

**Leaving the rat race to get a life:
A study of midlife career downshifting**

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ABSTRACT

“Downshifting” typically refers to a contemporary phenomenon where professionals, executives and managers voluntarily opt out of financially rewarding career paths to earn their living in alternative ways, involving lowered income and status. Since there was little systematic research on this phenomenon, this study aimed to provide further understanding of career downshifting from a phenomenological perspective. The central research question posed was “How do downshiffters experience their career change?” Supplementary research questions included: (a) How can career downshifting be more easeful? (b) Are there gender differences? and (c) What, if any, general midlife issues are implicated in career downshifting? To address the main aim of the research, a primary qualitative approach using semi-structured depth interviews was employed. A self-report questionnaire was also used to provide supplementary quantitative data. The procedures for heuristic enquiry recommended by Moustakas (1999) formed the basis for the analysis of the qualitative data.

As a result of downshifting, participants reported that they lost 54% of their previous income, on average. This study found that both organisational and personal considerations contributed to participants deciding to downshift their careers. Using the terminology of Derr (1986), prior to career downshifting, participants were predominantly oriented towards “getting ahead”, “getting high” or “getting secure”. After career downshifting, participants were more oriented towards “getting free”, “getting balanced” and “getting authentic”. The phenomenological experiences of career downshiffters included seven core themes: (a) Awareness of the need for change; (b) Struggle with the need for change; (c) Feeling down; (d) Facing difficulties and confronting issues; (e) Incubation; (f) Emergence; and (g) Possible positive outcomes. Positive benefits of career downshifting included greater satisfaction with life, and perceptions of greater autonomy, greater environmental mastery, greater self acceptance, better relations with others, and increased personal growth.

Nevertheless, career downshifting is not easy since it involves personal change of a large magnitude, and results in losses such as loss of income and social status. However, greater ease in the downshifting transition is associated with having the

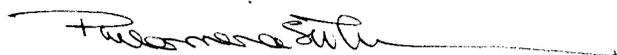
support of a spouse or relationship partner, and taking a longer time to prepare for the transition before leaving the previous occupational role. Gender differences found included a greater proportion of women seeking professional help with their transition, and a greater proportion of men moving towards self-employment. Several general midlife issues were implicated to a greater or lesser extent in the narratives of career downshiffters interviewed. These issues included a re-evaluation of work and life priorities, apprehension of time left to live, confrontation of opposite tendencies within oneself, greater introspection or reflectiveness, and a revision of personal identity.

The main contributions of this study include: (a) a systematic account of a phenomenon which may be more common in the future, given current social indicators; (b) a map of the career downshifting experience to assist potential career downshiffters, as well as those in the helping professions; and (c) identifying transition processes that have not been articulated in existing models of career change and general life transition.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree at any university, 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 and procedures specified by the Swinburne University Psychology Discipline's document on human research and experimentation have been adhered to in the preparation of this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philomena Tan', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

PHILOMENA TAN

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE PRESENT STUDY ON CAREER DOWNSHIFTING

This study was designed to shed light on the experience of career downshifting among Australian professionals and managers in midlife. The term ‘downshifting’ is typically used to refer to a contemporary phenomenon where professionals, executives and managers **voluntarily** opt out of financially successful career paths to earn a living in alternative ways, resulting in lowered income and status (Tan, 1998). The following examples provide an initial flavour of the phenomenon under investigation.

“I had decided that I needed to get my life in order. I realised I had to sit down and work out my priorities and make sure I addressed them ... My wife and I decided to return to Australia. No one in the corporate world could understand why anyone could give up a vice-presidency at Microsoft’s head office for a lower-level job in Australia.”

Daniel Petre, former Vice President at Microsoft,
Author of “Father time: Making time for our children”
(Petre, 1998, p. 29)

“My decision (to change career) was based on purely selfish reasons. Children can be influenced and I wanted that influence to be me ... I can still handle business meetings, but I’m no longer on my nerves and it doesn’t take a toll. Basically, I no longer have the drive for power and money. They don’t keep you warm at night.”

Sue Calwell, former Chief Executive Officer
of the Melbourne Tourist Authority, co-author of
“There’s more to life than sex and money”
(Lester, 1997, p. 4)

“There were a lot of comfortable reasons for doing (medicine); you get a lot of approval from a whole lot of people ... Once I’d made up my mind to leave the practice I set a six-month deadline and wrote to every patient. It was a bit like a

birthday, a special day was coming along. It was almost as if someone had tapped me on my shoulder and said your life is going to start again."

David Grodski, former doctor,
currently landscape gardener
(Nancarrow, 1997, p. 3)

Over the last three years, downshifting has captured media attention, as evidenced by the quotes above. Other examples of well known people who have downshifted include Australian fashion designer Prue Acton who moved to rural NSW to paint, and former Federal Treasurer John Dawkins who resigned to open a winery in South Australia (Bachelard, 1998). Indeed, the ABC has a successful TV series called 'Sea Change' which features a former corporate lawyer who moved to country Victoria to become the local magistrate (Browne, 1999).

While it may be tempting to account for downshifting simply as midlife crisis and career change, several factors suggest that it is a phenomenon worth investigating. First, conventional wisdom suggests that people generally change their careers to advance themselves in terms of money and/or status, whereas downshifting by definition implies less money and status. Second, downshifting typically involves radical career moves, as illustrated in the examples provided above, rather than relatively minor changes such as moves to a different role within the same organisation or industry or occupation, which could be subsumed easily under the rubric of 'midcareer renewal' (Bailey & Hansson, 1995). Moreover, in midlife, there is less time to recover from catastrophic financial losses, and it is more common to observe a conservative career strategy such as protecting financial resources. Third, there are many disincentives to career downshifting, apart from the consequences of decreased income and status. These disincentives include a possible need for re-training, social costs of going against societal norms, and the emotional costs of giving up a financially rewarding and well-respected career. Finally, social surveys and respected social commentators such as Harvard economist Prof Juliet Schor and marketing expert Faith Popcorn have predicted a growing trend towards this phenomenon (Tan, 1998). Elaboration of these issues is provided in the next chapter.

