Transformational leadership and generativity:
A narrative exploration

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Declaration Statement

I declare that this report does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree in any University, College of Advanced Education, or other educational institution, and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

I further declare that the ethical principles specified in the policies and procedures of the Swinburne University Human Research Ethics Committee have been adhered to in the preparation of this report.

Name: Christina Bell

Signed:
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- My friends for putting up with my absence
- And last but not least, the wonderful participants in this study who, in spite of very busy lives, gave willingly of their time and freely shared their life stories with me, enabling me not only to complete this project, but to learn a great deal from the profound insights they shared with me.
Abstract

This qualitative study explored the narrative themes that emerged in the life stories of 12 senior executives identified as high in transformational leadership. The research examined how participants’ life stories contributed to their sense of identity and to their adoption of a transformational leadership style. On the basis of an apparent conceptual relationship between the psychosocial construct of generativity and behaviours associated with transformational leadership, generative themes were expected to emerge in the life narratives. The analysis was exploratory and verificationary. General themes – struggle, external resources and support and inner strength - reflecting a strongly redemptive sequence were identified as well as five of the themes previously identified in the life stories of generative adults (McAdams, 2006). The findings suggest that transformational leaders’ generative concerns are forged by their life narratives located in the private world of their identities and beliefs, and manifested in transformational leadership behaviours in the public world of the organisations they lead. Implications of findings and directions for future research on generativity and transformational leadership are discussed.
CHAPTER 1: A NARRATIVE APPROACH TO TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

1.1 Introduction and Overview

The last twenty years has seen a paradigm shift in views on leadership. Leaders in organisations have been urged to adopt a less autocratic style, to be more democratic and to engage and empower followers rather than instruct them (Northouse, 2007). Such leadership is believed to produce more effective organisations and more motivated employees (e.g., Bennis, 2003; Block, 1990; Covey, 1992; 1993; Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2002, Kouzes & Posner, 2003; Senge 1990, Sison, 2003). The ethics of effective leadership has also become a central issue amongst organisational theorists with leaders expected not just to deliver high level individual and organisational performance, but to do so through ethical practice. Kouzes and Posner summarise the shift in conceptions of leadership from the master servant relationship of old to the more democratic paradigm:

"Leaders make it possible for others to do good work. They know that those who are expected to produce the results must feel a sense of personal power and ownership. Leaders understand that the command-and control techniques of the Industrial Revolution no longer apply, instead, leaders work to make people feel strong, capable and committed." (p.18)
Recently much of the attention of leadership researchers has been devoted to the study of transformational leadership which reflects this philosophy and dominates the literature. When Lowe and Gardner (2001) analysed a decade of articles in the *Leadership Quarterly* they found that 37% of them dealt specifically with transformational leadership. The popularity of transformational leadership derives from its perceived ability to deliver better individual and team performance.

Attempts to delineate the personality of transformational leaders (e.g., Bono & Judge, 2004; Lowe, Kroeck & Svininbrasmaniam, 1996) have delivered mixed results, with trait theories providing limited links with leadership theory. Behavioural and competency based approaches seem also to provide an incomplete psychological portrait of the transformational leader. However narrative psychology offers a perspective which goes beyond the trait and behavioural or competency approaches by providing a dynamic developmental perspective on how human beings come to understand themselves and attach meaning and purpose to their lives. In this thesis it is argued that the narrative approach is a more promising way of exploring what it is that leads to transformational leadership. A key aspect of narrative identity is the psychosocial construct of generativity which seems to have both a conceptual and a practical connection to transformational leadership.

The present qualitative study explores transformational leadership in terms of narrative identity as seen through the life stories of a group of
transformational leaders in senior positions. McAdams (2006) life story interview methodology is used to examine the themes that emerge in these leaders’ life stories.

This Chapter outlines transformational leadership theory and considers previous attempts to explain the psychology of transformational leadership. This is followed by an account of key aspects of the narrative approach including the role of memory, and core themes such as generativity and redemption. Finally the apparent overlap between transformational leadership and generativity is explored and the aims of the present study are presented.

1.2 Transformational Leadership

The term “transformation” has been defined as “a change or refinement in the consciousness and character of individual human beings”. (Baruch Bush & Folger, 1994, p.24). For Northouse (2007) transformational leadership is a “process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower” (p.176). The other two key leadership styles are identified as “transactional” and “laissez faire” leadership, and it has been claimed that these three styles represent the full range of leadership styles (Leban & Zulauf, 2003). Originally identified by Burns (1978), transformational and transactional leadership
are generally reported as two necessary aspects of leadership with the most effective leaders displaying aspects of both (Avolio, Bass & Jung, 1999, Miner, 2005). However, transformational and transactional leadership are very different.

According to Bass (1985), transformational leaders “attempt and succeed in raising … followers... to a greater awareness about the issues of consequence. This heightening of awareness requires a leader with vision, self confidence and inner strength to argue for what he sees is right or good.” (p. 17). The relationship between leader and follower is based on personal understanding as opposed to formal institutional rules, regulations, rewards or punishments. Examples of transformational leadership behaviours include inspiring, coaching, delegating, sharing knowledge and providing support. Following Bass (1985), many researchers specify four components of transformational leadership. Descriptions (Bass & Avolio, 2004) of these components are provided in Table 1.
Table 1  
*Descriptions of Four Components of Transformational Leadership*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Charisma or Idealised Influence</td>
<td>Followers see leaders in an <em>idealized way</em>, and want to identify with them and their mission. Followers have trust and confidence in the leader and are aroused and inspired with a vision of what can be accomplished through extra personal effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational Motivation</td>
<td>Leaders articulate shared goals and mutual understanding of what is right and important. They provide visions of what is possible and how to attain them. They enhance meaning and promote positive expectations about what needs to be done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Stimulation</td>
<td>Leaders encourage followers to think about old problems in new ways, to question their own beliefs, assumptions, and values, and, when appropriate, the leaders’ own beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualized Consideration</td>
<td>Leaders understand and share followers’ concerns and developmental needs and treat each individual uniquely. Leaders focus on one to one relationships which include mentoring and coaching.</td>
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Importantly, none of these dimensions taken in isolation is sufficient to constitute transformational leadership. For example, as
Miner (2005) argues, charisma is often associated with celebrity, but celebrities do not necessarily have the qualities needed for transformational leadership. In fact one of the reasons originally advanced by Burns (1978) for rejecting the claim that Hitler was a transformational leader was that Hitler, whilst he may have had charisma, had a negative effect on the well being of those he led.

In contrast to transformational leadership which encourages followers to transcend self interest, transactional leadership focuses on exchange for effort or contingent reinforcement. In lay language it reflects a “carrot and stick” approach. Followers are motivated by the leader’s praise and rewards but also by negative feedback, threats or reproofs. Thus leaders react to actions taken by followers to implement the contract implicitly or explicitly agreed between leader and follower (Bass & Steidelmeir, 1999). Transactional behaviours include paying performance bonuses for extra productivity and giving a poor performance appraisal for under performance. Effective transactional leadership produces compliance with organisational goals and requirements while effective transformational leadership leads to higher levels of commitment, and to followers going beyond the bare minimum requirements (Northouse, 2007).

In contrast to transformational and transactional leadership, laissez-faire leadership entails leaders being reluctant to have any form of engagement or involvement with followers. It is, according to Bass and
Riggio (2006), inactive and ineffective. Laissez-faire leaders avoid making decisions and are absent when needed.

People usually describe transformational leadership when they describe their ideal of leadership. In a survey of managers from four continents, Kouzes and Posner (2003) asked participants about the most important qualities of admired leaders. The top four characteristics identified were: honest, forward looking, inspiring and competent. At least two of these qualities (forward looking and inspiring) mirror aspects of transformational leadership (see Table 1). In reviewing a decade of research, Bass (1997) confirmed that people's prototypes and ideals of leadership are transformational. To this he adds two further universal propositions: First, compared to other styles of leadership, transformational leadership most strongly correlates with outcomes in effectiveness, effort and satisfaction and second, there is a one-way augmentation effect whereby transformational leadership adds to transactional leadership.

Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) go further suggesting that not only is transformational leadership a more effective and satisfying style of leadership but that it is grounded in moral foundations. Authentic transformational leaders (as opposed to pseudo-transformational leaders who in reality put self interest above the interests of others), act as moral agents who engage in the moral uplifting of their followers.
Extensively studied in the USA and elsewhere, transformational leadership theory has equal applicability in other cultures (Bass, 1997; Ochieng, Walumba & Lawler, 2003), although the manifestation of transformational leadership may be culturally filtered in different settings.

1.2.1 The Impact of Transformational Leadership

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ, Bass & Avolio, 1995) was developed to operationalise the three leadership constructs – transformational leadership, transactional leadership and laissez faire leadership. Numerous studies using the MLQ have examined the practical benefits of transformational leadership which involve improving individual performance and well-being, as well as team performance.

In a meta-analytic review of transformational leadership research Lowe et al. (1996) found the transformational leadership scales of the MLQ were reliable and significant predictors of leadership effectiveness as measured by a variety of reliable scales. Individual performance was found to be improved in a number of studies reviewed by Bass and Riggio (2006). For example, transformational leadership contributed to improved individual performance through improved follower self-efficacy, identification with the leader, and shared goals and empowerment. Motivation and commitment, manifested in extra effort, are also an outcome of transformational leadership (Kane & Tremble, 2000). Transformational leadership has also been found to improve
employee service performance (Liao & Chuang, 2007). And in a study examining the impact of transformational leadership on well-being, Arnold, Turner, Barling, Kelloway and McKee (2007) found that transformational leadership predicted subordinates’ perceptions of meaningful work, which in turn predicted their well-being.

The benefits of transformational leadership to work groups have also been demonstrated. Pillai and Williams (2004) found that amongst American fire-fighters transformational leadership built committed and high performing work groups by enhancing employee self-efficacy and cohesiveness. Kahai, Sosik and Avolio (cited in Dionne, Yammarino, Atwater & Spangler, 2003) found that transformational leaders increased group performance because they were instrumental in overcoming social loafing among group members. Transformational leadership also impacts the “bottom line”. In a study on the performance of research and development teams, Keller (2006) found that transformational leadership predicted technical quality, schedule performance, cost performance and profitability and speed to market.

In summary, research is predominantly positive with regard to the impact of transformational leadership as improving both individual and team performance, and, following Burns’ (1978) original conception, its capacity to augment the effects of transactional leadership (Bass, Avolio, Jung & Berson, 2003).
1.2.2 The Psychology of Transformational Leadership

Studies have been conducted to investigate links between transformational leadership and personality. The main focus of these studies has been on enduring traits. Bono and Judge (2004) undertook a meta-analytic study to examine relationships among the Big Five personality traits – extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness - and three dimensions of transformational leadership – idealised influence, inspirational motivation and individualised consideration. Apart from extraversion, which correlated strongly with the three dimensions of transformational leadership, relationships with other traits were weak. This led Bono and Judge to conclude that future research was needed on narrower personality traits and on non-dispositional determinants of transformational leadership.

Other theorists have explored leadership with reference to competencies or learned behaviour. For example, emotional intelligence can be seen as set of competencies reflecting the ways in which individuals understand, recognise, express and manage emotions and it is argued that training can improve emotional intelligence (Gardner & Stough, 2001). Emotional intelligence has been linked to transformational leadership. Gardner and Stough’s study of 110 managers measured emotional intelligence using the Swinburne University Emotional Intelligence Test (SUEIT) and transformational leadership using the MLQ. They found a positive relationship between
total emotional intelligence scores and all the subscale scores of transformational leadership (correlations ranged from .54 to .59). Further, Leban and Zulauf (2003) found that emotional intelligence was positively correlated with inspirational motivation and that the strategic use of emotional intelligence was positively correlated with idealised influence and individualised consideration. These findings indicate that part of the effect of transformational leadership is to arouse positive emotions in followers which in turn leads to increased efforts.

It has also been suggested that specific behaviours associated with transformational leadership can be learnt (Avolio et al., 1999) and that leadership training should incorporate training in behaviours such as coaching, delegating and inspiring. Dvir, Eden, Avolio and Shamir (2002) found an improvement in followers’ development after leaders were trained in transformational leadership behaviours. Organisations now offer individual coaching following administration of the MLQ and feedback on the results, and there are limited indications that scores on the MLQ can improve as a result (Miner, 2005).

However, neither the trait approach, nor behavioural or competency based approaches, such as emotional intelligence, seems to provide the complete explanation for how some leaders come to adopt the transformational style. According to Northouse (2007), the trait approach has failed to provide a definitive list of leadership traits, failed to take
situations into account, and failed to link the traits of leaders to outcomes such as group and team performance.

Miner (2005) cites Antonakis and House who claim that the transformational leadership literature focuses too much on behaviour and not enough on personality. Miner contends that most research has been conducted in bureaucratic hierarchical organisations and that: “The research to establish what type of personality is behind transformational leadership outside of bureaucracies simply does not exist, nor does the theory advance propositions in this regard.” (p. 379)

Based on Miner’s (2005) and Northouse’s (2007) review of the research, it seems that trait and competency based approaches miss the subtle and dynamic aspects of personality as well as a developmental perspective. It would appear that narrative psychology offers an alternative approach that might shed greater light on how it is that some individuals come to exercise transformational leadership.

The narrative perspective has four advantages over trait and competency approaches: First it has a dynamic, developmental perspective which enables explanations for change over time; second it is a broad perspective incorporating autobiographical, affective, behavioural and cognitive perspectives; and third it is the person himself/herself (rather than an outside researcher) who recounts and interprets the life story and who identifies the meaning of events in that story. Fourth and perhaps most importantly, within the narrative
framework identity is a psychosocial construct that provides insights into how individuals become who they are, how they give meaning to their lives and, in the current study, how it is that some leaders exhibit behaviours associated with transformational leadership.

1.3 The Narrative Approach

A broader perspective on personality than the trait or behavioural perspective is offered by McAdams and Pals (2006) who developed a new Big Five theory of personality psychology as a contribution towards an integrated science of the whole person. The rationale for this integrated framework lies in Kluckhohn and Murray’s (1962) claim that every person is like all other persons, like some other persons and like no other person. McAdams and Pals’ Big Five are comprised of: (1) the broad design provided by evolution; (2) dispositional traits; (3) contextually dependant characteristic adaptations; (4) meaning and identity from personal narratives or life stories and (5) culture which significantly impacts life stories.

The narrative framework is concerned with an individual’s life story, the “internalised and evolving narrative of the self that selectively reconstructs the past and anticipates the future in such a way as to provide a life with an overall sense of coherence and purpose.” (McAdams, et al., 2006). Narrative identities are based on both facts and
myths. Aspects of experience are selected and utilised in a process of imaginative construction so that they make sense both to the author and audience. Whilst drawing on the work of previous life span development theorists, contemporary narrative researchers, like McAdams, do not confine the task of working on a narrative identity to any one stage of life. A key ingredient in a narrative account of identity is the role played by memory.

The recall of important events throughout life helps us both understand ourselves and construct our personal identity. This recall utilises episodic memory which Tulving (2002) describes as dealing with the “what”, “where” and “who”. Since episodic memory is the only system that allows a conscious re-experiencing of past experiences, it is ideally placed to play a key role in our understanding of ourselves. Singer (2005) refers to key memories as “self-defining memories” which “keep their emotional power because they are linked to goals and desires that are still important in our lives” (p.21). Five elements seem to be retained by these memories: emotional intensity, vividness, repeated recall, connection to similar memories, focus on lasting goals or unresolved conflicts. Defining life events are reflected in nuclear episodes which can be classed as peak experiences – high points in a person’s life, nadir experiences – low points, and turning points – points in life where a new direction or meaning is found (McAdams, Hart & Maruna, 1998).
According to McAdams (2001), the prototypical good life-story displays six characteristics which suggest a mature approach to the search for unity and purpose. These are: coherence, openness, credibility, differentiation, reconciliation and generative integration. Interestingly, Burns (1978) began his work on transformational leadership by examining the life stories of well known leaders. His story of the life of Gandhi contains many of the elements McAdams specifies, although in this case Burns was the author of Gandhi’s story, not Gandhi himself (as he would be within the narrative framework).

A number of themes consistently recur in the life narratives of diverse people. These themes can reflect motivational forces, attitudes towards self and others, well-being, ways of integrating (or failing to integrate) the past and memories.

