to hold on or let go, and to learn to sift out the non-essentials in order to live through it. Such thoughts brought mutual appreciation and a feeling of affinity.

By week seven, leaders' respect of each other saw appreciation of the struggle to understand leadership, it being elusive and difficult to pin down. They wanted to hold and nurture the flow of meaning, accepting that the real strength of leading was in never being able to be pinned down. Here, a group meeting was first suggested in response to the group's need for grounding. This was not feasible and some enjoyed the ongoing mystique of idea-sharing without reality getting in the way. Leaders liked to saunter through the trove of messages, taking nourishment for the bruised psyche in catching up and synergistically finding personal thoughts expressed by others. They had a sense of wonder at the words they were able to write, sometimes preferring to listen, absorb and think, and other times, to display honesty, fierce courage and integrity. By mid-project, this was enough to bring one leader out of a heavy duty apathy period, with every issue becoming a personal issue. Another felt the cyber ramblings cathartic and another felt this was a space to shelter from judgement and find friends who understood and helped each other cope. Towards the end, leaders were enjoying the personal feel in the group and the sense of connectedness from sharing.

Even after all this time I feel this connection with the group – this angle is one of the key foundations of the experience. I think it also holds the key to what is missing in our senior management and leadership teams – the competitive , combatitive mode that accompanies power, status, prestige and remuneration too often leads to dysfunctional group behaviours and – these behaviours cannot survive in a true group sharing and knowing – maybe why it is so hard to get leaders and managers to take time out for the “soft management” and sensitivity and feelings being perceived as weakness and also dare I say marginalisation of any group that is predominantly female. Jenny 19-5-02

• **inertia/cooking - week 3→**

The playfulness of week two brought a lot of movement in response to a suggestion that value, belief and principle can act as motor and motivation and that more energy was needed to get the group flowing. A cooking metaphor saw leaders investing energy in getting the momentum rolling for a self-organising system, relieving the facilitator of the responsibility of wielding the spoon alone. The emergent recipe had the potential of soul food, moving the group from the slow motion of treacly time, being immersed in the glue of life, to mixing and whipping the ingredients of self into changing forms in readiness for the real cooking, the real work of the group. A sense of synergy came from this confection, with the group later on commenting that lots of ingredients, sensitively mixed, were needed to make great food and that these were coming together through developing confidence and trust in the medium. An analogy was made to teams in a

system and the question asked if any ingredients were more or less essential than any other, raising the point of needing a common principle and a shared goal from the beginning so that all could contribute to the richness.

• **time and medium - week 3→**

The potential of the food being cooked in each mail brought ever deepening and branching pathways for leaders to take. This raised issues about leaders' time and the medium through which the group was working that were reiterated through many multiples for the life of the project. Apart from a sense of time poorness, the leading concern early in the dialogue journey was frustration over the linear nature of the list working against the multiplicity of ever deepening and branching pathways. (At this point, the group investigated the use of a distributed discussion list instead of email, but eventually concluded that email offered the most flexibility.) The density of ideas and feelings embedded in the talk was overwhelming, but at the same time the presences of other voices was appreciated. This angst relaxed as leaders came to go with the flow of their reactions, making their own space and time for dialogue instead of trying to keep up.

By week eleven, leaders loved opening their email from the group and saw their conversation as a time-treat and a wonder hanging in virtual space, available when needed, silently supporting. To them, talking together was a thrilling reminder of the wholeness of self, bringing a sudden sharp sense of forgotten parts that was like diving into the surf: a bit uncomfortable at first, but bringing a shock of awareness of whole being. This brought the first sense of reconsideration of self in leaders, a new lens in their lives for examining ongoing quests and new beginnings. By week thirteen, the exuberance had mellowed to allow an appreciation of silence and space as well as talk, with Peter the poet reflecting:

*I've been thinking about my experience of space lately, too.
But I came to it through thinking about time.
And why I never have enough of it.*

*But time is infinite.
So how come I experience it as limited?
Time runs out when you set it within boundaries, avoiding the
awful infinite.
It gets closer to a limit, and the limit is passed.
But time travels on, spreading possibilities, endlessly.
By putting time in a bottle of hours,
I transform it into something else.
A measure of days. A shadow of its true nature.*

*Space loses sense when imprisoned by the System
International,*

*and dissolves into quantum gymnastics.
So.
This space is infinite.
Otherwise it becomes less than it can be. Peter 5-8-00*

This cyberspace was seen as very liberating by some leaders, to the degree that it may have contributed to reluctance to meet face to face, with one part wanting to meet but the other wanting to explore the freedom for longer. Some saw the medium as having little anonymity and high touch leading to authenticity, while others found it constraining, needing the tactility and warmth of flesh and blood human contact to know what's really going on. In Peter's words:

*And the biggest question yet...what does this opportunity mean to me?
A chance to be lyrical...to let my self fly a bit,
in the safety of cyberspace.
In a strange way, the anonymity is amazingly liberating.
No non-verbals to agonise over.
Plenty of silence to catch my breath in. Peter 10-8-00*

Through to weeks sixteen to eighteen, the email exchange was not really working for one leader, although the bumps along the way in breaking new ground were acceptable, but for Peter it was a comfort:

...it seems to me sometimes that I am hearing the conversation as if it were down the hall: me shuffling great piles of importance around under the desk-lamp, but with one ear cocked to the sounds of life in the next bright room. It's comforting to hear life going on. Thanks. Peter 1-9-00

In this storming and norming time, loyalty was also raised, with leaders feeling dis-ease in their consciences over failing to correspond due to time constraints. To be comfortable, they reassured themselves that listening and thinking were valued as much as writing, with one expressing value of the size and intimacy in the group and loving it the way it is, and another seeing the benefit of 'waxing lyrical' to share inner thoughts. Feeling relieved and less self-pressured, leaders were protective of their little 'club' and the quality contained within and agreed that the group was heart warming and that just 'being there' was valuable, a 'hole-in-one'.

The last weeks of the project saw leaders consider that being there is everything, that the group model might suit busy people who wanted more time to ponder patterns of experience. They began to see time as more flexible, tired of rolling from one piece of ordinary time management to another and wondering if, in bending time to our own uses and in mismatching our activities and time frames, it becomes finite and runs out because of focusing too intently on the now and losing sight of the big

picture. In making time, the need was seen to focus on the now not as a point but as a wave in which we choose how we measure passage.

I think this section is really important too – if we were a group meeting regularly I would never had made it – but because it didn't... in and out when possible/needed it was sustainable for me – although I recall many times thinking of you Sandy and going oh hell I should be.... To help with your research. Also at times I felt strongly your purpose for the group was so much stronger than any of us as participants so at times your meaning seemed so constructed and dense compared to my flighty itsy bitsy participation. But I didn't get hung up on this because others expressed similar feelings to me sometimes.
Jenny 19-5-02

• **teamwork - week 3**

This small theme touched on working together and setting team goals such that meaning came not from winning or losing but from group synergy and synchronicity, pride and satisfaction in performing well, and in learning from experience.

• **permaculture - week 3→**

The gardening theme of the first week was reinvented into a slightly different form in this theme of *sustainable* growth. Leaders appreciated the groundwork necessary to growth, with risk and trust being the best elements. For a whole system to become more self-sufficient, all components need to be supported such that good preparation works with the natural order, and the growth goes with the flow of creativity and follows the lead of the emergent shoots. Change was seen as good compost, leading to growth and development.

• **self-as-leader - week 4→**

Statements about self-leadership ranged from explaining engagement with the institutionalised practice of leadership as exhaustive, distracting, prescriptive and health-threatening and that people are not excel spreadsheets, to influencing people through weaving fuzzy people skills, to leading as a way of being and living life to personal standards, to not really considering self in a leadership capacity for years. Some problems and opportunities of leading were seen as finding a niche and choosing the venue most suited to leadership style, having to deal with immediate 'life and death' situations and losing the larger picture, being able to indulge in problem solving, nurturing and facilitating in your own way, and having to go on alone before others will follow.

The meanings behind the words expressed a sense of mission and stewardship, speaking of courage, the love of watching and helping human creativity expand and waiting for the moment when learning is possible, while noting that persuasive or enforced views of leadership diminish their holders and make them something other than leaders. The leaders' moving thoughts spoke of perceptual changes in understanding and feeling themselves to be leaders, of not aspiring to leadership but simply following the seasons of leading and following to grow more leaders, of living through pain to grow into compassion and leading self, kith and kin through the dark valley, of taking risks with others and avoiding circumstances that seek to enstructure and enslave so each could say 'I am a leader'.

I feel in the last year I have a clearer vision of leadership in practice – I can now see how I avoided leadership opportunities in many cases and used the collaborative “no one is really a leader, we all are” to avoid some realities – like if there is a situation and I have hard-won experience and expertise and timelines are short and the window of opportunity is small maybe I should be happy to step and direct and lead – so long as I take the time as soon as possible to share the thinking and experience with others so they can begin to take ownership and adapt the directions etc to make it sustainable. It is paradoxical. Jenny 19-5-02

• **dialogue and making sense - week 4→**

Dialogue, or meaning moving through, was a theme which I, as facilitator, returned to time and again throughout the project. My early 'leaders' tried to encourage movement and dynamics in our conversation, to both bring the inner out and to develop multi-stranded meanings. By mid-project, the group had established reference points of thought and feeling amongst each other and no longer felt so much at sea in the flow. They valued this kind of in-depth communication and thought that like-mindedness, and the airing and sharing of thoughts, might be what they needed more than fiery discussion. They liked stream of consciousness writing as an exercise in reflection that accessed a deeper level and made them more into 'I don't know' people who were open to novel solutions. Leaders liked to dip in and out of their stream of ideas and indulged in both short-and-quick and longer flows. The emerging development and definitiveness in world views brought dialogue that superficially might have been perceived as argument, but was really a making-sense process of fitting in or being inspired. Juxtaposition became the time-stopping engagement of every twist and turn adding their spin, of striving to make full meaning and experience fully without shutting down all on offer, of exploring things that were unclear, of unravelling knots to see the strands in meaning, and of being honest enough to admit laziness about contributing, it being offset by obligation to the group members, commitment to the project and enthusiasm for the topic.

• **management and leadership or ‘ducks in flight’ - week 4→**

A Chinese proverb, ‘not the cry, but the flight of the wild duck, leads the others to fly and follow’, inspired dialogue about leading and managing that was passionate yet showed great humility. Leading thoughts sought to address the leadership-management conundrum in a way that saw both as valued and necessary. To see management as the antithesis of leadership or as mutually exclusive was perplexing and leaders sought to find ways of understanding them as complementary. Like ducks, leadership appealed to an instinct/desire but, like Hitler and Churchill, incredible management turned their leadership into reality in the social contexts of their time. These leads raised the points that, like flight/flocking, being and doing are not a linear but spatial relationship and that leadership and management don’t happen in a vacuum, but through relationship. In probing their meanings more deeply, leaders thought that leadership was wrapped around communicating the idea or the concept (the goose cry) while management is around the doing (taking flight), with leadership needing to appeal to something that is already there to some extent and then management helping to make it happen. The cry might serve the purpose of coordination, a return to group nature for a while, with the formation/leadership being a team effort, an act of cooperative group management.

In the next week, leaders developed their theory of leadership as contextual and shared, not something to study for, formularise or describe in dot points, but as a property of the group, a quality of the collective bestowed rather than assumed or claimed. They saw that each ‘duck’ had some information, expertise and energy to offer and as one took the lead, contributed and fell back, another took its place such that complexity generated the ebb and flow of leaders and followers. To these leaders, good leaders exist through the grace of the group and persist if they gracefully serve, having the grace to create the environment for acts of leadership to emerge. Good leadership was seen as service, as a role about service to the people they lead and leaders wondered if needs could be more appropriately interpreted or the environment manipulated to allow self-leadership to flourish. In examining their meanings, leaders believed that leadership was a dimension inherent in collective experience and, as such, an emergent property and a random act of grace in that the first duck was chosen from random interaction. They did not think of appointed leaders or established experts, but of people with a common cause, with certain principles coming to the fore, with energy being drawn from the depth of consciousness to concentrate around them and enable them to be expressed through leadership. They wondered if leader-being was defined by living principles, such as servant leadership, and noted that the people the leaders see themselves as serving perceive the relationship completely differently until they do it themselves. Returning to the ducks, the group commented on the team nature of leadership in that the flight pattern had no one any more expert than the other, but that there was a common cause, a clear goal and

simple but efficient management. In their changing moments, the leaders saw the need for a marriage of good management with good leadership to translate the cry into the flying and ensure impact in the real world of day to day doings. The question and desire of their hearts was how to transfer a simple model for success like the ducks in flight into a bigger situation.

Week six saw the leaders exploring the dynamics of leadership in groups. They saw a dynamic tension between the notion that groups create leaders by their needs and contexts, with the group creating the necessary space to suck in whoever is ready, on hand, and who has the skills in the right time and place to be leader, and the notion that within some individual is the capacity to perceive the needs and space which calls them to serve by leading in that particular context or niche and the courage to respond to the call with the necessary action. They wondered at the spontaneity of leadership that in good teams, such as the ducks, the space appears and someone, by personal authority and group responsibility, steps in without coercion or finger pointing. They thought it might come of the need to resolve tension in the energy flow with leadership being a balancing of dynamic energies such that when a leader has intense energy, people will follow, or when leadership is scarce, leader energy flows in from elsewhere to fill the space. They wondered, in analogy to their working lives, what would happen if ducks flew in circles, their radars thrown out of synch by circumstances and came back to ground themselves in the teaching/learning process whereby the necessary space is the teachable moment and the response is the teaching act. The leader perceives the need or the space and responds by offering support as coach, steward and servant. To me, in conveying these leaders changing meanings over this theme, the group's moral ethic as leaders is apparent.

I don't think current organisational structures have sufficient flexibility and consciousness of themselves to allow for this (ie the underlined above). I think the key point from my view (being highly kinaesthetic – strange for one so desk bound) is the one about the need to resolve the energy flow within the group as it intersects with the actions and resources and needs etc of the context. That is how I feel it happening and when power or personality wrestles the “energy”, rather than finds the best space for maximum flow - things start to get painful... Then I say So.... What's new? Jenny 19-5-02

• ‘the system’ - week 4→

In this theme, leaders asked themselves how they could be leaders in ‘the system’. One lead was about running on your own subversive agenda while another was about working within the system based on higher thinking such as personal values and beliefs. In the latter, the impetus could be used to develop the system, that is, the people in it, so it more closely represents or recreates the leaders' values. The point was raised of how cultural

traditions were a concern in many large systems, with these leaders believing that the 'good things' of tradition should be respected through ritual and not lost. They saw, however, that systems have no life independent of the people who comprise them and that the constant tension of values and beliefs within the system actually helped it to move and change. They perceived a need to be always monitoring the tension between individual and systemic beliefs and saw how systemic structures of leadership often circumvented individual responsibility and trust. They believed in having the courage to follow needs and to examine the alignment between systemic and individual values to find a more meaningful meeting such that change begins not in systems but in those who make the system. They saw leaders as having a role in developing flexible and growing cultures.

Again I think we only scratched the surface here but touched on it in other places – demonising the “system” is very common in our organization but to me is a symbol of disempowerment. To demonise and blame is to transfer energy and power to the other. Jenny 19-5-02

• **metaphor - week 5→**

The latter two themes prompted a small reflection on metaphor in these leaders' lives. They saw that the metaphors they used for describing experience came from the natural world and that grounding and bodily connection to the larger self was sorely needed in social times of distancing and alienation. With the wild duck metaphor, for example, they saw that the formational spacing was instinctual, but that our space was socially constructed through culture and personality. To these leaders, a correct (and natural) distance was a celebration of being and knowing the human being within.

• **group leadership - week 6**

In exploring leading in groups, leaders picked up on metaphor again, this time with regard to music. Their leading statements were about group development such that in, an either/or and us/them framework, a harmonising chord singing the collective mind is heard as time passes. Out of harmonic toning, a melody bursts out and leaders liken this to being a channel for the wave of energy in a group, a response of creating a synthesising focus in the flow that they felt as ecstasy, a profoundly 'not-I' experience. They felt a space was made through hitting the right chord to create harmonic resonance.

Leaders paid tribute to the work of leading, to the intense conceptual work of reading, thinking, struggling with meaning, imagining, gaining insight and then trial communicating with others, moving to become a playmaker in real space and time, with perseverance and sensitivity to conditions and

timing. They felt that the personal suddenly became communal, and vice-versa, and sensed a readiness to learn that came together in one hit of the moment. Their changing statements conveyed leaders' poise and potential in speaking of the rush of nervousness and excitement, of shyness and trust that the group will hear, and the bursting out of a perceived synthesis, with practise bringing improved resonance with others, discrimination and timing so that the readiness of the audience almost bred new ideas in the leader.

Leaders also spoke of the role of groups in leadership. They believed that group members create the need of leaders, but warned of strangling their own growth in assigning leadership to positional managers/leaders only. They felt it was easy to give someone else the job of leading and avoid the hard work in self. To them, recognising that leadership is necessary should prompt leadership to happen, not by passing the buck, but by 'going ahead' one's self. Leaders also touched on the true leader, in being steward to others, gently handing back the need to the group, with support, thus making circles behind circles of influence and flow creating more leaders in a Lao Tzuan style. In their self-effacing style, these leaders also put trust in the group, noting that they felt safer with collective honesty (can't fool everybody) than with personal honesty (can fool yourself indefinitely).

This (underlined) is a really key insight – I remember when it was happening and written – there is safety in numbers! And yet we all know that the lone voice can be “ahead of its time” and no group can resonate and thus some sense of balance here is essential – documenting the dissenting voice is one practical strategy. Jenny 19-5-02

• stories and dreams - week 7→

In this reflective theme, leaders looked into their personal stories and dreams and spoke with depth about leading as parents and teachers, acknowledging their own child-likeness and need to be authentic. In being honest with themselves, they felt like a babe in the woods when beginning something new and, in appreciating the child in themselves, could empathise with others, particularly young people and their trials of growing up. They loved to be parents and teachers, and recognised the sensitivity and compassion needed for those leadership roles. They spoke of change in themselves, of at times leading and at others, needing to be led; and of pain and the metamorphosis of coming alive.

In the next week, leaders moved from within themselves into their dreams and aspirations in the larger world, paying tribute to the inspiration of Mandela. They did not wish to see community and leadership as either/or, or to see responses to problems rigidified by habitually referring them to positionally authorised leaders. They understood that large scale major change requires the genius of many different and equally important

leadership roles, begun with the extreme spearhead, the radicals who rend the status quo, going 'too far' but lighting a fire which spreads to gentler carriers of the candle; and at the tail end of surging change come the weavers who stitch the gaping tears in the fabric of society, weaving old and new, smoothing the way for latecomers who struggle to adapt to the changed environment. Expressing their passions in poetry, the leaders felt the power of change within themselves and in others, believing that they became both old and new, magnificent and almost larger than life. For them, when change occurs, the fabric is never what it was originally and each stage and those who enact and lead it are vital to, and vitalised by, the process.

• **confidence and risk - week 9**

Consumed by the feelings aroused in exploring their stories and dreams, leaders looked back on themselves to ponder the strength of their passions, wondering whether it had all been said, eloquently and wisely, and if they now had little to add that was new. This seeming lack of confidence was relieved by an acknowledgement that each saying deepens and clarifies meaning, that dreaming is worthwhile and that each has something of quality to offer if they can take the risk of doing so.

• **leadership and meaning - week 9→**

In probing the meaning of leadership, leaders pondered it as being deliberate or accidental. It was pointed out that there may not be an intention to lead, but that behaviour could none the less model leadership. One leader expressed concerns about the role of ego in leadership, but others supported deliberateness and intention to help other fulfill their needs such that, while the image of leadership is most often of the fearless one going forth, modelling courage outwardly for others, the practice most often is in helping others recognise and use the courage already within themselves. They thought that the leader's path of changing meaning seemed too abrupt and preferred to think of illuminating meaning as the path to transparency, to being clear and lucid.

• **fear and vocation or 'naming a calling' - week 9→**

This theme showed leaders going deep to illuminate their thoughts on who they were and who they could be and on the role of fear as a counterpart to courage. They began with a moral dilemma about self doubt, considering that it might be fraudulent to aspire to or to inhabit concrete, institutional power and wondering if they could hold their integrity within the system. Their thoughts showed their acute awareness of being between a rock and a hard place, working very hard for high ideas in situations and systems that drove them in the opposite direction to their calling. They spoke of having a crisis of faith and feeling burnt out, of being weary of the same educational agendas being revisited over and over, of losing motivation and not giving a

damn, of feeling agony over role-playing, of losing personal meaning and of having doubts double in tiredness and multiply in aloneness. On a different note, they also saw that doubt had its uses in allowing the choice essential for self-responsibility, that worry cycles fall apart without a continued injection of energy and that it's possible to leap over the edge to find a new balance, doing something to engage and energise creativity.