In spite of the factors listed above, there is little published systematic research on downshifting. Compared to the years prior to 1996, there are now more reported psychological studies on career change, and midlife career change, but none have focused specifically on the phenomenon of career downshifting. To date, only four books have focused on downshifting – three by journalists who have downshifted themselves (Bull, 1998; Ghazi & Jones, 1997; Saltzman, 1991), and one by an economist (Schor, 1998). While each of these books has focused on particular aspects of downshifting (e.g., typology of downshifters, guidelines for successful downshifting, or the economic context of downshifting), none provide an in-depth account of downshifters' experiences, motivations, difficulties and outcomes.

The Australian media, on the other hand, have implied a wide variety of negative motivations as suggested by the following headlines: “Top executives – why they’re drop outs” (Maley, 1998); “Stressed-out city-slickers prefer coasting” (Bachelard, 1998); “The downwardly mobile find a new way to go” (Schiel, 1999). Only a few media reports present downshifting as something positive, for example “A change for the better” (Nancarrow, 1997). A representative of one of Australia’s top recruitment and outplacement agency dismissed downshifters as those who were less than successful: “Most people don’t downshift voluntarily; they were over-promoted; the requirements of the job changed; they were in the wrong career; or they couldn’t handle the pace” (Hunder, 1999, p. 11).

Given: (a) an apparent trend towards more frequent instances of downshifting, (b) the lack of psychological information, and (c) the apparent negative bias in the media, it was hoped that helping professionals such as counselling psychologists and psychotherapists would benefit from the research reported in this thesis. Apart from the applied focus to the research, I also had a personal reason for undertaking this research. I am a career downshifter myself, having moved from 15 years of market research consulting to being a psychotherapist. In the early phases of my own career downshift, I encountered a few women who had similarly downshifted from corporate careers, but did not have the benefit of knowing anyone who had successfully completed a career downshift. Nor did I have the benefit of reading about others’ experiences, let alone having knowledge of the term ‘downshifting’. Thus, this research was also motivated by a personal interest in others’ experiences, as well as wanting to provide assistance to

possible stakeholders in downshifting – potential or current downshifters, families and friends of downshifters, and those who may be asked to provide professional help to potential and current downshifters (e.g., career counsellors, psychologists and psychotherapists).

Since personal experience of a phenomenon has advantages and disadvantages in relation to the process of psychological research, I have documented relevant details of my own career downshifting in Appendix A, so that the reader may form his/her own assessment about the extent of my potential bias for himself/herself. My involvement and first hand experiences of the phenomenon also had to be taken into consideration in designing a study that minimised bias. Methodological considerations and methods adopted to minimise bias are detailed in Chapter 6.

My main aim in conducting the research was to contribute to understanding the experience of career downshifting from a phenomenological perspective. The main research question I wanted to answer was “How do downshifters experience their career change?” Supplementary questions included:

1. How can career downshifting be more easeful?
2. Are there gender differences?
3. What midlife issues are present in career downshifting?
4. What advice would downshifters offer to potential downshifters, given the benefits of hindsight?
5. How did participants react to the term ‘downshifting’?

A review of the relevant psychological literature is provided in Chapters 2 through to 5. In Chapter 2, I review what is currently known about downshifting. In Chapter 3, I locate downshifting in the context of contemporary careers where the nature of work has changed dramatically during the last 20 years. In Chapter 4, a review of the literature on career change is provided. I also provide a broader perspective of understanding downshifting and career change by reviewing contemporary views of life transitions. In Chapter 5, I provide a brief review of the literature on midlife since I was interested in the downshifting phenomenon among those in midlife. Given that many midlife individuals are at the peak of their career earning potential and were likely to have considerable responsibilities in terms of family and financial commitments, I was

curious about aspects of midlife which contributed to a radical career change in the form of downshifting.

Chapter 6 describes the rationale for the methodological approach taken to investigate the phenomenon, and details the methods used. Results of the investigation and answers to the research questions listed above are provided in Chapters 7, 8 and 9. In Chapter 10, I discuss the research findings in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapters 2 through to 5, together with implications for stakeholders, particularly those intending to downshift, and those in the helping professions.

CHAPTER 2: THE PHENOMENON OF DOWNSHIFTING

Since ‘downshifting’ is a relatively new term, I begin this chapter by discussing its origins, reviewing its meanings, and contrasting it with other notionally related terms. The aim is to clarify use of the term “downshifting” in this thesis. Next, I consider social indicators which point to the relevance of the phenomenon (Section 2.2). Then I review the main publications on downshifting, to glean what we currently know about (a) Who are the people who downshift? (b) What are the factors that contribute to downshifting? (c) What are the barriers and difficulties to downshifting? (d) What is known about the experience of downshifting? (e) What are the benefits of downshifting? (Section 2.3).

2.1 The term ‘downshifting’

Ghazi and Jones (1997), who wrote one of the four major books on downshifting, attributed the earliest use of the term downshifting to Gerald Celente in 1994, then the director of the Trends Research Institute in New York. However, searches on the internet and electronic databases, yielded a definition dated as early as 1990. The magazine ‘US News and World Report’ defined downshifters as those “who reinvent success by shunning career-track jobs with good promotion prospects for jobs that allow more flexible hours and more time for family and community” (Words to watch, 1990). The first monograph on downshifting appears to be a book called “Downshifting: Reinventing success on a slower track” written by American journalist Amy Saltzman (1991).

The International Downshifter’s Institute (1997) explained that the term downshifting was derived from the idea of changing from a higher gear to a lower gear, and consequently not being on the “fast track”: “Downshifting is like the gears on a racing bicycle. There are many gears and while some choose to disengage completely, others make a more gradual downshift” (p. 1). The first important aspect of defining downshifting, then, is the **move away from a career path that is onwards and**

upwards, sometimes referred to as “the fast track” or “the rat race”, or simply “getting ahead”.

Writers such as Ghazi and Jones (1997), Popcorn (1991, 1996) and Saltzman (1991) go further in their definition of downshifting by attributing motivations such as desire for a better quality of life with greater balance and meaning, with less stress, overwork and relationship breakdown. American forecaster and writer, Popcorn (1991) referred to downshifting as ‘cashing out’, describing it as:

“the low-keyed trend that recognises that quality of life is more important than the title on the door. That you’ll be happier in the long run if you like what you’re doing – rather than do what you’re doing just for the paycheck. Or because you’ve been educated to do it ... With merging and purging, downsizing, and our favourite euphemism of all, rightsizing, many of the best and the brightest in big businesses are, or should be, leaving to do their own thing” (p. 223).