### 1.3.1 Generativity

Generativity is an important theme in the life narratives of adults and, conceptually, it appears to relate to transformational leadership. Generativity was first identified by Erik and Joan Erikson as the seventh stage of an eight stage life cycle model. According to Erikson (1982), during this stage individuals in middle adulthood confront the psychosocial challenge of generativity versus stagnation. The word itself is a combination of generate and generation (Yamada, 2004) and generative adults are concerned to establish and guide the next generation. Generativity encompasses procreativity, productivity and
creativity. Transformational leadership seems associated with productivity which is manifested in inspirational motivation and individualised consideration, creativity which is manifested in intellectual curiosity, and even with procreation if this is broadly understood as leaving a legacy.

Generativity seems linked to the notion of well-being of self and others especially in midlife. In a study involving midlife adults, Grossbaum and Bates (2002) found that self reports of generative concern were predictive of all six of Ryff’s (1989) psychological well-being dimensions (self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth). As already noted, transformational leaders also focus on and create the well-being of others (Arnold et al., 2007)

The generative adult is committed to some activity that is larger than his or her own life, investing significant time and creative energy into an endeavour that will live on. Generativity is not value neutral. It is the intergenerational transmission of that which is valued (de St Aubin, McAdams & Kim, 2004). One action that would embody the transcending of self interest implicit in generativity is the planting of a tree by an elderly person – a tree which will never provide shelter or fruit to the planter but which will be enjoyed by future generations. In an organisational context, the actions of transformational leaders who
transcend self interest to act in the interests of their staff and organisation would seem to reflect generativity.

A key aspect of generativity is redemption. Redemption sequences in a life narrative are those in which negative events lead to opportunities for growth, learning and generativity. So, for example, the sadness of divorce may eventually give way to a renewed sense of strength and closeness to family. Bluck and Glück (2004) found that people reported experiencing “wisdom” after situations in which they coped with challenging events. Redemptive life stories promote psychological health and security (McAdams, 2006), and provide narrative guidelines for living a responsible and caring life. Redemptive sequences have also been found to be positively associated with psychological well-being (McAdams, Reynolds, Lewis, Patten & Bowman, 2001).

Redemption sequences result in one or more of enhanced agency, enhanced communion and ultimate concern. The last of these occurs when the positive outcome of a negative event involves spiritual insight or confronting of fundamental issues (McAdams et al., 2001). First identified by Bakan (1966), agency is described as manifested in self protection, self assertion and self mastery, while communion is described as manifested in a sense of being at one with other organisms. Agency is linked to dominance and extraversion and reflected in achievement and power motivation while communion is related to agreeableness and nurturance and is reflected in intimacy and an affiliation motivation.
McAdams, Hoffman, Mansfield and Day (1996) identified a number of themes for agency and communion as they appear in autobiographical episodes. These sub-themes and their descriptions are outlined in Table 2, along with a description of ultimate concern.

Unlike redemptive sequences, contamination sequences occur when life story events begin positively and are later ruined or overshadowed by a negative turn of events. Whereas redemption sequences are associated with well-being, contamination sequences are associated with negative mental states. Adler, Kissel and McAdams (2006) found that contamination sequences scores remained a significant predictor of depression after controlling for neuroticism, with similar results observed for low life satisfaction.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Self mastery</td>
<td>The story protagonist strives successfully to master, control, enlarge, or</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>perfect the self.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Status/Victory</td>
<td>The protagonist attains a heightened status or prestige among his or her</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>peers through receiving a special recognition or honour.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achievement/</td>
<td>The person reports substantial success in the achievement of tasks, jobs,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>instrumental goals or in the assumption of important responsibilities.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>The subject is enlarged, enhanced, empowered, ennobled, built up, or made</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>better though his or her association with someone or something larger and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>more powerful than the self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communion</td>
<td>Love/Friendship</td>
<td>A protagonist experiences an enhancement of erotic love or friendship toward</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>another person.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>A person experiences a reciprocal and non-instrumental form of communication</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>or dialogue with another person or group of others.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Caring/Help</td>
<td>The individual reports that he or she provides care, assistance, nurturance,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>help, aid, support, or therapy for another, providing for the physical,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>material, social, or emotional welfare or well-being of the other.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Unity/Togetherness</td>
<td>The protagonist experiences a sense of oneness, unity, harmony, synchrony,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>togetherness, allegiance, belongingness, or solidarity with a group of</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>people, a community or even all of humankind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultimate</td>
<td>concern</td>
<td>The protagonist confronts or has significant involvement with fundamental</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>existential issues or ultimate concerns.</td>
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</table>
**Themes in generative life stories**

McAdams (2006) suggests that there is a prototypical life story told by highly generative adults. This “commitment story” shows evidence of the six themes shown in Table 3.

1.4 Transformational Leadership and Generativity

There are grounds for expecting that generativity might strongly emerge as a theme in the life narratives of transformational leaders. First, intuitively there seem to be some links between the concepts of transformational leadership, and generativity. A common element is that both involve bringing about ongoing changes and improvements in the lives of others, thereby leaving a legacy. “Generativity is often about progress, improvement, transforming the bad into good.” (McAdams & Logan, 2004, p. 26).
### Table 3
*McAdams Generative Themes and their Descriptions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A sense of being advantaged early in life</td>
<td>Early in their lives, generative adults experience an advantage which might have to do with “family, school, appearance, talent or luck…... A feeling that <em>I am blessed</em>” (Mc Adams, 2006, p. 62).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Witnessing the suffering of others</td>
<td>Evidence from developmental psychology consistently shows that children who engage in prosocial behaviour have high levels of empathy which seems to be associated with being sensitive to the pain of others. Hence early exposure to witnessing the suffering of others leads to empathy which helps drive generativity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Moral steadfastness and continuity</td>
<td>Highly generative adults tell life stories in which personal ideologies play a key role. These ideologies might be religious or political / social and comprise a set of beliefs and values which originate in adolescence and develop over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The power of redemption to reinforce progress in life</td>
<td>Through redemption the person grows, gains new insight or develops new closeness to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Conflicts between agency and communion</td>
<td>Generative adults construct life stories in which needs for power conflict with needs for love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Articulating prosocial goals for the future</td>
<td>In the stories of generative adults, there is an expectation that the individual’s influence will continue on into the future. As part of this they also articulate general prosocial goals for their community or the world as a whole.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Second, in interesting parallel paths for psychological theory and leadership theory, the same person has been chosen as a prototypically generative individual as well as a prototypically transformational leader. In *Gandhi’s Truth* (1970), Erikson presents a psychological profile of Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian religious and political leader who advocated non-violence. In devoting his life to the service of his people and his emerging nation, Gandhi maintained that we should learn to love our opponents. In the same decade as Erikson was writing of Gandhi’s life of service, Burns was developing his theory of transformational leadership. Burns (1978) cites Gandhi as a classic transformational leader, an individual who acted in the interests of millions of people and in the process was himself changed.

A third source of evidence for a possible relationship between transformational leadership and generativity can be found in the ways in which the concepts have been operationalised in the items of the MLQ and the Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS, McAdams & de St Aubin, 1992a). The MLQ measures leadership behaviours and the LGS measures generative concerns. Seven shared factors appear to underlie transformational leadership and generativity. Table 4 shows the possible underlying factors for aspects of the MLQ and LGS, indicative items from each of the measures, and Mc Adams' generative life story themes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible underlying Factor</th>
<th>MLQ Scale</th>
<th>Example of item</th>
<th>Mc Adams Generative Theme</th>
<th>LGS item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Intellectual stimulation</td>
<td>“I seek differing perspectives when solving problems.”</td>
<td>“I try to be creative in most things I do”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping others learn</td>
<td>Individualised consideration</td>
<td>“I spend time teaching and coaching”</td>
<td>“I try to pass along the knowledge I have gained through my experiences.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a positive impact on others</td>
<td>Individualised consideration</td>
<td>“I help others to develop their strengths.”</td>
<td>“I feel as though I have made a difference to people.”</td>
<td>“In general my actions do not have a positive impact on people.” (reverse scored)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being positive about the future</td>
<td>Inspirational motivation</td>
<td>“I talk optimistically about the future”</td>
<td>Articulating prosocial goals for the future</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I articulate a compelling vision of the future.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 4**  
*A Comparison of Items from the MLQ and LGS with McAdams Generative Themes and Possibly Underlying Factors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible underlying Factor</th>
<th>MLQ Scale</th>
<th>Example of item</th>
<th>Mc Adams Generative Theme</th>
<th>LGS item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believing in the</td>
<td>Idealised influence</td>
<td>“I talk about my most important values and beliefs.”</td>
<td>Moral steadfastness and continuity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>importance of values</td>
<td>( behaviour)</td>
<td>“I consider the moral and ethical consequences of decisions.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping others</td>
<td>Idealised influence</td>
<td>“I go beyond self interest for the good of the group.”</td>
<td></td>
<td>“I feel as though I have done nothing of worth to contribute to others.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( attributed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( reverse scored)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individualised consideration</td>
<td>“I help others develop their strengths.”</td>
<td></td>
<td>“I do not feel that other people need me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( reverse scored)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( reverse scored)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“People come to me for advice.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having the good</td>
<td>Idealised influence</td>
<td>“I act in ways that build others’ respect for me”</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Other people say that I am a very productive person.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opinion of others</td>
<td>( attributed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.5 Aims of the Present Study

Both transformational leadership and narrative psychology have been extensively researched. This study aims to bring them together by exploring the links between the development of narrative identity and the exercise of transformational leadership. The qualitative nature of the present study provides an opportunity to obtain rich and detailed data concerning the stories told by leaders.

The study identified a group of senior leaders who appeared to exhibit transformational leadership and explored the themes that emerged from their life stories. Following McLeod (2001), the thematic analysis comprised both exploratory and verificationary methodologies. In the exploratory stage, general themes that emerged were identified. In the verificationary phase, narratives were examined for specific generative themes as defined by McAdams (2006). Given the conceptual similarities between transformational leadership and generativity, it was believed that evidence of generative themes would provide support for the proposed link between transformational leadership and generativity.
CHAPTER 2: METHOD

2.1 Participants

The study involved an initial pool of 18 potential participants and another who participated in a pilot of the research interview. Participants were recruited through contacts of the researcher. They agreed to take part in the study after receiving initial information about the nature and purpose of the research. Of the 18 respondents who completed the questionnaire, the first six men and the first six women who indicated their willingness to be interviewed comprised the final research group. In this group of 12, ages of the men ranged from 44 years to 71 years ($M = 51.60$, $SD = 11.08$) and ages of the women ranged from 48 years to 57 years ($M = 53.67$, $SD = 3.27$). All were exercising leadership in senior roles such as CEO or Managing Director. Seven described their level of leadership as senior executive, three as senior manager and two failed to specify. Participants came from fields including the public, private and not for profit sectors. Professional backgrounds included medicine, law enforcement, industrial advocacy, theology, environmental science, public service, education, welfare, town planning, the law, and manufacturing.
2.2 Materials

2.2.1 Self Report Measures

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ, Bass & Avolio, 1995)

As self assessment of leadership style was of interest in the present study, the original MLQ questionnaire was modified by removing the questions intended for leaders’ direct reports to answer. This resulted in 36 questions instead of the original 45. The questionnaire comprised three scales – transformational leadership, transactional leadership and laissez faire leadership. Table 5 shows MLQ Scales and subscales, numbers and examples of items, and reliabilities taken from the MLQ Manual (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

Each statement described a behaviour and respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they practised that behaviour by means of a Likert scale where 0 represented “Not at all” and 4 represented “Frequently, if not always”. All items had a maximum score of 4. Subscale scores were calculated by dividing the total score by the number of items giving a maximum of 4 for each subscale. The higher the score for each scale, the more frequently the respondent utilised the particular leadership style.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MLQ Scale</th>
<th>MLQ Subscale</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
<th>Example of item</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Leadership</td>
<td>Idealised influence (attributed)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>“I instil pride in others for being associated with me.”</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Idealised influence (behaviour)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>“I specify the importance of having a strong sense of purpose.”</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inspirational Motivation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>“I talk optimistically about the future.”</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intellectual Stimulation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>“I re-examine critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate.”</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individualised consideration</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>“I treat others as individuals rather than just as members of a group.”</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional Leadership</td>
<td>Contingent Reward</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>“I provide others with assistance in exchange for their efforts.”</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management by exception (active)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>“I focus attention on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions and deviations from standards.”</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management by exception (passive)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>“I fail to intervene until problems become serious.”</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laissez faire Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>“I avoid getting involved when important issues arise.”</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reliabilities shown in Table 5 indicate good internal consistency of the MLQ scales. Construct validity of transformational leadership as measured by the MLQ has been established by correlations with measures of leadership effectiveness (Bass & Riggio, 2006). However, because the questionnaire was modified, validity and reliability could not be specified for this version. A copy of the questionnaire is found in Appendix C.

Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS, McAdams & de St Aubin, 1992a)

The LGS assesses the extent to which individuals are generative in their beliefs and actions using 20 statements which ask respondents to indicate to what extent each statement applies to them, from 0 “never”, to 3 “very often or nearly always”. Six items are reverse scored. Items are totalled to give an overall score with a maximum score of 60. McAdams and de St Aubin (1992b) report good internal consistency for the scale (Cronbach’s alpha .84), test-retest reliability over a three week period of .73, (p < .001) and construct validity shown by high correlations with other generativity scales. A copy of the questionnaire is in Appendix C.

2.2.2 Narrative Interviews

The interview methodology was an adapted version of McAdams Life narrative methodology (McAdams, 2006). Each section of the interview encouraged interviewees to think about their life story in general and their exercise of leadership in particular. Participants were
advised that they would be asked to think about their life as a story divided into at least 2 and no more than 6 chapters. They were asked to give each chapter a name and to briefly describe the overall contents in each chapter and provide a plot summary for each chapter. They were then asked a series of questions about their lives.

Table 6 summarises the sections and topics that formed the basis of the interview. The interview information sent to participants is found in Appendix A and the interviewer’s script in Appendix B.

Prior to the main study, the narrative interview was piloted. This enabled the researcher to fine tune the methodology for the interviews, and to confirm that the questions and the sequence of questions were meaningful for interviewees.

2.3 Procedure

Potential participants identified by the researcher were contacted by email. All participants were informed of the purposes of the study and were assured of the anonymity of their responses. Participants were also advised that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. Information, consent forms and questionnaires (MLQ and LGS), were then sent to those who agreed to participate. The questionnaires which also sought demographic information and information concerning level of leadership took about 20 minutes to complete and were returned in
reply paid envelopes. Eighteen completed questionnaires were returned.

Copies of the questionnaires are in Appendix C.

Table 6

*Sections of Life Narrative Interview and Topics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section of interview</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Critical life events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Peak Experience (high point)</td>
<td>(v) Important Childhood Scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Nadir Experience (low point)</td>
<td>(vi) Important Adolescent Scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Turning Point</td>
<td>(vii) Important Adult Scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) Earliest Memory</td>
<td>(viii) One Other Important Scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Single greatest life challenge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Influences on life story</td>
<td>(i) Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Negative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Personal ideology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Any additional information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3.1 Interviews

A sub-sample of 12 was identified based on order of receipt of completed questionnaires, and they were sent information about the format and content of the interview. Interviews were conducted at times
convenient to participants at their work premises or in one case at Swinburne University and they took place during February, March and April, 2007. Interviews took between one hour and two and a half hours. Where necessary supplementary questions were used to clarify responses or to gain additional information. All interviews were recorded on a digital recorder and later transcribed.

### 2.3.2 Coding

The transcripts of the interviews were read several times so that the researchers became familiar with their contents. Following McLeod (2001), coding followed a two stage process. In Stage 1, the exploratory phase of the coding, general themes were allowed to emerge and individual themes were identified and recorded. In Stage 2, the verificationary phase of the coding, a specific examination was conducted to check for evidence of McAdams generative themes (for definitions see Tables 2 and 3). Further information on coding is supplied in Appendix D.
CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

3.1 Overview

Results from the self report measures are presented and indicate that this group of leaders scored higher for transformational leadership than for transactional or laissez faire leadership and that their scores on the Loyola Generativity Scale were higher than the Australian norm. Next results of the exploratory analysis of the narratives are presented followed by results of the verificationary analysis which provide evidence of five of McAdams (2006) generative themes.

3.2 Results from Self Report Measures

The self report data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 15.