In exploring their meanings, they were at first critical of intelligence, seeing it as a Chinese curse through giving too many choices and doubts, but came to a clearer line of making commitment to a rightness of action, whatever the context, rather than a concrete goal. They recognised that vocation gave an inner calling to define and distinguish self but that such intelligence was no guide about how to live life or handle problems. They had to stand outside themselves and love what they saw: perfect human beings trying to perfect human being. As such, action was almost an afterthought, a natural and essential consequence of being. They noted, though, how much harder and humbling right action was than maintaining moral outrage in abstract principle. They saw how it easy it was to be taken up with empty clichés, superficial slogans and platitudes to become a liar. Yet, for all their patient perseverance within the system, they felt a need akin to a midlife crisis to be out of it at times because day to day management sapped their creative wellspring. They paid homage to the right path, to being vulnerable to pain, to knowing courage in the face of doubt, and to being open to the compassion that brings joy. These leaders worked hard at refusing to demonise the system and so give it power over them, to maintain their self-respect when faced with messy choices and compromises, and to see themselves as leaders for whom the mainstream, the orthodox and the established were to be transcended, because as change agents, the status quo would never satisfy them.

By week eleven, leaders were exploring the concept of vocation and negotiating shared meanings about it from personal interpretations. Some were abashed in the face of truly held vocation, some felt that various roles either added or detracted from personal meaning, others felt that life without vocation was a dry and tortuous road, a constant wandering and ache, without the refreshment of the oases of inner vision. Vocation was seen as something that burns inside and makes the pain and struggle worthwhile and able to be borne. While on the one hand wondering if they truly held vocation, on the other their experience was that it could be productive and life-enriching, especially when personal meaning, authenticity and responsibility intertwined with it to support and nurture. To them, pain experienced within the context of a higher calling, or sense of energising purpose and strong direction, was more endurable and left less damage in the life-making process.

Kris had some revealing words about how she saw group members' true vocations:

...my true vocation, I feel, would be to lie in the sun and listen to jenny and peter reading and composing their beautiful poetry (they both of course having given up work with ed. dept., and developed their as-yet-undiscovered gifts with language to become inspirational and powerful writers of substance), watching sandy do her t'ai chi and Aikido (also no longer working in the library but gently encouraging all comers, sharing the wisdom from the east - and elsewhere - from her peaceful bush retreat), while musing idly with doug, who also having taken up lying on the grass in the sun as his new vocation, is contemplating the world and reflecting broadly and wisely on its themes, considering his next unassuming but significant action,.... Kris 23-7-00

• **holiday reflections or ‘embodied alchemists’ - week 10**

The previous theme of vocation had leaders touching on archetypes such as the fool or jester, the trickster and the mage and this short holiday theme took this further to examine alchemists. The thought was that leaders could be likened to alchemists, in creating wonders out of seemingly next-to-nothing, with fuzzy influence getting things going when a need for leadership emerged. The zeitgeist was used to launch a shaping or forming of energy patterns in the space that opens, reminding leaders not to put up with constrictive roles but to make the most of them, seeking fluid patterns instead of static ones. To this end, working within given systems was seen not as fraud but as the opportunity to make and change those systems.

• **I/B/E leadership vs personal leadership - week 11**

Leaders here considered whether there could be personal meaning in Institutionalised, Bureaucratic and Enforced leadership and whether there could be a wounded healer. Initially, it was pointed out that I/B/E ‘leadership’ could not be classed as leadership and that I/B/E action was distinct from leadership, but this either-or position moved to a consideration of effective leadership as being about creating meaning for the individual whilst an integral part of an I/B/E environment. While leaders agreed that ethical leadership had love and moral credibility at its core, some did not see these as the defining realities of leadership, or rather, that the top end of the continuum, the actualisation of higher learnings, was more important than the lower end. Probing this, leaders thought they presented the high ideal but for much of the time were engaged in what was in their faces, operating from other angles but subconsciously trusting that their ‘love ethos’ was underlying whatever headset being worn at the time. To one leader new to IBE leadership, this felt like wearing grandfather’s trousers, a costume that didn’t yet fit and which needed serious tailoring if the right thread could be found. To another more experienced, the either-or position was incomprehensible due to expertise in seamlessly bringing personal meaning to I/B/E contexts. Leaders were aware of the mystery of leadership

such that there could be personal meaning in anything they did, including management (the manual doing) and administration (ministering). They thought that if the heart and thus the ethic was in the right place, all else followed to make an integrity of doing what's right for each. However, they did not see meaningful leadership as right in itself, giving examples about the power of Hitler and of the British empire, and asked if leadership was simply a function of human being and society and that what was brought to it, whether it be love or manipulation, defined its value for social and psychological well-being.

The leaders turned back on themselves to wonder if they often 'manage' in schools because meaning is lost, or never found, thinking that if there was meaning, leadership was an almost natural or consequential occurrence, almost 'demanded' by a situation and provoking the 'suffering servant' and 'sacrificial leadership' which they saw as positive where responsibility was accepted but not taken and where choice was involved. Leaders valued their ability to notice apart from themselves, to trust themselves to have the integrity of doing what's right in principle for them, and to stretch and take risk, accepting the outcomes.

The call of leadership was likened to rain upon dry ground, but leaders acknowledged that there were lots of hours lived in the swamp and that both the lofty and the lowly ideas of leadership shared the same motivation, that of serving self and others. Being able to blend inner, personal meaning or vision with a bigger institutional role might bring meaning to a place where there might otherwise be some lack of it.

• **conflict - week 11**

The last theme, in its either-or or both-and nature raised the issue of conflict. Leaders thought conflict valuable in that it showed something important was at stake and so should not be avoided. To them, some positive aspects of conflict were that it demonstrated that self-trust was strong enough to negotiate and integrate other perspectives, and that all voices, even dissenting ones, could be honored. To disrespect any voice brought the most risk to the survival and sustainability of a group. To be willing to enter conflict meant being prepared to suffer and persevere, however going to the point of martyrdom was not supported. Leaders thought they had to be happy in their sacrifice, going to an extent of personal choice that they could live with. Some spoke of avoidance in pussyfooting around while some relished conflict as a growth tool, but all considered that it was important to act from a heartfelt position and to be able to let go to openness while still knowing when enough is enough. To work through conflict could move leaders to weeping, being moved by the process of exploring rather than avoiding, but could also energise and give a buzz that made any suffering into a gift.

• **love, fear, hate and leading or ‘illumination’ - week 12→**

The depths from which leaders were now communicating and sharing meaning and change brought illuminating professions of feelings. Leaders spoke strongly of the love of leading: love of helping others to meanings that they can act on and be gratified by, love of assisting others to push their bubble, love of moving people towards achieving their potential, love of developing emotional growth and strength in others. In contrast, they also spoke of fear of alienating people or inadvertently leading them into something that hurts them and of being seen as manipulative for personal gain, asking if the overall cost of leadership might be too great. They hated the constraints of bureaucracy and the restrictions of roles, but on the other hand loved the opportunity and empowerment that leading in an I/B/E environment could bring to meeting people’s needs and to personal growth.

The next week was an up and down time, with leaders speaking of the inspiration they get from challenging people’s self-imposed limits, from helping things happen and from what others can do. This was balanced by isolation and doubts about sharing doubts, by the staccato of details that buzz then mean nothing, by fear of wrong choices and energy blocks, and of the heart-in-the-mouth making of balance points with hopefully good decisions. Leaders spoke of an almost primal fear of exposure, of naked vulnerability, of being inadequate and making mistakes, and of sheer frustration with self or others. They worried about lack of credibility and of being hurt by small-mindedness and resentment, but found their ground in the idea of authenticity and of leadership as service according to the expressed needs of others, helping them to be what they want to be.

Their changing words saw these leaders honour their own needs of wanting to make space for their own reflection to come to a deeper understanding of themselves and how they worked. They wanted to take a chance to reconnect to and articulate the playful, exhilarated source of wellspring and to explore how that resonates, or otherwise, with working life. They wanted to talk with trusted others about the perceived nature of the I/B/E beast in its lair and to reveal their true nature and to be accepted. They believed that to find self-assurance, they had to avoid succumbing to other’s fears yet at the same time be vulnerable, trusting that personal authenticity was the best model and that their integrity would stand for them. They longed for an Elysian idyll of true humanity and calm joy and of all being fed what they need, and had the courage to accept responsibility for getting there. As leaders they believed in the empowerment of choice, and that included choosing to not be ashamed of neediness, to be faithful in small things and to simply be present with each other.

• **chooks - week 13**

A comment about my role as facilitator in scratching over the dry fragments of New Times Roman to lay bare the juicy worms of meaning led to a light-hearted consideration of the value of chooks - that is, chickens - and being

chook-like. Leaders admired the great simple purpose in chooks, that they just do what they have to do, thoroughly enjoying themselves in the process, and that they have their uses, for eggs and for their pecking order arrangements helping in understanding elusive psychological concepts. As facilitator, I believed that there were no dry fragments but fertile seeds that needed turning over to reveal their treasures, making me more like the archetypal crone raking the bones to feel their magic. The group admitted to liking, even loving, chooks as they were a reminder to keep a simple purpose or vocation and gave encouragement, like the Nike logo of 'just do it', to live fully in the moment, whether it be incubating an idea or relaxing on the grass to watch them pecking.

• **resilience - week 14**

A short reflection following the chooks theme revolved around the seeds of resilience and self-worth making leadership so important in that they could be used in helping people turn their lives from sad waste to productive and joyful participation. The courage to go forward and take risks was acknowledged, but also was the resilience to pick up and keep going when knocked down. Meanings touched on how self-belief gives strength, but noted that resilience wasn't an endless pit. It needed adding to sometimes, just as do the kids and adults who are fearful of not having enough, or of not being enough. An important thing was to recognise when personal reservoirs needed topping up and some suggestions given for feeding resilience were to go wild, to reconnect to source, to go surfing, to get out inspirational bits of writing and to be nurturant.

• **time - week 15→**

This theme examined the qualities of time and of how it impacted on professional life. The leading statements suggested moving away from a perception of time ruling ruthlessly and leading linearly to death / stasis or dissolution into chaos and into a view of time as flow, using time / space to create orderliness and to make a place for important things. One leader noted that in an I/B/E environment a person was measured by the amount of things that can be ticked off in least time, but considered that Covey's idea of first things first was a revelation. Others were distressed that time didn't go round, such that everything seemed to need a constant injection of energy (force?) to make it happen and that others didn't pick up and run, allowing the game to keep going. In exploring their meanings, leaders liked Covey's thoughts on balancing life through attending to what is really important and meaningful on a personal level, but spoke of the frustration of getting caught up in the meaningless, shallow satisfaction of ticking things off. The much preferred one-task-at-a-time, the doing of important but not urgent tasks worked as an article of honour and respect, and as an efficient use of energy both physically and mentally because to be unfinished ended up meaning to be scattered.

Different frames of time were seen as useful and necessary, such as routine serving to get through mundane and to provide some framework, ritual serving to make space for celebrating the sacred or special, and the cycles of nature serving to give sense of place. However, time / space to fly was enormously important; unordered time to engage in things properly, to let creativity come through and to make a personal piece of order and meaning. Leaders spoke of the numinous experience when time disappeared through being one in the flow. They liked measuring time by getting through tasks they wanted to do, giving up task management in a set time frame such that the most satisfying times of life were spent in working on important things under less stress.

• **changing meaning - week 17→**

The ten weeks from week 17 were an emotional time for leaders in experiencing and exploring changing meaning, particularly for one leader in which this period began with a decision to take long service leave and concluded with the death of her mother. This leader's realisation that work was 'forced' and like being locked in a ground hog day, with all the strain and sapping effort that entails, her admission that her well spring of motivation was muddled and her decision to wander away to have some time and space for reflection and recreation brought some soul-searching in the group about the processes and implications of changing meaning. They spoke of change as making new sense because the old sense didn't make sense anymore: it was no longer adequate to live by and had lost its truth. Change was learning and the combined exhilaration and terror of throwing the interconnected patterns that the mind has when meaning shifted - when a new, different and never entertained path / choice became an imperative, a jump to a higher level of knowing, understanding and being that was not a reshuffle of meaning pieces, but an invention of new pieces that were more authentic than appropriate - up into the air, unsure of how they will land. Notably, work did not always offer this with responsive opportunities being too patterned, or dictated by management gurus or trendy academics, to include autonomous responses according to personal chords.

Meaning was about purpose, an intersection of experience and prior knowledge with some new experience or perception. Forms coalescing to rigidity, external expectations and frozen dinner meanings of premature consensus were not appreciated, but the choices and dimensions available in personally making meaning were. Leaders liked sharing in others' meanings and in sometimes finding them their own, but not in being forced into them. One leader also admitted to having been buried in others' expectations, but now saw this as self-imposed out of a misguided sense of service. The leaders paid tribute to authenticity and considered that all changes of meaning are about coming closer and closer to personal truths. They liked the group because no one was shimmying up the flag pole to have everyone line up behind it or interested in constructing 'a line' on anything so that meaning making was possible, the group acting as a window to being and

becoming. The group's role in personal changing of meaning was acknowledged as important but hard to describe, with more happening off the list than the words sent; the words being the tip of the iceberg but the group providing the stick for a lot of fairy floss that would otherwise float off and melt.

• **self-organising systems - week 16**

In a short follow-on to the above theme, differing views of change were seen as akin to a dimension of personality, ie, the need for closure as opposed to the need for openness. Following some anecdotes about unanticipated situations of change demanding new responses, it was pointed out that life has no contingency plans and that systems need to be able to move with the flow, recognising growth and limits. For systems to self-organise, they needed central reference points and the flexibility to deal with the unexpected, less a prepared framework for dealing with contingencies than the mental and physical preparedness to not get knocked out. It was seen as okay to say 'I don't know' until things were worked out.

• **chords or 'harmonic resonance' - week 19→**

A metaphor from week 6, then used in the context of group leadership, was revisited in another sense when the group sought to express the nature of their journeying together. Leaders noted how the group's resonance warmed them, through the harmony of individual songlines setting off resonances which reverberated and extended meaning. They wondered at the chords coming naturally, with no force involved, when each melody was unique but somehow the whole was a song of unison. That song spoke of a longing cry from the heart to be (allowed to be) the people /leaders they truly were and of love and care for the human condition. The leaders went on to wonder why they longed and, fear aside, why they felt they needed to be allowed to be themselves. They thought that perhaps it was because they saw 'them' as 'we' and wanted a cooperative growing up of the human race founded on mutuality, or mutual allowing. The chords of harmonic resonance within the group were felt to be inspiring.

• **do we need leaders? - week 20**

With mutual 'allowing', leaders asked if it was possible to capture a snapshot of leadership, with all the messy bits involved in problem solving. It was thought that leaders in the mould that 'leadership' was so often understood were not needed, but that maybe leadership was a necessary imaginative key, a myth that inspired and sustained efforts but at the end of the day remained a myth borne of the reality of ego. On the other hand, leading was also seen as the birthright and responsibility of every human being such that true leading was not a myth but an opportunity to live life's purpose unafraid.

• **flow - week 22→**

In this reflective theme, one leader thought it was getting easier to see the world as flow, but a problem was how to not get caught up in reactivity, though it seemed like being responsive. Seeing everything as relationships helped, with the answer to reactivity lying perhaps as much in others as in leaders, with blending being needed. In revisiting the words of the project after its formal ending, there came a sense of oscillation between leading and meaning, with one always redefining the other through the process of moving between.

• **learning needs or ‘adult learners’ - week 22→**

This theme probed what leaders needed as adult learners. In avoiding reactivity, it was seen that it was people stuff that needed to be learnt; learning to be more aware, ie, to be within interactions yet also outside as actor and observer. It was not things that needed to be learnt, but the skill of being fully present yet distanced enough to be able to consciously choose a response. To help in this, one leader noted that she saw herself in a certain frame, but would learn from being able to perceive and understand the frames in which others saw her. This led to an exchange of frames between two leaders, excerpts of which follow. (The mail to me from Jenny was initially posted privately, but later Jenny consented to sharing it with the group, as per our commitment at the outset.)

Jenny (to Sandy) 14-10-00

You amaze me!! I feel small in relation to your wisdom your indefatigable momentum towards the higher good. I stand in awe at your obvious energy in your work your weekend workshops, your martial arts, your reading, your fecundity on this list.

I do not know that this group is the one you need to be in.... you seem to be operating on another plane In your coaching of us I feel your yearning to be in a group which matches you I do not feel I can....

Sandy (to Jenny) 15-10-00

To my frames of you... first and foremost, what comes in is your intense and passionate care of others. I feel for the suffering you go through on others' behalf. I think, just now, that you are learning to care for yourself as well... for that bubbling and vibrant thespian who sometimes gets buried under the load of caring. I appreciate your Gemini nature... have one child like

this... a great student, but one who needs to break out into her funloving, wacky and goofy side now and then.

I so admire your energy, enthusiasm/advocacy and reaching into new frontiers at work... I admire, too, that you invest yourself so fully, and get the returns that buzz you. But I see that it is time for stepping back to process all this and heal the unattended-to hurts that have happened in both your personal and work life. It takes great courage to give a gift like this to your self.

Another leader saw learning needs as many and varied but loved that learning was a given in the organisation (school). The preferred style was to have time to reflect away from the immediate environment and it took a degree of honesty to say he didn't know something because he had to think on it. A personal developmental need was seen as learning to reflect at the time and apply it to responding more quickly. In all, the problem with people stuff was in trying to connect meaning with people in vastly different frames in very little time.

• **work as the empty lunch box - not really - week 23**

In this soul-searching theme, leaders asked if work was like an empty lunch box, not providing the food they needed to grow. They agreed that work was dispiriting but at the same time, a huge challenge to operate in the wider arena and explore the limits and extensions of beliefs and drives. They admitted to being always hungry, but saw that there were a number of ways in the soul diet to fill up, with work as a leader being a necessary part of their paths. Leaders, therefore, worked hard at sustaining some soul content in activities, finding some meaning and connectedness to people and the planet. Despite the angst and feelings of constraining forces, work for these leaders was absolutely an experience of food for the soul. Despite the crushing onrush of the work dynamic, whilst exploring the pain and damage it caused them, these leaders were accepting of, and even grateful for, their path. They spoke of the energy needed to cut through problems and knots; and of the need to respond whole-heartedly to problems. They believed that the use of energy could be lethal or life-giving, and that how one chose to use it said something about understandings of power.

In growing older, leaders acknowledged that they did not have the energy they once had, and sought to manage and balance it better, even questioning their coping skills and asking if their self-respect demanded more for them. They saw that they would always be hungry (but not starving) souls, always looking for what will keep them growing and thriving and moving on. They reminded themselves to cherish and nourish the child in each of them so they could continue to wonder and to be innocent and open to learning. Yet for all, they were able to ride the tide, instead of having problems washing over and submerging them. The place

to which they had got couldn't be shared around, only reached through the inner work of growing.

• **heart and soul and EQ - week 24**

In this last major theme, leaders continued to reveal their souls. In talking of leading and EQ (Emotional Intelligence / Quotient), they spoke of the need for self-preservation, of being aware of how much they were giving so the emotional bucket wasn't run dry. However, their bottom line was that heart and soul must come to work if there was going to be a valuing of individual difference and authentic relationships. They believed that, as a species, educators needed to restore their sense of personal power, and needed to acknowledge and capitalise on individual differences and strengths as well as supporting individual weaknesses without any shame or disgrace being attached. Leaders played with the concepts of compassion, empathy and boundaries, believing that true detachment was needed to be of any real service, and that cold professional detachment was different to real empathetic detachment. This latter was seen as the wellspring of compassion, where leaders could feel as and with others, but still allow them to fully own themselves, their thoughts and their feelings. Such feeling fully and frankly with others did not take responsibility from them.

Leaders went on to speak of the experience of flow and transparency, of meeting people where they are at, but not entering deeply into them unless specifically invited to. Leaders needed to know their own boundaries to do this. They wondered about interpersonal boundaries at work and at home and spoke of the need to negotiate boundaries in good practice. To them, a middle ground of differentiating between workplace heart and soul and home heart and soul was useful to avoid being burnt. They wondered about people's personal readiness in being able to invest self and take risks on others and felt that there was too much diffidence about putting stuff about feelings before people before they were ready; exposure might just strike a chord in someone. These leaders saw that when the emotional factor was happening successfully at work, people were less afraid, and more tolerant and supportive of each other. They saw that energy could be exchanged and that opening to the flow was like dancing together.