Popcorn (1996) cautioned that ‘cashing out’ should not be confused with dropping out, or copping out, that it is more a question of opting out, irrespective of whether an individual was forced to leave or choose to leave an organisation. Saltzman (1991) also distinguished downshifting from the hippie movement, the back to the land movement, or a romantic notion of moving to the country for a more quiet lifestyle. She argued that downshifting is a viable lifestyle choice and indeed, a well considered choice for some individuals in the current context of organisational life.

Thus, the second important aspect of defining downshifting is that it **implies a change in lifestyle**. While many writers have woven motivations or reasons for downshifting into their definitions of downshifting, I believe that a definition of downshifting does not need a priori assumptions. If we assume that downshifting is primarily motivated by improving quality of life, or wanting to decrease undesirable situations such as pressures at work, we might fail to consider other issues which could be involved in making this career choice (e.g., midlife considerations). A person can be described as downshifting their career simply by observing that the person chose work that involved less money and status, and that it involved a lifestyle change as a result.

A third possible criterion for defining downshifting involves whether **voluntary choice** was involved. In this thesis, I have chosen to consider downshifting as a voluntary choice on the part of the individual, rather than resulting from being forced to leave a career or organisation (e.g., being fired for lack of performance, or retrenched as a result of organisational restructuring). The main reason for this third criterion is because the psychological literature indicates that those who change a career involuntarily have more to contend with than those who change a career voluntarily (e.g., Beijan & Salomone, 1995). In other words, I was interested in those who chose this type of career change which would involve less financial rewards and its consequences, rather than those who were forced to adopt a change in lifestyle because they were forced into accepting less rewarding work.

Both Popcorn (1996) and Ghazi and Jones (1997) pointed out that a choice to downshift is not necessarily for an indefinite period of time. Some individuals choose to downshift during a specific time of life (e.g., professional women during the early years of their children), planning to return to their careers at a later stage. Furthermore, McKenna (1997) suggested that some people will have cycles of scaling their career paths up and down throughout their lifecycle. In other words, downshifting one's career is **not necessarily a permanent proposition**; there are part-time downshifters and serial downshifters.

In the course of my research, I found that many people confused the term 'downshifting' with 'downsizing'. In the interests of comprehensiveness, it is worthwhile to point out that 'downsizing' refers to the activity whereby organisations reduce their size by retrenching a number of employees. Unfortunately, the term 'downshifting' is sometimes used in the field of cognitive psychology (i.e. in a non-career context) to refer to "the psychophysiological response to threat, accompanied by a sense of helplessness or fatigue" (Pool, 1997, p. 12), in other words, a sort of mental downshifting. In this context, the person who has downshifted has the experience of fear and anxiety, leading to the feeling that he/she is unable to access their ability to deal with the situation that they are facing. In motoring, the term 'downshifting' refers to changing to a lower gear. Obviously, these definitions do not apply in this thesis.

Celente considered downshifting as “a new Renaissance philosophy”: “People are very empty and they are looking for much deeper passions in life than those provided through material accumulation or through vicarious association with status symbols and people who represent them. Voluntary simplicity is very much a bottom-up movement” (cited in Ghazi & Jones, 1997, pp. 44-45). This quote shows that Celente equated downshifting with ‘voluntary simplicity’. The term ‘voluntary simplicity’ was coined by Richard Gregg, a British disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, and the concept was further promoted by Elgin (1981) in his book “Voluntary simplicity”. While the ‘voluntary simplicity’ philosophy drew on the traditions of the Quakers, the Puritans and transcendentalists such as Emerson and Thoreau, Elgin emphasised that many people experimenting with voluntary simplicity did not view themselves as part of a conscious social movement. Etzioni (1998) defined ‘voluntary simplicity’ as “the choice out of free will ... to limit expenditures on consumer goods and services, and to cultivate non-materialistic sources of satisfaction and meaning” (p. 620). Etzioni’s essay discussed three types of people who practice voluntary simplicity – downshiffters, strong simplifiers, and those practising the simple living movement (wholistic simplifiers).

Downshiffters were defined by Etzioni (1998) as “economically well off and secure people who voluntarily give up some consumer goods, often considered luxuries, they could easily afford, but basically maintain their rather rich and consumption-oriented lifestyle” (p. 622). An example is people who can afford expensive clothing and accessories but “dress down” in one way or another by wearing t-shirts, or jeans, and driving old cars. **Strong simplifiers** were defined as “people who have given up high-paying, high-stress jobs as lawyers, business people, investment bankers and so on, to live on less, often much less, income” (p. 623-624). The third category Etzioni referred to as “the most dedicated, **wholistic simplifiers** (who) adjust their whole life patterns according to the ethos of voluntary simplicity. They often move from affluent suburbs or gentrified parts of major cities to smaller towns, the countryside, farms and less affluent or urbanised parts of the country ... with the explicit goal of leading a ‘simpler’ life” (p. 625-626).

From the above discussion, it appears that ‘downshifting’ can refer to two particular domains –consumption and/or careers. Etzioni’s (1998) first category of voluntary simplicity is called downshifting, but actually refers to downshifting only with

regard to conspicuous consumption. His second category of ‘strong simplifiers’ correspond to the career downshifters referred to by Saltzman (1991) and those who ‘cashed out’ referred to by Popcorn (1991, 1996). It is possible that some career downshifters may move to smaller towns and country areas, overlapping with Etzioni’s (1998) third category, but moving to a smaller town and country area does not make one a career downshifter necessarily. (For example, a person could undertake such a move as a way of advancing to a more financially rewarding career in a regional centre). Thus, there is an overlap between those who have downshifted their career and those who have downshifted their consumption of consumer goods and services.

This brief review of the usage of the term ‘downshifting’ has shown that there is room for confusion in the use of the term. For the purposes of this thesis, my focus is on **career downshifting** whereby people have changed their careers to work that involved less income, status and responsibility. I distinguish career downshifting from **consumer downshifting** (which refers to consuming fewer consumer goods and services) and discuss both in this chapter. For the rest of this thesis, however, I focus on career downshifting, referring to it subsequently as ‘downshifting’ for brevity. For reasons discussed above, I have limited my thesis to **voluntary career downshifting**. There are no a priori assumptions about the permanence of any downshifting career change, nor any assumptions of individual’s motivations for the career change. There is, however, an assumption that downshifting will impact on an individual’s way of living.