3.2.1 Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)

Scores for the Transformational Leadership scale of the MLQ ranged from 2.75 – 3.60. Scores for Transactional Leadership ranged from 1.16 - 3.00 and scores for Laissez Faire Leadership ranged from 00 – 1.25. Table 7 displays the means and standard deviations for self report scores on MLQ scales as well as norms.
Table 7

Self Report Scores on MLQ Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current Study</th>
<th>USA Norm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N=12)</td>
<td>(N=3,375)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M   SD</td>
<td>M   SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational</td>
<td>3.26 0.27</td>
<td>3.02 0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional</td>
<td>1.97 0.50</td>
<td>1.88 0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laissez Faire</td>
<td>0.60 0.38</td>
<td>0.61 0.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: USA norms are from the MLQ Manual (Bass & Avolio, 2004)

A repeated measures one way analysis of variance revealed a significant difference between scores for the three leadership styles: $F(2, 22) = 150.26$, $p < .001$. Planned contrasts showed that the mean scores for transformational leadership were significantly higher than scores for transactional leadership, $(F(1, 11) = 57.04, p < .001)$ and for laissez-faire leadership, $(F(1, 11) = 281.59, p < .001)$. Scores for transformational leadership were also higher than the USA norm while scores for transactional and laissez-faire leadership were roughly equivalent to the norms (see Table 7). However, it was not possible to test the significance of comparisons with USA norms.

3.2.2 Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS)

Scores on the LGS ranged from 36 – 55. Means and standard deviations as well as norms for the LGS are displayed in Table 8.
Table 8

*Scores on LGS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current Study (N= 12)</th>
<th>Aus Norm (N=289)</th>
<th>USA Norm (N=149)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>46.50</td>
<td>7.82</td>
<td>33.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>41.50</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>35.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44.00</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>35.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: USA norms from Mc Adams and St Aubin (1992b) and Australian norms from Bates and Findlay, (2001).*

Although the mean score for males in this sample was five points higher than the mean score for females, this difference was non-significant, \( t(6.64) = 1.45, p > .05 \). The overall mean score for this group was significantly higher than the Australian norm, \( t(300) = 3.06, p < .05 \) and all participants in the current sample scored above the Australian mean.

### 3.3 Shared Narrative Themes

Quotations illustrating particular themes were identified and selected for inclusion in the findings. Appendix E shows additional illustrative quotes. In identifying illustrative quotes, the researchers allocated pseudonyms to each participant.
Three major themes characterised the life stories of all of the participants. These were: struggle, the importance of external resources and support and developing internal strength. Each major theme had some sub-themes. Struggle was experienced through (a) feelings of being different or isolated, (b) lack of confidence or feelings of low self worth and (c) personal loss or tragedy. The importance of external resources and support was experienced through (a) having a mentor or role model, (b) education and learning from life, and (c) recognition by others. Finally developing internal strength was experienced through (a) feelings of independence, (b) seeking and meeting challenges, (c) perseverance and (d) job satisfaction and work ethic. Each of these sub-themes is examined in turn.

3.3.1 Struggle

Feeling of being different or isolated.

Nine participants experienced struggle through striving to overcome the feeling of being isolated from or different from others. For some this was a feature of their early life, for others, the struggle continued into adulthood. This feeling derived from a number of different contexts.

For three participants the school environment was a very lonely place in which their experience of isolation derived from the feeling of being rejected. Jill recalled:
I guess what I remember most is a sense of isolation. I was a kid who had no friends. I was never picked for sporting teams because I was bad at sport. We didn’t have a television at home so therefore I had nothing really of any interest to talk to anyone about. I was a kid who felt… very, very much alone.

For Stephen, his feeling of not belonging and being at odds with the religious beliefs of his family’s church is recalled in an important childhood scene in which he is sitting in church and listening to a “hell and damnation” sermon which frightened the congregation, including his mother. Without realising why he wonders: … when are we going to home, why are we here, this sense of not belonging. Later in life he remembers this episode and identifies what it meant to him:

So what was significant for me … if I was going to be a Christian it was going to be for positive reasons not negative reasons, and you know … that’s influenced the kind of way I’ve tried to think and teach.

His sense of not belonging continues as his painful and unhappy youth culminates in having his number being drawn in the conscription ballot for the Vietnam War:

The replay of all the unresolved emotions of my teens, the stuff that I had successfully kind of put on the back burner … and that was just all sheer anxiety… so that was a nightmare, very very difficult area and trying to talk to my parents was close to impossible…
there were good things going on like beginning to be involved in that year - 1970 I think was the year of the first Vietnam moratorium - but I am right up against it, right up against it in political activity, fighting the government, not allowed to vote of course... it’s a long series of moments, of going to demonstrations and getting chased by the cops and basically wanting to kill myself because of the sense of being wrong, being all wrong, not fitting, not belonging, because I wanted to belong to the church but the church didn’t want me, I wanted to belong to this society but it wanted me to do what I was not going to do and didn’t want me for what I was able to do.

Lack of confidence or struggling with feelings of low self worth

For Emma lack of confidence is an ongoing theme which has been a feature of her life and a challenge which must be met whenever a setback in life occurs. In talking about this lack of confidence she recalled her childhood relationship with her father:

I don’t want to paint my father as a nasty man, because he wasn’t but I was frightened of him. He never physically harmed me... but he did yell a lot and I was frightened when he yelled and would do whatever I needed to do so that that didn’t happen. ... That carried into that lack of confidence - don’t step out of bounds, just be in the background, be quiet and be in the background
This notion of not stepping out of bounds is echoed by the words of Anne who, through being picked on at school, learnt to “play small”. As a child Anne arrived as a migrant from Sri Lanka with her family during the last days of the White Australian Policy when very few Asian migrants came here. On her first day at primary school she was picked on in the playground. Her teacher’s response was to organise a debate in the classroom – with her on one side of the platform at the front of the class and the rest of the class on the other. Later, in form four, she was bullied again and these experiences led to her desire to be inconspicuous:

“At the same time I got bullied at school because ... another teacher... found me helping the kids in the class with their maths homework before school. It had started because I happened to be very good at maths and so she lectured all of us about the blind leading the blind and because of her view of me - it translated into one group of girls systematically bullying me for the rest of the year. So again ....another theme that would recur in my life was to play small.

Experience of significant personal loss or tragedy

Nine participants had struggled with the effects of significant personal loss or tragedy. These experiences included the loss of a parent when young, painful marriage break ups, the suicide of a sibling, the death of a child and in one case the death of two children.
For some there were periods in their lives following tragic events where just surviving was an important theme. After losing a second child, Emma recalled that period as her greatest life challenge. Just surviving became the only goal for each day:

*There was never a suicidal thought or any of that but it was about... (and it still is to some extent but nothing like the same)... the desire to get up and get out of bed and go to work and then knowing and understanding that from past history, I knew that that was it - get out of bed and walk and then the rest of it catches up. But then I really, really struggled to ... to find any motivation. I could go through the functions in survival mode ...What’s the motivation to do something that’s joyful or...finding meaning, finding meaning in activity? Yeah that’s probably even better... finding meaning in what I was doing was a real struggle.*

After the death of her father when she was sixteen, Sally had been prevented from grieving. She had arrived home to a full house to be told of her father’s death interstate:

*You know lots of people in tears ... and people praying and then Father C. taking me aside and saying that I was the eldest, that Mum not only needed support, I had to be the example for the rest of the kids. I wasn’t allowed to cry. I had to be strong for my Mum and for the other kids and then I spent the rest of the day feeding people, making cups of tea and all that sort of stuff and in*
fact I didn’t cry for Dad. And Mum couldn’t afford to bring his body back and so he’s buried over there. **There was a funeral but without a casket.** And I always remember nightmares of being chased by teacups and pots for ages after that...of course there was an impact about 9 months later because I hadn’t grieved. ... when I started off doing Year 12, I got acute tonsillitis, I got a post tonsillitis illness, I lost close to 2 stone and got very sick and in the end it was because I hadn’t been allowed to grieve.

Years later when her daughter died in tragic circumstances she used her experiences after the death of her father to identify the importance of grieving:

> In my mind, there were times when I pretended Dad wasn’t really dead- he and mum had had a fight and this was the deal. So coming out of that, I knew it was important for me as a human being to express grief and it affected me in terms of how I dealt with T. as well.

### 3.3.2 External Resources and Support

The second major theme in the life stories was the way in which the participants’ lives and leadership were changed or enhanced by external resources and support. These resources and support were critical in helping them in the struggles already discussed and in facilitating their path to leadership.
Having a mentor, role model

For nine participants having a mentor or role model or at least someone who took an interest in them was critical. In five cases this person was a family member, for three it was a boss and, for one, a parent and a boss. In identifying a positive influence on her life Jill described being strongly influenced by her grandfather whose ethical values she shares and tries to live:

It would probably be my grandfather. He had more integrity than anyone I’ve ever known. He lived as a very committed Christian….. He got involved in politics late in life; he always sent an automatic donation to the Liberal Party because that’s what doctors did. He got very concerned about the Vietnam War - he would have been in his late 70s. At the 1966 election he voted Communist because they were the only party promising to bring the troops home. Growing up with someone with that sort of commitment and straightforward honesty, humanity. ..He could talk to anyone, be involved with anybody… just this absolute integrity and consistency of belief throughout his whole life. So I think he really has influenced me a lot. ..I’m not a Christian in the way he was, but I think I’ve got basic beliefs in honesty and consideration for other people – it’s morality I suppose… and for which he inspired me.
Mark, who had nominated family members as role models, also found mentors in the workplace. He identified valued personal qualities in the leaders for whom he has worked:

_All the people that I’ve reported to for longer than a year have been exceptional individuals and have helped frame who I am by giving me encouragement, real encouragement and encouraging me to back my own judgment on things:_

Anne even entitled one of the chapters in her life story: _The Best Boss in the World:_

My first boss was a guy called B. G. … he encouraged his people and gave them great work and was generally a great human being with the most integrity. Years later, as I progressed through the corporate ranks, _I became General Counsel at … And I realized I was the same age that B. was when I went to work for him and that I had turned into him…Life had now come full circle and I was now a grown up and I had turned into B. and whenever I found myself in a difficult situation, my guiding principle was - what would B. do?_

Some participants increased their understanding of good leadership by having a negative role model of poor leadership. Howard had the opportunity to compare positive mentoring with negative, or rather non-mentoring:
And another aspect was a notion of what I saw as good mentors and the juxtaposition between my L. mentor and the chap in P. couldn’t have been more stark. So I have always really tried to emulate my mentor in L. who was very open, generous, enjoyed teaching, enjoyed people, enjoyed nurturing young people whereas the chap in P. (was) … extraordinarily bright, but no personal abilities or skills and no ability really to nurture.

**Education and learning**

Ten participants identified education and learning as central to their life stories and often as critical in their development and access of leadership. In recalling the excitement he had felt in his university studies, Ken recounts:

*University was really really influential ... most of it was Economics but we did economic history as well and I also did Renaissance history. And you read the writings and thoughts of all these really famous people who have influenced history ... I was really impressed by their arguments and their lives and the things that they did. These were committed individuals. They were people of values and principles. I thought: “Gee I’d like to be like that. I would like to achieve those sorts of things in my life, set that sort of example.”*
Other participants emphasised learning from life’s experiences rather than formal education as critical in developing understanding and progressing in life:

*Out of the comfort of (a university college) into … bang! Curate in charge, aged 24, thrown in the deep end … and I was 4 years there.*

*Everything I learned at college didn’t seem to work in working class…*

Emma’s greatest lessons in life were learnt not during formal study but in a program for the family and friends of people with drinking problems:

*I don’t believe there was one thing in those five years of study that I didn’t learn more thoroughly on a personal basis through my personal life. It did teach me that …there was learning in reading and the breadth of the learning and a theory to work from, but I found it easier and more successful to draw on the theory that I’d been taught in Al Anon.*

As life throws up incredible challenges including the death of two children she continues to draw on the lessons learnt from the Al Anon Program. She nominated the Program as a major positive influence in her life story and recalled her decision to go to her first meeting as the turning point in her life.

Howard, who is highly academically and technically qualified, recalled the on the job learning he had as a leader of a previously
underperforming service delivery organisation. His learning about managing and leading people occurred through working with an experienced effective manager:

*I also had a really really good manager ...a proper manager, and she was really nice, sensible, firm, consistent, tough, fair. I learnt an enormous amount from her, about what ... managers should do, and the integrity of management because I was so much into giving into the emotion of the moment and making promises I couldn’t uphold or making snap decisions or I’d just get fed up and say this is ridiculous*

**Recognition**

For most participants, recognition of their qualities, skills and achievements by others was vital in allowing them to develop as leaders. Often it was this recognition that allowed them to form a sense of themselves as worthwhile or competent people and/or leaders and this encouraged them to strive further.

In identifying an important adult scene, Sally recalled that the day after her election as President of her union she received an unexpected tribute from someone previously though to be a political enemy:

*Flowers arrived for me the next day... from a person called S.S.
And she actually ran against us in an...election and these gorgeous flowers arrived from her congratulating me and saying what I’d done was important to the future of the ... union movement. It*
heightened the sense of pride that I had in what I’d achieved...Here was somebody I wouldn’t have expected to support me ... but to feel that she would recognize it in that way it was pretty special.

It’s one thing relying on getting the mood of the members right like at that stop work meeting behind you...but for people who had previously been political opponents to come out and say that’s fantastic that was pretty good.

Jill recalled a second important adult scene and her happiness on the night she was elected Mayor of her local municipality. This event and the recognition it brought were vital factors in helping her develop feelings of self worth:

_The night of my election was a really wonderful event...It was just wonderful to have that acknowledgement and go up and be sworn in and have my friends and other people there seeing this event and being able to give a speech and saying what we were going to do as a Council. It was really a significant night for me. It was like I’d made it at last. And the feeling that I was a worthwhile person after all - that I could do things._

### 3.3.3 Developing Inner Strength

The third major theme to emerge in the life stories was developing inner strength. This was manifested in being independent, seeking and meeting challenges, perseverance and job satisfaction and work ethic.
**Being independent**

Being independent or being your own person was a commonly expressed theme. For some this meant self-sufficiency and being able to “do your own thing”. As a leader, Ruth’s independence was manifested in independence of thought and belief in her capacity to make her own judgments. Colleagues try to turn her against someone but she remains determined to make her own assessments:

> And I’m telling people they have to make their own judgements
> because ... in these circumstances X might be a terrible person, but
> X in the circumstances in which I meet her might be a good person

So you make your own judgements, come to your conclusions about things and put your own solution on to it rather than take someone else’s word on another person or another situation.

In spite of a negative experience where her motives at a Tribunal hearing had been misinterpreted by others and she had suffered loss of face as a result, Lorraine was not cowered or deterred from speaking the truth:

Well (it) didn’t stop me from appearing when I could and it actually probably had quite a different reaction, I would always be honest and if you didn’t want to hear it, bad luck. If I believe that’s the situation I say it, so that probably made me more determined about being honest in my opinions, my professional opinions. I’ve not been one to fluff about pride and
dignity, maybe that’s there and I’m not recognising it - it’s more just my integrity and my professional judgment and my opinion and not to be afraid to say what you think…

She advises others to be equally determined and not to be deterred by set-backs:

I’ve given advice to other women to don’t be deterred by that sort of age group, that genre of males, in the legal fraternity particularly. Don’t get upset about it … ride above it, don’t take it to heart and certainly don’t let it influence you not appearing at all. Be strong about it. Don’t let it get you down.

This determination to do what needs to be done in spite of what others think requires a certain kind of courage and Stephen coins the phrase “courageous aloneness” to describe what it is that leaders must often experience:

It requires courage I think, first of all to tell the truth about how things really are and that sometimes means standing out in front or being a lone voice to say, “Hey this is what I think is happening, this is what could be, what do you reckon?”… You can’t do that job unless you invite resonance. Do you agree, this is where we’re at, but it also requires that kind of courageous aloneness that says, and, after hearing all that, after doing all that I think this is where we need to go - but doing so in a way that holds the balance between authority and invitation. It’s
difficult not to be authoritarian, it’s difficult not to sit in the back row, or stay with the crowd or the group... Unfortunately we live in a society that thinks that being dogmatic is strong leadership. People who are called strong leaders are actually just vehement.