• **quiet reflections - week 25→**

After the emotional expenditure of the last themes, there came a sense of wonderment at the group, its space of existence and the journey of sometimes raw learning. I asked if it had all made any difference in the participants, but saw that only time would reveal any watersheds coming out of our journey.

• **youth suicide and leadership - week 43**

A late theme after the formal conclusion of the project dealt with life-and-death leadership. One leader spoke of recent experience with youth suicide,

and it touched a chord with others who had similar exposure to situations of high risk. The experience of leading and teaching from the heart was petrifying, taking risks on a young person's life or death and knowing that what was said could make a difference either way. The reality of laying your life and those of others on the line by what you do and say as a leader was seen as ultimate risk leading, yet in a way, every little thing leaders do was seen as really equally so. There was no place for false comfort, but a need for an emptying out of self to be able to respond to each new situation as it emerged, to be prepared to ditch previous, normally successful tactics, to be patient and enduring, and to risk the act of trusting people with their own lives. These leaders believed that simply to live was a triumph and had profound gratitude for the gift of life. Sharing the pain and joy of living life with trusted others built communities of the heart.

Analysis:

The following analysis of the data was focused on identifying what evidence and implications there might be for the *changing ways* considered in the research's theoretical framework. Each 'changing way' is listed below, along with a synopsis of some ways I (and some of the participants) saw the data speaking to each path. In offering academic interpretations in conjunction with evidence (again using participants' phrasing, as exemplified by the italics in the 'Changing' section below), I used wording of thought, feeling and sensitivity in making my meaning. As a participant researcher in a changing way of researching, my intention was neither to be tentative nor assertive in my conclusions but to be reflective of the head-and-heart wholeness of participants' involvement in a journey in which there was nothing to prove but much to learn about self and others. Although I was a participant and thus seer in the project, in analysing the data I took on the role of witness.

Changing:

In the theoretical framework of this research, changing was seen as an *ongoing constant* in which inner meaning and outer actions transformed each other in a self-referential cycle, particularly in those seen as leaders.

This definition of changing permeated the group and proved useful in developing a shared language for talking about change. For example:

Perhaps one of life's few 'constants' is that change is constant and guaranteed, whether welcome or not; maybe my other existing concept is that, like the old fashioned 'charity', voluntary change begins at home.
Kris 18-5-00

I am interested in building structures that respond to and generate diversity and change, while being aware that probably the only genuine way to influence change is by personal example. Peter 19-5-00

Change is learning is the combined exhilaration and terror of throwing the interconnected patterns which are my mind/head sets up in the air unsure of how they will land ... certainly not like a change of clothes because some US management guru or postmodernist trendy academic has articulated a marketable product/process/product/theory which implies if I don't line up I am a has been -- wow there is soooooe emotion behind that one. Jenny 16-9-00

For Kris, change was ongoing and began 'at home' in personal ways. Peter thought likewise and saw that personal change influenced structural change. Jenny focused on the learning and thrill of inner personal change as opposed to the imposition of outer, structural change. Changing, for these participants, was a deeply personal experience that appeared to require some courage and commitment to enact in the world.

Congruent with the notion of changing as ongoing, the group identified with the *permaculture* idea of working with the *natural order* of systems to develop *sustainable growth*. This extended the conception of changing that initially framed this study. In *beginning 'at home'*, changing needed to come from within the leader and develop *support structures* so that it could diversify and perpetuate itself as necessary. This was in contrast to imposed change with *pre-ordained response opportunities giving little autonomy* and thus little strength or rooting to the process. The leaders found that changing needed courage, as revealed in their stories of personal journeys. It was like a complete *metamorphosis, a change of state*, because the old sense was left behind as inadequate and a new sense was needed. For one participant, a *nakey little baby* became a *brilliant, iridescent dragonfly*,

reflecting the deep and *irreversible nature of change* that Quinn (1996) spoke of. For another, lack of change was *like being locked in a groundhog day* (that is, the same day repeated over and over) so *work became forced and motivation sapped*. The data showed that the group as a whole saw changing as a necessary element in a healthy life, much as Bütz (1997) proposed, and that it was most meaningful when personally initiated. This affirmed the position in the theoretical framework that changing begins within. Outer structural change leaves much the same because it does not sufficiently involve the inner, personal dimension. The implication for leaders in education involved in changing was that their focus should initially be on the process of changing within people as individuals more than within systems.

The changing way of being:

In exploring a changing way of being in the theoretical framework, I put forward a case for the outer dimensions of action being reconciled with inner dimensions of contemplation to give an embodied mind, that is, a self conscious of participating in and making the present through distinction and differentiation. The data showed that participants welcomed the opportunity that the project presented to contemplate on their actions:

This is the time-treat I've been waiting for all week - getting back to our e-mail conversations. Kris 23-7-00

I feel energised and more focused, so writing this has been good for me. I hope it has been some good for all of you too. Doug 26-7-00

In allowing the treat of time for contemplation, the participants' bodies and minds were integrated and gave rise to a changing way of being, that is, a sense of being more energised and focused. This feeling of well-being is Csikszentmihalyi's (1992) 'optimal state' of flow as described in the theoretical framework.

From the beginning, and indeed throughout the dialogue as Jenny pointed out in her critical feedback (19-5-02; chimera / shape-changer - week 1), the group saw themselves as plastic and playful, cooking up food for the soul and recreating the magic of changing. This I saw as a response to the exploratory nature of the journey as the project's path was indistinct and participants needed to feel their way. My sense is that they felt joyously free and unencumbered by expectations. They valued being able to develop fresh views of experience and, although the ambiguity made for uncertainty, they had adequate trust in each other to go with the ebb and flow and unpredictability. This was in distinct contrast to the discontinuities in the workplace. My initial feeling from this was that some of these leaders at least disliked the compartmentalisation of work and could wish for more of a role in shaping their work, that is, in bringing more of themselves into its determination. Their changing way of being had to be pragmatic, allowing the inner vision to be worked out in the work world, but nevertheless diversified enough to allow different people to make different meanings and actions... being imprisoned by the 'System International' and 'frozen dinner' meanings were not for them.

The participants in the group, in coming to reveal the inner faces behind the outer persona, showed themselves as sensitive souls for whom reconciling their inner and outer sides was important. Developing empathy, respect and trust for each other within the group eased their bruised psyches of leadership in the outer world, and reflected a longing to be able to take their inner selves out into the work world, there to be accepted and safe; to be revealed, as Leider and Shapiro (1996) put it. As Jenny (19-5-02; sensitivity / feelings - week 2) said in her feedback, the connection within the group was fundamental to the experience and she believed that such connection and community were what was missing in a workplace that was more combative and competitive. That said, none wanted to demonise the system and be disempowered, but rather they valued conflict as an opportunity to learn - to see their blind spots, as Heifetz (1992) puts it. They supported a

personal examination of the alignment between systemic and individual values to find a more meaningful meeting such that changing was driven from within people rather than by a system. Thus, these leaders had courage and personal power and saw themselves as having a role in developing flexible and growing cultures of learning in education. In adding my personal perspective as a group member, I believed all of us were leaders who risked alienation in going ahead in various ways and I think I speak for all in saying that the 'being there' of those who understand and accept the person behind the action makes a big difference. When the inside is known and trusted, fear does not rob experience (Gibb, 1991) and the outer work becomes easier. Similarly to Remen (1999) in her study of surgeons, the data supported the view taken in the theoretical framework that leaders in education need to be in another way. Rather than being isolated and put on a pedestal, they need the collegiality of trusted others to witness and share their journeys into change.

The changing way of relating:

Changing ways of relating, as put forward in the theoretical framework, bring about a sense of self that is both distinct from others and implicate in others. Dialogue is a vehicle of relating through which personal and shared meanings can be created as participants reveal their inner and outer sides to trusted others. The data showed stories and insights of the project's participants as they negotiated their way into new ways of relating:

There was a synergy in that team that was inspiring. And my boys worked together in the game and discussed their little triumphs and other learning experiences for some time afterwards in a shared debriefing that I was part of. ... It was interesting because the younger son played in two games, one winning one losing. Which gave the greater satisfaction? Performing well in the losing one. Doug 28-5-00

Listening to your recent conversation makes me think that just 'being there' is valuable... just caring friends and a cosy space/time without pressure, ready to offer support and gentle challenge anytime. Sandy 12-9-00

Yep... hole in one, from my end anyhow; I feel quite relieved!! ... I like the lack of pressure and you see, already feel freer to write back briefly. Kris
12-9-00

Doug was comfortable with reflecting on others' relationships and learning from them. In contrast to Doug, Kris needed an indication from me as facilitator in an academic project that it was acceptable to move into a loosely coupled mode of relating in which there was support without pressure. With the less formal relationship of caring friends, she felt less constriction and was happier to contribute.

In their collective 'being there', the participants became more relaxed over their sense of time. The data showed that they gradually let their dialogue move from being forced into pre-existent time frames, largely determined by external factors such as work, family and perceived needs of the project, and into a flow. This flow moved around them such that it might have been always there (and valued for its constancy) but was accessible as and when needed. Similarly, in the workplace they were tired and worn from rolling from one tick-off task to the next and wanted to minimise pressure by relating to the task rather than the time it took to do it, as Covey, Merrill and Merrill (1994) suggest in working on 'first things first', the non-urgent important tasks. The participants liked to make space / time to create, but not to bind it and become its victim. They also liked time for the telling of stories, for making their personal lives part of their communal lives such that their authenticity as individuals was revealed. Relating a tale about the sons' weekend footy match was a rich source of material for exploring teamwork, leadership, parenting and how these were reflected in their work relationships.

In the research group, listening and thinking were valued as much as speaking/writing by the caring friends. Indeed, Isaacs (1999) understands listening as an attribute of dialogue, as described in the theoretical framework. In dialogue, the *receiving* of listening is as important as the *giving* of speaking in allowing meaning to move through. The participants

liked being in a club where they could control their contact in dialogue, choosing to be part of and apart from as they wished, but sensing that even when they were apart, they were still very much in the group, a factor which contributed to its sustainability. The group's connective relationships went beyond the immediate and into a realm of always being there in silent support and challenge in a way that was heart warming and grounding. My sense is that each member valued being a 'self', but also appreciated having others as part of them. As the group developed, they established their psychological similarity (Duck, 1994), as referred to in the theoretical framework, in shared reference points of thought and feeling and individuals were able to exert their distinctiveness without fear. It was possible to be different, but still to be respected, and I sense that the participants would have liked a similar tension in the workplace such that conflict was seen as healthy, as a resource for social learning (Heifetz, 1992), and that diversity was possible in a community of shared values. An implication for practice as shown by the data is that leaders need to engage in productively processing conflict rather than avoiding or downplaying it. Likewise, they need to develop communities in which they are able to relate to trusted others as caring friends. Such viewpoints imply that leaders in education should attend to changing ways of relating more carefully.

The changing way of knowing:

In the context of my theoretical framework, knowledge becomes less a static object and more a process of knowing that is open to reconstruction in every use, or performance, of it.

I made the mistake of reading your thoughts on leadership last night before going to bed and that coupled with a quote I read meant that the old brain had a field day mulling over a range of issues during the night.
Doug 3-6-00

Unlike Peter, I need the non-verbals to get a drift on what's really going on. I feel more wary of opening heart and soul to cyberspace than I do with flesh and blood people - which I know you all are really of course. I also

would actually feel better with a visual on things, rather than Doug's 'faceless anonymity.' Kris 11-8-00

I don't know right now I'll have to think on it. Doug 15-10-00

Although knowing and knowledge *per se* did not feature significantly in the group's dialogue, the above excerpts demonstrate the mutable nature of knowing in the participants - knowing was actively recreated by 'mulling over' or 'thinking on it' and the process of knowing was different for different people. However, the group's dialogue over the period of the project on the theme of leadership revealed what Lévy (1997) would call a knowledge space, a very personalised living-in-knowledge and knowledge-in-living.

To these people, the concept and practice of leadership could never be pinned down as one participant pointed out, but could be known and experienced in multiple ways in their lived lives. These leaders were learning first hand that knowing, and the knowing of leading in particular, was mutable. They found that they needed to be fluid in dealing with such changeability, both in themselves and in working with others. In this project, they were reaching for an integrative metaknowing in bringing together their individual knowings of leadership into a shared meaning. Thus, in terms of the higher levels of Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1998) continuum on knowledge as outlined in the theoretical framework, they were at first exchanging personal perspectives and were thus able to view knowledge from different perspectives. They proceeded to develop their personal views in relation to others and to enrich these in light of considering what others brought to the dialogue. It was a case of being able to learn more together than each probably could alone. Their cumulative and shared body of knowing about leadership was a step beyond mere knowledge: it was alive in them, distinct but not definitive and thus always open to changing. The data summaries of 'management and leadership or 'ducks in flight' - week 4→' and 'I/B/E leadership vs personal leadership - week 11', in particular, demonstrated this. For example, in exploring the

meaning of the Chinese proverb about ducks in flight, participants put forward their own viewpoints but then superseded them with considerations of all the viewpoints. They did not come to an endpoint of how the proverb could be used in interpreting leadership, but their knowing of leading was deepened and broadened as a result of their dialogue. In so enlarging their knowing, these leaders demonstrated what Nespor (1994) termed as 'knowledge-in-motion'. Their knowing was problematic in that there was no one correct definition of leading. At the same time their knowing was a flow in space and time as it allowed distinctions about leading to emerge and interweave. The participants' changing way of knowing about leading had motion. A flow-on from this was that the movement was contextualised in practising leadership, that is, in changing the practice because the knowledge of it was changing. Like the ducks changing leaders to optimise the teams' performance, the participants saw that their leading should similarly change. In some cases, for example, a more autocratic 'I/B/E' style was seen as appropriate, while at other times, a more collegial style was better. An outcome of such a changing way of knowing in participants could be the development of an ability to choose ways of leading more responsively and responsibly.

The changing way of representing:

In a world that is not pre-given or separated from consciousness, language becomes as changeable as the reality it is representing. The inexhaustible entanglement of always being within language makes representing an active process of knowing in which changing meanings are expressed relationally through differentiation and distinction in the present rather than definition in the past. The leaders in the project group, for example, represented themselves and each other in a range of descriptive ways that demonstrated that no one 'label' would be adequate to carry the meaning of who they were:

I see myself as having a number of roles in life including husband, father, lover, educator, coach, enforcer, instigator, problem solver, listener, amateur counsellor, friend, dreamer and a range of others. Doug 21-5-00

*To the dragonfly...
creature with power, grace and speed, and ancient iridescence
how might I speak with thee?
oh ancient one
where art thou travelling so quickly and gracefully?
do you have time to stop oh dragonfly
and share the shining darkness of thy message?
Jenny 7-7-00*

*Doug wrote - 'I love being a parent... and... to a large extent it defines me'... well I just want to agree with you there... I know the myriads of times that teachers would be talking about some 'issue' or problem and some one would say 'ask Doug'... ah yes, and that would make everyone feel better - just having a pappa bear there to pass a problem on to... who we knew would deal with it with reasonable compassion mixed with good sense...
Kris 23-7-00*

The group's evolving representations of the concept of leading and of themselves as leaders will feature below. Here I deal with the participants' changing ways of representing themselves through metaphor, stories, dreams and through naming their callings. In introducing themselves at the outset, the participants largely spoke of themselves in outer dimension terms, representing themselves by defining their roles and relationships in the world of work and of family, for example, as employee or parent. Over time, they moved into sharing their inner dimensions with each other, as signalled in their linguistic choices, and their representations of themselves moved into a more fluid field. They used dream imagery and the idea of 'vocation' to sketch more poetic pictures of themselves. For example, the language used shifted from the definitive to the likeness of metaphor. This allowed the audience within the group to play more of an active part in imagining and recreating the speaker. For example, one participant was considered first as a learning support teacher but later as a glowing dragonfly. Another participant was an enforcer (amongst other things) and later a parent in his own eyes but was recreated as a pappa bear in another's. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), our conceptual system is fundamentally metaphorical in nature and it is rightly so that metaphor is

pervasive in language, thought and action. For the participants to relax into metaphorical representation showed the deepening of their personal and communal knowing. The possibilities in knowing each other multiplied, as did the meanings of each person multiply into richness and roundness instead of brittle facets. In this, consciousness was not separated as Reason (1994b) spoke of, as in the person and the act, but embodied in the person-within-the-act and correspondingly, representational language became fuller and more holistic.

Nowhere was the inexhaustibility of representing more evident than in dialogue around the theme of naming a calling ('fear and vocation and 'naming a calling' - week 9 →). Frustrations were evident in some participants, who seemed to feel it a huge challenge to fit pre-made roles. Subsequently, they felt either adrift because the fit with themselves - like 'grandfather's trousers' - was so poor, or lost because roles demanded a sell-out of themselves, as in being a 'mother' or a 'worker' leading to a loss of personal meaning. The language of 'burnout', 'crisis of faith', 'agony', 'doubt', 'fear', 'anguish', and 'victims' featured in the pathos of participants trying to find and live their vocations in an organisation and a world that they saw as placing them between a rock and a hard place. Their hearts aspired to making their own paths, to drawing their own images of their authentic selves - and one participant lightheartedly saw his archetypal representation as the Fool. Further, they wanted to be clear and be clearly seen by others, in other words, to be revealed and respected for who they were in both inner and outer dimensions - a healthy attribute according to Leider and Shapiro (1995). As leaders, the participants had the courage to use the pain they had experienced to keep making life - and their representations of it and themselves - anew. Within the period of the project, three out of the five participants in the group underwent significant changes in their personal or professional lives, with the other two having already changed paths within the last ten years. Clearly, to seek changing ways of representing themselves was appropriate.

The changing way of meaning:

In foregoing the presumption that there are fixed, given meanings, I advocated in the theoretical framework that there is rightfully no 'space' for a consciousness that binds meaning. Rather, meaning should be seen as an expression of flow, an ongoing dialectical process of relating for those who participate in it, as one participant's contributions to the project group's dialogue reflected:

*...when I check the new messages I find such links with my unsent message
! Jenny 4-7-00*

*- - illuminating meaning is the leader's path; - - recognising meaning is...; -
- questioning meanings is...; - - pursuing meaning... meaning is the
leader's path. Jenny 19-7-00*

*...meaning making is the ultimate ... it is it... I do not like anything with a
whiff of frozen dinner meanings - the premature consensus group think
type of thing. ...that is why I like this group.. no one is shimmying the flag
up the pole to have us line up behind anything. Meaning making is
possible not just endless explications or eternal examples of some
beginning agreed point or shared meaning. Jenny 16-9-00*

For the above participant, a changing way of meaning was particularly significant at the time of the project, with meanings being renegotiated on both the work and home fronts. In this period of personal changing, meaning was particularly mutable, being in the process of remaking within self and others. Jenny spoke, on an individual level, of meaning as an intersection of personal experience and prior knowledge with something new, that 'new' being fresh to her from outer dimensions. For example, she spoke of piggy-backing and hitchhiking on others' knowledge and experience to go beyond her personal reach as a lone individual; of finding her patterns of meaning reflected in others who had travelled different roads; and of finding personal meanings that have been articulated through antiquity by countless others. In this way, her personal meaning had a social and relational context - created and shared with others but at the same time, fully owned by her. Her sense of meaning was, to me, similar to Whitmeyer's (1993) sense of community in that it was a living process, both individually and socially mediated. Quite pointedly, she observed that there

was nothing 'frozen' about meaning and she valued the opportunity of making meaning with others in the group simply because they were 'fresh', that is, not in a discussive mode of defending 'given' meanings, but a dialogic mode of allowing a living meaning to flow through. As Bakhtin suggests, such to and fro of self and other is necessary to meaning making (in Roberts, 1994).

For leaders involved in educating, the challenge is to keep meaning - like knowing - fresh and alive. I believe the only way to achieve this is to model an openness to recreating meaning as Jenny obviously does. A changing way of meaning involves thawing out frozen meanings and, with others as in this project, encouraging a cooking-up of fresh ones where the teacher is not always right, does not have the correct answer and, as another participant admitted, needs to think about it.