2.2 Social indicators of downshifting

Harvard economist Schor (1998) reported from her national survey that 19% of her sample of 800 American adults had made a voluntary lifestyle change between 1990 and 1996, (excluding retirement), that involved earning less money. Over half of the 152 downshifters interviewed (55%) considered their new lifestyle to be permanent. The majority (85%) were happy about the changes made, although 35% missed the extra income, with a further 19% experiencing “real hardship” (Schor, 1998, p. 118). Only 12% had involuntarily downshifted as a consequence of losing a job, or having hours or salary reduced. Among those who voluntarily downshifted, 29% changed to a lower paying job, 12% reduced working hours, 16% ceased paid employment outside the

home, 17% changed careers and/or went back to study, and 10% started their own business. Only 2% reduced the number of jobs held, with 1% refusing a promotion. On average, Schor's voluntary downshiffters worked about 45 hours pre-downshifting and about 32 hours post-downshifting.

In the UK, research conducted by the Henley Centre for Forecasting was cited by Ghazi and Jones (1997) as providing "hard evidence" that downshifting is a significant emerging trend (p. 57). While there were no figures on frequency of actual career downshifting, this nation-wide UK survey indicated a high propensity, at least among those surveyed, to consider career downshifting. First, 42% of those who were in full-time work said they would choose to work part-time if they felt they could afford to do so. One-quarter agreed with the statement 'I would be willing to take a lower paid job if it meant less stress and more free time'. Furthermore, 28% said they would rather have more time off in future rather than money. Some 17% said they would accept a 10% pay cut in return for three extra days leave a year, and three hours off the working week. In terms of attitudes, 50% of respondents agreed with the statement 'dedicating yourself to your job isn't worth the sacrifices you have to make'.

In Australia, a Newspoll survey conducted on behalf of the Australian Centre for Industrial Relations Research and Training (ACIRRT), ("The Overworked Australian", 1997) showed that one in three full-time workers would prefer fewer hours, with professionals/managers more eager for fewer hours than manual workers (35% compared to 22%). Perhaps this is not surprising, considering that the average hours worked by full-time workers had increased to 43 hours in the late 1990's with one in three males in full-time employment working more than 49 hours a week.

Apart from social surveys, there are also numerous internet web sites related to career downshifting. In October 1997, internet searches using the search engines Altavista and Yahoo! yielded about 1400 matches each. About 3% of these were related to career downshifting. Titles of career downshifting web sites included "Downshifting: Taking the slow lane in the rat race" (Bayley, 1997), "Shift down to gear up" (Buckingham, 1997), "Work demands and family responsibilities: An exploration of problems and solutions" (Kennedy, 1997), "Trading away high stress for lower pay" (Owen, 1997). Since career downshifting and consumer downshifting overlapped, and

since career downshifting involves a drop in income, there were also numerous web sites offering advice on how to live on less income. Titles of these web sites included: “Frugal living resources” (Gray, 1997), “Getting grunted: Our secrets to living well on less” (Eisensohn, 1997), and “Today’s consumers turning lean and green” (Ottman, 1997).

Not all internet websites relating to career downshifting originated from the USA. For example, one web site originated from a man who was previously the managing editor of one of South Africa’s leading newspaper (Bayley, 1998). Indeed, within the last 12 months, many articles with brief personal accounts of downshifter’s experiences have appeared in the Australian press (Hunder, 1999; Schiel, 1999). McLean’s, a popular Canadian magazine, ran a cover story entitled “Cashing out: Thousands of Canadians are downshifting out of the fast lane, choosing to live a simpler life” (McDonald, 1996). In summary, there are numerous social indications to suggest that downshifting is a significant phenomenon, at least in North America, UK and Australia.

2.3 The downshifting literature up to 1999

Up to late 1999, there were four major books published on downshifting: “Downshifting: Reinventing success on a slower track” (Saltzman, 1991), “Getting a life: The downshifter’s guide to happier simpler living” (Ghazi & Jones, 1997), “Downshifting: The ultimate handbook” (Bull, 1998), and “The overspent American: Upscaling, downshifting and the new consumer” (Schor, 1998). Saltzman and Bull focused on career downshifting. In contrast, Ghazi and Jones, and Schor were more interested in consumer downshifting although both provide some discussion of career downshifting within the broader context of less consumption and simpler living. While Schor’s work is based on systematic social and market research, the rigour of interviews conducted by journalists Saltzman, Ghazi and Jones, and Bull remains uncertain due to the lack of details about their methodologies in their books.

Nevertheless, Saltzman’s (1991) pioneering work in the area of downshifting attempted to present a combination of downshifting career patterns as well as case studies. In her view, professionals seemed to be stuck between two ultimately dissatisfying extremes regarding work: either dropping out completely, or working at a

high speed on the “success treadmill” (p. 15). Within this context, her main aim was to provide images of alternative career patterns. Ghazi and Jones’ (1997) provided a review of several social surveys which indicate the propensity to downshift in the USA and the UK, and a variety of case studies of people who had downshifted. The main thrust of their book, however, was to provide a self-help guide for those intending to move away from a consumer lifestyle. Similarly, Bull (1998) attempted to provide a practical guide for those who were considering career downshifting. Case studies were provided to illustrate issues that potential downshifters should consider. While the main strengths of Ghazi and Jones, and Bull were in identifying issues that would be faced by downshifters and the provision of case studies, the main weakness is the absence of analysis showing patterns or themes in the downshifting experience.

There have been other publications which have also questioned conventional career paths, suggesting that it is important and viable to leave careers which no longer hold meaning. Two books focused on women’s careers: “Work of her own: A woman’s guide to success off the career track” (Albert, 1994), and “When work doesn’t work anymore: Women, work and identity” (McKenna, 1997). Neither author used the term downshifting, but provided case studies of women with unfulfilling work who made career changes, often to work that was less financially rewarding. An Australian contribution to this literature was “Reinventing success: Find happiness, satisfaction and balance by managing change in your life” (Cotton, 1996) which presented ten case studies of people who had changed their lives resulting in a change of values. While this book did not focus on career downshifting, many of those interviewed had obviously downshifted their careers.