**Seeking and meeting challenges**

Even participants who referred to lack of confidence, saw challenges as providing the necessary motivation to overcome their self doubts and to make things happen. Commenting on his feelings returning to study as a mature age student, James observed that he was:

...scared that I couldn’t do it, apprehensive about my ability but excited that in fact it was a door being opened- I could walk through it. The thing is do you walk through it or don’t you? And the thing I know is if a door opens you do walk through and the consequences might be life enhancing and sometimes they might be destructive but you’ve got to walk through it.

Anne recounted that her life experiences have made her driven to achieve goals and meet challenges:

It’s made me very, very driven but probably also I’m very, very ethical... Driven to achieve in a personal way, to achieve big, broad sorts of transformation ... for meaning, rather than to sort of make lots and lots of money for myself. **So it means that I’m driven to achieve really huge, challenging, difficult, long term lasting sort of goals; so the “I’ll show you” is about achieving**
all that stuff. But the goal has to be there because that’s important in life.

Perseverance

All the participants developed an ability to persevere and see things through even when situations were negative or difficult. On taking on a challenging role of turning around an underperforming organisation Howard recalled the learning he gained through sticking at a very difficult task:

My first year there was the toughest year I’ve ever had … I took so much personal responsibility for everything. If anything went wrong or someone was unhappy I felt it was my fault, my responsibility and I had a very clear vision as to how I thought the service should develop and what it needed… I had never been through the process of actually bringing a workforce along with you, and you’ve got to give them the idea that maybe things need to change and then guide people into the belief that they actually had the idea… it took a process of change management …and ended up at the end of the year with… by far the best of the services in P. So I think…that was pretty key for me, you know it got to national prominence and people won awards and the workforce were just so behind me …. But the going through, and the human cost and the sleepless nights… It was really really tough and I think what got me through was… I just thought I just have to stick this out and
have to do it and get through because there were times when I
wanted to forget about it, not worth it. But it was the toughest year
for me, the toughest thing I’ve done I think.

On going to a new work environment which she found to be
difficult for women, Ruth recalled the strategies she developed that
helped her persist in quite a hostile environment:

*It was a very good learning opportunity because - going in there
every day, had I not developed other strategies - would have been
like going into hell nearly every day and with the personalities
and the feud that I had to put up with from management… So I
developed this strategy where I would go in, I would be
businesslike, I would deal with everyone in a very businesslike
manner and then I would always have something to look forward
to, coming home to… I had swum nearly every morning anyway
so I made sure that I continued that but every afternoon I then
added a walk so I’d come home and make sure I went for a walk.
I started a Saturday morning breakfast club with friends outside
... so I always made sure I had something to look forward to and
it got me through the time I was there…153

Sally, faced with nasty in fighting within her union had to decide
whether to walk away or persist. For the sake of the membership who
had put their faith in her she decided to stay and persevere:
But was I prepared to walk away, or was I...I have to stay and I decided that time I had to stay, even if I went down screaming. I had to at least make an attempt to keep faith with what members had voted for.

Job satisfaction and work ethic

Job satisfaction was a theme often coupled with a sense of responsibility and accountability, and more generally commitment to a work ethic. Ruth remembered how she began in her current career by accident but now, 33 years later, she loves her work. Initially she met some people at a sporting event and they started talking about their work:

I thought that sounds like a job I’d like and they told me that it probably would be because it was just so diverse. So I went and applied ...with the intention of probably staying about 3 years, we are now up to 33 with my mother still asking me when I’m coming home dear. I guess that commenced what I consider to be one…

of the best careers I could have chosen which I actually stumbled into

Lorraine recalled the sense of work ethic she received from her father whose own father:

…was extremely ...cruel to the children. So my father has absolutely no good memories of his father. So he wanted to, I think, to make up on what he missed out on, particularly with regards to education and opportunities- however with a work ethic - what you
want you work for. You don’t get it just because you’ve got the money. So I think those sorts of feelings have influenced me through my life

For Ken his own strong work ethic leads to expectations that others will apply themselves:

People have got to be fair ...we’ve all known people in our lives, really gifted individuals, whether it be sporting or academically who choose not to apply themselves and people who are less gifted but have more commitment, more drive, more discipline and they will be far more successful in their lives. I think you can only do so much for people and provide the opportunity but if they refuse to exercise the gifts they’ve got and take the opportunities they’ve got, that is their decision

3.4 McAdams Generative Themes

The prototypical story of the generative adult as described by McAdams (2006) has 6 key themes (see Table 3) and five of these were in evidence in the participants’ narratives. Only one participant displayed what could be described as a sense of being advantaged early in life. As already noted, for many it was more a feeling of being special in a negative way. One redemptive sub-theme for enhanced agency and one sub-themes for enhanced communion were also absent. These themes
were status/victory (enhanced agency) and dialogue (enhanced communion) (see Table 2).

3.4.1 Witnessing the suffering of others

Ten participants recounted memories of witnessing the suffering of others. As the eldest of a family of what would eventually be thirteen children, Sally nominated an important childhood scene she witnessed when she was ten years old:

One of my strongest memories and I know there was one point in time - Mum was constantly pregnant - I have a very vivid memory of her, and it was ... Okay Mum’s pregnant again with another kid, doing nappies and all that sort of stuff. But I have this very strong memory of Mum...leaning over the toilet vomiting her guts out - and actually seeing that happen... of thinking, “God, if this is what it does to you why do you keep doing it?” And I’ve often thought about that ... But I saw her tired and exhausted from time to time, I saw all these other things, but seeing her throw up all of a sudden was thinking, “Why would you do this to yourself?.”

For Michael the ongoing distress of seeing his father extremely ill causes him to reflect on vulnerability:

My Dad ...spent a lifetime in the sun in Queensland... he was diagnosed with a serious melanoma on his mouth. He suffered an incredibly long battle with cancer related illnesses that is still going on today over 25 years later... When I was about 24...
was basically told that he was not going to make it ... so at that
time it was a very sad and distressing time for us as a family and
for me personally because I was very close to my Dad... He’s in
his 70s now, still suffers from considerable ill health ... *His life*
has been a battle and that’s really been hard to watch, he
doesn’t look great when you look at him ... because he’s had a lot
of operations and things like that. *I suppose from our point of*
view it reminded us of the fragility of your existence and you’re
not indestructible. Dad was always very fit and active up until
then, but that knocked him over in no time

3.4.2. Moral steadfastness and continuity

Sally reflected on her work in education and that what first drew
her to education - making a difference to people- continues to drive her:

*My commitment to the work that I’ve done... kids, people,
people are special. And a lot of what drives me is around social
justice issues and education being the key to that. So it’s a good
mix of a style that I’m on about people and I’m there to make a
difference to people’s lives. It’s the same thing core thing that led
me to teaching and it underpins this.*

Howard, a health practitioner, nominated equality of health care as
a social issue about which he has strong views. In spite of the temptation
to earn more money in the private system, he remains in the public
system where he bulk bills patients:
I do strongly believe in things like the equality of health care....

I’ve always worked in the public sector whereas I could have earned a lot more money if I worked in the other sector. I never charge anybody. I just bulk bill everybody - even if I see very, very rich people, I couldn’t charge them. So I feel more comfortable with that, because it’s a sort of ideal because I don’t think when you’re ill you should have to pay for health care.

Anne remembered her greatest life challenge as having to confront the organisation for which she worked with the need to act against self interest and according to wider ethical obligations:

It was a challenge because it really did threaten existing power relationships and I had nothing to gain but probably everything to lose because what I was saying was in an indirect way critical of the people who had gone before... I was also having to convince the CEO who cared a lot about money and his personal wealth...and he would be angry with me because it would mean that a provision of several hundred millions dollars would have to be raised and therefore the share price would go down and therefore his personal wealth would go down... even though it was in the organisation’s interests, it was an implied criticism of those who had gone before and done nothing ... remain. But I had nothing to gain so it was very hard for that reason.... I couldn’t really live with myself if I did nothing. I think the over
...a sense of “oh my God, what if in 20 years
time someone else was looking back and saying why didn’t they
do something”

3.4.3 The power of Redemption to Reinforce Progress in Life

All of the stories contained redemption sequences involving enhanced agency, enhanced communion and to a lesser extent ultimate concern.

Enhanced agency

Agency describes a motivational force which is manifested in autonomy, expanding and asserting the self and mastering the environment (McAdams, 2001). Redemptive sequences involving enhanced agency contain themes of self mastery, status victory, achievement/responsibility and empowerment (see Table 2).

Self mastery. All twelve participants exhibited redemptive themes involving self mastery. Lorraine remembered being bullied by a boy in her street when she was a child and recalled being physically underdeveloped as an adolescent and how self conscious and embarrassed she was. She turns her self consciousness of her appearance into an advantage as an adult:

And I might have spent more money on clothes and things than I should have, but I think it all started from being conscious of my appearance and really conscious of the fact that I wanted to be really proud of myself. And I’ve always stood tall and straight and I think that’s been part of that going through school, perhaps having moments where I felt
really self conscious about my body and my appearance… I think that’s been part of how I’ve presented myself professionally, … and I think that’s been part of my leadership too… you’ve got to stand tall and proud, with your shoulders back and present well, look good and feel good. It was about feeling good - about yourself particularly when you’re out there as a business woman in a practice.

Achievement/responsibility. Eight participants described redemption sequences involving enhanced achievement/responsibility. Howard described himself as having been terrified of authority and very shy as a child. As an adult he determines to beat this by putting himself in situations in public where he is “socially scrutinised”. He nominated an important adult scene as one in which he gave a talk at an international conference. This experience turned a previous handicap into a strength:

And it was in a hall in front of a panel of very famous people.
They gave their talks and it was all very dry and dull … and I then I just turned my address into something quite different and took a risk with regard to the way I went about it. And it was fantastic. And people just loved it. And people came up to me and said it was great- and that was an enormous rush. I was exhilarated about it because …it was … positive affirmation. Also I thought I knew how much risk I could take and was slightly on that edge of anxiety …and I think you have to be a bit anxious to
perform well. And ... I have repeated experiences of that nature, because I do that a lot, public speaking, I really like it a lot.

Anne’s experiences of bullying, being made to feel different as a migrant child and her negative experience of teachers either reinforcing or ignoring the behaviour of students towards her helped her to understand the important responsibilities that leaders have:

There are two things... I got two very clear messages from that, which are scripts that keep playing my head... And one is to live the worthwhile life, but the second is ... an “I'll show you” kind of thing. So there are two things that psychologically I got out of that. But the other thing it taught me is the role of teachers, and if you extrapolate that to the society and the workplace, the role of the leader in setting the tone, is really, really important. Because if the leader says it’s okay to do this, then you won’t have an ethical situation so the ethics of the leader are very, very important, and I suppose those would be my key leadership learnings.

Empowerment. Nine participants described the significant impact a role model, mentor or person who had a positive influence had on them. Examples of these are outlined on page 42.

Enhanced communion

Communion is a motivational force reflected in efforts to join with others in bonds of love intimacy, friendship and community (McAdams,
2001). Enhanced communion is manifested in love/friendship, dialogue, caring/ help and unity/togetherness.

**Love/friendship.** In half of the life stories redemption sequences emanated in enhanced communion in the form of love/friendship. Stephen recalled having a turning point when aged twenty and following a very unhappy period of his life during which he had experienced loss and grief. His turning point occurs on a particular day and involves three very vividly remembered incidents involving relationships with others. He makes the connection between these incidents and his behaviour many years later as a leader:

> I can remember it clearly, the turning point was twenty to four on a Sunday morning ...I’m ... in my student room and ... I thought, “This is what’s it about.” There had been three moments in this day of worth in relationship with human beings. That’s what it’s about; it’s not about programmes, as the church seemed to be saying. It was not about grand schemes in politics or whatever. It’s what I later on I read in a poem, as “the long littleness of life”, this is what’s is about and that for me was a turning point in the question of meaning if you like....The crucial thing is that results and outcomes are not what it’s about. Goal driven programmes are not what it’s about, they are not the objective. Human relationships are much more important than all of those things and those things are in a sense, incidental. They are the things that sneak
in alongside and happen while you are doing other things, availability for others and the gift of others is what it’s about.

Emma goes through a very unhappy time in her marriage when she realises her partner has a drinking problem. She attends a support program and learns strategies for coping and the results are enhanced relationships with her partner, children and parents:

The Program ... changed many things, particularly my relationship with the kids and it also changed my relationships with my partner so that it became a whole lot less of a war zone in every way with the kids and with him to something with less structure, and more caring and loving and demonstrations of affection and the same with my parents

Caring/help. Redemption sequences involving enhanced caring/help of others were present in eight of the stories. When asked to nominate the most important value in human living, Mark had no hesitation in nominating concern and care for others. He linked this understanding with his own challenge of having cancer and experiencing the care of others:

Concern and care for others. I think what I found when I was battling with cancer ... is that you have to have first and foremost care and concern for yourself as well as care and concern for others, and I mentioned that in my speech to staff and I talked about staff taking responsibility for themselves as much as me
taking responsibility for them as an employer, but nevertheless-
concern for others.

For Emma, who works in the justice system, her own experience of hardship, tragedy and loss makes her realise the importance of helping offenders have the support and help they need to get back on the right side of the law:

*I really believe the role of Corrections is to make the community safe and to offer help to these people, who ... have had a very under-privileged existence and haven’t had the opportunities that many of us have and therefore they get themselves into strife. And they’ve got to find a happy medium between making them comply with what the order said... but on the other hand helping them ...make some changes in their life. And you need money and understanding and professional people to help to do that and I feel very willing to do that because ...I think if I paralleled that with my own life how much worse off I would have been if I didn’t have supportive parents who looked after my kids when I studied... While my life has had many awful things ... (it’s) very different from other people who have neither money nor support ... There are so many of these young people they have never had a job, they have broken down families without any support, they haven’t got good accommodation, they are not living in a good*
environment, they just need some help so I feel that’s where my welfare thing comes in

Unity/togetherness. Redemption sequences involving unity/togetherness were present in the narratives of eight participants. Anne had worked for a company where she had had to close a plant employing large numbers of people. She had regarded this as having been well handled with even some benefits flowing to the community. Later she took another position with the same large private sector company. Things started to go badly and eventually she was made redundant. This painful experience which she described as the turning point in her life was used to reflect on what it must have been like for the staff she herself had earlier made redundant, and to develop empathy for people in such situations:

Well, my turning point is when I was made redundant.... So here am I ...knowing exactly what I had been involved in that it had affected quite a lot of people so I was ... I then was forced to have to learn that myself... I just finally understood what it had meant to other people. Because before that I had gone to any number of ...people who had lived and come through the ...works and gone up through the ranks, and gone and they had listened to me. And suddenly I thought “I know what its like to be in your shoes”. It was a very humbling thing to go through but it also completely changed my view about employment, it
was just a very stark realization that it’s really transactional not relational.

Ultimate concern

Redemption through ultimate concern was present in eight of the participants’ narratives. In describing a peak experience in his life Stephen recalled a vivid moment in his twenties After an unhappy adolescence in which he struggled with depression and feelings of low self worth he had what he described as a religious experience:

*I have just finished* (a book) *that ...talks about the goodness of God and what comes to me as a revelatory moment there has to do with God’s acceptance and love of me. That “You’re Okay,” sense which addresses all of the inferiority and brokenness and shame and stuff that was my experience through those teenage years and which was masked by my performance, my brilliant performance through my 20s. And I know that I cried, thinking this combination of shame and warm acceptance, “If God loves me, why I can’t love me?” ...I said it. Why, who am I not to love me, if God loves me. So this actually was a kind of religious experience in a sense, but it’s also a deep personal identity thing which gets worked through into that sense of leadership thing later on close to the end of my time in E.*
Emma who has lost two children and experienced the break up of two marriages sought to describe how meaning and purpose can nevertheless be found in life sometimes in unexpected places:

I’ve been astounded to find you can find the most rare and decrepit place like a rock face and there’ll be a fern growing out of it…or a desert and there’s a flowering cactus or something and… what I draw from that is new life. … I don’t believe that something as complicated as us can have just evolved, that doesn’t fit for me so something bigger and greater than us started it. I don’t understand what it is for - unless it’s service to others...