The changing way of leading:

In proposing in the theoretical framework that a changing way of leading focuses on self-expression and a personal search for meaning through both being and doing with others, self-leadership was seen as a right and responsibility of every human being - a flow which is developed throughout life and not only in formalised roles. This was reflected in the project group's dialogue about leading:

Leaders exist only through the grace of the group, and persist if they gracefully serve. Leadership as service! Now there is a thought. Peter 6-6-00

So ... big breath... I am a leader. Jenny 12-6-00

...leadership is a wisp of smoke, elusive, difficult to define. I am enjoying being part of a group trying to pin the tail on the mystery 'donkey'. What is great is that we will never pin it down which of course is its real strength. Doug 20-6-02

In digging deeper, I know it is not the "born leader" idea I feel strongly about protecting/defending. It is leadership in context, it is something to do with the precious gifts of diversity and trust that leaders are able to

emerge when required - lots and lots of different types of leaders leading in different ways. Jenny 26-6-00

...leadership is about deliberately or accidentally assisting others to make meaning in such a way that they reconceptualise or refocus so that (for them) a direction/goal is set for them to pursue. Doug 3-7-00

Any leader knows that the reality is that their role is about service to the people they lead. Leaders forget that at their own peril (if they want to continue being leaders, that is). As the generations move on that becomes more and more the case. Doug 8-8-00

The self-nominated leaders in the project group exemplified, to me, the epitome of Greenleaf's (1977) servant leadership. In my experience of them through our dialogue, I found them neither self-deprecating or modest in hiding their light, nor self-aggrandising or in need of kudos. They were just themselves - people who enacted themselves as leaders - with no value judgement attached. To me, this implied that they were secure in themselves as human beings and in their paths, although that is not to say they were all comfortable in themselves as 'leaders', for two reasons. First, the idea of labelling as a leader brought some angst for two participants because even though their life paths demonstrated significant leadership in various fields such as home and local community, they did not see themselves 'officially' as leaders. Second, to be a leader for these people was seen as having to try on some official mould, which fit like grandfather's trousers and which was not either's way of operating. Nevertheless, with the mould in which leadership was so often understood being put aside as unneeded, the participants agreed that leading was messy and complex and for them, an imaginative key - a myth to inspire and sustain their efforts, but ultimately borne of the reality of ego. Leading, for them, was as much a part of their imaginative inner dimension as it was of their enacted outer dimension. In their changing way of leading, they did not feel the need to be named leaders by others; they just were, in themselves. As such, they were free to be true leaders in living their lives' purpose unafraid and that common purpose was to serve people. Leading was not a position but a potential in their lives.

The group questioned the intent usually implied in leading. To them, it was possible that there were cases where there may or may not have been an aware and deliberate intention to lead and yet leadership was demonstrated, modelled through the behaviour of a person. (To me, one group member showed this unself-aware being-and-doing leadership in guiding a daughter through a difficult and life-threatening period and in guiding herself through traumatic changes in her life.) There was some concern over the role of ego in leading, but putting that aside as they did, their intention as leaders was less to deliberately lead than to help others to lead themselves. While a common image of leadership is of the fearless one going forth and modelling courage for others, the real practice of taking the leading edge was seen by this group as helping others recognise and use the courage already within themselves to develop self-leadership, as Leider (1996) terms it. Leading was not a being-and-doing that was forced on others; it served others' needs and in that, served the leaders' needs. In this, the leaders in the group grew more leaders, meeting Greenleaf's (1977) test of servant leadership.

These servant leaders showed humility in their leading, to the point of believing that persuasive or enforced views of leadership diminished their holders and made them something other than leaders. Their dialogue demonstrated that leading was more of a flow of potential, of having the mission and stewardship to nurture and facilitate, to take risks on others, to live through pain and grow compassion, to wait for the moment when learning was possible, to avoid circumstances that enstructure and enslave, and importantly, not aspire to leadership but to live in the seasons of leading and following. That implies, as Jenny (19-5-02) pointed out in her feedback to the data summaries, leading when the time and space presents the need for a particular leader to emerge. On the evidence of the group participants' lives as leaders, that is how the changing way of leading frames leadership: the field or context (Grint, 1997) of a situation pulls a

person of courage and awareness of need to go forth and lead rather than a person who would lead pushing the field because that's his or her job.

The changing way of becoming:

In the theoretical framework, it was posited that for leaders, the changing way of becoming - of doing - is intimately related to a changing way of being wherein inner meaning is the motivator of outer action. According to the participants in the project, the leader, in being pulled into a field requiring leadership, aligns his or her energy to move individual meaning into social leading in an inside-out process of changing, thus beginning the orderly and cyclic development of a dynamically balanced self-organising system. This is demonstrated in their dialogue thus:

Leadership is contextual, it seems to me. Not something you can study for, and formulaise, and describe in twelve dot points. 'Leader' is really a property of the group...a quality of the collective, that is really bestowed, rather than assumed or claimed. It may be that leadership is a dimension inherent in collective experience ...first the group, then the leader. An emergent property, inevitable given sufficient interpersonal interactions, sufficient complexity of engagement, sufficient time, maybe.

*I seem to recall that duck
 duck
 the first duck
 duck
 duck
 duck
 duck*

is actually chosen from the random interaction of the group members. No different from any of the others, except by virtue of being in an unpredictable place at an arbitrary time. Peter 6-6-00

My foray into this issue has me contemplating whether the evidence from nature and history suggests that meaningful leadership is as powerful as the instinctual, perceptual or real need/s of the individuals or groups you are working with. Doug 7-6-00

Out of all the wonderful reflections on leadership, what kept coming back to me was the dynamic tension between the notion that groups create leaders by their need at times appropriate to their context (the ducks) - that is, the group creates the necessary space which "sucks/ducks-in" whoever is ready/on hand/has the skills/is in the right place at the right time- and the notion that within some individual is a capacity to perceive the need/space which calls them to serve by leading in that particular

context/niche and the will or courage to respond to the call with the necessary action...

Often when working within groups, I hear what is being said, in an either/or us/them framework, and as time passes, feel/hear a chord - a harmonising path that the collective mind is singing but not yet hearing over their singular tunes. I almost inevitably get a rush of nervousness combined with excitement. Many times through shyness I try to keep my lips buttoned and trust that the group will begin to hear it too. But given short timelines and circumstance or egoism? I usually burst out in a rush with what I am perceiving - a synthesis. I feel very much like a channel for a wave of energy which the group has released at these times. I think this is a sort of perception level of leadership in that I am not creating I am responding and describing what I feel or experience or notice. Jenny 12-6-00

How can we lead without this feeling of personal well-being and sense of knowing ourselves through reflection with others? Doug 15-10-00

In their changing way of becoming, the participants in the group had prolonged dialogue about the dynamic tensions in a potential field of change. In my interpretation, they were considering the yin/yang-like qualities of a space-time calling for leadership and the leader emerging and responding to that call because it had personal meaning for him or her. Thus, the potential leader may have become aware of a need and opportunity in space-time for leading and flowed into it. This need could be visualised as a gap, hole or thinning in the field that needed to be filled and ‘pushed’ a leader into emerging. Alternatively, the need could be seen as a concentration of energy ‘pulling’ or attracting a leader. In either view, it is as if the leader and the space created each other, like yin and yang, as the group’s deliberations about the nature of leadership in ducks in flight and in their own experiences suggested. Jenny, in her feedback to the data summaries, lamented that current organisational structures in education did not have sufficient flexibility and self-consciousness to allow for such dynamics. Hence, as Caine and Caine (1997) noted, much stayed the same in current approaches to change, prompting them to propose that educator change was necessary for system change. In support of this, Jenny’s (19-5-02) suggestion as a changing leader was that attention needed to be paid to resolving energy blocks and harmonising the energy flows within the field; that is, looking at how people, purposes, resources and contexts intersect

and align, with a view to finding the best space for maximum flow rather than engaging in power games and wrestling matches.

One dilemma that the group keenly felt in the changing way of becoming was what they saw as an artificial separation of a leader's being-and-doing into leadership and management. The question was raised as to whether there could be personal meaning in institutionalised, bureaucratic and enforced (I/B/E) leadership. It was a painful journey of resolution for the group to come from a bewildering sense of separation to an integrated sense of relational flow that saw the common labels of 'leadership' and 'management' as really two faces of the same coin, just the inner and outer aspects of the whole phenomenon of leading. In this, they were demonstrating the kind of sharing of meaning that Fullan (1991) saw as necessary to change processes. Importantly, it was the meaning of leading that they saw as crucial in how it was enacted through managing. Giving historical examples, they showed that an ethical meaning allowed management of integrity, but that power-driven meanings led to manipulation. They turned the dilemma back on themselves to examine their own practices and concluded that, to be a leader becoming, it was their challenge to lead from personal meaning, from their purpose of serving self and others, to intersect and blend with the larger systemic energy, and thus to work, as Jenny said, to make a space for changing.

The leading way of changing meaning:

The leading way of changing meaning, as set out in the theoretical framework, is centred in transformative consciousness, with changing perspectives provoking changing meaning to re-energise self-actualisation and the making of new spaces for learning. In the data, the leaders' changing meanings resonated with this view, as witnessed in their words:

I'm getting better at feeling authentic. Sandy 7-8-00

Authentic hits the nail, Sandy. I think that's about the best we can hope for. Peter 10-8-00

Once, I was 'appropriate', but now I've learnt that 'authenticity' is the way I'm supposed to live. In the future, I hope this meaning will become clearer as I learn more. Sandy 10-9-00

I have tried to follow this path, too. It is my meaning, in a way. A meaning I am not about to change, either. Do only some meanings change? Or is the change about how the meaning is expressed? Peter 7-10-00

What is inarguable is that heart and soul must come to work if we are going to have authentic relationships there. Doug 20-10-00

Yes I believe I have a whole other life yet to be lived I believe I have burnt out my public persona - ie work persona- I am so ready for some space... Jenny 16-9-00

In a word, 'authenticity' best described the participants' primary concern as leaders transforming themselves in changing meaning. This was not about abrupt junctures of change, although there were some of these for some of the group during the life of the project, but an ongoing self-authentication that moved ever deeper within to illuminate previously hidden meanings of self and of how that self was enacted as a leader. The group expressed a longing for a recognition of who they truly were and that with this 'being' recognised, it should also be respected and 'allowed to be'. In fact, they believed that educators as a species needed to have their sense of personal power restored. This was presently not forthcoming from without; from an outer dimension dominated by structural change. Educators' ability to integrate 'being' and 'doing' was being compromised by change that denied their inner being. However, within the project group, 'being there was everything'. The participants' more inwardly focused dialogue allowed an authentication of each other which brought trust and the ability to move more deeply into self, each and together. To me, they displayed what Terry (1993) called 'authentic leadership' - the courage to act to find their meaning, in this case, through our shared journey of exploration into self. To learn their way into changing meaning, the group members saw themselves as needing greater self-awareness to be both actor and observer

in interacting with others. The idea was to meet and serve people better but also to be more true to self; to be conscious of 'being' instead of just 'doing'. One participant loved that learning was a given in an educational organisation, but felt that in order to manage his own learning as well as guiding others, he needed time away to reflect. This was a purpose that the research project helped to fulfill.

One article of reflection amongst the group was 'detachment', which the participants defined as a skill very pertinent to their workplaces but with which they felt inadequate. They used the opportunity of the group to take the idea of detachment inside of themselves to share meaning and find new spaces of understanding that compromised neither them nor others. As the group saw it, the challenge of detachment was to be fully present to others, yet distanced enough to be apart. This was not understood as an either/or oxymoron but as having an awareness of observing during action so they could consciously choose responses. A further layer to the challenge was to invest self in relationships while maintaining the integrity and health of a personal self; in other words, being aware of the need for self preservation. This was seen as knowing how much to give out so the emotional bucket wasn't run dry and knowing how to replenish it. The group did not like the idea of cold professional detachment, but at the same time acknowledged that their work personas were different from their home ones as far as 'distance' from people went. Heart and soul, in their opinion, definitely had to come to work as their 'EQ' or emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995). They settled on needing a 'transparency' which allowed them to know their own boundaries and to meet people where they were at, while not entering deeply into them unless invited to do so. In this and further dialogue, it became apparent to the group why detachment troubled them: they disliked the separation that they felt was necessary to preserve themselves. They preferred to maintain a full and present relationship if mutually respectful boundaries of self-ownership and self-responsibility - such as they found in the group - could be negotiated in the working world. In this kind of

relationship, they remained connected and compassionate, feeling fully and frankly with others but not taking responsibility from them, allowing them to own themselves. Under these circumstances, the energy of sharing and changing meaning could flow. Together, the group thus showed that they could lead each other in changing meaning.

In their dialogue about detachment, the group demonstrated to themselves a maxim that they had earlier raised: that we always have choices and always make choices. As leaders changing meaning, they had raised the question of whether work was like an empty lunch-box. In apparent support of this analogy, they used descriptors like dispiriting, exhausting, constraining and crushing, but beyond that they saw their paths as leaders as absolutely food for their souls. They chose their path and were more than willing to live it. They were in the process of learning that level of self-awareness that they sought: of being like a hungry (but not starving) child and thus always ready to learn; of being child-like and thus innocent and open to wonder; and of being able to cherish and nourish that child so they could go on, balancing their energy in ways that brought them personal dignity. The irony was that their 'lessons' could not be shared around as givens, but only learned by others through the personal development of self-leadership. In a leading way of changing meaning, those who would lead must go the journey of exploring self. However, as leaders 'on the way', the group members could foster this inner work of growing in others: this learning inside-out (Senge, 1996; Covey, 1996; Gilley, 1997). In Greenleaf's (1977) terms, they could 'grow more leaders' and that, to this group, was the essence of the leading way of changing meaning. As leaders, their inner changing meaning could grow out into supporting others' journeys into being and doing. Thus, the project showed that rather than focusing on outer structural change, educators might be more successful with integrated change if they challenged and supported inner change and self-leadership.

The changing way of researching:

For leaders in a changing way of researching, the task is to *search and search again*, recovering the essential and healing unity in diversity. In changing meaning, leaders' research is changing in itself and thus is creative of changing relations, being 'living processes of coming to know' (Reason, 1994a, p.235). Researching requires the personal engagement of leaders, challenging them to risk full participation in human development. Researching transforms meaning and makes the difference that Bohm (1987) proposes. For the participants in the project of this research, feeling fear and taking risks were part of their leading a changing meaning:

And my archetype? The Fool, maybe. Peter 20-7-00

All of which brings to mind the notion of risk. Yes, you and others may be hurt; likewise you may be winners. You'll never know until you have a go... no gain without pain... emotional growth is the end result of putting yourself on the line. I believe that emotional growth and strength is the best asset we can have. Doug 7-8-00

Well, here I am, risking being alive. Peter 10-8-00

*Fear is something I am much more familiar with.
My days (and nights) are wracked with fears of inadequacy.
Of forgetting important details.
Making mistakes. Getting it wrong.
It feels unhealthy, but is a pattern so deep I can only rarely escape to the plateau of enlightened awareness (all is illusion, I must make a note of that in my diary).* Peter 10-8-00

*I long for an Elysian idyll. Of true Humanity and calm joy.
But there I go, playing that Fool again.* Peter 10-8-00

Attempting to deal with fears of inadequacy and taking risks on yourself and others in seeking 'true humanity' might have felt like a fool's quest, but nevertheless this quest was undertaken by the group in the journey of this research. With regard to the challenge of detachment as raised above, the kind of 'separation' detachment the group disliked raises a spectre of decaying meaning and of creating powerless victims or passive observers, as noted by Quinn (1996) in the theoretical framework. In their resolution to

the dilemmas of detachment, it was clear that the participants felt the need to stay connected throughout the changing that relating to others brought, both within the group and in the outer world of work. This project was researching into changing meaning for them and they valued each other being there while they went exploring, laying themselves on the line in taking risks and working through their fears as leaders. The courage needed for full participation in the research was present, with Kris (5-7-00) commenting on *so much honesty, fierce courage and integrity coming in the mails*. To me, the group was practising Reason's (1994b) 'future participation' in being so present and revealingly honest with themselves and each other. In their outer work and their inner researching, they relished the role of the Fool in changing meaning socially but accepted their susceptibility to fooling themselves individually. As Peter (15-0-00) pointed out about leaders, *I guess I feel safer in trusting collective honesty (you can't fool everybody) rather than personal honesty (but you can fool yourself indefinitely)*. The group lived Buber's (1965) idea of 'man', the individual being socially constructed by other. Indeed, Jenny (9-8-00) even wondered if her persona in the group was mediated through the participants: *I used to be a speech and drama teacher. I may even 'construct' this project to empower all 'players', whatever you write, to be aspects of my 'potential persona' in all this*.

In their participation in the project, the group was thus *creating* rather than *telling* their shared story of the journey. In their changing way of researching, they were together generating meanings which had previously been non-existent or below the level of their awareness. In interacting with each other, they were wanting to create those new categories of relational sense variously called meaning, information or intelligence to fulfill their purposes. As Jenny reflected four months into the project:

I joined this project to try to carve out some reflective space in my deluge of work and family commitments. I wanted to come to a deeper understanding of why I continue working how I do and why I have such enjoy/hate; fight/flight; persevere/I'm out of here dilemmas each day of

my working life. I wanted to take a chance to reconnect with and articulate the playful, exhilarated source of my wellspring to explore how that resonates or not with my day to day working life.

I tend to assume/accept that if I truly share my own work experience, I am a sitting duck. ...I really need to talk about all this with educators/others/you. ...I need to work through some of this with trusted 'others'. ...I seek to make meaning with others, not alone - a different meaning from my face to face connections. Jenny 9-8-00

Rather than changing around the meaning pieces in a tired decor (Zohar, 1997), the need was emerging to *make* meaning - different meaning - and to do it with others. The ongoing email dialogue was in essence creating data for the participants to work with further, inventing changing meanings as they proceeded. Likewise, the process of analysing the data after the project has been an ongoing invention, making meaning through new patterns, layers and dimensions. It is important to acknowledge here that these meanings will continue to be open to reconstruction: a changing way of knowing demands it. In a changing way of researching, there is always opportunity to *search and search again*.

The way in which participants in the project conducted their dialogue and made meaning reflected Bateson's (1988) juxtaposition and abduction. Contributing members would initially lay their meanings along side each other in juxtaposition, but then went on to abduct these into new shared and more inclusive meanings that moved through the group in true dialogical fashion. The 'debate' about I/B/E leadership (see data summary for 'I/B/E leadership versus personal leadership - week 11') is an example of this. As Doug (26-7-00) pointed out at one stage, *Sandy's email though certainly challenged my entire belief system on leadership. ... I don't mean to sound cynical about leadership but I guess your responses will give me a reality check on my perceptions of it*. This initial juxtaposition of obviously different perspectives led onto an integration that enabled the group members to find personal meaning in leading in institutionalised, bureaucratic and enforced situations in that both 'higher' and 'lower' level leading were valuable. As Jenny (28-7-00) went on to say, *I for one hear the*

call and find it as rain upon dry ground... and yet and yet... I am framed by lots of lived hours here in the swampground ... I know love is the answer, love will find a way etc but for much of the time I am so engaged in what in is my face I am just operating from other angles and I guess subconsciously trusting that in an unaware way my 'love ethos' is underlying whatever headset I am choosing to wear at the time.

Bateson's (1988) stochastic process, as mentioned in the theoretical framework, was also in evidence during the dialogue. One participant would lead off with an idea (a non-random selective process), supported by explanatory meaning. Respondents understood in varying ways (random stream of potential) and replied. The leader (of the idea) and the others participated in a stream of meanings, shaping them into greater clarity for all. It was necessary to have sharing to establish common meanings, just as it was necessary to have individual meanings to position, negotiate and change meaning. There was sometimes considerable iteration between leading-off and the eventual result of patterns of meaning which connected. Again as example, the intense I/B/E 'debate' led to a new pattern of changed meaning. As Kris (26-6-00) summed up, *you're talking about blending inner, personal meaning or vision with a bigger system/institutional role of some kind... bringing meaning to a place where there might otherwise be some lack of it.* The model used in shaping the data for analysis, as outlined earlier, traced this stochastic process, enabling data to be categorised into leading, changing and meaning statements. In this, the shaping was reflecting the data as spoken in dialogue but also enabling the generation of new information through analysis, allowing post-conceptions as Bateson (1988) would say.

Bateson (1988) further argued that contextualised, lived in experience is the core of transformative research. It is the beginning from which participants move into something and someone different. As Buber (1965) indicated, when the experience is done, the relational I-thou might be; the outer doing

of each moves into inner being, creating unity and wholeness. Such a journey is what this research was about and in trusting each other, participants found that they could bare all, taking risks to lay themselves open, to be vulnerable. It was not an easy path as Jenny (9-8-00) indicated: *I think at times I feared if I started you all might think - oh god this bird plans to use this group for surrogate counselling! I think I just needed to get a feel for who you/we are. ...I need to work through some of this with trusted 'others'.* Through their dialogue, the group developed a loyalty to each other that allowed each to be raw, yet protected. For example, it was valuable to have conflict as a growth tool, as touched on earlier. Jenny (28-7-00), like Fullan (1997b), suggested that confronting differences was useful: *often I am called to reassure people that the conflict of ideas, beliefs and approaches (headsets) is great ...this is what we are made for in the process of clarifying our extra dimension of distributed intelligence.* Still, as pappa bear Doug (9-9-00) said, he felt *quite protective of our little 'club'.* The message within the research group was that it was okay (meaning valuable and necessary) to be different - everyone belonged and was accepted. To me, the degree of vulnerability amongst the group was an indicator of the respect the members had for each other. Such an atmosphere of tough love promoted the risk-taking of changing meaning, of *being alive* as Peter (10-8-00) said. Educators would do well to note that structural change, in being concerned with the outer dimension, does not promote such an atmosphere.