In November 1999, a literature search of the Psychlit database using the keyword ‘downshifting’ only yielded one article (Etzioni, 1998). As discussed previously, Etzioni was more focused on consumer downshifting, rather than career downshifting, although there was an overlap in coverage. Thus, there appears to be very little published research on downshifting, with most of the limited research originating from either the USA (Albert, 1994; Etzioni, 1998; McKenna, 1997; Saltzman, 1991; Schor, 1998) or the UK (Bull, 1998; Ghazi & Jones, 1997), with Cotton (1996) being the only Australian source. With the exception of Etzioni, whose main focus was economic psychology, other contributors to the downshifting literature have been journalists (or ex-journalists) (Bull,

1998; Ghazi & Jones, 1997; Saltzman, 1991), an economist (Schor, 1998), a writer and ex-university administrator (Albert, 1992; 1994), and a management consultant (Cotton, 1996). In short, there has been no significant published work on career downshifting conducted primarily from a psychological perspective, although there has been much systematic research on the general topic of career change (reviewed in Chapter 4).

The next section reviews the above literature in terms of four key issues commonly addressed: (1) Who are the people who downshift? (2) What contributes to people downshifting? (3) What do downshifters experience? (4) What considerations do downshifters need to address in their career change? This is then followed by a discussion of gaps in the literature and how this thesis attempts to fill these gaps.

2.3.1 Who are the people who downshift?

Saltzman (1991) described five types of downshifting patterns that she classified as successful. These were: (1) **plateauers** who choose to remain at a particular level or position within an organisation, avoiding and refusing promotions or greater responsibilities; (2) **backtrackers** who choose to take a few steps down the organisational ladder; (3) **career shifters** who use the same skills they have acquired in a new setting with less emphasis on a traditional fast track, for example moving from a corporate environment with its emphasis on profit and increasing market share, to working for a non-profit organisation; (4) **the self employed** who leave organisations to work for themselves doing similar work; (5) **urban escapees** who set up well considered viable businesses in a small town or regional centre, often using skills acquired in larger organisations and possibly capitalising on electronic technology to link with larger organisations or larger cities. Saltzman's typology was based on the extent of change in one's occupation role and the extent of change in relationship to an employing organisation.

Ghazi and Jones (1997) profiled eleven cases of downshifting in Britain. While each of the cases profiled were given descriptive labels, there were many similarities to Saltzman's (1991) typology. First, Saltzman's '**urban escapees**' corresponded to Ghazi and Jones' **post-modern romantics** (a journalist and a fundraiser who moved to a remote farm; another couple who left their lucrative careers to live on a canal boat);

simple life pioneers (a couple who pursued a self-sufficient ecological lifestyle after the male partner accepted voluntary redundancy from academia); **the downshifting entrepreneurs** who used their savings to set up an advisory business which failed, and then bought a farm in the country; and the **woodlander** (a former telecommunications manager who is now a conservationist). Second, Saltzman's category of '**the self employed**' correspond to Ghazi and Jones' descriptions of **the city shifter** (a commercial TV production assistant who became a self-employed aromatherapist) and **freelancers** (a secretary who set up her own secretarial business from home after redundancy).

While Ghazi and Jones (1997) did not provide case studies which corresponded to Saltzman's (1991) 'plateauers', 'back trackers', and 'career shifters' they included two other types of downshifter: (1) **temporary downshifter** (a consultant who took unpaid sabbaticals to have a complete break before resuming work again; a senior civil servant who opted for voluntary redundancy with no specific alternative career in mind) and (2) **career changers** (a property developer who downshifted to become a counsellor; a couple where the male partner gave up a senior management job in information technology to raise their young daughter, while the female partner began a late career in community welfare).

Laabs (1996) identified downshifter as those who "want to slow down at work, so they can upshift in other areas of their lives" (p. 62). Laabs (1996) proposed two broad "camps" of downshifter: (a) those who want to break out of the corporate mould, either permanently or temporarily; (b) those who just want to work less. Andrews (1997), a former academic who currently runs voluntary simplicity workshops in Seattle, characterised consumer downshifter as typically being between 35-55 years, 95% having college degrees, being high and middle class achievers, widely read, concerned about the environment and who reject consumerism. While Andrews' profile of downshifter was based on participants at her workshops which focus on achieving a simple living lifestyle, the first three descriptions are consistent with Saltzman's (1991) typology and Ghazi and Jones' (1997) case studies. Nevertheless, it is not clear how extensive or representative Saltzman's and Ghazi and Jones' samples are since there is

no documentation of actual sample sizes¹, method of accessing the samples, or whether a systematic approach was used in interviewing downshifters.

In contrast, systematic surveys were conducted by Schor (1998), although she used 'downshifting' to refer to both consumer and career downshifting. Among the 152 voluntary downshifters, there were approximately equal numbers of men and women, with an average age of about 40 years. The majority were white Caucasians (85%), with 9% being African Americans and 4% being Hispanic. Over half were married or living with a partner (57%), while 24% were never married, and 19% divorced, separated or widowed. Over half (53%) had no dependant children, 17% had one dependant child, 20% had two dependant children, with only 11% having three or more dependent children. Most downshifters were well educated: 39% had a four-year degree or higher, 30% had some college training, and 21% had a high school diploma. Schor emphasised that downshifters are to be found at all income levels, not just among those who were previously on 6-figure incomes. Over half (55%) made US\$35,000 or less before downshifting.

Bull's (1998) emphasis in his book "Downshifting: The ultimate handbook" appeared to be on providing practical advice of the self-help genre. Within this context, he did not provide a profile of those who had downshifted, but a checklist of qualities that successful downshifters tended to have in common. This checklist was based on his interviews with "over 50 downshifters, most of whom have succeeded in their task, some of whom have failed" (p. 35). His extensive checklist of 21 attributes included being: independent and self-reliant; confident, optimistic, resilient and enterprising, full of energy and enthusiasm, not reliant on the approval of others for their self-esteem; prepared to make sacrifices; highly organised; patient; hard working; aware of their strengths and weaknesses; and creative and imaginative.