Ruth who works in a demanding job and has no children of her own finds meaning in supporting others in a situation where death is an ever present possibility:

About five years ago … I signed on to do voluntary duty at the Royal Children’s Hospital in the Cancer Ward and I thought I knew what was important in life … until I walked in there the first night. It really turned things on their head about what is actually important. … So I’d go in there on Thursday nights for three hours and I’d come away absolutely uplifted because I’d think that’s what important, this other stuff we do is important, the service we provide is important, but not having the right car, and not having this, and I used to say that. I still say to people: "If you really want to know what’s important go up to 6 East
and just sit there for an hour and you’ll see what’s really important in life…”

### 3.4.4 Conflicts between Agency (power) and Communion (love)

For several participants the conflict between agency and communion was played out in the struggle to balance work (or study) and life - particularly relationships.

After coming back to work after a serious illness Mark had determined to achieve more work life balance and to ensure that his staff did too:

> I’m the CEO and I’m paid more than anybody else, and I don’t think I should just work 40 hours a week. And the challenge ... is how to moderate my working hours to set a better example here for people .... And they should be able to enjoy their lives as much as enjoy their work so I’m trying to work all that out at the moment. So that’s why I try to work at home on Fridays and try to leave the office earlier than I have in the past, and try not to travel as much.

Howard had been forced to choose between a job opportunity interstate and remaining with his family:

> It was a heart wrenching time for me because I’m very very close to my children but I knew that the job I was in ...wouldn’t sustain me and I knew I needed to at least give it a go in terms of pursuing an academic career in M which is the centre for .. research...
For Sally there is the constant struggle to meet competing demands of children and work:

The biggest challenges I’ve had along the way is that...I now have a very time consuming and emotionally consuming job - that balance of family, personal and whatever. I can give great motivational speeches for other people about how to crack that balance and sometimes I feel like a charlatan in doing so.

In identifying the major challenge in his life, Ken recalled the enormous personal sacrifices made by himself and his wife and children so that he could complete his studies as a mature age student:

The biggest challenge- and my wife was really important in this - was I had to complete six years of part-time study to finish my economics degree ...and that was a huge challenge. And my wife she put up with me, Saturdays and Sundays out at the university, not taking holidays, so I could save all my holidays up and take a year off so I could do more units to save time. And then going on for good measure and doing a post grad ... after that. Plus we started to have a family at that time, that’s probably been the biggest challenge, you make a decision, you don’t look back, just keep going and she might say, “Well what about some time for me?.” I think it’s pretty ruthless, looking back. I thought “I am just not going to fail. I’m not going to fail”
3.4.5 Articulating Prosocial Goals for the Future

Eleven participants articulated prosocial goals. Jill, who had described a childhood and youth filled with loneliness and feelings of rejection, articulately described the prosocial values she has developed and lived through her political activism:

*I guess I’ve always had a firm left-wing view. I’ve always felt that fairness and equality should be the aim and that governments should be trying to ensure that... I think that richer people should pay more taxes; social welfare should be higher than it is... I believe in services being provided publicly rather than privately. So I believe in Medicare and I feel it should be broader than it is and that people shouldn’t be herded into private health insurance the way they have been. I feel disturbed that increasingly there are two strands of education in Australia. Those who can afford to go to good private schools and the rest who have to put up with the state schools. I feel that’s very wrong. I’m concerned about environmental issues... global warming; the way in which industry has been allowed to just ride rough shod over the environment and continues to do so – largely to the detriment of everyone else. I’m also concerned about drug use. I don’t like the way Australia sort of blindly follows the United States and gets involved in wars we don’t have to*
Long a campaigner for social justice, James nominated poverty as an issue about which he is very concerned:

Yes, poverty is the bed rock issue and there are as many children in poverty today as there were in 1991. We haven’t made any real progress on that... and all of the problems with drug addiction and homelessness and all the rest of it, it gets back to that really... So I think I’m more strongly committed to that than ever.

He clearly articulates the idea of prosocial generativity when asked about his fundamental beliefs:

A little kind of catch phrase, “Leaving the wood heap a little higher than you found it.” I use that one a lot. It’s a very important thing about philanthropy – that’s what it does. It’s a very important thing about leadership, you ... have an obligation to pass on those things which you’ve found helpful, to others. To really show a genuine interest in young people and enjoy being with them, and exchanging with them, understanding, I’ve always loved that, still do, more than ever. This is a kind of life cycle, it’s the putting back, the obligation to put back and to try and find ways and means you can do that effectively, it’s being useful to people.
CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Overview

This study aimed to explore the relationship between narrative identity and the exercise of transformational leadership. A particular focus was elucidating general and generative themes emerging from the life stories of 12 senior executives identified as transformational leaders. It was felt that the emergence of generative themes would provide evidence of a link between transformational leadership and generativity.

The Discussion first presents the quantitative data from the MLQ and the LGS, before presenting the current group’s prototypical story which contained three general themes: struggle, external resources and support, and developing inner strength. These themes follow a strongly redemptive sequence linking to generativity. After the prototypical story, McAdams (2006) generative themes are discussed. Throughout the Discussion, links with transformational leadership are explored. Finally the implications and importance of this research are considered, methodological considerations are identified, and areas for future research are suggested.
4.2 Self Report Measures

Scores on the MLQ confirmed that this sample consisted of 12 individuals who perceive themselves as predominantly engaged in transformational, as opposed to transactional or laissez faire leadership. Scores for the LGS indicate that this group express stronger generative concerns than the Australian norm (Bates & Findlay, 2001). Whilst scores for this group differ from the Australian and USA norms, and this is of potential theoretical interest and worthy of further study, with a sample of 12, no firm conclusions can be drawn from these differences.

4.3 Life Narratives

4.3.1 The Prototypical Story: a Story of Redemption

There was a striking similarity in the narrative themes which emerged across the different stories told by participants. This allowed a prototypical life story to be postulated which contained three general themes displayed in Figure 1.

These three themes did not emerge at the same chronological stages for all participants. For the majority, most significant struggles occurred in their youth, for a minority they came later in life. Presumably future struggles and challenges lie ahead and this cycle of themes may recur. The emergence of these themes and the order in which they occur in the
life stories, provide evidence for an explanatory narrative sequence and strong evidence for one of McAdams’ (2006) key generative themes: the power of redemption to reinforce progress in life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Struggle</th>
<th>External resources and support</th>
<th>Developing inner strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isolation/ feelings of being different</td>
<td>Having a mentor or role model</td>
<td>Being independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of confidence/ feelings of low self worth</td>
<td>Education and learning</td>
<td>Seeking and meeting challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of personal loss or tragedy</td>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Perseverance</td>
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<td>Job satisfaction</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>and work ethic</td>
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</table>

*Figure 1*

*General themes emerging from the narratives*

In this redemptive cycle, challenges and negative events are encountered, the protagonist is assisted through external resources and support and the outcome is growth of inner strength. Importantly the participants themselves made the connections between negative sequences and eventual positive outcomes. This recognition is vital for narrative sequences to be classed as redemptive (McAdams, 2006). For some participants, redemptive cycles in their lives began not just with
negative but with tragic events such as the death of a sibling or children. In these circumstances it is not unreasonable to talk of the outcome of the cycle as post traumatic growth (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999).

Common to all the participants' stories, this redemptive sequence provides insights into the narrative identity of participants and ways in which this informs their leadership. Aspects of revealed narrative identity which seem to particularly relate to transformational leadership include meaning making, self understanding and self-efficacy, well being and enhanced agency and communion.

**Meaning making**

As participants recounted painful memories they were visibly moved. These memories are still vivid, painful and important but participants explicitly linked them to positive outcomes reflecting the redemptive sequence outlined in Figure 1. Growth is seen as they turn negative struggle into positive striving. For example, Lorraine explicitly traced the connection from the distress and embarrassment of being an underdeveloped, bullied adolescent to the confident, well dressed, professional woman who now heads a successful international company. Meaning making from memories was critical to the pathway in this redemptive cycle. Memories show how individuals regard and deal with disruptive emotional situations and events (Bluck & Glück, 2004). Meaning making and integration of self defining memories are strategies that help people to cope with negative emotions (Blagov & Singer, 2004).
and use them for growth (McAdams, 2006). In fact, for narrative researchers, it is relationship memories involving struggle and resolution, rather than positive memories that are the most meaningful and important (McLean, Pasupathi & Pals, 2007). Some painful memories provoke ultimate concern (McAdams) which involves redemption through attaining insights at a deep or spiritual level. Interestingly, in the current group two participants who had experienced significant tragedies most powerfully expressed this theme.

Meaning making results in a sense of purpose and goals (Singer, 2005). Transformational leaders engage in shared meaning making by exhibiting clarity of purpose and goals, helping followers become aware of their own needs, values and purposes and helping them integrate these with those of the leader (Burns, 1978).

In the current study the role played by meaning making confirms the view that it is not just events and external situations that impact on our identity but also, and more importantly, the meaning we attach to these events and situations (McAdams, 2006, Singer, 2004).

**Self understanding and self-efficacy**

Personal growth through insights gained from life events enabled participants to develop greater self-understanding and self-efficacy. Participants were capable of extensive self-reflection and able to see themes, patterns and connections in their lives. Individuals who themselves have successfully struggled to overcome the experience of
personal difficulties appear to have developed the self-efficacy that derives from resolving difficult situations (Singer, 2004). Negative experiences can also result in a changed sense of self, with individuals experiencing increased self reliance, personal strength and competence (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999). Leadership theorists emphasise the importance of self understanding - leaders know who they are, what they want, and what their strengths and weaknesses are (Bennis, 2003). Self understanding may enhance understanding of others and enable the transformational leader, through individualised consideration, to give, for example, strong affiliation to some staff and clear directives to others (Northouse, 2007).

Participants linked the development of self-efficacy to events in their own lives and described its manifestation in leadership: Ruth and Lorraine are determined to follow their own judgements, no matter what others think; James and Ann expressed their determination to meet challenges; Sally and Howard recalled perseverance and strategic actions to get through difficult situations and to bring staff along with them; Ken talked of being a role model of self discipline and hard work for staff; and Stephen eloquently described the leader’s ultimate accountability as the “courageous aloneness” needed for leadership. Increased self-efficacy and confidence also came from recognition by others. Howard, Jill, James and Lorraine all describe public occasions where their skills were recognised and affirmed. It is as though through the eyes of others they
come to see themselves as people of worth. Transformational leaders exhibit self-efficacy, and, in articulating a vision they also produce a sense of self-efficacy in followers (Shamir, House & Arthur, 1993). Interestingly, in being interviewed, participants may have derived benefits from the recall of challenging experiences in which the self is efficacious, since such recall is likely to produce further self-enhancement as well as making the individual feel wise (Bluck & Glück, 2004).

Participants saw mentoring and learning as of great assistance in overcoming negative experiences and feelings and in developing self-efficacy and confidence. Interestingly, only one woman but four men had a professional mentor. Five women and two men had a non professional role model or mentor. It is possible that with fewer women than men in senior leadership roles, finding a professional mentor may well be harder for women. The role of the mentor was often life changing. Ken, for example, described how his whole life was changed by encouragement from his boss to go to university.

All the participants were tertiary educated and it could therefore be concluded that the effect of formal education simply confirms the link thought to exist between higher levels of education and generativity (de St Aubin et al., 2004). However, of greater significance is the value participants placed on learning from life experience. The difference between having a degree and having wisdom or understanding was
emphasised and a number stressed the greater importance of learning from life and others. For Ruth it is not so much the content of learning but the process of learning, the acquisition of knowledge, the development of a love of learning and the learning together with others that are critical. She strongly encourages her staff to undertake further study in any field so that they can experience the benefits she has enjoyed. In the participants’ redemptive sequences, learning could constitute “wisdom experiences” which Bluck and Glück (2004) found significantly connected to life consequences and directions.

The participants’ desire to pass on skills and knowledge to followers confirms Burns’ (1978) claim that a key way in which transformational leaders improve performance is through teaching and being willing to learn from others. For example, Howard, who has high level technical skills, reported that he initially needed to observe and work alongside an experienced manager to understand what leading people entailed. The teaching and learning components of transformational leadership include the possibly passive learning by followers from the role model of the leader and the active learning involved in the individualised consideration given by the leader to help followers develop their strengths and compensate for their weaknesses.

**Well being**

In their narratives the participants recalled generative concerns and behaviours when they had reached a stage of some resolution or
advancement, or in conjunction with key events, such as the birth of children. It was often when life was going well or when a life challenge was resolved that they turned their attention towards the outside world. For example, after an unhappy, friendless childhood, Jill finally made friends when she went to university. After moving 13 times in 9 years she finally put down roots by buying a house and establishing herself in her career. She indicated that only then did she start what became ongoing community service through her involvement in the local council and the political process. Reflecting on this, she conveyed the sense that once her own situation was mastered, she felt ready and able to give to the world around her. When the time in their own life is ripe and they are feeling better about themselves participants are more able to meet the challenge of generativity. This is consistent with the positive relationship demonstrated between well-being and generativity (Grossbaum & Bates, 2002) and between positive mood and prosocial behaviour (Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2006).

Importantly, having experienced the well-being associated with redemption (McAdams et al., 2001), the participants can more easily follow the central tenet of transformational leadership by transforming followers’ beliefs to enhance well being (Arnold, et al., 2007).

**Enhanced agency and communion**

As is typical of the life stories told by generative adults (McAdams & Logan, 2004), all narrative revealed strong agentic and communal
themes. The struggle experienced by participants led to both agentic responses of trying to prove one’s worth by one’s actions and communal responses of showing care or concern for others. For example, Stephen exemplifies agency with communal overtones when he talks about the need to look after people by keeping on doing the ordinary following tragic events. He draws on his own experience of surviving the death of both a family member and a friend to inform his leadership behaviours during organisational crises where he focuses on the fundamentals like making sure people eat when they need to.

In leadership, enhanced agency reported by participants led to behaviours associated with intellectual stimulation such as challenging followers to find new solutions to problems, and to inspirational motivation manifested, for example, in articulating a vision for a project. Having struggled and finally found success in a male dominated profession, Lorraine fulfils her dream of setting up a network to assist other women in that profession. Enhanced communion may lead to behaviours associated with individualised consideration such as providing emotional support to staff. Stephen exemplifies this when he reports his major leadership learning as the importance of affirming, acknowledging and thanking staff. This application and arousing of, positive emotions also supports suggestions that part of the effectiveness of transformational leaders is their ability to express emotions,
understand the emotions of followers and use positive emotions to motivate followers (Gardner & Stough, 2001, Northouse, 2007).

In spite of the development of inner strength, some participants, even as successful adults and leaders, reported that a lack of confidence continues to lurk just below the surface and must be confronted from time to time. The fact that redemption was the strongest generative theme to emerge in this study suggests that transformational leaders are able to find meaning in the memories of negative events, to integrate these memories, to use them for growth and insight and to use their own learnings from life’s experiences to inform their leadership behaviours.

4.3.2 Other Generative Themes

In addition to the power of redemption to reinforce progress in life (discussed above), participants’ narratives showed evidence of four of McAdams’ (2006) other generative themes: witnessing the suffering of others, moral steadfastness and continuity, conflicts between agency (power) and communion (love) and articulating pro social goals for the future. Only one of McAdams generative themes was absent from the narratives. The participants’ life stories did not include a sense of being advantaged early in life. As discussed, for most, any early experience of being singled out, or of being special, was actually associated with negative feelings of being different from others and/or unworthy.
Moral steadfastness and continuity

Moral steadfastness and continuity was the second most strongly evident theme in the narratives. Participants traced their moral values back to influences such as family, religious beliefs or childhood experiences, or a combination of all of these. Moral steadfastness assisted participants to develop self-reliance, persistence and the energy needed to surmount challenges.

Two participants identified their moral values as deriving from orthodox Christianity. For five, there was a Christian heritage of some sort, and for the rest a values system based on care for and respect for others. Wuthnow (1998) makes a distinction between spiritual “seekers” for whom individual autonomy is more important than religious doctrine and “dwellers” who tend to occupy a space created by traditional religious authority. Thus ten participants could be described as seekers, while two with orthodox religious views could be described as dwellers. Dillon and Wink (2004) found that both dwelling and seeking were positively associated with well being and positively related to scores on the LGS, but that dwelling was more associated with the caring aspects of generativity, and seeking more associated with the self expansive creative aspects of generativity. Caring and creativity are also reflected in aspects of transformational leadership, namely individualised consideration and intellectual stimulation. Transformational leaders pursue visions but also pay attention to the needs of individuals. Ken
described how he combines both as he inspires and motivates staff by
conveying a vision, a sense that “we are all in it together”, by drawing
people out and involving even those who are reluctant participants in
decision making.