Due to the trust and regard within the group, the changing way of researching inscribed truth and thus validity in the journey for each participant. Kris, in reflecting on her path was able to honestly describe what the project meant to her:

...being part of this group was overall, a somewhat 'troubling' experience - I felt a lot like the kid who sits up the back, not bothering anybody, but not really getting into it, making an occasional attempt, which seems to fall flat, so goes back to day dreaming/doodling/fiddling/ reading something else- whatever will pass the time; easier than struggling with the situation at hand. I didn't want to drop out of the group, as 1) I kept hoping that something would happen which I would really be able to latch onto,

contribute to, and run with... and 2) I felt personal loyalty to sandy for seeing the project through, however faintly I managed! Kris 18-2-01

By way of contrast, this was Doug's truth:

... For me it was extremely valuable to have access to other people's opinions on leadership and that those people weren't in stereotypical leadership positions. It allowed us to explore leadership in a range of its manifestations. I think that at times we were at risk of going around in circles and that at times it became a self help group in which we shared ourselves with each other. That was probably it at its richest. Doug 19-7-00

These personal reflections are included to demonstrate the multiplicity of truth within the group. A changing way of researching needed personal truths that were contextually justified and hence valid for others. As a member of the group and as a researcher, I had no qualms in accepting either of the above truths about the project, different as they were. Each truth was testable against the lived and felt experience of these inner explorers - something I could verify as a group member who participated in dialogue with them. My trust came of our connection; of shared meanings beyond the words that represented them. Thus, participating in a changing way of researching involves truth and trust and is, as Reason (1994b) suggests and as the participants themselves indicated in raising terms like 'self help', a way of healing the split between inner and outer dimensions.

A changing way of researching was a challenge for the leaders in the research group. It was researching that demanded the whole of each participant and that required a surrender of the old self to a new and different self-other. It went deep inside each individual; what came out had a changing meaning... we belonged; we would always be connected. Far from being distanced observers, in our being and doing we showed ourselves to be leaders who, through participating in researching and world making, were also healers:

...it came to me that I feel from 'us' a cry from the heart to be (allowed to be) the people/leaders we truly are. It feels a bit like the emergent melody

that Jen spoke of... a soft little song that comes out of our choir, and the strange thing is that it's a song in unison... the same song in all and each of us, one that speaks of longing and of love and care for the human condition. Sandy 19-1-01

I felt that shared longing and chord within the group over our time together too and perhaps that is what I value most of the experience. Jenny 29-1-01

A changing way of researching involves researchers participating fully in the human condition. This implies *searching and searching again* for new and healing meanings both within and without. In generating changing meanings that address more than the structural outer dimension, such a way of researching could profitably be employed by educators seeking change where much does not stay the same.

The changing space of researching:

A legacy of separated consciousness is that human spaces tend to compartmentalise rather than overlay and integrate, leaving few times or places for the healing of 'being with' (Josselson, 1996), both in self and with each other. Leaders in a changing way of researching resist closure (Schratz and Walker, 1995) and seek space and time to participate in changing meaning through integrating inner and outer dimensions in continuous flow. They order through *change* rather than *time* and through *relation* rather than *space* (Liao, 2000).

In his mail to the group and in his feedback to the data summaries, Peter in particular epitomised the leader in a changing way of researching. The changing space and time of the research project, as created by the participant group in their changing meaning, found synergy with Peter's personal changing as he moved into a new professional role. Always a change agent - *a radical subverter of dominant paradigms* (Peter 19-5-00) - by his own admission, as both an individual and a social being, he welcomed a further breathing space; a space of metamorphic changing as he developed a new space - not a separate one, but one which he sought to integrate with

his existent spaces of being and doing. The group was a place for his inner contemplation and changing meaning, as a balance to the hectic activity of changing outer roles. As Peter (14-6-02) said in his feedback, *appreciating the space was a big part of it* for him. The *qualities of the experience* harmonised with his needs to enlarge and expand the compartments that outer life forced on him - the metaphor, fantasy and imagination of the dialogue made time and space larger in scope, more encompassing and more connective for him. He spoke of his experience of needing to seriously tailor the grandfather's trousers of his new role and participation in the group provided an inner space/time for him to indulge in connective threads, making for a better fit at work. The connection in the group brought another reality of sanity and wholeness for him, a place for the unpressured telling of stories (Josselson, 1996). Peter (10-8-00) spoke of the I/B/E environment, in which he was moving into a middle management role, as affecting his mind thus: *Staccato. Befuddled with immensely significant details that mean nothing the very next moment. The hectic "buzz" certainly makes the day go by, but is piquantly unsatisfying.* Of the research project, he added, *What does this opportunity mean to me? A chance to be lyrical...to let my self fly a bit, in the safety of cyberspace.* It was as if the group was a relief valve for him, or a *touchstone*, to borrow Jenny's (25-9-00) words. Peter had been a researcher in one way or another all his life. In a previous profession, he had been a research scientist, but the changing way of researching in this project offered him a whole new space, a researching in which he was within instead of without, and thus which was also within him.

In contrast to Peter finding the changing space of researching to be perhaps a taste of the *Elysian idyll* (Peter, 10-8-00) he dreamed of, Jenny had the intention of using the space to work through her changing meaning, as her story shows:

I am really going to try to use this group to deal with pressing personal and professional issues for me. Jenny 12-6-00

I joined this project to try to carve out some reflective space in my deluge of work and family commitments. I wanted to come to a deeper understanding of why I continue working how I do and why I have such enjoy/hate; fight/flight; persevere/I'm out of here dilemmas each day of my working life. I wanted to take a chance to reconnect with and articulate the playful, exhilarated source of my wellspring to explore how that resonates or not with my day to day working life. ... I really need to talk about all this with educators/others you. Jenny 9-8-00

So rather than plunging deeper and deeper into my current situation and seeking through this group to unravel some mysteries and come to a clearer understanding of why I feel the way I do I am going to wander away from it and be for awhile. ...I would be sad to lose this group online. It is heart warming. Jenny 4-9-00

Maybe what it is that I sought to be in this group to explore things that were unclear to me and so I have brought to it the knots rather than the strands that sustain and weave most of daily life. Jenny 14-10-00

It is clear that Jenny's longing was for time/space 'out' to go 'in'. Like Peter, she needed an alternative space, or perhaps another layer, in which to retreat, contemplate and make new sense out of her everyday self and realities. As she said, she brought to the group the knots and she sought to tease them out, and to reweave the threads of her personal and professional life into new patterns-that-connect.

In response to a question about the group having a role in personal changing of meaning, Jenny (16-9-00) said, *I can't describe it but I know it is really important ... more happens off the list than the words I send.. the words are the tip of the iceberg but being in this group provides the stick for a lot of fairy floss in me that otherwise would float off and melt.* This indicates to me that our changing space of researching, besides being 'spacious', had as its balance a grounding for the group - perhaps not only in an alternative and personally valid reality but as a reality check.

Interestingly, in empirical research, a hypothesis in support of a theory is tested, trying to 'prove' a certain reality. In a changing way and a changing space of research, reality itself is brought into question, where 'feelings and perceptions are put under threat of erasure' (Schratz and Walker, 1995, p.38). My perception is that both Peter and Jenny, for different but in some ways similar reasons, needed somewhere else to have a chance to be 'real'

just like the little velveteen rabbit of the delightful children's story (Williams, 1996); to live in changing meaning, grounding and integrating themselves so they could continue to have coherence in the outer world. Our changing space of researching, in supporting their *searching and searching again* into self and other, provided that.

Changing 'time and space' into 'change and relation' (Liao, 2000) was not, however, an abracadabra event for the participants. Their most important step and most significant change towards meaning something different was gifting themselves the 'time and space' to participate in 'changing relations'. Eventually, loyalty to each other - a relational aspect - won out over guilt at the time taken to indulge in inner exploration. For example, Kris (31-8-00) said she'd *just been 'slack'* and didn't *really enjoy 'failing' to correspond*. Likewise Doug (9-9-00) professed to *slackness* and wanted to *make an effort to remedy* what he saw as his inadequate participation. As the group became accustomed to the ambiguity and lack of agenda in the project, they became more able to take control of timing and spacing, gradually developing pacing that they could live with, in amongst their other spaces. (Out of this, I believe, came the ongoing and almost supernal sense of 'being there' amongst the group.) Initially frustrating due to what Jenny (12-6-00) perceived as linearity, the group's dialogue moved into a flow that became what Kris (23-7-00) called a *time-treat*, one that they could regulate as they wished - being *time-poor* (Kris, 31-8-00) as they were. Kris added, *for it to be 'comfortable' for me, I'd like to feel reassured that it's ok if I don't write for maybe even 2 or 3 weeks - knowing that we all understand and accept individual needs time-wise? But that I'm still here, listening, thinking and eventually(!), writing*. Perceived 'time' became actualised 'change' in the to and fro of dialogue. As Peter (5-8-00) poignantly pointed out in his poem about time (see data summaries), *time runs out when you set it within boundaries*. In contrast to their outer everyday lives of managing time, the group was able to surrender time to change by not binding it, thus making the group sustainable, as Jenny (19-5-02) commented in her feedback. In

our changing space of researching, we chose with trepidation and courage not to make time *a measure of days, a shadow of its true nature* or to make space *less than it can be* (Peter 5-8-00). Thus, we could always be there.

The virtual space of researching:

Virtual space is seen as a valid space for researching and relating insofar as it can embody humanity, as put forward in the theoretical framework. In cyberspace, the quality of relational cues and clues is different from face to face communication, but is no less useful in determining and sharing meaning. As Sibbett (2000 in Lipnack and Stamps 2000) suggests, the complexity of the natural world can be recreated in cyberspace, generating multiple dimensions through remote embodiment and a distributed humanity. The opportunity of multiple self-others can, with grounding and responsibility, deepen the leader's journey. To the leaders in the project group, the opportunity to expand self into other in new spaces was liberating for some and challenging for others:

*It's still a wonder to have this conversation hanging in virtual space.
Available when needed, silently supporting. Peter 20-7-00*

I seek to make meaning with others, not alone - a different meaning from my face to face connections. ...I have thought to myself .. imagine that this group /project will still be going in 20 years time - respond to it in that rhythm and spirit. I have also thought .. imagine this group/project will be over in a week ... what do I want to say to you each and all? Jenny 9-8-00

*And the biggest question yet...what does this opportunity mean to me?
A chance to be lyrical...to let my self fly a bit,
in the safety of cyberspace.
In a strange way, the anonymity is amazingly liberating.
No non-verbals to agonise over.
Plenty of silence to catch my breath in. Peter 10-8-00*

I appreciate your sharing so we can get to know you. As you say Peter cyberspace is very liberating in that way. I must admit that was behind my reluctance (unstated - cowardly) to jump in for a face to face meeting. One part of me would love to the other wants to explore this freedom for a bit longer. Doug 10-8-00

There's been a lot written about the pros and cons of interstitial space like ours. My experience through a lot of people is that it can both challenge

and support. And I don't ever feel it is fake, as it could easily be. Like face to face contact, people's writing (or non-writing) speaks volumes about them behind the words. I believe it actually adds to authenticity, to be known as self rather than public persona... hardly anonymous... which I find liberating... for my true self to be known. Sandy 10-8-00

oh dear, but unlike everyone else, I find this medium constraining. maybe because I'm a very tactile person and thrive on the warmth of human contact - if you were all in Germany or s'where that would be ok, but you're all so frustratingly close and I can't see you!!!! unlike peter, I need the non-verbals to get a drift on what's really going on. I feel more wary of opening heart and soul to cyberspace than I do with flesh and blood people - which I know you all are really of course. I also would actually feel better with a visual on things, rather than doug's 'faceless anonymity.' Kris 11-8-00

it is important to share with others but I guess the bonding has to grow; maybe this takes longer in cyberspace? Kris 31-8-00

I would be sad to lose this group online. It is heart warming. Jenny 4-9-00

I value this one [list] for its size and intimacy ...deep down I love it the way it is on this list. Jenny 4-9-00

I felt quite protective of our little 'club'. Doug 9-9-00

What sort of person might suit this model? Busy people, who would love to have more time to ponder the patterns of experience. ...Being there is everything. Peter 7-10-00

Interestingly, in a changing way of researching and a changing space of researching, the virtual space of the project was able to accommodate and integrate both the liberation and challenge the participants in the project felt. Handling such yin-yang aspects of changing was possible in a space that could be infinitely elastic in responding to the deepening and changing meanings of the leaders. However, as the complex was liberated, so too was the simple found. According to Bolman and Deal (2002, p.22), 'Albert Einstein once said the simplicity on this side of complexity is worthless, but the simplicity of the other side is almost priceless.' The research group in this project began with the simplistic, an email list that was conceived as linear and limiting, as Jenny (12-6-00) said. As the participants' virtual dialogue progressed, the group worked through the 'teething troubles' of storming and norming to develop the complex, a rich and deep body of shared meaning. For example, Kris persisted through her 'challenges' and eventually found 'liberation'. Then, she had a lot to say in contributing to

the group's meaning. In bids for diversification, the group considered alternate media and genre, adding more members to the group and reconfiguring it, perhaps so all participants were acquainted with each other beforehand and therefore on a more equal footing. All are valid points that should be considered in any future groups, but the consideration here is that the participants moved beyond wanting to make the medium and experience better (the external dimension) to relishing the complexity of thoughts and feelings (the internal dimension) and appreciating each other simply 'being there' which Kris (12-9-00), as the member of the group least comfortable with cyberspace, supported as a *hole in one*.

Using a virtual space of researching allowed participants to access, through their emergent multiple selves and multiple space/times, realities that previously were below consciousness or didn't exist. Less conscious meanings were revealed and new ones emerged; their knowing of their meanings was changing. As noted with Peter earlier, virtual space provided the necessary space to become more real. It provided, I believe, a freedom. As he noted in his feedback, Peter (14-6-02) thought the journey was *definitely enhanced by locating interactions in cyberspace. Appreciating the space was a big part of it for me*. Strangely enough, in seeming contrast to Turkle's (1996) proposition that concrete experience should ground the virtual, the group found that cyberspace communion helped to ground their everyday lives, giving them time and space away to connect their outer actions with their inner meanings. However, primary to Turkle's argument was the necessity of making connection to the whole, and I feel that either way supports this, with both spaces reinforcing each other. For the group, the 'flights' in the virtual world balanced the 'fights' in the material world. There was a story of a baby morphing into a dragonfly, *a magnificent, larger-than-life, ancient, and darkly iridescent creature, with power, grace and speed* (Kris, 5-7-00), of the chance to let self fly, as Peter (10-8-00) said. Such flight brought an other-dimensional grounding to the fights of bureaucracy that Jenny and Doug, in particular, experienced in their work.

Jenny (10-8-00) tended to assume that if she truly shared her work experiences with her colleagues, she would be a *sitting duck*, but in the context of the group, she was able to reveal herself and, in return, to appreciate and thus ‘real-ise’ others’ journeys: *Do you have time to stop, oh dragonfly, and share the shining darkness of thy message?* (Jenny 7-7-00). The permeable border between the real and the virtual that Turkle (1996) spoke of was in evidence. As Peter (14-6-02) suggested in his feedback, the metaphor, fantasy and imagination in the dialogue enhanced the quality of the journey and I would add that this blurring of borders enabled participants to loosen and expand their boundaries and deepen their realities.

This more encompassing and multiple sense of self in the participants included the development of virtual roles in the group, roles that were at once reflective of outer selves, yet on another level. For example, at the outset, Doug (21-5-00) described his roles thus: *I see myself as having a number of roles in life including husband, father, lover, educator, coach, enforcer, instigator, problem solver, listener, amateur counsellor, friend, dreamer and a range of others*. Later, he added an insight from deep inside: *I love being a parent. To a large extent it defines me*. (Doug 20-6-00). In Kris’s eyes as a colleague, as we have seen, he was the almost charismatic ‘pappa bear’, a father figure. In her dreaming of vocations, she further saw Doug as being a wise and unassuming person of contemplated action (as he was by his own admission). In the group, all these roles rolled into my labelling him as our pragmatist; that is, working amongst worlds and seeking to bring out the best (the most just, most practical and most humane) solution was important to him. Jenny too had many roles, amongst them mother and worker (19-7-00). She sometimes feared she would get lost in those roles, but had found through experiment in her early years that going totally her own individual way was dangerous. Now, in both her work and in cyberspace, I characterised her as our administrator. As in the original sense of the word, Jenny’s care and concern was in ministering to

others, seeking on the one hand to make a large educational system work better for its people and on the other, to make the small system of the project work best for the participants. Kris's virtual persona, to me, was a gardener because she cherished all life and Peter was the poet, the one who welcomed the chance to be lyrical, a part of him that I feel did not often see the light of day in his outer world. I cast myself, being facilitator, as the helper.

In all these roles and realities, the lines of communication within various selves and with each other were open. I felt no conflict of interest between Doug the enforcer and Doug the pappa bear; between Peter the diehard radical subverter and Peter the poet of beautiful words and profound insights; between Kris the dragonfly of power and grace and the gentle supporter of learning; between Jenny the bureaucrat and Jenny the imaginative fun-lover - the only one who purposefully introduced humour into the group; or between me the idealist Pollyanna and me the spiritual teacher who lives on another plane. I believe that in our changing meaning, we led each other into being more aware of our growing diversity of roles, of our multiplying of our selves. I doubt, without our virtual but very real journey, that we would otherwise have affected each other as deeply. To Peter and Doug (10-8-00), the anonymity was liberating; they liked not having to deal with the baggage of day to day personas. To my mind, however, virtual space allowed us to more truly get in touch, to safely expose ourselves more fully and to find the missing parts of us that only others could see, and again like that little toy rabbit (Williams, 1996), each became more real and more complete. Peter (10-8-00) once said that he couldn't close his eyes and see what he looked like in the mirror, but I believe in our virtual space of researching that we all came to see each other more clearly; to see each other in the sense of the African greeting, 'I see you.' Reingold (in Turkle, 1996) believed that community could only work if each other's real lives were affected from cyberspace. I cannot specify the

effects, but like the others, knew that the being there, the community of us, existed as another layer in our lives. Perhaps Peter expressed it best:

In a frantic, flustered final week it has been good to know that when I finally had some life back, I would be able to sit down and saunter through a trove of messages. Some nourishment for my bruised psyche. And it has been wonderful to catch up. Peter 3-7-00

A virtual space of researching, thus, allowed participants the ‘time and space’ to ‘change and relate’; to nourish the inner dimension so neglected in a working world that focused almost exclusively on the outer dimension. For educators seeking holistic rather than only structural change, supporting leaders in employing virtual spaces of researching for changing meaning would go some way to acknowledging the importance of the inner being in changing. Not all of a leader’s work is done ‘on the job’.

In conclusion to this analysis, it was apparent that the data collected in the project supported the changing ways as set out in the theoretical framework. Throughout the journey of the group’s dialogue, the tripartite leading-changing-meaning was evidenced in the participants’ interdimensional unfolding and enfolding. The participants were no longer the people who began the project: in subtle and permanent ways, they meant - and so had become - something different. As evidenced in this analysis, in their leading way of changing meaning, the participants’ ‘being’ was transformed into ‘becoming’.

Outcomes:

In seeking to identify the differences in participants that might be attributable to or influenced by the project’s journey, I revisited the group’s responses to some of the informal process questions I had interspersed throughout the project when appropriate, for example, questions about face-to-face meeting and the number of members in the group. As facilitator, I

intended these questions to focus the journey, incorporate iteration and encourage the group's self-reflection. In assessing outcomes, I referred to the participants' feedback from questions about individual readiness for the project, about the group's role in any personal changing of meaning and about the worth of the project to the participants. At least one participant replied to each question. Segments of these replies have featured earlier in the various contexts of analysis, but the participants' words have been brought together here to give them voice and to bring a sense of rounding and fullness to the results of the project as a whole. Firstly, as a beginning point, there were Doug's (9-9-00) reflections on his preparedness for what the project might bring:

I felt ready in terms of life experiences. I have certainly spent a great deal of time wrestling with the pragmatic aspects of leadership and management as well as doing a fair bit of reading. My only problem with the reading as it is with so much I do is that except for the time of exposure when I am capable, I believe, of putting some high level thinking in place I simply sieve the concept or gist of the reading through my values and belief systems see what it does to it and move on from there. Subsequently I feel under-done jargonistically. Likewise I am comfortable with my world view on leadership and management especially in terms of valuing people however I will be the first to admit that my attention to detail means that sometimes my management, particularly, is not what it should be. But I know that and so again feel fine with how what I am learning about Leadership and Management fits with what I am learning about myself.