Bull's (1998) checklist is open to several criticisms. First, he did not define what constitutes successful downshifting. Second, the checklist appears overly prescriptive and would preclude a large number of people. Third, the checklist appears to be a description of an ideal person who could successfully traverse any type of career change

¹ Saltzman (1991) indicated that more than 100 professionals were interviewed in the preparation of her book, but not all of them were necessarily downshifters, as some interviews included experts in specific fields who provided opinions on the phenomenon.

or life change. Bull also provided 17 contra-indicators for downshifting. These included: enjoying the security of having an organisation; enjoying office politics and the camaraderie of office life; feeling that work provides status which would be hard to replace; work provides a sense of self-worth; feeling that a sideways or downward move would end a career; fearing a drop in income; afraid of the unknown; having no direction of future direction if a downshifting move is undertaken, and being heavily in debt. While these contra-indications appear to have some face value, case studies presented in Saltzman (1991), Albert (1994), Cotton (1996), Ghazi and Jones (1997) and McKenna (1997) indicate that the majority of those who changed their careers downward fit one or more of the above descriptions which Bull (1998) offered as contra-indications of a downshifting career move.

In summary, there is a lack of rigorous social research which provides a reliable demographic profile of downshifters. There is also a lack of sound research which would distinguish between characteristics of those who undertake a successful career downshift, whatever this may mean, and those who fail. Nevertheless, considering the typology offered by Saltzman (1991) and the case studies offered by Ghazi and Jones (1997), it would appear that downshifting career paths could incorporate any of the following: (a) deliberately choosing to plateau in one's career; (b) moving backwards in a career path; (c) remaining in one's occupation but opting for a less responsible role; (d) changing one's occupation to one which involved less financial rewards; (e) becoming self-employed; (f) moving to a rural environment; (g) temporary career change to a role or occupation that involved fewer financial rewards.

2.3.2 What contributes to career downshifting?

Since the phenomenon of downshifting is not named or referred to as such in the mainstream psychological literature, accounts of the phenomenon tend to be found in literature outside the domain of psychology research literature. These accounts tend to centre around the interconnected themes of (a) changes in the economy and structure of organisations, resulting in growing disenchantment with the assumption that a worthwhile career should involve upward progress; (b) rapid technological change and its stressful effects; and (c) individual factors, all of which contribute to a re-evaluation of the role of work and what constitutes success in life.

(a) Changes in the economy and structure of organisations, resulting in growing disenchantment with organisational cultures

According to Schor (1998), downshifting occurs “primarily because people have had it with demanding jobs and stressed-out lives” (p. 113). The main reasons given by Schor’s 152 downshiftingers for downshifting careers were as follows: wanted more time, less stress and more balance (31%), wanted to spend more time caring for children (18%), wanted a more meaningful life (15%), no longer interested in material success (8%), found it too difficult to succeed in today’s economy (5%).

Bridges (1995) argued that we are currently undergoing a second major “job shift” which involves the loss of jobs as we have conventionally known them such that our assumptions about work and living are being challenged, just as they were in the first “job shift” of the Industrial Revolution. Moreover, organisations are also turning to “leasing” workers rather than employing staff. Handy (1989) referred to this emerging trend as the “boundaryless organisation”, characterised by a three-leaf shamrock leaf form: (a) core staff who are committed to the organisation and derive some sense of identity from it; (b) contractors and specialised people who are not part of the core organisation, but offer a variety of services which are faster, better, or cheaper than what the organisation itself could produce; (c) a contingent labour force comprising temporary workers and part-time staff. Handy (1994), however argued that this did not represent the demise of work, if work is defined as useful activity, but merely the disappearance of jobs. Paid work now takes various forms such as consulting, contract work, part-time work, temporary and casual work.

These changes in the economy and the structure of organisations imply numerous ramifications for individuals’ careers. First, the traditional concept of career as an onward and upward linear path within one organisation has been eroded. Second, there is a polarisation in many developed economies between those with too much work and those with no work or not enough work. Third, increasing competitiveness in global markets among organisations lead to corporate cultures which are more competitive, focused on bottom line profits and less loyal to employees.

These changes in the last 30 years have contributed to increasing job pressures and overwork. Some managers and professionals may also be susceptible to 'face time', the notion that working long hours and weekends are necessary to get ahead (Power, 1994). McKenna (1997) distilled the following rules implicit in American corporate life, rules not unlike those in organisations in other developed countries: (a) "Work comes first, above all personal or family concerns"; (b) "Long hours are a requirement"; (c) "There is only one career in your life, and only one path; if you step off it, you're out of luck"; (d) "Work is about hierarchy; your job is to make your boss look good"; (e) "The goal is to get as close to the top as possible" (pp. 51-52). Similarly Saltzman (1991) enunciated several beliefs endemic in organisations including the following: (a) Workers have to demonstrate a competitive drive to the detriment of a healthy personal life if necessary; (b) Making more money and gaining more power are synonymous to happiness; (c) In a successful career path, we travel upwards; (d) Work can provide a sense of community, family and meaning; (e) If we have too much leisure, we are weak and dull losers.

Given this culture, many workers pay a heavy price in terms of psychological stress, pressure and decreased quality of life. Prior to career downshifting, it was not uncommon for many workers to lose perspective of what is important in their life, and operate from a public persona or false self (McKenna, 1997; Saltzman, 1991). In other words, at least among downshiffters, there was a growing realisation that work (prior to downshifting) was not delivering the promise of happiness (Glassner, 1994; Keen, 1994).

(b) Technological change and the emphasis on work

Ghazi and Jones (1997) cited Young's proposals in his book "The Metronomic Society" that modern society suffers from "hurry sickness" induced by a "time famine". With technological advances like electric lighting, time allocated to work has extended beyond the natural rhythmic diurnal and seasonal cycles. Industrialisation also made developed cultures more reliant on the clock as a regulator of daily lives. In other words, we are disconnected from the natural world and our own daily rhythms, consequently becoming more stressed.

Saltzman (1991) argued that western cultures place inordinate importance on efficiency and computer time. As such, we have been indoctrinated into a “cult of busyness” (p. 20). Efficiency and speed are valued by both organisations and the greater culture such that we put ourselves under pressure to complete tasks, reach goals and get promotions in record time. Within such a system is the belief that if we were not busy and working for advancement, we were wasting time and not working hard enough to get ahead in our careers. Saltzman also proposed that western culture glorifies the image of the “super-successful fast-tracker who manages to do it all” that there is an appealing challenge to “master modern day madness, total control and perfection” (p. 19). Within this context, work then takes the role of religion. It is not uncommon for many white collar workers to regard devotion to work as a kind of personal and religious salvation. The result, however, is not happiness and satisfaction but obsession, exhaustion and burnout.