Participants frequently described putting the needs of others ahead
of their own interests. Examples of this include Howard who, as a
medical practitioner, always bulk-bills patients and works in the lower
paid public system; Mark, in spite of having a life threatening illness, is
passionate about showing care and concern for his staff; and Sally who,
after the death of her first child, is most concerned about the impact this
will have on the child’s father’s state of mind. Transformational leaders
are people who have a strong set of internal values and ideals and
motivate followers to support a greater good (Kuhnert, cited in
Northouse, 2007). In particular, as Erikson (1970) and Burns (1978)
showed in their exploration of the psychology, behaviour and life of
Gandhi, generative individuals and transformational leaders transcend
self interest.

**Witnessing the suffering of others**

Although the theme of witnessing the suffering of others was
present in the narratives, it did not seem to be as important as the
participants’ own experiences of struggle. For example, having struggled
as a single parent with little money, Emma feels great compassion for	hose in difficult circumstances who fall foul of the law. She linked her
empathy for them back to her own early challenges rather than to early witnessing of the suffering of others. It is the resolution of their own struggles that seems to provide the impetus for participants to turn their attention to the needs of others.

**Conflicts between agency and communion**

A conflict between agency and communion was observed in the competing demands of relationships and/or families and work and/or study. Many participants mentioned sacrifices made in family time or relationships in order to pursue education or career opportunities. Most of these senior executives expressed reluctant acceptance of the fact that to advance their careers sacrifices had to be made in personal lives. However, others indicated that these competing demands were a source of ongoing tension – they had found no way of resolving the competing motivations of agency and communion.

**Articulating prosocial goals for the future**

All but one participant expressed strong prosocial goals for the future. These included: concerns that environmental challenges would be addressed, that adequate health care and education would be available for all, that Australia would be accepting of those who seek refuge from world trouble spots and that those who fall foul of the law would be managed in a justice system which not only fulfilled legal requirements but also exhibited compassion.
4.4 Implications of Study

Each participant’s narrative was full of generative themes. Since all the participants were in mid or later life, they could be expected to emphasise generative themes at a time when Erikson (1982), predicted they must resolve the challenge of stagnation versus generativity. Yet, in telling their stories the participants emphasised and interpreted different points in their lives in generative ways lending more support to the contention that generativity is a core issue for identity, and the process of identity formation is an ongoing process not restricted to midlife (McAdams, 2006, Singer, 2004). It could be argued that the participants are reinterpreting their own past and stories in the light of their own current midlife generative concerns and beliefs. One way this might happen is when consistency bias (Matlin, 2003) is in operation and individuals have a distorted memory of the past due to having exaggerated the consistency between past and present feelings and beliefs. However, what is clear in the current study (and emphasised by narrative psychologists) is the importance of the meaning that participants attach to memories, rather than the accuracy of those memories. In fact this study provides strong support for the claim that it is not so much what happens to individuals in their lives but the meaning they attach to those happenings (Singer, 2004).
Narrative theorists such as McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992b) see generativity as part of the psychosocial construct of identity, while the focus of transformational leadership theorists is manifest behaviours (Bass, 1985). While the development and understanding of an autobiographical self is predominantly a private task undertaken through self reflection (McAdams, 2001), transformational leadership skills are honed in the outside world. Narrative themes in this study are seen to link the more private personal domain of identity reflected in experiences, attitudes and beliefs (generativity) and the more public professional world of transformational leadership behaviours. For leaders, what is critical is not just their sense of self, but how that sense is used in an organisational setting.

An important finding of this study is the significant presence of the theme of struggle in the participants’ prototypical story. This constitutes a difference from the prototypical generative story theorised by McAdams (2006) which contains the theme of early advantage. There may be many possible reasons for this finding, for example cultural or social differences between the Australian and American contexts, and further exploration is warranted.

The current findings indicate a powerful source of insight and understanding which should be accessed as part of leadership training and development. Rather than focus just on observable behaviours, leadership training and development should encourage leaders to reflect
on their own life experiences, the meaning of those experiences, how they have contributed to who they are and how to draw on these insights in their leadership. The qualities and effectiveness of leaders are crucial to the success of organisations and the well being of staff, and narrative psychology has a most important contribution to make to our understanding of and fostering of effective leadership.

4.5 Methodological Considerations

In this study the use of narrative methodology which incorporates cognitive, behavioural, affective and developmental perspectives enabled a comprehensive and dynamic exploration of the whole person rather than perceiving the person as a set of behaviours. The use of a qualitative method enabled rich, detailed data on transformational leadership to emerge and the data were grounded in participants’ own words. Each stage of the two stage analysis provided thematic evidence which was consistent with themes emerging from the other stage. Moreover, participants themselves made linkages and causal connections without these having to be inferred from anonymous quantitative data. Another major advantage was that the participants had significant levels of insight and during the process of telling their stories their insight grew.

The study relied on self report for information about leadership by means of the MLQ and the interviews. A modified version of the MLQ
was used and validity and reliability have been established only for the full version of the measure which includes reports by subordinates. Had time permitted supplementary information from interviews with participants’ direct reports would have added to an understanding of participants’ leadership styles. However this limitation was largely overcome by the initial selection of participants with a reputation for transformational leadership. Another consideration is that it was not possible to assess the impact of participants' leadership on the organisations for which they worked and thus confirm the benefits of transformational leadership described in the literature.

An additional possible limitation concerns potential cultural bias affecting the validity of the LGS when administered to Australian respondents. For example, items regarding procreation, charity work, expectations of living on in memory after death may attract a higher score in an American cultural context than in Australia. However, the narratives of the participants provided sufficiently strong evidence for the existence of generative themes and in this qualitative study this evidence is more important than quantitative data.

A final possible limitation concerns the composition of the sample. Although gender balance was achieved, the sample lacked diversity in other ways – only one participant came from a non Anglo-Saxon background and Christianity was the only religion represented. While transformational leadership has been found to be equally effective in both
individualist and collectivist cultures (Schaubroeck, Lam & Cha, 2007), it has been suggested that there are cultural differences in narrative practices (McLean et al., 2007). The inclusion of participants from more diverse cultural backgrounds would have added insights concerning different ways in which narrative themes such as generativity and redemption might emerge. Moreover such a mix of participants would have been more reflective of Australia’s multicultural population.

4.6 Recommendations for Future Research

Five areas of research could be addressed in the future. First, research could extend the current study by combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies including developing a coding scheme based on the particular redemptive sequence that emerged in this study. This could be used to test for the presence of these particular themes in the narratives of other groups. Second, future research on generativity could consider the cultural relevance of McAdams’ (2006) generative themes and the LGS in the Australian context. Third, a quantitative study could explore the relationship between scores on the LGS and the full MLQ to determine whether a statistical association between the two is found in a large sample. Fourth, research could investigate the distinct impact of generative, transformational Australian leaders on followers and organisations. Fifth, since the current study focused exclusively on
transformational leadership, a useful contribution could be made by research focusing on the life stories of transactional leaders. This would enable interesting comparisons with results from the current study. Finally, any further quantitative or qualitative studies should utilise samples that reflect the diversity of the Australian population.

4.7 Conclusion

This study explored the links between the development of narrative identity and the exercise of transformational leadership. The prototypical story of senior transformational leaders revealed a strongly redemptive sequence involving: struggle; assistance from external resources and support; and development of inner strength. Redemption was the strongest of McAdams’ (2006) generative themes to emerge with participants integrating their self-defining memories into their sense of identity. Aspects of narrative identity such as meaning making, self understanding and self-efficacy, well being and enhanced agency and communion were particularly related to the practice of transformational leadership.

The emergence of redemption and other generative themes confirmed the expected link between transformational leadership and generativity. The findings suggest that the narratives of transformational
leaders are likely to contain generative and particularly redemptive themes.

Participants reported generative concerns in the more private world of their personal narratives, their sense of identity, their values and beliefs, while the public manifestation of this generativity lay in the behaviours of the transformational leader. This finding confirms the notion that generativity is an underlying psychosocial aspect of identity (Erikson, 1982, McAdams & Logan, 2004), while transformational leadership is a descriptor for a set of behaviours with measurable outcomes (Bass, 1985, Northouse, 2007).

In conclusion, the current study appears to be the first Australian study to apply a narrative methodology to exploring leadership, and is the first to explore the relationship between generativity and transformational leadership. It is hoped that this project furthers an understanding of transformational leadership and generativity and helps bring narrative psychology to the fore as a way of investigating leadership, the life stories of leaders and the link between generativity and transformational leadership.
References


Appendix A

Letters to Participants and Consent Form

SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
FORM OF DISCLOSURE AND INFORMED CONSENT

Transformational leadership, generativity and life stories
Associate Professor Glen Bates - Supervisor
Ms Christina Bell - Psychology Honours student

We are conducting a study to explore transformational leadership, generativity and life narratives. We are interested in examining the relationship between transformational leadership and more general generative concerns and relating this to the themes that emerge from the life stories told by leaders.

If you choose to participate in the study, you will be asked to complete two questionnaires relating firstly, to your style of leadership, and secondly, to your broader attitudes towards relationships with others. Subsequently a sample of participants will be invited to participate in an interview in which they will be asked questions relating to their life story, for example questions that ask about defining moments or significant influences.

The questionnaires will take approximately 20 minutes to complete and it is important that you complete the questionnaires honestly. Many of the items are similar and it is important to respond to all of them as conscientiously as possible, but without spending too much time on any one item, your first response is probably the most accurate. Your responses to the questionnaire will be completely anonymous and confidential. Those interviewed will need to be available for up to an hour. Results of the study may be published in an academic or management journal, but only as group data, not as the results of any individual.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your initial agreement to participate does not stop you from discontinuing participation and you are free to withdraw at any time. The submission of your questionnaires will be taken as consent for your data to be used in the study as well as to your willingness to be interviewed. Your interest in this study would be greatly appreciated.

Although unlikely, the questionnaires or interview may raise some concerns for you because of some personal experiences or some questions. If you would like to discuss these with a counsellor, you could
ring the Swinburne Psychology Clinic on 9214 8653 or Lifeline on 131114.
If you have any questions about this study, please contact the researchers:
Associate Professor Glen Bates on 92148100
Or
Christina Bell, Fourth Year Honours Psychology Student on 98188322 or at chbell@groupwise.swin.edu.au
If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, please contact:
Research Ethics Officer
Office of Research and Graduate Studies (H68)
Swinburne University of Technology
P O Box 218
HAWTHORN VIC 3122
or Tel (03) 9214 5218

Please retain this information page for your records.
Your participation is very important to the study and is greatly appreciated.
Thank you for your time and assistance.
CONSENT FORM AGREEMENT

I,
(name and address) have read and understood the information above. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I may withdraw at any time.

I understand that I may be asked to participate in an interview in which I will be asked questions about my life for examples questions about key events in my life. I agree that the interview may be recorded on audio tape as data on the condition that no part of it is included in any presentation or public display.

I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or provided to other researchers on the condition that anonymity is preserved and that I cannot be identified.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT ............................................. ................................

SIGNATURE ............................................................. DATE ................

NAMES OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS
Associate Professor Glen Bates and Christina Bell

SIGNATURE ............................................................. DATE ..............
Associate Professor Glen Bates

SIGNATURE ............................................................. DATE ..............
Christina Bell, Fourth Year Honours Psychology student
Thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed as part of your participation in the above research project. This letter is firstly to confirm that I will be meeting with you at \textit{time} on \textit{date} at \textit{address}. The interview should take about one hour to one and a half hours and it will be taped so that it can be transcribed. You are welcome to have a transcript of the interview.

The second purpose of this letter is to give you an idea of what to expect. The interview will be about the story of your life. I will be asking you to play the role of storyteller about your own life - to construct for me the story of your own past and present.

In telling me a story about your own life, you do not need to tell me everything that has ever happened to you. A story is selective. In telling your own life story, you should concentrate on material in your own life that you believe to be important in some fundamental way -- information about yourself and your life which says something significant about you, how you have come to be who you are and about your exercise of leadership. Your story should tell how you are similar to other people as well as how you are unique. The purpose of the interview is not to conduct a therapy session. The interview is for research purposes only, and its sole purpose is the collection of data concerning leaders' life stories. The interview is divided into a number of sections.

\textbf{I. Life Chapters}\n
I will begin by asking you to think about your life as a story divided into at least 2 and no more than 6 chapters. If you are able to, you can give each chapter a name, briefly describe the overall contents in each chapter and provide a plot summary for each chapter. It would be helpful if you could bring along written chapter headings to the interview. This first part of the interview will take 20-25 minutes.

\textbf{II. Critical Events}\n
In the second part of the interview I will ask you to concentrate on a few key events that may stand out in bold print in the story. I will be asking you to reflect on whether or not you think these key events have in any way influenced the leadership you have exercised.

I will ask you about 8 specific life events. You may be able to think of several events under each heading. Please choose the one that has had the greatest impact. For each event, I'll ask you to describe in detail what
happened, where you were, who was involved, what you did, and what you were thinking and feeling in the event. Also I’ll ask you to convey what impact this key event has had in your life story, what this event says about who you are or were as a person and how it may have influenced your exercise of leadership. The key events are:

1. Peak Experience (high point)
2. Nadir Experience (low point)
3. Turning Point
4. Earliest Memory
5. Important Childhood Scene
6. Important Adolescent Scene
7. Important Adult Scene
8. One Other Important Scene

III. Life Challenge
In the third section of the interview I will ask you about the single greatest challenge that you have faced in your life, how have you handled it and what impact it has had on your life story and on your leadership.

IV. Influences on the Life Story: Positive and Negative
In the fourth section of the interview I will ask you about positive and negative influences on your life story and on your exercise of leadership. These influences may be a single person, group of persons, or organisation/institutions.

V. Personal Ideology
In the fifth section of the interview I will ask you about fundamental beliefs and values, and meaning and spirituality in your life and in your leadership.

VI. Other
Finally I will invite you to add any information that will help me understand your life story and your leadership.

You may like to bring this information with you to the interview so that you can refer to it.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. I can be contacted on 98188322 or at chbell@groupwise.swin.edu.au. Or you may wish to contact Associate Professor Glen Bates on 92148100.

I look forward to meeting with you on date

Yours sincerely

Christina Bell
Appendix B
Life Story Interview Script

The Life Story Interview
Adapted (2007) from Dan P. McAdams, Northwestern University
Revised 1995

Interviewer’s Script

Introductory Comments
This is an interview about the story of your life. I am asking you to play the role of storyteller about your own life -- to construct for me the story of your own past and present. People's lives vary tremendously, and people make sense of their own lives in a wide variety of ways. As social scientists, our goal is to collect life stories in order to begin the process of understanding how people make sense of their own lives. I am particularly interested in the life stories of leaders and therefore, I am collecting and analysing life stories of "normal" adults who have exercised leadership, and I am looking for significant commonalities and significant differences in their life stories.

In telling me a story about your own life, you do not need to tell me everything that has ever happened to you. A story is selective. It may focus on a few key events, a few key relationships, and a few key themes which recur in the narrative. In telling your own life story, you should concentrate on material in your own life that you believe to be important in some fundamental way - information about yourself and your life which says something significant about you, about how you have come to be who you are and about your exercise of leadership. Your story should tell how you are similar to other people as well as how you are unique. Our purpose in these interviews is to catalogue people's life stories so that we may eventually arrive at some fundamental principles of life-storytelling as well as ways of categorizing and making sense of life stories constructed by healthy adults living at this time in history and in this place. We are not interested, therefore, in psychological problems. I am not trying to work out what is wrong with you. Nor am I trying to help you work out what is wrong with you. The interview should not be seen as a "therapy session." This interview is for research purposes only, and its sole purpose is the collection of data concerning leaders’ life stories.

The interview is divided into a number of sections. In order to complete the interview within, say, an hour and a half or so, it is important that we not get bogged down in the early sections, especially the first one in which I will ask you to provide an overall outline of your story. The
interview starts with general things and moves to the particular. Therefore, don’t feel compelled to provide a lot of detail in the first section in which I ask for this outline. The detail will come later. I will guide you through the interview so that we can finish it in good time. I think that you will enjoy the interview. Most people do.