I have found this [group] beneficial particularly I admit where it addresses the pragmatic issues. I believe my management has been my let down in this forum as well in that I await inspiration to strike before I put finger to key. Like Jenny said quite some time ago the short quick ones suit better. On the other side of that I think it has been of tremendous benefit for all of us to 'wax lyrical' at times and share some of our inner thoughts.

For Doug, then, the project was an event he could easily participate in and use to go further on his personal journey. He was already 'wrestling' with the pragmatics of how to enact his inner leadership in the outer world. His problem was that he sifted out ideas that were congruent with his current practices and didn't 'manage' to engage significantly with the more challenging ones. The project allowed him opportunity to explore ideas more with others, but he remained self-critical of his ability to manage them into reality. That said, he valued the collegiality within the group, admitting

that it was of benefit to share thoughts. It was helpful to have a confidential forum in which the leaders could share stories of their journeys. To this extent, the project acted as a place of group therapy in which to find understanding and healing. As with Remen's (1999) surgeons, it was a place in which the participants could witness each other's journeys and move on. That is, they were able to explore changing meanings of themselves and each other and to lead off in new directions.

Not long after Doug's response, Jenny (16-9-00) added some reflections about the processes of changing meaning in her life and on the role of the project group in that changing:

I have felt for a little while like I am locked in ground hog day even though I work in a very dynamic (or dynamic... that is more like it) area -- very 'new' inputs all the time... but perhaps responsive opportunities are too patterned... I do feel sufficiently autonomous to respond according to my own chord.

I believe I have a whole other life yet to be lived; I believe I have burnt out my public persona - ie work persona - I am so ready for some space where I can be anonymous not representative or leading or showing anything... Dig my hole and lie in it. If I am honest, as an achieving student in school from a young age I feel cheated... I was not anonymous; I was noticed and with that came external expectations which being a happy eager to please type, I responded to in an unbelievably detailed and explicit way ... which is not to say I have not 'dropped out' of the roles but even the dropping out format was shaped by the blueprint of what I was rebelling/escaping... this is all very long ago but has a lot of resonance with now. I do not believe it is by accident that I have become a servant of public education. I think the headset started many many years ago in infants school.

I can't describe it but I know it is really important ... more happens off the list that the words I send... the words are the tip of the iceberg but being in this group provides the stick for a lot of fairy floss in me that otherwise would float off and melt.

For Jenny, the project provided a place and people for her to say what she had to say, to metaphorically 'get off her chest' issues that were affecting the quality of her personal and working life. In a way similar to Doug's thoughts, the participants' dialogue with each other helped Jenny to work through blockages that had her in a 'groundhog day'. The open agenda of the project allowed what was important to Jenny to rise up and catch, like fairy floss on a stick, and to be dealt with, allowing her to move on. She felt safe

in expressing her frustrations and in reflecting on her development as a person. In honoring her journey through dialogue with trusted others, she then had the option to shape changing meanings and to set off on new paths.

At a later date, Kris (18-2-01) contributed some detailed thoughts about what she saw the worth of the project journey as having been:

I certainly would do this again, and in fact am already part of another group which I was able to join confidently because I understood how it would work!! ...I also learnt about the 'down' side of being a learner - a seriously valuable experience for me in my work with kids who are nearly always on the 'down' side of education at school. I learnt anew and at first hand the value of personal loyalty/regard/respect for the person who is teacher/facilitator/(dare I say?), leader, in keeping motivation up; I experienced the frustration of being willing to participate, but not being able to get 'on board', and I discovered just how difficult it is to persevere under certain less-than-ideal learning conditions...my poor typing frustrated and hindered me also(just as kids feel trapped by poor handwriting and spelling skills); so feeling generally on the outer', for a variety of odd little reasons, was also a discouraging factor to meaningful contribution; this also must happen such a lot in class groups...

...being part of this group was overall, a somewhat 'troubling' experience - I felt a lot like the kid who sits up the back, not bothering anybody, but not really getting into it, making an occasional attempt, which seems to fall flat, so goes back to day dreaming/doodling/fiddling/ reading something else- whatever will pass the time; easier than struggling with the situation at hand. I didn't want to drop out of the group, as 1) I kept hoping that something would happen which I would really be able to latch onto, contribute to, and run with... and 2) I felt personal loyalty to sandy for seeing the project through, however faintly I managed!

I also felt handicapped by the fact that sandy knew each of us, but we didn't all know each other - in such a small group it set up unbalanced communication dynamics maybe?? ...I found it was easy to feel 'unmotivated' to contribute when feeling this way (and how often must our kids experience this mild alienation in class?)

personally, I also felt out of my depth with some of the education/academic jargon used; I'm not at all afraid of languages and verbal games, but I felt hindered by its persistent presence - which is not a judgement against the dialect used, but just that I couldn't get on board with it...

anyhow, this is very much a personal reflection from a very novice group member, and I hope is not coming across as bulk negativity... and, after my experiences of struggling to communicate appropriately, I will never again (I hope) underestimate the amount of effort that someone may have put into an apparently meagre contribution!!

so there you have it - in a reverse sort of way, I have drawn a lot of food for thought from being involved. it's also added considerably to my volume of email, which I always enjoyed receiving and reading - I guess the fact that it has still trickled through is what finally encouraged me to join in again... another lesson for me, ie the value of persistence and continuity in encouraging the unsure and dis-encouraged?

so sandy, don't despair, this group has definitely provided me with a learning experience, probably more graphically and deeply than any book or lecture could have done; I'm happy to stay 'connected, for as long as the connection lasts, and I apologise for being such a poor correspondent these last weeks, but perhaps now at least I have explained (but not necessarily justified)myself. Kris 18-2-01

Kris had reflected deeply on her project experience, identifying it closely with the experiences of the students she works with. Through the project, she gained new skills and a greater appreciation of what is involved in leading learning that changes meaning. The path was not easy for her but she turned her 'troubling' experience into positive directions and affirmed its value for her. As with the other participants, the project was at times uncomfortable but the processes of changing were eventually seen as worthwhile.

Doug (19-2-01) also wrote some reflections on the worth of the project for him:

I thought the project was worthwhile and to some extent regret that I didn't put more into it time wise. For me it was extremely valuable to have access to other people's opinions on leadership and that those people weren't in stereotypical leadership positions. It allowed us to explore leadership in a range of its manifestations. ...I think that at times we were at risk of going around in circles and that at times it became a self help group in which we shared ourselves with each other. That was probably it at its richest. And to be honest Sandy that is what you do best. You have a wonderful sharing nature that values everyone around you and loves to help them if needed. The group certainly reflected that and I believe that was its strongest role. Leadership discussions became an academic front for what people really needed. That is so often the case in this busy world. Doug 19-2-01

To Doug, the participants sharing themselves with each other was the 'richest' part of the project experience. He posed leadership discussions as an 'academic front' but in my opinion, participants' dialogue about leading led them into leading themselves into changing meanings. Leading provided

the context for inner dimension explorations, but important to this was the context of the project itself. In the outer dimension of work, it was unlikely that such broad-ranging and such deep dialogue could have taken place. A collegial space apart from work was necessary for participants to feel comfortable in revealing themselves and to engage in changing meaning.

Some two months later, I added my own reflections about the journey of changing meaning that was the project:

For me, I'm feeling a bit ambivalent. On the one hand, I work through our words and see the richness and depth and learning together. On the other, I look at us now and honestly question whether it all did indeed make any difference in us. Personally, I think I'm trying too hard to put a finger on something specific, ...and will just have to wait and see over time if I will look back and see some kind of watershed coming out of our journey together.

I think now: why does the experience have to be a watershed? Change can ease up on us over time and needn't be a now-one-state/now-another thing. In fact, I think most change happens this way... as relationships move and shift, we sooner or later reflect and see that change/transformation has happened when we weren't looking.

*Another thought has been that I have always (or at least, as far as memory goes back) been in a group like this, in one way or another. I need and value the support of others-like-me... somehow it gives me that not-alone confidence to be me. Therefore, I really appreciate your 'being there'. Sandy
21-4-01*

Thus, my thoughts revealed some anxiety about the 'success' of the project, *per se*. However, like the other participants, I realised that I valued collegiality that was intimate and personal as well as business-like and professional. 'Self' becoming 'more-than-self' in the company of trusted others brought the confidence to lead changing meanings. Leading the self, then, is closely related to leading others. As the participants in the project demonstrated, the 'self' and 'other' have a mutuality in the processes of leading changing meanings.

Peter made few specific comments about how the project affected his changing meanings, but his poetic words during the course of the journey reflected his value of the group 'being there'; a value that was shared by all

the participants. It was as if the group made a connection to Peter's true self, providing the grounding that I mentioned earlier:

*It is clear that this dialogue represents different meanings for each of us.
...It seems to me sometimes that I am hearing the conversation as if it were
in a room down the hall. Me, shuffling great piles of importance around
under the desk-lamp, but with one ear cocked to the sounds of life in the
next bright room.
It's comforting to hear life going on. Thanks.*

*I am very happy to be able to dip in and out of the stream of ideas,
as and when I am able. ...I may not reply in writing to each twist and turn,
but they all add their spin to my thoughts.*

*...Little bits of joy are OK by me. (It seems all I have time for, anyway.)
...Let's please continue, and let the journey lead where it may. ...There are
plenty of days (and nights) yet. Peter 1-9-00*

Like Jenny in a way, the group also provided the contexts for Peter to address his personal daemons during his moving to a new work area. In dialogue about personal callings and vocations, Peter (3-7-00) noted:

*In my experience, intelligence is something of a Chinese curse...
Too many choices. Too easy to predict disaster. Always a rational doubt.
I have never surely known what I will be when I grow up.
I constantly have doubts about my ability to cope.
I'm never sure that I am doing the best thing.
My commitment is not to a course of action to achieve a goal, but to a
rightness of action, regardless of context.
By choosing abstract, rather than concrete goals, my focus has been away
from Vocation.
What I would like to know is does that make me a fraud to aspire to roles
defined by concrete, institutional power?
Are these rightfully on another path, the stages of Vocation?
Maybe the doubt is enough to compromise success.*

*Sorry to be so dark...and other times I am excited and emboldened by
increasingly complex contexts for action..... yet the doubts nag.*

In the group, Peter had the opportunity to take out his ideas and examine them more closely. He was anxious about his motivations in leading and it was helpful to reveal them and question them with trusted others. Like Jenny, Peter worked at clarifying the distinction between self-as-leader and leadership as an ascribed position. With 'others', he was able to work

through the changing meanings of his 'self' and to lead himself more confidently in new directions.

In the later retrospective of examining the outcomes, I came to understand that the changing meanings in the participants were different for each leader. In summary, Doug had a readiness for exploring new territory, but found himself in a state of *work avoidance* (Heifetz, 1992) as he applied only ideas that already had some fit with his practices. More challenging ideas had sticking points in their application. However, the group was a help in Doug's changing where it addressed the more technical pragmatics - the 'how' of bringing his meaning into the actions of his leading and managing. Yet it was also a *tremendous benefit* to share inner thoughts. Doug valued both the access to 'other' on the outer, for example, experiences and opinions on leading, and to 'other' on the inner, for example, sharing and supporting each other. Jenny saw herself as a product of the educational system from a young age, but longed to break out of her mould and to break the moulding of public education. The group was a place and people where she could be frank and could work on that break-out; the contemplation allowed her to pull her 'floss' together into more focused thought and action. My sense is that, on her return to work after the leave / retreat she embarked on during the project, Jenny's personal power would have been restored making her, even moreso, a force to be reckoned with. For Kris, the project - in particular the medium- was a sometimes rocky road, but in her perseverance, she reached some deep insights about her own learning and about that of others. Peter, too, was able to gain deeper insight, in his case, into his motivations for leading. For all participants, the fact of each other 'being there' was important to their processes of changing meaning, whatever they were.

In studying outcomes, it would have been easy to fall into looking for cause and effect, but in my changing world as I have set it out, I prefer to consider synergies. As I said in my personal reflections about the project earlier, I

questioned any premise that would seek a watershed in changing meaning. I believe that changing meaning does encompass irrevocable transformation, but that it is not a singular event. Rather, it is an ongoing parallel process of finding new ways to align energies and to encourage creativity in meaning and performance. *Change* might be a serial move from one state to another, but here I have been looking at *changing*, a living interlocutor of leading and meaning, of growing and limiting. In changing meaning, I asked myself if the changing ways and outcomes of the project demonstrated support and challenge for the flow of becoming different; not for effect. Doug found support in the energies of others who could identify with his struggles to bring his meanings of leadership to life. Jenny appreciated a space and people to help her work through a crisis of confidence. Likewise, Peter found support for getting through outer changing in the sanity and peace of inner space. Kris was challenged to use a novel experience to learn more about herself and about the learners she worked with. I found that I had friends in colleagues who could share the journey. I found, most surely, that we as leaders needed to honour our inner dimensions to function well in the outer domain and I propose that all educators have a similar need. The lack of such connection, I submit, has been the core of the problem with change in education, much as Fullan (1991) suggested more than a decade ago. Recently, he said that ‘the single factor common to successful change is that relationships improve. If relationships improve, schools get better’ (Fullan, 2002, p. 18). It is significant that this single factor, for the participants in the project, was not found in a singularity, but in the multiple, relational dimensions of leading-changing-meaning. To extrapolate, if relationships in and amongst educators improved, such as the leaders in the project demonstrated in their changing meaning, educating would have a chance to make a difference in the dimensions of students’ lives.

Synthesis:

To turn the full circle in the dance of leading-changing-meaning, it was necessary to return to the beginning of this research and revisit its first steps to make connections. In the way of the t'ai chi tu, in the beginning is the ending and in the ending is always a new beginning. I needed to see, through reflection, if the beginnings in this research prompted the endings to emerge and if the endings were what was seen in the beginnings. In other words, I had to ascertain if the 'spin' of the research had coherence for me as researcher and for the group as participant leaders, and if so, what the spin-offs were.

In the beginning, I wanted to learn about authentic changing in leaders' lives through studying the interactive outer and inner dimensions of leading and meaning. I wanted to know if self-aware, participative researching into the dynamics of such changing could be both supportive and challenging. Lastly, I wanted to know if the medium used in the research was appropriate to its task of facilitating the cycling of leading-changing-meaning in the participants. The specific research questions I put forward reflected these aims and therefore guided the way forward in our journey together. The participants were aware of these questions from the research proposal, a copy of which was sent to each member of the project group. In our iterations of dialogue, these questions were behind our reflexive considerations of if and how this researching was working for us. At the formal conclusion of the project, the participants were asked to give personal responses to the research questions. Before moving onto some broader implications of the research's spin, I have featured below the conversation between Jenny - the only respondent - and myself (7-12-00) about these research questions. I have used 'our voice' in this synthesis rather than mine alone to honour the participative nature of the project journey:

Has the meeting place been adequate as a learning environment for leaders?

Isn't it so often the way that in one's greatest strength also lies one's greatest weakness?

Interesting that in face to face meetings, we never give ourselves the time to mull and cogitate, yet we do need that. I feel in this group that maybe we have learnt to listen to, and in silence, with less of the sense of guilt we so often have at work if we are not 'busy'... a hang-over production line work ethic.

Collectively we aired most of the major approaches to leadership in a natural and personal way, but I wonder if we did anything except together map the existing terrain.

...but perhaps the mapping in itself was valuable? Gave us more clarity about individual positions and purposes?

I think we did weave an additional dimension, personalising through anecdotes the major threads/approaches, and exhibiting again and again what happens when two or more seemingly contradictory approaches are enacted/held as one within one beating breast and heaving mind.

I like this metaphor and like what you imply... I agree. It is good to see beings and doings understood as dimensional and as pulsing... that is, moving.

I personally for example, revisited the tension I experience between the lone forward scout and the social approach whereby I am simply 'filling the space' created by and on behalf of the group at any particular time.

I believe there is a place for both. For some reason, the t'ai chi maxim of 'dynamic energy, not dynamic tension' comes to mind.

Has it supported inner dimension exploration and how can it be improved?

I believe it is in the inner dimension exploration rather than the shared exploration that this meeting place succeeded. For me it was the reflection between messages, and the almost kaleidoscopic tangents of others in relation to my own musings which acted as a catalyst to speed up some processes that I was spinning my wheels on when working internally alone.

This is great... shows again that we are more than each alone. And maybe the group was the outer dimension to each individual's inner dimensions.

Has the project experience fostered personal change in individuals and in the group?

I have experienced personal change whilst in this group - hard to say if it was because of the group - I think I joined in determined to do some shifting of my inner and outer realities. I appreciated the subtlety and gentle human warmth of the group - and Sandy's indefatigable urging always towards the higher good or ideal.

I think each person was in the group because of a 'readiness' to do some personal work. I loved the group too.

Has the working together been found useful in change processes?

I don't believe I really shared the nitty gritty of the work context in which my change was taking place. It seemed unnecessary really as I could take others' comments and ideas and apply them to my specific context without them actually addressing my specific situation - there is something in this point that bears looking at.

It's interesting that you say this. It's like this in a lot of work I do with people... somehow the external contexts are less relevant than the effects and affects of them. Sometimes, I know very little of the nitty gritty but it doesn't matter... it's what those situations, whatever they are, mean and feel for people that are important.

In effect I could have kept a journal of my specifics and changes and events - and then sewn the responses from this group into that context and provided an explanation of the effects of this group on me and my situations.

... but I guess the outer meanings for us would be less than for you, since we don't share the contexts. Yet, there is some deeper level of meaning that we do share. Maybe it's the simple human thing of sharing trials and tribulations... of not being the only one... of knowing there are companions on the road.

I know that would have helped you Sandy, but I am satisfied that the process occurred and have no desire/time to document it. (Forget about the third eye - what about the third arm? I often wish I had one to do the running commentary on what I am doing /writing with the other two.)

... bit tricky, hey! Still, it's a useful habit to be able to watch one's self living.

What does personal change 'look' like for these leaders?

Words that come to my mind are - alignment, in synch, moving from a state of unbalance which if continued will lead to reduced performance, less joy, and perhaps inappropriate actions to a more whole and healthy state where perception is more accurate, processing more efficient and less harrowing and expression clearer, action more accurately directed, and more impact for less energy.

Harmonious... as in aligning energies?

This change is like resetting the timing the on an old holden when it runs a bit hairy - I needed to do that. I know I was getting out of synch especially within my inner self - losing confidence that my interventions in the 'outer world' were appropriate and enabling.

This group did give a chance for time out/in and reflection . I have acted on this and given myself both space and time.

You know, I feel a sense of honour that you have done this, both for you and for me, for all of us. To me, if for no other reason, this group has been worthwhile because you have taken this step. You are a brilliant educator and leader and it would destroy something in all of us if you were to burn out.

How might it relate to other, outer dimensions in creating integrated change in practice?

Why are people seeking change? What makes integrated change something worthwhile? First the evidence or experience that something isn't working well. Artificial external agents which introduce cognitive dissonance or rock the boat are only as good as their timing - if stasis is comfortable such interventions have little effect - then factors such as compulsion seem necessary to bring about change, but compulsion does not work well for sustained change - the stick or the carrot have to be there; the change is not integrated. (the difference between surface and deep learning).

Ahh, yes, the deep learning. I think finally we are coming to realise that change/growth is a personally initiated thing... it's the being that metamorphoses before or in conjunction with the doing. Maybe back to supporting learning needs instead of using force. Come to think of it, that was the great strength of the old professional development committee we used to have locally. We just held the dollars, people nominated what they wanted and we gave them a hand to make it happen... the seeds of a learning community... not quite the deep and personal learning yet, but at least a vibrant, interested bunch of teacher/learners.

I think some people seek dissonance and challenges and others seek comfort and stasis. Neither is better than the other, just different.

Yin and yang... the stabilisers and the innovators.

I think many people who become leaders in education, gravitate to positions like EAs or curriculum writers etc are atypical teachers; the mistake is to not to recognise that many other teachers operate in different ways and even worse to not respect teachers who do not have a drive to innovate or change.

The self-organising system in dynamic balance comes to mind... continuous self-referenced change so the stabilisers and innovators are both valued.

It is the same sort of thing as a classroom teacher not respecting students who do not learn in the same way as the teacher, or who do not see the point of many activities.

Okay, we need the old unity-in-diversity. I, for one, am pleased that our curricula are moving more this way.

I was just thinking the other day that I am so lucky to work with all the kids in our school... I get to participate in such a variety of adventures with them, yet even those are only a few of the total that the kids experience. I also get the privilege of doing some pulling-it/them-all-together... I'd like to cultivate that into greater depth and focus to make us clearer about our purposes and directions, but we're making progress.