Keen (1994) and McKenna (1997) also argued that there is a tendency for many people to over-identify with their work. Instead of working to make a living, there is a tendency for many to let work consume their lives, at the expense of family life and personal life outside of work. Keen argued that, increasingly, work was used to provide meaning to many people’s lives, with many people finding their identity as members of corporate tribes. McKenna found that many women in her study subverted the rest of their lives to their work identity, which was central to how they defined themselves. These arguments are consistent with other recent psychological research on workaholism (Porter, 1996) and experiences such as “career success and personal failure” (Korman & Korman, 1980) or “dual identity syndrome” (Dorn, 1992), where excessive involvement with work was associated with neglect of other areas of life.

Keen (1994) suggested that over-involvement with work and the stresses of current organisational life cannot be dealt with by means of “psychological tricks” (p. 196) because for the most part it is not a physiological problem, but a matter of the wrong world view. According to Keen, the burnout experienced by many workers is a kind of “combat fatigue” (p. 197) of living for extended periods within an environment that is experienced as a battle zone. Ultimately, the only cure for this stress is to “leave the battlefield” (p. 197).

(c) Individual factors

The main publications on career downshifting to date do not include systematic accounts of individual factors contributing to the decision to leave a financially rewarding career. Ghazi and Jones (1997) and Schor (1998) focused on consumer downshifting and thus provided mostly explanations for the move away from a materialistic lifestyle which largely centre on a realisation that beyond a certain point, material prosperity does not necessarily increase happiness, a notion confirmed by psychological research (e.g., Furnham & Argyle, 1998). Since Saltzman's (1991) focus was to provide alternative images of career patterns, she did not present an analysis of individual factors which led to a decision to downshift a career, apart from identifying a common theme that prior to career downshifting, many individuals realised that they wanted to work towards goals that were more meaningful.

In case studies presented by Cotton (1996) and McKenna (1997), antecedents of career downshifting included personal crises such as death of a significant person, break-up of a marriage, workplace discord, alcohol addiction, an overall decrease in the quality of life, a sense that work had totally taken over, or a sense that a heavy price was being paid in terms of work pressure and stress, and that life was out of control. These crises were often accompanied by feelings of dissatisfaction with work, anxiety and depression. Both these authors proposed that the crux of the decision to change careers was an incongruence between career changers' outer lives and inner values. McKenna also identified the possibility of a career crisis coinciding with many women's realisation of a finite time left for fertility. Beyond difficulties which may contribute to pressure to leave organisational work, career changers may also be motivated by other values such as more time for friendships, family, serenity and leisure time.

McKenna (1997) argued that it is very rare to have people saying "I don't want to do this anymore because this is not who I want to be", and that it is much more common to have external triggers such as a change in management or corporate culture which lead to career change. Albert (1994) relied heavily on Ebaugh's (1988) role exit model to account for what she referred to as the "career crisis". Five turning points (which could be viewed as an interaction between the environment and individual factors) potentially contribute to the decision to leave a career. These five turning points were: (a) a series of

events which crystallise an individual's discontent; (b) "the last-straw" which involves a gradual build up of feelings and events that culminate in an explosive situation; (c) time-related factors (e.g., reaching a specific age and realising some opportunities were time-limited); (d) "an excuse" where some event or authority figure makes it clear that a role exit is necessary for the well-being of the person; (e) "an either/or point of exit" where the individual is confronted with choices (e.g., leaving the career or continuing to work in an environment which would continue to erode personal well-being).

2.3.3 What are the barriers and difficulties in downshifting?

One obvious barrier and difficulty to downshifting is that it involves, by definition a change to work that is less financially remunerated. While midlife coincides with peak earning capacity, it also coincides with peak financial responsibilities such as mortgages, support of non-working spouses who may have primary responsibilities for child care, support and education of children, and care of elderly parents (Lachman & James, 1997). Nevertheless, salaries of many professionals and managers exceed their basic needs (Saltzman, 1991). Schor (1991) estimated that it is generally possible for many Americans to halve their work time (e.g., four hours a day, or six months a year) and still maintain a material lifestyle similar to people living in the middle of the 20th century. Given these last two points, the question might be asked: Why aren't more people downshifting for benefits such as less stress, more time for family, friends and other interests?

Schor (1991, 1998) argued that the major barrier to downshifting is the "consumerist culture" which propagates a "work and spend" cycle, and more recently a "see-want-borrow-buy" cycle where easy purchasing using credit cards encourages high levels of debt. Furthermore, she argued that rising incomes actually create social pressures to spend, with marketing and advertising contributing to these pressures. While some people may demonstrate conspicuous consumption, many people are taught from an early age not to flaunt possessions so as not to evoke envy. As a result, housing, cars and clothing are used as alternative ways of communicating wealth. While Schor's arguments largely apply to consumer downshifting, they also apply to career downshifting. Schor (1998) argued that we construct our personal identities in relation to social groups, and downshifting would required us to disassociate spending with our

sense of personal worth. Furthermore, “For people to whom identity and consumption are fused, losing the symbols of success and personhood is a bitter blow” (p. 140). In other words, career downshifting does not simply lead to less money, but in all likelihood, it also leads to a destabilisation of our sense of social identity and worth.

Similarly, Ehrenreich (1990) hypothesised that the middle class are especially anxious about “fear of falling”. She argued that the truly rich can afford to be idle, whereas the middle class maintains its position only through continual exertion and allegiance to traditional values of hard work and self denial. As such, they become the “deserving rich” because they work steadily and compulsively. The upwardly mobile middle class are thus frenetically and conspicuously busy in the pursuit of wealth. Furthermore, since many in the middle class choose occupations on the basis of earning capacity, the loss of intrinsically rewarding work is compensated by strenuous consumption. In other words, for Ehrenreich, the pleasure of work is lost in a race to get ahead or simply to stay in place within a society rapidly becoming polarised on socio-economic grounds.