**Questions?**

**I. Life Chapters**
I would like you to begin by thinking about your life as a story. All stories have characters, scenes, plots, and so forth. There are high points and low points in the story, good times and bad times, heroes and villains, and so on. A long story may even have chapters. Think about your life story as having at least a few different chapters. What might those chapters be? I would like you to describe for me each of the main chapters of your life story. You may have as many or as few chapters as you like, but I would suggest dividing your story into at least 2 or 3 chapters and at most about 7. If you can, give each chapter a name and describe briefly the overall contents in each chapter. As a storyteller here, think of yourself as giving a plot summary for each chapter. This first part of the interview can expand forever, so I would like you to keep it relatively brief, say, within 20-25 minutes. Therefore, you don't want to tell me "the whole story" now. Just give me a sense of the story's outline -- the major chapters in your life.

[The interviewer may wish to ask for clarifications and elaborations at any point in this section, though there is a significant danger of interrupting too much. If the subject finishes in less than 10 minutes, then he/she has not said enough, and the interviewer should probe for more detail. If the subject looks as if he/she is going to continue beyond half an hour, then the interviewer should try (gently) to speed things along somewhat. Yet, you don't want the subject to feel "rushed." (It is inevitable, therefore, that some subjects will run on too long.) This is the most open-ended part of the interview. It has the most projective potential. Thus, we are quite interested in how the subject organizes the response on his or her own. Be careful not to organize it for the subject.]

**II. Critical Events**
Now that you have given me an outline of the chapters in your story, I would like you to concentrate on a few key events that may stand out in bold print in the story. A key event should be a specific happening, a critical incident, a significant episode in your past set in a particular time and place. It is helpful to think of such an event as constituting a specific moment in your life story which stands out for some reason. Thus, a particular conversation you may have had with your mother when you were 12-years-old or a particular decision you made one afternoon last
summer might qualify as a key event in your life story. These are particular moments set in a particular time and place, complete with particular characters, actions, thoughts, and feelings. An entire summer holiday - be it very happy or very sad or very important in some way -- or a very difficult year in high school, on the other hand, would not qualify as key events because these take place over an extended period of time. (They are more like life chapters.) I would particularly like you indicate whether or not you think these key events have in any way influenced the leadership you have exercised.

I am going to ask you about 8 specific life events. For each event, describe in detail what happened, where you were, who was involved, what you did, and what you were thinking and feeling in the event. Also, try to convey what impact this key event has had in your life story, what this event says about who you are or were as a person and how it may have influenced your exercise of leadership. Please be very specific here.

Questions?

Event #1: Peak Experience
A peak experience would be a high point in your life story -- perhaps the high point. It would be a moment or episode in the story in which you experienced extremely positive emotions, like joy, excitement, great happiness, uplifting, or even deep inner peace. Today, the episode would stand out in your memory as one of the best, highest, most wonderful scenes or moments in your life story. Please describe in some detail a peak experience, or something like it, that you have experienced some time in your past. Tell me exactly what happened, where it happened, who was involved, what you did, what you were thinking and feeling, what impact this experience may have had upon you and particularly about your leadership, and what this experience says about who you were or who you are. [Interviewer should make sure that the subject addresses all of these questions, especially ones about impact and what the experience says about the person. Do not interrupt the description of the event. Rather ask for extra detail, if necessary, after the subject has finished initial description of the event.]
(Supplementary questions:
What’s the clearest part of the memory?
What is the strongest feeling in the memory?)

Event #2: Nadir Experience
A "nadir" is a low point. A nadir experience, therefore, is the opposite of a peak experience. It is a low point in your life story. Thinking back over your life, try to remember a specific experience in which you felt extremely negative emotions, such as despair, disillusionment, terror, guilt, etc. You should consider this experience to represent one of the
"low points" in your life story. Even though this memory is unpleasant, I would still appreciate an attempt on your part to be as honest and detailed as you can be. Please remember to be specific. What happened? When? Who was involved? What did you do? What were you thinking and feeling? What impact has the event had on you and on your leadership? What does the event say about who you are or who you were?

(Supplementary questions:
What’s’ the clearest part of the memory?
What is the strongest feeling in the memory?)

Event #3: Turning Point
In looking back on one's life, it is often possible to identify certain key "turning points" -- episodes through which a person undergoes substantial change. Turning points can occur in many different spheres of a person's life -in relationships with other people, in work and school, in outside interests, etc. I am especially interested in a turning point in your understanding of yourself and in a turning point that may have influenced your exercise of leadership. Please identify a particular episode in your life story that you now see as a turning point. If you feel that your life story contains no turning points, then describe a particular episode in your life that comes closer than any other to qualifying as a turning point.

[Note: If subject repeats an earlier event (e.g., peak experience, nadir) ask him or her to choose another one. Each of the 8 critical events in this section should be independent. We want 8 separate events. If the subject already mentioned an event under the section of “Life Chapters,” it may be necessary to go over it again here. This kind of redundancy is inevitable.]

(Supplementary questions:
What’s’ the clearest part of the memory?
What is the strongest feeling in the memory?)

Event #4: Earliest Memory
Think back now to your childhood, as far back as you can go. Please choose a relatively clear memory from your earliest years and describe it in some detail. The memory need not seem especially significant in your life today. Rather what makes it significant is that it is the first or one of the first memories you have, one of the first scenes in your life story. The memory should be detailed enough to qualify as an "event." This is to say that you should choose the earliest (childhood) memory for which you are able to identify what happened, who was involved, and what you were thinking and feeling. Give me the best guess of your age at the time of the event.

(Supplementary questions:
What’s’ the clearest part of the memory?)
What is the strongest feeling in the memory?)

**Event #5: Important Childhood Scene**
Now describe another memory from childhood, from later childhood, that stands out in your mind as especially important or significant. It may be a positive or negative memory. What happened? Who was involved? What did you do? What were you thinking and feeling? What impact has the event had on you? What impact has it had on your exercise of leadership? What does it say about who you are or who you were? Why is it important?

(Supplementary questions:
What’s the clearest part of the memory? What is the strongest feeling in the memory?)

**Event #6: Important Adolescent Scene**
Describe a specific event from your teenage years that stands out as being especially important or significant.

(Supplementary questions:
What’s the clearest part of the memory? What is the strongest feeling in the memory?)

**Event #7: Important Adult Scene**
Describe a specific event from your adult years (age 21 and beyond) that stands out as being especially important or significant.

(Supplementary questions:
What’s the clearest part of the memory? What is the strongest feeling in the memory?)

**Event #8: One Other Important Scene**
Describe one more event, from any point in your life that stands out in your memory as being especially important or significant.

(Supplementary questions:
What’s the clearest part of the memory? What is the strongest feeling in the memory?)

**III. Life Challenge**
Looking back over the various chapters and scenes in your life story, please describe the single greatest challenge that you have faced in your life. How have you faced, handled, or dealt with this challenge? Have other people assisted you in dealing with this challenge? How has this challenge had an impact on your life story? On your leadership?
IV. Influences on the Life Story: Positive and Negative

Positive
Looking back over your life story, please identify the single person, group of persons, or organization/institution that has or have had the greatest positive influence on your story and on your exercise of leadership. Please describe this person, group, or organization and the way in which he, she, it, or they have had a positive impact on your story.

Negative
Looking back over your life story, please identify the single person, group of persons, or organization/institution that has or have had the greatest negative influence on your story. Please describe this person, group, or organization and the way in which he, she, it, or they have had a negative impact on your story and on your exercise of leadership.

V. Personal Ideology

Now I would like to ask a few questions about your fundamental beliefs and values and about questions of meaning and spirituality in your life and in your leadership. Please give some thought to each of these questions.

1. Consider for a moment the religious or spiritual dimensions of your life. Please describe in a nutshell your religious beliefs or the ways in which you approach life in a spiritual sense.
2. Please describe how your religious or spiritual life, values, or beliefs have changed over time.
3. How do you approach political and social issues? Do you have a particular political point of view? Are there particular issues or causes about which you feel strongly? Describe them.
4. What is the most important value in human living? Explain.
5. What else can you tell me that would help me understand your most fundamental beliefs and values about life and the world, the spiritual dimensions of your life, or your philosophy of life?
6. What impact have your beliefs, values had on your leadership?

VI. Other
What else should I know to understand your life story and your leadership?
Appendix C

Self report Measures
MLQ - Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire
Leader Form (5x-Short) -modified

Age:
Gender (please circle) M F
Level of leadership (please circle) senior executive/ senior manager/ manager

This questionnaire is to describe your leadership style as you perceive it. Please answer all items on this answer sheet. If an item is irrelevant, or if you are unsure or do not know the answer, leave the answer blank.

Thirty-six descriptive statements are listed on the following pages. Judge how frequently each statement fits you. The word "others" may mean your peers, clients, direct reports, supervisors, and/or all of these individuals.

Use the following rating scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Once in a while</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Fairly often</th>
<th>Frequently, if not always</th>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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</table>

1. I provide others with assistance in exchange for their efforts 0 1 2 3 4
2. I re-examine critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate 0 1 2 3 4
3. I fail to interfere until problems become serious 0 1 2 3 4
4. I focus attention on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions, and deviations from standards 0 1 2 3 4
5. I avoid getting involved when important issues arise 0 1 2 3 4
6. I talk about my most important values and beliefs 0 1 2 3 4
7. I am absent when needed 0 1 2 3 4
8. I seek differing perspectives when solving problems 0 1 2 3 4
9. I talk optimistically about the future 0 1 2 3 4
10. I instil pride in others for being associated with me 0 1 2 3 4
11. I discuss in specific terms who is responsible for achieving performance targets 0 1 2 3 4
12. I wait for things to go wrong, before taking action 0 1 2 3 4
13. I talk enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished 0 1 2 3 4
14. I specify the importance of having a strong sense of purpose 0 1 2 3 4

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www.mindgarden.com continued over
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MLQ continued</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I spend time teaching and coaching</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I make clear what one can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>I show that I am a firm believer in “If it ain't broke, don't fix it”</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>I go beyond self-interest for the good of the group</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>I treat others as individuals rather than just as a member of a group</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>I demonstrate that problems must become chronic before I take action</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I act in ways that build others' respect for me</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I concentrate my full attention on dealing with mistakes, complaints, and failures</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>I consider the moral and ethical consequences of decisions</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>I keep track of all mistakes</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>I display a sense of power and confidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>I articulate a compelling vision of the future</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>I direct my attention toward failures to meet standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>I avoid making decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>I consider an individual as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>I get others to look at problems from many different angles</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>I help others to develop their strengths</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>I suggest new ways of looking at how to complete assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>I delay responding to urgent questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>I emphasize the importance of having a collective sense of mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>I express satisfaction when others meet expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>I express confidence that goals will be achieved</td>
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</table>
Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS)

Age

Gender (please circle) M   F

Level of leadership (please circle) senior executive/ senior manager/ manager

Instructions.
For each of the following statements, please indicate how often the statement applies to you, by marking either a "0," "1," "2," or "3" in the space in front.

Mark "0" if the statement never applies to you.
Mark "1" if the statement only occasionally or seldom applies to you.
Mark "2" if the statement applies to you fairly often.
Mark "3" if the statement applies to you very often or nearly always.

1. I try to pass along the knowledge I have gained through my experiences.
2. I do not feel that other people need me.
3. I think I would like the work of a teacher.
4. I feel as though I have made a difference to many people.
5. I do not volunteer to work for a charity.
6. I have made and created things that have had an impact on other people.
7. I try to be creative in most things that I do.
8. I think that I will be remembered for a long time after I die.
9. I believe that society cannot be responsible for providing food and shelter for all homeless people.
10. Others would say that I have made unique contributions to society.

Continued over
Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS)

(Continued)

Instructions.
For each of the following statements, please indicate how often the statement applies to you, by marking either a "0," "1," "2," or "3" in the space in front.

Mark "0" if the statement never applies to you.
Mark "1" if the statement only occasionally or seldom applies to you.
Mark "2" if the statement applies to you fairly often.
Mark "3" if the statement applies to you very often or nearly always.

____11. If I were unable to have children of my own, I would like to adopt children.
____12. I have important skills that I try to teach others.
____13. I feel that I have done nothing that will survive after I die.
____14. In general, my actions do not have a positive effect on other people.
____15. I feel as though I have done nothing of worth to contribute to others.
____16. I have made many commitments to many different kinds of people, groups, and activities in my life.
____17. Other people say that I am a very productive person.
____18. I have a responsibility to improve the neighborhood in which I live.
____19. People come to me for advice.
____20. I feel as though my contributions will exist after I die.
Appendix D

Interview Coding

The interview coding followed McLeod (2001) and was conducted in two stages.

Stage 1 – Exploratory

After reading through the transcripts several times and becoming familiar with the contents, the author first conducted an exploratory analysis of themes allowing themes to emerge, documenting them and counting the number of times they emerged in the narratives of each participant and in total.

Stage 2 – Verificationary

In the second stage of the coding the author examined the transcripts for specific evidence of McAdams (2006) generative themes. Each time one of these themes was noted it was recorded and then the number of times it occurred calculated for each participant and in total.
Appendix E

Additional Illustrative Quotes

Struggle

Isolation feelings of being different

Lorraine

I was one of those kids who wasn’t academically brilliant but I was good at sport and I was reasonably smart which meant that to some degree I experienced some jealousy, from them and particularly in the first year of my secondary schooling. For the first six months no one spoke to me and no one sat and had lunch with me and it was mainly because I went to a school where most of the girls in my class had come up through the junior school. There were very few of us had come in from the state primary schools ... In fact I used to go home and say to Mum I didn’t want to go to school. And that has stayed with me a long time ... University was the same and ... I was so overpowered by the sheer numbers that I didn’t actually ... get involved in things, I was probably very lonely and I’m not the sort of a person who doesn’t make friends easily but I found that institution so overwhelming, because I was in the faculty of Arts, that I had great difficulty making friends. And in fact I have very few friends from my university days ... that I’ve kept in contact with.
Lack of confidence feelings of low self worth

Jill

… the evening when my husband came home and told me he was leaving. That really just pulled out the whole basis of my existence. As I said being married and having children was extremely important to me and I thought when N was born I’d done it and I’d made it. This event showed that I hadn’t at all. That I was just a dull, ugly person and unwanted … and that I’d been right to think that in the first place and I could just see a whole lifetime of loneliness and a rejection I suppose… it’s certainly the lowest point of my life. EJ

James

Now through all that there’s a kind of abiding theme, and I think the theme is to do with being unconfident, unsure... And I think I always had a view that, you know, if you are called to do something you’ve got to do it, whatever you feel you’ve got to do it. It’s a compulsion and I think that’s pretty much been the driving force, I haven’t always wanted to- you do what you do

Stephen

Well I think I would say that the fundamental life challenge for me is the question of self worth. I’ve grown up with the sense that, first of all, self worth is a competitive thing… you actually only get it by being ‘better than’. And I suppose one of the significant
adult experiences or important moments for me was the realization that it’s actually possible for there to be two smart people in the room. )

Experience of personal loss or tragedy

Jill:

That was very traumatic because it had been preceded by a couple of months of very difficult times where he had a stroke and got dementia as a result so he was quite mad. I had to deal with that and I’d find myself hoping that he would suddenly drop dead with a heart attack or something because he was so miserable, he was making my life so miserable and so difficult. I just didn’t want it to go on. So he went into hospital for a minor operation… and then the next day the surgeon rang me and said: Look he’s got really bad bladder cancer and he’s going to die very painfully within a year unless he has another heart attack today, which is possible’. And the surgeon said; ‘What do you want us to do?’ I suppose felt a bit guilty that I didn’t hesitate at all. I said: ‘Well no don’t take any extraordinary measures to save his life. He’s a member of the Volunteer Euthanasia Society- I just want him to go.’ So that’s what they did, but I’ve always felt a bit guilty I suppose about that and I suppose that I wasn’t actually with him when he died … so my last memory of him is that this very unhappy, very confused, very angry man. I didn’t see him right at the end when he
became quite peaceful and just drifted off. I don’t know whether it’s
had any influence on me as a leader. It’s just an important event in
my life. And quite traumatic really.

James

I remember when it was really, really bad, I was sitting ... and I
could hear this mantra, I suppose a sort of negative mantra saying,
‘You’re dead, you’re dead’, and about a day later the phrase from
St. Paul came through, ‘And your life is hidden with Christ and
God.’ So I thought, ‘Yes that’s what that means’. Even though I felt
dead, physically and mentally and actually my work ... is dead and
gone, I thought there’s something else sustaining me here that
nobody knows about and no one can take it away. And we’ll survive
this and it was the knowledge of that – I thought, we can deal with
it.