Back to the question... I think any coming together of professionals for sharing reflection and dialogue is a great opportunity. I think it very valuable periodically to move out from the worn paths of existing professional relationships to engage with others who are unfamiliar or unknown. Some of my best professional development has been attending events which are not specifically for 'educators' or school sector people. It is refreshing and helps new perspectives form.

I feel that 'perspectives' are what we're on about... all learning comes of changing perspectives (and hence allowing new meanings/patterns to form).

On another tack (perspective!), a beloved said this the other day: 'The road never changes, the destination never changes, only the scenery on the way makes the journey more or less interesting.' I translate this as purposes being consistent, but walking (and looking at) the road in a multitude of interesting ways... fun as well as valuable to diversify... a richer weaving of relationships.

The minute I am part of a group where the agreed 'group think' becomes very strong I cannot help fleeing - you can see such in-groups form academically through papers in journals where the same group members all reference each other and repeatedly bang the drum of whatever line or theory they are 'selling' at the time...

At times whole schools or districts can exhibit such behaviour when they get a mass conversion to things like ET or Multiple Intelligences or whatever. Such processes are valuable in bringing great momentum and shared learning and exploration but such things have a definite use by date beyond which empty slogans and exclusive elites emerge.

Being me, I never like to jump on bandwagons, and I guess the likes of us play a balancing and integrative role in helping people figure out what it all means in the bigger picture and longer term.

Enough !!!

Surely enough for now. Thank you for a lovely time of reflection. A years-old cooperative poem has been rattling around in me as I have written. Here it is for you all to share in:

*The path was prepared.
The holes filled and the rocks removed.
We began our walk toward the shining,
Our face taking on the glow of the first goal!*

*The step became ten and the ten became millions!
The second became minutes and the minutes became years.*

Still we walked.

*The path took its own mind,
With detours, holes and pits.*

Still we walked.

*Others joined our path,
Our goal and our mind!*

*Our path had changed,
Our scenery changed,
But still our goal remained.*

*Still we walk,
Offering succour to our other travellers.
Our light waits for us,
We walk towards it!*

Reprise:

*The path turned to water,
We flowed into one.
The light was never lost.*

This dialogue of specifically engaging with the research questions led to my interpreting the questions in a simpler and more personalised way in order to study their implications for the group as a whole. These secondary questions and my reflections around them *in searching and searching again* are featured below.

Searching again:

What was leading-changing-meaning like for us as members of the research group?

Jenny spoke above of how being in the group enabled a revisiting of tensions such as those between time for active work and time for reflective mapping, between individual and group action, and between contradictions within a whole. The fact of admitting the dynamics of tension bespoke the movement of ongoing changing in her. For Jenny, for example, it was problematic that work time where face to face meeting was possible did not incorporate contemplative time: work was for doing, for productivity, not for being or processing! I have encountered similar situations in my own work daily, even with Doug, the group member I have been able to meet with face to face. We have made the effort, in the run of days, to reach into the inner dimension, but have never granted ourselves the luxury of enough time for

reaching satisfying conclusions and empowering new directions of changing. In our haste, we have been left with sieving new material through existing mindsets, as Doug (9-9-00) put it. Doug liked the pragmatism, the dealing with the real issues of leading, in the group, but regretted that - even away from the workplace, in a cosy club - he had not put more time into participating more fully. It was ironic that the group longed to be allowed to be themselves but, in general, did not give themselves permission to be fully who they were. To me, we were giving our power, both willingly and unwillingly, over to the expectations of others, whether it was the system, our colleagues and students, our families, or our self-imposed guilt over spending time on ourselves when we perceived others needed us. Whilst not making any judgement on this, I believed that our ongoing guilt-trips about inner work at times affected the quality of our learning. Human beings have a tradition, in Western societies at least, of only taking notice of the inner dimensions of meaning when crisis strikes, yet I would suggest that the proactive leader on the edge of possibility dares to walk the line of dynamic balancing, paying proper homage to the outer aspects of leading and the inner aspects of meaning.

Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002), whose recent work concerns how leaders can employ inner emotional intelligence, point out that deep learning requires open loop learning, learning that relies on connecting with others and is mediated through the limbic system of the brain to create permanent changing. In our group, we definitely had the potential for deep learning and while we did not to a great degree specify that learning, the fact that it did take place was evidenced in our how we felt about 'being there'. Goleman and his associates could have physiologically explained this emotional reliability within the group as resulting from 'interpersonal limbic regulation' occurring and triggering oxytocin being released in the brain to give us good feelings. They referred to such regulation as a process of entrainment wherein the individual rhythms of people in conversation could move into a similar profile, a phenomenon they called mirroring. It

seemed that people in dialogue, like the leaders in the project, moved towards both psychological and physiological similarity. They were able to perceive each other's frames of meaning (Duck, 1994) because they were processing through the open-loop limbic system and one result was that they moved into literal mind-body resonance. This gave added meaning to the sense of reflecting on the inside: upon reflection, you do see yourself in the mirror, but you need other people to help create the image. This also gave me new insight into how the phenomenon of 'being there' worked in our group. We experienced an entrainment that brought us the attunement of resonance. I saw this as similar to harmonic resonance in music theory, to gestalts in field theory, to synergy in consciousness theory and to Buber's (1987) I-Thou state. In the outer work world, as Doug indicated, we sieved new ideas only through our brains' frontal lobes and thus our existing conceptual frameworks, not taking the time for limbic, open loop learning to process these ideas in relation to our feelings and meanings as well as our thoughts, thus denying ourselves the ability to truly change. Superficial learning plagued our days and even ventured into our group's nights of dialogue when we had guilt over 'time out' for 'time in'. However, when we as participants allowed ourselves to engage and to be there for each other, to be primal leaders as Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) termed the ability to be emotionally involved, we danced the dance of leading-changing-meaning and engaged in deep learning.

Did our little club, as Doug (9-9-00) called us, support and challenge our changing journeys? Did we help each other along the way? Did our inner dimensions relate to our outer worlds, making our changing integrated?

The outcomes section above revealed how we supported and challenged each other, and thus how together we learned our way forward as leaders changing meaning. 'Being there' might have seemed an imaginative key, much as Jenny (25-9-00) at one stage proposed of leading, but we have seen that there was substance to it. Similarly, 'love' - an aspect of emotion - was

considered somewhat of an imaginative key, one of some contention amongst group members and thus worthy of study in further demonstrating how the changing meaning of the leaders was synthesised. Doug (21-5-00) saw one of his roles in life as being a lover and noted that he loved being a parent so much it defined him (Doug 20-6-00). I loved being a parent too, but in a larger sense: *love watching/helping any human being/becoming, whether young or old, grow and change and deepen* (Sandy 21-6-00). In defining love, I saw it as *an energy we gift other people to allow them to love themselves and hence others... a cyclic thing. Leading is loving self-other... this is why I believe a leader IS in being* (Sandy, 27-6-00). However, I laid myself on the line with the following thoughts on I/B/E (institutionalised, bureaucratic, enforced) leadership, personal meaning and love:

...the I/B/E action is distinct from leadership. However, there is a mystery, almost a hidden meaning, a texture. To me, personally meaningful leadership can exist, permeate through all the stuff we do. My goal/principle is to love people, that is, to gift them energy/belief that helps them grow in themselves as self-leaders. My challenge is, in each and every thing I do, to live out that goal. It's a big ask I ask of myself and I know I have to be gentle on myself so I can keep going, keep persevering as one who is, in myself, learning self-leadership too. I can't say I'm very good at it, but it gives my life purpose/vocation. Sandy 25-7-00

In Doug's (26-7-00) view of my words, the word love was being used indiscriminately in connection with leadership:

While I will be the first to agree that ethical leadership has as its core love and moral credibility I don't see them as the defining realities of leadership. In other words to sound glib 'if only Hitler had used those leadership skills for good instead of evil'. Maybe he thought he was in the beginning in terms of resource acquisition, national pride, etc for a people he truly loved.

Doug did not see love as a defining reality of leading, especially in the case of love as understood by a psychotic leader. That love was incomprehensible against his experiences of it. He severed love from leading, giving them only a functional association: *...is leadership simply a function of the human being/society and what we bring to it - love, manipulation, whatever the thing that defines its value for our social/psychological well being?* (Doug 26-7-00). Jenny (28-7-00), on the other hand, saw love in leading as the high

ground that she hoped was operating inside her while she lived in the swamp:

I know love is the answer, love will find a way etc but for much of the time I am so engaged in what in is my face I am just operating from other angles and I guess subconsciously trusting that in an unaware way my 'love ethos' is underlying whatever headset I am choosing to wear at the time.

Later, in the aftermath of the project, I spoke of what felt like a *same song in all and each of us, one that speaks of longing and of love and care for the human condition* (Sandy 19-1-01). Jenny (29-1-01) added that she *too felt this shared longing and chord within the group over our time together* and perhaps that what was she valued most of the experience. This, and our notion of 'being there', spoke of the love of leaders, a love that I believed Doug would embrace rather than deny. Bolman and Deal (2002), who have studied the depths of leading with soul, saw love, or caring - a person's compassion and concern for others - as a gift of leadership. Although our group had some contentions over the meaning of love in leading during our journey, the endings we synthesised saw us loving each other as leaders and being protective, as Doug (9-9-00) said, of our group. Maybe it was only natural as Maturana and Varela (1992) suggest. Like Goleman and his associates, they took a clinical - yet still emotionally intelligent - view of the basis of love in human biology, one which showed that love concerned deep, inside learning:

Biology also shows us that we can expand our cognitive domain. This arises through a novel experience brought forth through reasoning, through the encounter with a stranger, or, more directly, through the expression of a biological interpersonal congruence that lets us see the other person and open up for him room for existence beside us. This act is called love, or, if we prefer a milder expression, the acceptance of the other person beside us in daily living. This is the biological foundation of social phenomena: without love, without acceptance of others living beside us, there is no social process and, therefore, no humanness.

...We may resist the notion of love in a scientific reflection because we fear for the objectivity of our rational approach. ...such fear is unfounded. Love is a biological dynamic with deep roots. It is an emotion that defines in the organism and dynamic structural pattern, a stepping stone to interactions that may lead to the operational coherences of social life. Every emotion (fear, anger, sadness, etc.) is a biological dynamic which is deep-rooted

and which defines structural patterns, stepping stones to interactions that may lead to different domains of operational coherences (fleeing, fighting, withdrawing, etc.). Maturana and Varela, 1992, p.246, 247.

Love is learning is leading - we found that through our inner-outer journey of changing meaning. I have wondered if, in our merging, we were headed for the group-think that Jenny (16-9-00; 7-12-00) abhorred. Physiologically and emotionally, we might have reached attunement, but psychological similarity did not mean we thought the same: it simply meant that we could access each other's ways of thinking to have a chance of sharing meaning and participating in each other's changing meaning. For these leaders who loved, the learning was at once about deep connection and about growing diversity within our unity, the inner dimension enfolding and the outer unfolding. The group's experience supported Bohm's (1987) notion that true creativity in the flow is only possible with love.

Did our little club have a good space/place to meet for inside out work?

To my mind and heart, it felt as though our deep connection actually created a space: 'our space'. The resonance amongst us created an interstitial field that belonged to and was maintained by our inner relating and the force of our meaning. That this additional layer came to exist without coercion as in between, supernal and substrate in our busy lives quietly amazed me. It began mechanically as a closed email list - a virtual space that belonged mostly, the group perceived, to me as the researcher initiating the project. Along the way of the journey, our cyberspace - a space of infinite possibility - became inhabited by the leaders, lived-in in such a way that it was no longer empty and impersonal, but highly reflective of the hearts and minds that participated in it. Maturana and Varela (1992) noted that we create the world we see in the act of seeing. As noted throughout this work, 'seeing' and 'witnessing' go hand in hand. In the instance of this project, the group made a world that had tangible reality for us - virtual though it was - because we were inherent in it. In other words, our space existed by virtue of its meaning for us as the participating leaders.

Getting 'in-synch' and feeling comfortable in our space was easier for some group members than others. Some initial detractors for all of us were members' varying perceptions of outside expectations, for example, what the university might require in a study, and of a less-than-level playing field because only I knew all participants beforehand. As involvement in our space developed, the angst about perceived expectations faded and members grew to appreciate the lack of external pressure in the space, a freedom which Peter (20-7-00) relished: *It's like diving into the Noosa surf for the first wave of the summer... a bit uncomfortable at first, a shock of awareness of my whole being, bracing...a thrilling reminder of my whole self a sudden sharp sense of forgotten parts.* (The group, though, created their own internal pressure through their concerns with physical and mental space/time to participate, as noted above.) The playing field never really levelled out, despite two attempts to convene a face-to-face meeting to get to know each in the ordinary dimensions of life. However, I didn't see this as disadvantageous to our space because there is no level playing field in life. In our group, we were perhaps forced to mirror the hills and dales of the external dimension in our inner explorations and this work of accessing each other, I believe, brought a more coherent sense of reality to our meaning and our space. Despite this making the space more realistic, relative anonymity was still an issue for Kris for who liked physical touch, as we have seen, although Doug (10-8-00), like Peter, enjoyed the freedom of not having to deal with external persona. Over time, however, Kris did eventually feel at home participating in our space:

...am still finding it difficult to put thoughts to air - so just wanted you to know I'm still listening in and appreciate everybody's writings. Kris 11-10-00

...lovely to come home and read all the email from everyone! Kris 15-10-00

...this thought takes my thinking on leadership - at last! - to a new place - one of those haiku moments. It certainly has been some months in coming!!! but worth waiting for (speaking for myself only here of course... I had to get this whole thing into a context I could relate to)... be interested to know if this strikes a chord with anyone else or not... Kris 18-10-00

...sorry to say the tide has turned and now I actually have quite a few 'words' to get off my chest...ignore or read on as is appropriate!! Kris 25-10-00

In retrospect, I think that Doug, Jenny and myself had the greatest degree of comfort with the email medium, as such, because we were active users of it before the project. Kris had some initial frustrations with the mechanics of it, but eventually was able to use it to participate in our space of changing meaning effectively. Peter (10-8-00), on the other hand, found cyberspace safe and liberating. As he said, it was *a chance to be lyrical...to let my self fly a bit*. It was as if this space being available opened in him another part of himself, the unexpressed poet who was a vivid commentator on life as it was lived. For Peter, the inside was able to come out, grounding him and at the same time, enriching us all with his images and making our space more vibrantly alive. Through his words, we were able to live in his meanings of darkness and light:

Sorry to be so dark...and other times I am excited and emboldened by increasingly complex contexts for action..... yet the doubts nag. Peter 3-7-00

*The reason I am writing now is that I took some time for myself to be at the sea.
As weariness recedes, engagement returns.* Peter 6-7-00

In summation, the aims of the research have been fulfilled and answers found to the research questions, but in the way of cycles, returning to the beginning from the endings - as has been done here - is not the end of the journey. Just as the endings were implicit in the beginnings, so too are new beginnings in the endings. I would like to turn now to the 'spin-offs', the deepening cycles that spiral off from where our journey has led and give new insight into solutions to the leader's problem in educating - that of lack of integration between inner and outer dimensions in changing.

Towards changing meaning in the leading way:

My thesis here has been that leading is about changing meaning. We have demonstrated through the research project that leaders going beyond the outer field of action to the inner realms of contemplation make a space in which changing meaning has a chance. We have seen that changing is, at the least, outer and structural; at the most, inner and personal. At best, it literally incorporated or embodied both and was more than either. While changing belongs only in the outer world of experience, the world is characterised by Buber's (1987) primary word of *I-It*. When changing moves in to encompass the inner realms of meaning, 'the primary word *I-Thou* establishes the world of relation' (Buber, 1987, p.6). In relating (mind/heart) with body (experience), participants in the project provoked movement and the cycling that led to changing meanings. Further, Buber (1987) saw the world of *It* as contextualised by space and time, while the world of *Thou* initially had no context. However, as *Thou* participates in relating, the *It* of experience is created and similarly, *It* moving into connection may become *Thou*. In the project, we purposefully created a space and time for *It* to transform into *Thou*. When we moved from dialogue about experiences of leading to what it meant to be there for each other, I-It became I-Thou, a relationship that persisted into new cycles of experience. We found that the yang of changing by distinction had also the yin of changing by connection. As Buber (1987, p.62) points out:

Individuality makes its appearance by being differentiated from other individualities. A person makes his appearance by entering into relation with other persons. The one is the spiritual form of natural detachment, the other the spiritual form of natural solidarity of connexion. The aim of self-differentiation is to experience and to use, and the aim of these is 'life'...

Using experience to make the meaning that is life was our group's challenge. We felt, as we have seen, the discomfort of detachment without connection and longed to be in relation beyond the superficialities of external structures. We longed for the inner peace, as Remen (1999, p.37) put it, of

‘not...distancing oneself from life, rather... knowing life so intimately that one has become able to trust and accept life whole, embracing its darkness in order to know its grace.’ As leaders, we found we needed the *more* of sharing meaning to feed the hungry child within, to refresh us, to fill the emptiness and top up reserves, and to find the wholeness that ‘being there’ brought. This need of more connection was on a level deeper than our individual and differentiating experiences. As Jenny (4-9-00) said, *I started to consider how so many of the things I was projecting onto my specific job and role and situation are being experienced by people all over the place in very diverse settings*. We had different jobs as leaders, but we shared the commonality of appreciating each other’s ‘being there’ to create common meanings that held us in a sense of belonging to each other. In the reflections post-project, I wrote a poem about the fulfillment we found in the emptiness of virtual space:

*An empty space, white and blank,
yet full of being there
invisible threads that join
hearts and minds and
bind souls.
Somewhere in the white and light
the lines exist
dark strokes that write
of life, its pains and joys,
of being there. Sandy 19-3-01*

An emptiness that was full brings me back to one of the metaphors of the research project, that of the organic cell’s endoplasmic reticulum appearing as empty, interstitial space but in reality serving as a vehicle of connection. As leaders, we found that we too needed a space outside of experience to make meaning, the patterns-that-connect that Bateson (1988) spoke of. Reason (1994b) proposed that the purpose of human inquiry is to heal the separations that characterise modern existence and I believe that ‘being there’ was healing for the us as participants in this research. The healing operated on the level of connecting us to one another, taking our diverse outer experiences and shaping inner shared meanings, and also on the level of personal changing, connecting the outer persona with the inner self. The

leaders in the project learned to heal themselves and in this, also healed self-others. I have asked myself why we needed more and why we needed connection and my answer is that as human beings, we were wounded by the fracturing of life's experiences and needed to heal into wholeness. Acknowledging this yearning and honoring it by learning, developing and growing relationships that encompass the inner and outer is, to my mind, the leading path in adulthood. In being revealed and so establishing connection, the transparent self is changed and changing - more is no longer needed. The self is actualised and satisfied as the one finds home amongst the many.

This 'growth as a person amongst persons [is] a rehumanizing process', as Jourard (1971, p.171) says, adding that 'self-disclosure begets self-disclosure' (Jourard, 1971, p.141). Healing, or making whole and thus making human, comes of the mutual empowerment of revealing the inner to the outer, of authenticating self through courageous truth-testing with others. We have extensively studied enfoldment in our group of leaders, coming together to bring the outer dimension inside to create meaning, but it must not be forgotten that primal leading comes from within, that leading is primarily being. Changing moves first from being to doing, unfolding meaning into action. Jourard (1971) believes, like Bolman and Deal (1995), that we need places - much like the space in this research - for simply 'being with' (Josselson, 1996, p.13); to hold *within one beating breast and heaving mind*, as Jenny (7-12-00) said, what we might become. In such public privacy, the act of 'being becoming' has something in common with the act of love (Jourard, 1971) - as explored earlier - because the mutual revelation of knowing one another begets the mutual validation and acceptance of 'being there'. That is what the healing of changing is about. Leaders need to get through outer 'togetherness', which Jourard (1971) likens to the parallel play of two year olds, to the naked inner meeting of personal truths. The real iterative and parallel process is in the little hungry and naked baby inside morphing *into a magnificent, larger-than-life, ancient, and darkly*

iridescent dragonfly, with power, grace and speed, as Kris (5-7-00) related.

The healing of changing comes in recognising that parallel processing is not discrete; the outer to inner and the inner to outer create each other as yang and yin. There are no separate processes, but one process in which there is continual, transformative changing. The healing, or making whole, is in the connective and moving dance of changing.

There is something special in this healing. As Remen (2000, p.6) has discovered:

By making a place for wholeness within our relationships, we offer others the opportunity to be whole without shame and become a place of refuge from everything in them and around them that is not genuine. We enable people to remember who they are.

To be naked without shame and to find refuge without judgement enables people to remember their natural *power, grace and speed*. The wounded leaders who participate in the healing of transformation can flow transparent in the world, their meanings apparent to all. The process of changing meaning brings strength and power, joy and gratitude (Remen 2000) to leading. It also brings the silence, the white and empty space of 'being there' - of being whole yet making space for something new to be heard (Heifetz, 1992). The changing meaning that is healing is 'all good', as the current parlance goes, but beyond that, I admire how Remen (1999, p.47) puts it:

...meaning can be a source of strength: meaning enables us to endure and prevail through difficult times. Meaning heals us not by numbing our pain or distracting us from our problems but by reminding us of our integrity: of who we are, of what we are doing, and how we belong. Meaning gives us a place to stand: a place from which to meet the events of our lives; a way to experience life's true value and its mystery. ...Meaning is a practice. The recovery of compassion, the recovery of meaning is, in the words of Proust, a 'voyage of discovery that lies not in seeking new vistas but in having new eyes.'

Changing meaning brings strong new eyes, and this opens the doors of perception, after Blake (in Jourard, 1971). Educating might be seen, in

Jourard's (1971, p. p.20) eyes, as opening new vistas of mind and heart 'to help a person receive and make sense of more of the disclosure of the world.'

Why do we deny ourselves as educators and our students the grace of such healing, of such revelatory unfolding through participating more fully in creating the world? Why do we deny changing perception and meaning? I have wondered what holds back those who would lead themselves, and so others. To me, the problem is still structure - as leaders in education, sharing the journey and 'being there' for one another is definitely fuzzy, intangible stuff that has no definitive use. Remen (1999, p.36), in working with leaders in the medical field, believes similarly:

In the medical culture, we do not engage with our full humanity. In fact, authentic human connection - connecting to the humanness in yourself and in others - is actually seen as being something undesirable, unprofessional, even dangerous. We have become ashamed of our wholeness and may come to see it as weakness. We are taught to fear connecting with our humanness, and especially our emotions, because it will destroy our scientific objectivity and mar our judgement.

The fear is in connection, in being revealed and found wanting, but equally the fear is in separation, in being different from others and thus *ashamed of our neediness* (Sandy 15-8-00), as I said in the project. It takes the raw courage of true leading to go apart in order to come together in a deeper way. The existing outer physical and psychological structure in education holds educators in the thrall of assimilation and accommodation rather than adaptation, fearing to walk the way of changing meaning. That structure may be imposed by others, but equally again, the structure might be imposed from within. We may live in the 'hell of changelessness' (Jourard, 1971, p.68), forgetting that '*educare*, the root of the word *education*, means 'to lead forth the hidden wholeness', the innate integrity in every person' (Remen, 1999, p.35). That is the same as a doctor denying the Hippocratic Oath. Educators, like doctors, are healers. Our special role as leaders is to serve wholeness in humanity and as Remen (1999, p.35) says, 'we must have the courage to educate people to heal this world into what it might be.'

The leading way of changing meaning requires us to see our lives as educators differently (Remen, 2000). To see differently, we must travel the road of being different. We must journey into the individuality of *I-It* and turn the inner eye to find *I-Thou*. Putting a foot on the road of individuation (Jung, 1977) demands the bravery of self-leading, but it is not as ‘all bad’ as it might seem. There may be friends to share the discomfort, even on the road less travelled. As Jourard (1971, p.68) notes:

One usually needs to leave other people in order to take leave of the way one has chronically been with them. ... ‘Going away’ can be, and usually is, the first step in psychological growth. One need not be in solitude to redefine or to discover a new being-for-oneself.

Going away means going another way from one’s meanings to grow new shapes and forms. We have found in the process of this research that human beings actually need others to make meaning, so although the leading step is a solitary one, the changing journey into self and then the return to others (integration) happens in the ‘company of equals’ (Ogilvie, 1998a). This refers to what Jenny (16-9-00) was talking about with regard to more happening off the list than the words she sent. The going apart and coming together, in the nature of parallel processing, proceed together. Leading, or ‘leaving home’, shows the way for ‘the quest’, the changing of meaning that enables a ‘returning home’ (Bolman & Deal, 2002, p.23). In this research, the faithful friends, as Bolman and Deal (2002) put it, looked after each other and guided their changing ways, much as did Monkey, Pigsy and Sandy in the Chinese folktale. Developing trust, and dare I say love, enabled the journey. In getting through the fear of separation, we also passed through the fear of connection. We were not heroic or mythical beings, simply human beings who found the courage to lead, to educate and to heal. It is said that ordinary people can sometimes do extraordinary things and I suggest that ordinary educators, properly together, can lead themselves into extraordinary changing in educating. Faithful friends might be, as Remen (2000) found and as Bolman and Deal (2002, p.25) note:

...a group of professional colleagues who meet periodically to share experiences and support one another through triumphs and tragedies. The critical thing is to have trusted friends with whom to share and explore the challenges and frustrations of leadership.

The core of the problem in educational change might literally be in our core; that core that sees educators isolated and disconnected, prone to structures of changelessness. Educators would serve healing better by taking a risk in trusting each other - the critical thing - and reaching in and out for that space of 'being there' where changing meaning is the leading way.

Conclusions:

In researching the leading way of changing meaning, my conclusions to the project could have focused on structure, on the mechanics of how it all worked, but I chose instead to go inside to contemplate on what the participant group learnt on our journey of exploration. The research here has been different to create difference both for the participants and for audience, much like finding new eyes to see anew or like leaving the shore to find new land. In its other-than-usual framing, processing and reporting, researching the leading way of changing meaning was intended as a means to an ending - an *ending* of changelessness leading to a *beginning* of being different and becoming one; of being alive in the in-out-and-round dancing which deepens and illuminates human being. Here below are the conclusions of this study - the *changing meanings* which were our learning in *leading* - which I identified and recorded in reviewing the group's *way* in this research. First, some conclusions about us as a collegial group are listed:

- Our collegial group had value for professional and practical dialogue, but also for personal and perceptual development in allowing self and other to be more holistic. In our group, we were able to bring the inner and outer parts of ourselves together.

- Our group had a valuable role in grounding leaders. Without external expectations, 'handles' or agendas and in openness without structure, members felt safe and trusting and were free to connect with untouched aspects of themselves and others. We valued being there for each other without outer pressures.
- Members of our group learnt through dialogue to appreciate the perspective of other, to value inclusion and loyalty, to understand the dip in the learning curve and to persist through challenges and frustrations. In our group, our dialogue provided a microcosm for understanding relationships in the outer world better.
- Being in our group allowed the participant leaders to learn about the dynamics of being different from both negative (being disadvantaged, isolated, alienated, fearful, excluded) and positive aspects (being empowered, courageous, persevering, empathetic, compassionate). Participation in our group provided a microcosm for exploring difference safely.
- In our group, making the implicit explicit (and finding out what is implicit in the explicit) encouraged mutuality and trust. Within the confidentiality of our group, revealing the implicit developed trust in each other.
- Being in our group provided diversity but also belonging and shared identity. Helping each other was validated - not the usual case for supposedly self-contained professionals. Needing each other was not cause for shame, but celebration. We celebrated our need for each other in 'being there'.
- In our sustained group, many individual meanings were generated, but an undercurrent of core shared meanings also developed. In our group, our dialogue over time helped individual meanings 'move through' into shared understandings.
- Our group demonstrated that depth and connection were essential to us as a professional group. In making a space of sharing rather than competition, our group was able to move into community. We made an interstitial time for the 'being with' of sharing and witnessing that fostered our communal 'being there'.

These conclusions show that our collegial group had a valuable role in the personal and professional *changing meaning* of the participant self-leaders. In education, mutual support groups such as 'circles of equals', 'leaders'

learning circles' and 'communities of practice' do already exist for some leaders to study their work. Based on our experiences, I believe a useful challenge in these groups could be to support changing inner meanings as well as outer actions. Focusing on the practical and professional in the outer dimension could be balanced by the perceptive and personal in the inner dimension in order to achieve healing and holism.

The next group of conclusions concerns leading as it was experienced and transformed by the participants in the project:

- Leading for us implied taking up the right and responsibility to autonomous action and meaning-making as human beings. Authenticity came to mean being a sovereign self-other (self-in-relations), making and exercising opportunities for choice and decision-making, for creativity and participative performance. It could be said that our eventual desire was to be less a product of a system/structure (meeting an external expectation) than a work of art in progress-process. The leaders in our group wanted to be accepted for who they truly were.
- In the course of living, we as leaders used personal experiences to allow us to develop empathy for others. In being able to share meanings and make connection, compassion was practised. Leading, as we found it, was about connecting at both surface and deep levels.
- Working in a team made us as leaders more aware of the dynamics of teams and provided the opportunity to develop team leadership. In the project, working together on a journey of exploration into self enabled 'us' to emerge from individual 'i'-dentities.
- As leaders we helped each other to connect to the self beyond the persona through showing our inner selves and meeting without condition. In our group, personal revelations engendered inner 'meetings' that would not have been possible in more superficial and hierarchically structured 'meetings'.
- Leading for us was 'not-one' as it involved the self-and-individual and the social-and-communal in an ongoing dance of dialogue that needed the one and the many. Our deliberations of leading showed it to have many faces. Despite leading beginning in one, it was a 'not-I' experience as the many called forth the leader.

- To us, leading was loving, making the space for new ways and fresh journeys. ‘Loving’ was contentious in our group, but that made for perceiving and conceptualising new ‘leads’ on love.
- In being transparent, we as leaders did not use energy to conceal or hide, but to reveal and to find synergies. For us, using our energy to revealingly show rather than defensively structure our inner and outer ourselves brought an ability to ‘see through’ each other. In better being able to read each other’s meanings, we were better placed to understand each other’s leading.

Leading, then, for the participants in the project was transformed from more conventional notions into a motivation to and experience of changing meaning. Leading was both an ‘imaginative key’ and a very real experience in the group’s lives.

A further group of conclusions focuses on changing meaning in the leading way, as experienced in the project group:

- ‘Going with the flow’ was what we as leaders in connection practised. We found that using less force to make things happen created better energy alignment and harmony. In being attuned to the flow around each other - in being ‘just the way we were’, we observed that we could lead even without conscious intention.
- Following on, we found that dynamic energy was preferred to dynamic tension. It created a flow of changing instead of cause and effect change. From the group’s changing perspective, contradiction and conflict could be seen as sources of harmony and unity rather than discord and dissonance.
- Loosely-coupled systems seemed to work best for us as there was room to move and the most potential for leading. The group in the project could not have ‘worked’ in the way it did with a more formalised structure. It needed the openness of no external agenda to release the energy of self-leading.
- Through personal changing, we sensed that one naturally becomes a ‘force’ for change beyond self. The energy of moving coherence seemed not to force but to love others into change. In our group, increasing inner coherence brought better coherence with others in the outer world of work.

- For us, it took courage and confidence in a changing self to allow the inner, true being to shine out into the outer dimension. Our increasing confidence with each other within the group allowed us to begin to trust outer others with more of our inner self.
- Changing by going along 'the road less travelled' in our group was refreshing and rejuvenating because it brought new perspectives. The project experience was an out-of-the-ordinary and less-travelled road for us, but our journey brought us new ways of perceiving each other and world around us.
- Changing for us was only worthwhile if self-motivated. Real change came from deep within. We found that structural mandates for change only went so far; we had to engage personally in the work of changing for it to be significant for us.
- Our experiences together demonstrated that implicit in changing is not-changing or stasis. What orderliness we developed was governed by limits as well as by the need for exploring diversity. Change was self-referential for us as changing was a constant in our lives but within that there were seasons of growth and decline.
- The keys to any changing for us were changing meaning and changing relations. We did not see change as an external event but as an intimate shifting of who we were and of how we connected with others.

Changing meaning in the leading way thus required a lot more than structural change for us. It involved a very personalised transformation through learning to be and become in different ways. Some conclusions about this kind of learning, as demonstrated in the project, are as follows:

- Reflexive learning - learning from one's and others' learning and reflecting on it through the dialogical processes of making meaning - was a valuable tool for us. The leaders in the project group used their dialogical reflexive learning to travel further than any one of us could have on our own.
- Learning happened for us because of tangents, juxtaposing the different to prompt new patterns of meaning. The advent of leaders in our group being able to share and juxtapose individual meanings prompted novel alignments and patterns to emerge.

- Our metalearning was independent of contexts - the quality of connections and relationships was the key factor. For us, we were largely ignorant of each other's daily contexts, but connecting at deep and emotionally significant levels allowed us a healing learning. Further, the distance of witnessing as well as the nowness of seeing allowed both decontextualisation and embeddedness and thus a roundedness in learning.
- Deep learning was an emotional experience for us. Emotion / feeling created meaning and drove change in our group. Our motivation to change came from deep learning; that is, learning that affected our sense of self in both thought and feeling.
- Individuation and integration were two sides of learning one wholeness in the project. There was a need to go apart and be individual, but also a need for being with others to make meaning and develop 'i'-identity. We found that this 'I' was not ego-bound but an 'I' who recognised other as part of self. Thus, 'being there' was part of our 'i'-identity.
- Transformative learning was an ongoing process for us and increased our awareness of change-ability, movement and dynamic balance. In our group, our learning together both challenged and supported who we were. We were participating in 'educating' each other.

The leaders in the project, thus, learnt their way into changing meaning. However, while there are structural constrictions to changing and educating, it is difficult to participate in transformative learning, such as we experienced, in the daily run of schools. Structure in education needs to be reconceptualised into something more fluid; something that allows those participating in educating to form and shape their own changing. Last, I have two conclusions from the project that demonstrate our different structure for time and space:

- Our experiences showed us that time can be productively used in silence and listening, to learn to be comfortable in receiving as well as giving. We found that 'time-out' for 'time-in' was valuable in leading changing meanings.
- We developed the notion that space was potentially infinite, bound only by that used to make it finite, for example, time, fear, love, identity. To us, it was limitless yet bounded. In the project, we noted that imposed systems bound our space, making us less than we could be. We longed for a space in

which we could be accepted for who we were; a space of our own binding in which our sovereignty was acknowledged.

Honoring different times and spaces, then, was a way for us of respecting both the individual and social nature of our journeys into changing meanings. Leaders need to be able to create meaningful times and spaces for changing and projects such as the one herein allow this.

To add my own personal conclusion, I turn back to Dupain's 'Two Forms' which graced the opening of this research journey into changing meaning. To me, the core of the problem in educating is that form has solidified into structure, both within and without, producing change that - like the pick in the photograph - shatters instead of heals. At present, change is 'taking apart', but not 'putting back together again'. The more natural path of changing sees form and function integrate, shaping durable but malleable meanings. In continually meaning something different - that is, in learning - and so becoming both old and new, life is both enduring and fresh. The leaders in this research found integrity, connection and identity. These identities were a little life-worn like the shell in the photograph, but burnished by the experiences of changing. These identities were very much alive and real because the leaders were actively and reflexively participating in making their way of changing meaning. That way was not easy, but was honest in leading them into the harmony of heartfelt chords of 'being there'. Without being sentimental, my conclusion is that, in changing meaning in the leading way, we have gone the full circle of inner and outer dimensions: now we belong; now we are healing. The structures that isolate have been superseded and we can flow as one.

Recommendations:

Following this research and in light of current practices in schools, I see making connection - making 'patterns that connect' - as a priority for education. Learning is about making connections, and although such a focus is often apparent in teaching, it is rarely visible in teachers themselves. Systemic structures seem to burden many teachers, leaving them disconnected; that is, isolated, alienated and unable to change in any personally meaningful way. Yet becoming different, as demonstrated in this research, comes of changing meaning and changing meaning comes from within. Teachers and administrators can promote the learning of making connections in *leading* themselves, as the group in the project herein did, on journeys of meeting and making; of revealing themselves to each other to develop the trust and mutuality necessary to *changing meaning*. My recommendation is that they gift themselves, without guilt, the time and space to contemplate as well as act, so becoming learners who lead themselves. The virtual space herein was a useful tool in developing relationship, but regardless of whether self-leaders meet face-to-face or not, the important meeting is in the *heart-to-heart* so a space-of-their-own can grow and become a place of 'being there'.

I would also recommend that professional development be reconfigured into *personal-professional* development, thus acknowledging that inner-outer cyclical connectivity, as evidenced in this research. This development needs to begin pre-service so that beginning leaders learn not only the skills of reflection and participation, but develop the courage to consciously witness themselves and others living. Professional communities should also foster the making of meaning beyond the superficialities and beyond the contexts of everyday practice. Collegial retreats and postgraduate study, such as that conducted by Remen (1999), could provide avenues for meeting. As well, leaders within schools could demonstrate connective practices, for example, in working in leadership teams, and in giving priority and thus time to

events and groups that bring people together for deep learning. However, my chief recommendation is for educators to recognise that *changing meaning* is an ongoing characteristic of *leading*. In acknowledging this, they would see and participate in a world in flow; an holistic world that is created by self-aware leaders in connection with others.

5. Future Directions

Throughout this research, I have sought to clothe the words of Bohm that prompted this journey and which opened this work. With my fellow wayfarers, I have explored the change of meaning which Bohm (1987) espoused as necessary to change the world and given life to what changing means for individuals; in this case, leaders in education. In the relationships within participant individuals and with the group, meaning *is* different and, as Bohm projected, a fundamental change has taken place. We now belong to each other; in some barely definable way, we are one. We have the numinous intimacy of connection and of being part of each other. Our totality - our reality - is not constituted of independent fragments, but is inclusive, coherent, harmonious and flowing in an undivided whole (Bohm, 1987). This makes a difference to each of us. 'Being there' is a gift of grace.

In our participative journey of researching the leading way of changing meaning, we have explored each other and found that the seeds of changing lie in leaders' having the courage to go deep and inhabit their inner dimensions of meaning as well as the outer world; to confront their fears of both separation and connection; and to trust each other enough to risk wholeness. As Jenny (26-6-00) suggested, in referring to Mandela's inauguration speech, we had to learn to let our brilliance shine. Along the way, we have explored *searching and searching again* as a tool of growth, both for personal and professional development. Researching for us has meant the personal revelation of heart and mind, allowing us - through our own and each other's eyes - to be witness and seer of ourselves living. We have been conscious and self-aware participants in our changing meaning as leaders. Our gift, in the way of leading, is to show the way for those who follow, demonstrating for them that changing life and changing the world depends on the changing meanings of individuals and groups. Changing is not someone else's responsibility, but the gift of self-responsibility and self-

leadership. The core of the problem in education only remains because educators allow it to, neglecting to take up the challenges of changing meaning; of confronting the internal and external structures that bind them. Educating, recovering the hidden wholeness, is possible if we have the courage to truly learn. This research has contributed to our learning as leaders and will, I trust, to that of those who share in our journey and enjoin the way of changing meaning.

In considering future directions from this research, I believe the way is open for people-centred 'changing ways' of researching. The journey to date has been unconventional and contentious at times, but changing meaning has been my priority. The changing ways in this research have been unpredictable and sometimes ambiguous, but it is in the nature of living systems to differentiate and to distinguish; to explore new forms as well as to test limits. Only in being different can becoming one be realised. Science, the art of understanding nature, is messy and chaotic but underlined by emergent orderliness. As leading scientists, researching our own being and becoming has been an experience of changing meaning, one that at times brought angst and at others, quiet joy. We made a space of our own that we could shape as we wished; made to order to our own recipe for being there. I would encourage others to take a lead from our example and seek out ways that bring educators together for changing meaning. The life of leaders is full and always will be, until each one finds the courage to create an empty space inside for the meeting with others; for the revealing and healing that changes meaning and all else.

For myself as researcher, the challenge still exists to ask the difficult questions, to probe the meanings that shape the structures, to support others on the journey and, above all, to explore ways of connecting leaders and developing the healing wholeness. Most immediately, these concerns are focused in writing an online course in connection. Again, my research

will involve using virtual space to bring educators together for dialogue, but the shape will be different - another exploration into changing meaning.

Just as this research opened with a symbolic image, it closes too with an image of my preferred future in the leading way of changing meaning. The photograph to follow is of a white-breasted sea eagle taking flight, a metaphor for leading. It is akin to Lindsay Rawlings' photograph of a paper crane which graces the cover of the 1987 edition of Bohm's *Unfolding Meaning*, but is very much more alive and participative in the moment. Leaders live fully, taking initiative and accepting responsibility as participants in a world they help to create. Leaders have grace and live in fluid harmony with the nature of which they are part. They also have the power and focus to make a difference, and the compassion and care to nurture other as self. In accepting their limits, they find freedom to explore their limitlessness. Through the flight of changing meaning, leaders realise humanity.

Endpiece

Figure 7: *Sea Eagle* - Qld. National Parks & Wildlife Service
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