External resources and support

Having a mentor or role model

Ken:

My mother’s been a big influence on my life. Mum was... the
tertiary qualified member of the family but I didn’t get to realize
that until years after I was out of school, but those values of
caring and empathy and support and giving – a major influence,
quite a contrast to my father in many respects, but a huge, huge
influence on my own personal attitudes.
Sally:

I think Mum and Dad - both incredibly giving people - never had much money ... Those core values of strong sense of community both in terms of the importance of family ... and more broadly. I said Dad was a doctor. At F.G. at the time we had a lot of ... immigrants coming and establishing market gardens up there... I remember Dad knew that a lot of people that he saw could not afford to pay and there were a whole heap of people that never got bills from Dad. And those who could afford to pay got bills and those who couldn’t didn’t. But that sense of community was reciprocated because we never lacked vegetables in season. We’d get up one morning and there’d be a crate of broccoli at the back door. ... My father being very Catholic ... I actually found out from some communists ... long after my father had died ... that he was highly regarded by the communists in the area, as someone who (even though) he wouldn’t identify himself as a communist as such ... I did have a Catholic education, I had that reinforced.

It was more what I saw of mum and dad and they were Catholics and how they expressed that that more impressed me and because Catholicism in the end held far more questions for me than answers. So it was Mum and Dad and their living values.
Ruth:

I had an aunt who lived in C. which was a beach area ... and from time to time I went there, and I loved it ... I used to do that from a very early age, and my uncle would always read to me. And even though my mother was a great reader she was a reader of magazines. He actually read books to me, and because it was with cousins so there’d be three or four of us in the room and he’d be sitting there reading to us. And I just absolutely love books and I’m sure that it came from him, because when he’d finished reading, I’d then grab the book and read it myself, and read it and re-read it until we had another one to read.)

The woman next door’s husband was a travelling salesman so when he’d go away I’d go in there to keep her company. Apparently I was a chatterbox which is significant because later on I became quite shy, and that neighbour didn’t have any children and ...pantomimes and things like that that she wanted to go to and she’d come to come in and ask Mum if she could take me which I thought was fantastic. So probably from about 7 or 8 she’d come in and say, ‘We’re going to the theatre today, you’ll have to put your best dress on,’ and I’d get gloves and hat and purse, I thought I was a real little lady. Even though Mum was really busy I had a lot of people around me who nurtured me and gave me time and opened my eyes to things...so I had a lot
of experiences... I vividly remember her coming in that day. We both went off in our hat and gloves and she was very old at that stage, probably about 22! We went into town on the train. We were very important people, and just all these things that were made available to me that my siblings didn’t have.

James

That’s another thing, if things don’t work out, you have to accept that and wait for the next opportunity. F.T. was a great mentor on that. He would put up these ideas and the board would block it and as soon as he saw opposition he’d say: ‘No, let’s not go down there, it was just a thought…’ and he wouldn’t get it through. But six months later he’d slip it back in and he’d usually succeed. I’m not that manipulative, but it’s this business of knowing when the time is right, knowing when an idea is ready to be received, and embraced and acted upon and just because you think it’s a good idea at that particular time, doesn’t mean it is.

Mark:

My grandmother ... was a woman that had spent 30 years of her life in Korea, where my mother had been born and everything about her home and her life was imbued that, with an Asian flavour... and we just always talked about Korea, and meeting of missionaries and other people in the house all the time. And that whole atmosphere is what I think of when I think of my
grandmother, actually telling me stories, rather than reading them, because she would tell me stories about Korea and they were always entertaining and often amusing, and always really interesting... but they transferred me to another place. ...That Korean heritage from my grandparents and my mother are very important....

(My grandparents) ... were both leaders. There have been books written about them and I’ve always appreciated how special each of them was in their workplaces. My grandmother’s workplace was in her home, and so I think that’s actually quite a significant sort of heritage. My grandmother was one of the earliest graduates of M. University with a Master of Arts. They were both extremely clever people and I’ve just felt very privileged to have that heritage. Mum often says to me that I’m actually a missionary as well, just not a missionary for God. I rather like that.

Education and learning

Ruth

(Tertiary education) ...also helped me at work because what I did was I encouraged so many people to undertake tertiary education and I have had so many responses back years later saying that they had had the same thrill as I did... You know, there is no other power that’s as good as having knowledge ... you
I just think it’s such an empowering feeling to have knowledge that I encourage as many people as I can, and I say, ‘Look I don’t care if you go and do macramé ... It doesn’t matter what it is.’ Because part of it is the whole experience of mixing with people outside your own experience, gaining knowledge ... It’s not just what you get in lectures and things like that, it’s that mixing with other people. And I do tell them that it’s an important part, they need to go to the café, they need to sit down and have coffee and they need to listen to people who are younger and older and all the rest of it. I really do encourage that because it is part of my leadership, because I actually did it and it brings empowerment. 

Ruth 208 words

Recognition

Lorraine

I guess that was recognition of effort. I think that was my peers saying to me ‘you are worthy of this’ and that’s something ... you don’t work for because you don’t think about it. ..That was for me absolutely an exciting time because it was really my peers… within the profession who were saying ‘we want to give you something back’... So that was really important to me. It was important to my mother, because my mother came along to the ceremony and I could see her sort of, puffed up. I think that
was really good for my mother to see that, to have her pride in her daughter... I thought ‘I’m one of a 100 women in this state’ and that’s a hundred women going back to when women first settled here. But it was before that because there were actually Aboriginal women... Yeah, it’s very special. 150 words

In a profession where probably females have not been recognized for leadership, that to me was really important, and I guess that was just one of the fundamental things that I was so interested in, assisting and setting up the network with so many women being overlooked as leaders, as middle managers, as ideas people. 55 words

Emma:

I was elated about those things because to me it was like they were happy to work with you or they wouldn’t have invited you in the first place...

Ruth:

I remember reading about people not wanting to attend their graduation ceremonies. What a ridiculous question, why wouldn’t you want to go? Because I couldn’t imagine anyone who had gone through all that wouldn’t want to march down there in front of all their family and friends to celebrate the achievement. I can really remember sitting there at ... in that hall with the blue gown and the cap and walking down. I can still remember the feeling that I had
receiving that thing that I had worked so hard to achieve. ...(I felt)
absolute pride but also just so grateful that those people were
there to celebrate it because they had been so significant with the
support that they had given me. And even my mother who could
never understand why I joined the police force, could never
understand why I undertook all this stuff on top of what I was
already doing, sitting there, still as proud as punch, sitting there
telling everyone about her daughter who had just gained a
university degree.

Mark:

(I said): ‘Well I want to go overseas and I’ve come to offer my
resignation.’ And again this was another point in my life when I
realized people actually thought I was quite good with what I was
doing because he said: ‘We don’t want you to resign, take as long
as you like off and come back.’ I said, ‘Okay then I’ll take a year’
He wrote to me about three-quarters of the way through and said,
‘Do you want to come back?’ and I said, ‘Yeah, that’d be quite
good.’ So it was very progressive of him because he realized I
needed to spread my wings a bit and he gave me some freedom to
do that.

Emma:
I got up and told my personal story and had a very vivid response from a lot of people when I spoke. And ... I think that gave me much confidence - again experience - and in terms of leadership, yes sure it was a personal event but I know that if I hadn't had those experiences I couldn’t have been the public speaker that I’ve been in each of the jobs I’ve had and stood up in front of many people and talked about work issues or given direction or done the microphone thin, so a key event

Ken:

What comes next? This is really great! This was something I’d always wanted. I was really pleased and I thought I was looking forward to telling my wife, S....This will be good to share with my friends - that I’d been successful in this regard...(JN)

Developing inner strength

Being independent, being your own person

Mark:

When I learned I had cancer I decided that I would tell people and keep people informed about what was happening - and a few weeks ago (on his return to work) I gave a speech in front of staff and was very open to them about what it had meant to me, how much their support to me and my family had - we had valued - and a number of my staff came up to me afterwards and said how much they valued that and one of my staff said that that was very
brave to do that. I did find it difficult to do. I think she was right, but that was my inclination - to be straightforward. And I so much valued what they’d done that I wanted them to know that. In different situations if I didn’t particularly appreciate what somebody had done, I would probably tell them.

Mark

I think I really really resent it. And particularly with the stuff that’s come out on leadership in the last four or five years which is all about your own intuition and your own emotional intelligence and much less about adopting whoever the latest guru of business leaders is. I really resent those people who are trying to mould me as a particular type of leader and that includes just a couple of staff that I’ve had as colleagues, a couple of Board members in the late 90’s. And I guess it was only when B.H. started to really take off in 2000 that I began to realize that I didn’t have to conform to what somebody else thought was appropriate for leadership and I backed my own judgment more. . . I feel that I’ve come to this really late in life, to be more confident of the things I can do, and do them well and farm out the things I can’t do well to other people, to make the most of your strengths and have other people deal with your weaknesses. And in the last four or five years we’ve built a really good team here that allows me to do that and not be so worried
about the things that I would normally feel were critical for a 
leader such as numbers.)

Mark

A number of people perceive me as being very definite. If I believe 
something I say it, and it’s often said of me that I call a spade a 
spade and some people might be offended by that, but my intention 
is not to offend. But if someone asks me what I think I’ll tell them 
and Mum tells me I’ve always been like that

Jill:

I’ve always been very honest - and that’s not always a good 
thing. I had a terrible fight with someone before Christmas 
because I was honest with him and really I shouldn’t have been. 
But I just believe in being straightforward and candid and that’s 
an important part of my leadership. I think.

Seeking or meeting challenges

Ruth

I think throughout my life I have always taken responsibility and 
accountability that if something needs changing I at least have to 
start even if I need help to do it, I have to at least initiate it.(SN7)

Perseverance

Emma:

During that time ...I had teenage kids who didn’t have a very 
strong influence with their father so they were acting out, that
was not easy and I had money problems so I was working on a casual basis for the CHS ... so I was taking people with disabilities for a day out and getting paid $80 for a day. So sometimes with my lack of timeliness around things I’d have an essay that was due at the same time and I’d think do I get the 80 bucks or do I do the essay? But during that time in five years there was no time when I asked for an extension, and that was because I thought you’d lose respect if you like, the rules are you’ve got to have in by such and such a date. But I found a great release the day you put it in the edit box and you let it go, there’s nothing more you can do with that one, it’s gone. So that was good.

James:

There’s a military phase actually, I often heard it when I was in office and its courage under fire. That’s the ultimate test actually, that you can somehow sustain life and limb and dignity regardless of what’s going on

Sally:

… developed strong skills of when I have to be hard and sharp and I guess given some of the discussions we have, while my personal style is to be personable and caring and everything it doesn’t always happen. If I have to be I can be tough as well and that’s not my personal preference but if I only had to deal with
people who share the same values as me. But when you deal with politicians sometimes you have to be pretty tough and take a tough stance as well and I can do that when I have to.

Ken:

‘No, I’m not going to do that. I don’t need your support or your input to help me manage my career.’ That for me was - I’m going to do it on my own. I’ll take advice and support but I’m not going to be manipulated by this person; so I just put up with her for the next six months and I then I actually got a promotion and the outcome of that was the best opportunity - it created all the other opportunities for me, it was the best thing I ever did to keep pushing for another job and making a decision to leave the public service.

Ken:

It was good I was really proud of being accepted into uni... I went up and told my father and uncle at the cattle yards in Bendigo. It was a Tuesday, so I went up and told them... that I had been accepted. Monash had accepted me, and I was going off to uni. So it was a good feeling and I made a decision at that time that I was going to see it through, no matter how hard it got, I was not quitting, I was going to keep going regardless
Redemption

Enhanced agency

Sally:

I think there are a few things, some of them personal around the importance of family, the importance of respecting others, about people’s different ways of responding, whether it’s in personal crisis situations or difficult circumstances, more broadly...It made me more reflect on why I needed to talk and it was like if I didn’t she never properly existed, ... And in my professional and political role I’m still very much a person-person and those sorts of relationships and personal experiences people go through are a lot about how I respond to many people in my work. It also I guess puts in a context of family, and whatever you do, that’s why I am lucky in the job I do because I am passionate about what I do, about joy in living, making the most of the moment because things can end...and you do factor that in terms of how you work on a daily basis. MB6

Self mastery

Jill

I think its part of the miserable time I had in my schooldays really, when I just didn’t fit in ... that sense of isolation is something that recurred throughout that whole time until I got to university. ... I think the things I’ve done have tried to disprove
that. But, I thought at that stage that I wasn’t worthwhile, that no one liked me, that I wasn’t good at anything and I think a lot of my life has been trying to disprove that. By doing things and taking opportunities.

Achievement/responsibility

Ken:

One of the most significant events that’s ever happened to me in my life…I was elected captain, really chuffed to be captain and we were playing B on the local football ground …and I was Ruck Rover and there was another guy I was changing with and I knew that when I was going onto the ball we were actually opening the game up and we were winning and when this guy was on it we were being beaten, and I didn’t force it, I thought oh well I’m the captain but I should do the right thing by him let him play on the ball because its an important part of the game – and we lost. And afterwards my father said to me, ‘When you were on the ball the game opened up a lot more and you were winning, you were getting the ball.’ - and I knew that as captain I’d done the wrong thing and I thought about it and why I hadn’t put myself onto the ball was because you don’t put yourself first, it was an ego thing, people will think I’m egotistical if I’m putting myself on the ball and not giving this guy a go – what I should have done is taken this guy off the ground and brought somebody else on. I was very
clear about ...being polite and considerate. I grew up Catholic, you know, you put others first, you go to church on Sundays, you listen to all this stuff, ‘who will be last will be first’ and its all running round inside my head and I’m trying to work it out. I did it wrong. I was playing the game, I was the captain, I shouldn’t have been backward in asserting myself as the first person to be giving something on the field...and I got it wrong on that occasion. And that was a real big influence on my thinking and I thought never again will I be afraid to push myself forward if I think I’m the right person and that’s influenced my thinking as a leader.

Ultimate concern

Mark:

Well there’s no question obviously that getting cancer last year is the challenge... I’m relatively young to get it, most people are over 50, I’m 49, but the really concerning thing for two or three months for us was the fact they thought I had a secondary one ... and that’s not good - in fact by the time we’d sat down with the ... surgeon I wasn’t sure that I’d last out this year with the sort of prognosis that he was describing. So for two months in my mind I was looking death in the face and J was too. ...And J and I talked about it and we agreed that I really don’t have any regrets for the life I’ve lived to date. And so if I think about the various
elements of my life and family, and work and other activities I really feel that I’ve been able to balance things so then the challenge now is to understand that, the cancer I mean, and think about how I change my habits and how I deal with the next 50 years, given I’ve now been given a clean bill of health….

Generative themes

Conflicts between agency (power) and communion (love)

Emma

I always thought I could make a difference… And now having worked for …a government department that is so big, I haven’t lost the commitment about doing the job the best I can, but I have lost the thing of ‘ I can make a massive difference’. I think I can make a difference in my little sphere, but even within that, I’m only working, I am only genuinely working because my financial superannuation set up is not where it needs to be for me to stop working and the defining moment of losing the second member of my family and understanding that I have lost two kids and two marriages shifts my value system to the point where I think don’t want to work. I want to spend time with my youngest son, my grandson who was on the way when my second son was killed, and my ageing parents who are currently still both well, and that would be my priority by choice. So the defining
moment is I have to find the balance between understanding
that I need to work, but it changes the way you work.

Articulating pro social goals for the future

Lorraine

I am totally pissed off with the federal government because there
is no social conscience and it’s the lack of social conscience that
really annoys me. And why are we spending all this money on
defence when we should be spending it on education and health.

And you know I’ve often said I don’t care about paying taxes for
families because I don’t have kids. That’s my role to pay taxes but
it’s not my role to support the army in Afghanistan - so you know

I have some fairly firm views on that.

Mark:

In a left/right sense, definitely a left leaning, largely as a
consequence of the home ... I guess I’ve always had a view that
we need government to look after the battler... I’ve never allied
myself with a political party... I could never support a party that I
didn’t feel strongly that I accepted all their major policies ...

Definitely strong views on certain things around the environment,
social welfare, education, health - appalled by the dismantling by
the K government of a whole range of community and social
systems and fabric.