Brandt (1995) advanced these arguments by postulating that modern economies suffer from “economic addiction” (p. 3), which is characterised by addiction to work, money and purchasing. With this addiction, there is a commitment to increasing production and consumption, justified by the belief that more is better. In general, people turn to addictive substances and activities to restore feelings of well-being and power, or at least to reduce the feelings of pain, loss and powerlessness, due to everyday deprivations and suffering. While addictions are not unique to modern societies, Brandt pointed out that modern economies depend on addictions for continued functioning. Advertising and the media reinforce the notion that identity and self-esteem are based on what people buy. As such, economic addictions need to be addressed not only at the personal level, but also at the social and institutional levels. Indeed, Keen (1994) painted the metaphor of men shackled to a mercantile society in much the same way that medieval serfs were imprisoned by the feudal system.

In a similar vein, Albert (1994) argued that a “career culture” predominates in developed countries. This career culture is oriented around business organisations which shape the nature of careers. The career culture “controls people’s decisions not only

about where and how to work, but also about where and how to live, how to spend money and leisure time, and how to bear, raise and educate children” (p. 4). As such, the career culture is “extraordinarily seductive” (p. 113) offering a steady diet of rewards, money, recognition and status, to the point where the career self becomes much larger than any other aspect of an individual’s personality. Thus, downshifting would imply a move away from socially acceptable models of success, and a struggle to redefine one’s identity apart from a previously well-developed career identity. These arguments are consistent with case studies presented in the downshifting literature. For example, McKenna (1997) wrote of herself, “I spent several years desperately trying different things to make it work. But because my life was so deeply tied in to how well I was going in my career, I couldn’t leave it or change it. I was held hostage by success” (p. 87).

Internalised beliefs and fantasies about work are also barriers to career downshifting. Many of the women career changers interviewed by McKenna (1997) and Saltzman (1991) had the fantasy that they could “have it all”, that it was possible to have successful work and personal lives, without paying too high a price. Others struggled with the obligation to keep working, since women’s fight for equal employment opportunities were so hard won. They did not want to be accused of being on the “mommy track” or being accused of “not being able to cut it” (p. 53). In the eyes of the career culture, a woman who downshifted from a successful career would be regarded as giving up “her first-class ticket and returned to second-class status” (Albert, 1994, p. 7).

Downshifter profiled in Saltzman (1991) and McKenna (1997) also spoke of their fears of being judged as mad for giving up successful careers which others might envy. Hardesty and Jacobs (1986) judged women who leave their corporate careers as “losers who have fallen from grace” (p. 6). They are seen to have cut themselves off from the source of real power in the world and are examples of arrested professional development or failed personal growth. LaBier (1986) similarly points out that those who are committed to career as the most important life priority and even “typical psychologists” would believe that people who experience work-related conflicts are weaker and more neurotic than those who adapt. These conflicts would be seen as “simply a reflection of some internal weakness or deficit, which prevents (them) from becoming winners” (p. 9).

Ghazi and Jones (1997) suggested that men and women would have different difficulties with career downshifting. Since men tend to derive their sense of identity from their work, they hypothesised that men would find it difficult to cope with a decreased status and be more concerned about providing for their families on a smaller income. In contrast, women with careers would be more concerned with losing financial security, and facing the hostility and resentment of other women for “letting the side down”. Saltzman (1991) specified specific difficulties that would be encountered by each type of career downshifter in her typology. “Plateauers”, “back-trackers” and “career shifters” who switch to lower positions within their own companies or industries would suffer loss of status. Those who become self employed would suffer the stress of building up a business, typically from scratch. “Urban escapees” would have to endure the initial loneliness of relocating to another area. In summary, for both men and women, loss is a major barrier and difficulty in career downshifting – loss of financial security, loss of status, loss of purpose, loss of identity, possible loss of community, and loss of acceptance in society.

2.3.4 What is the experience of downshifting?

Many of the downshifters presented as case studies experienced crises, burnout, physical and emotional exhaustion, and even depression before their career change (Saltzman, 1991; McKenna, 1997). They were then faced with a choice to stay in a difficult work situation or change their career in some way. In McKenna’s view, “Only when we become really miserable are we willing to abandon the antagonistic roles we are trying to perfect. Only then can we begin to reclaim who we are and what is important to us” (p. 86). Other experiences included grief for various losses documented in Section 2.3.3 previously, and struggles to find suitable work and resolving dissonance between a well-cultivated work persona and inner values.

Among the writers on downshifting, Albert (1994) articulated the most sophisticated model of downshifters’ experiences. Based on her interviews with 80 women who radically changed their careers, and influenced by Ebaugh’s (1988) role exit theory, her model consisted of six essential stages which emphasised the initial stages prior to making the decision to change careers. In the first stage of **doubting**, the

potential downshifter suspects that things are not what they appear to be. There are feelings of nagging discomfort and a need to re-evaluate career investment. In the second stage of **reflecting on self**, there is a sense of disconnectedness from one's career and extensive inner exploration to gain greater clarity regarding work and its place in one's life. In the third stage of **weighing options**, there is a rational process of analysing the situation, exploring one's skills, interests and experiences, seeking and evaluating alternatives. **Career crisis** sets in at the fourth stage. Whether the change is gradual or abrupt, Albert noted that the aftermath can be chaotic and experienced as a black hole or vacuum. Individuals feel wounded, disabled and unable to function without the protection of a career persona. In the fifth stage, of **the black hole**, individuals feel alienated, disaffiliated and estranged. There are feelings of sadness and grief. In the last stage, individuals find **work of (their) own**, which Albert described as work that is close to "what the heart calls you to do" (p. 136).

Cotton (1996) focused on individuals who changed their lifestyles dramatically, including several who downshifted their careers. Cotton presented the process of change among her ten case studies using Joseph Campbell's (1949/1988) framework of the archetypal "hero's journey". In her adaptation of Campbell's framework, Cotton used the following topics to systematically present each case study: "opening to change", "the choice for change", "crossing the threshold (of change)", "the path of change", "transformation", "rewards appear", "integrating the old and the new", and "new challenges". Cotton applied Campbell's framework "to show that in embarking upon life changes, the people (in the stories) are undertaking a journey which has been taken countless times before" (p. 11). In other words, Cotton used an existing framework to understand her interviewees' experiences, while Albert (1994) had constructed a framework from her interviewee's experiences.

2.3.5 What are the potential benefits of downshifting?

Numerous benefits of career downshifting have been documented in the popular literature reviewed in this chapter. These benefits include decreased pressures, a slower paced lifestyle, greater control and flexibility in an individual's work life, more meaningful work, a better integration of work and home lives, more leisure time, and new perspectives on what constitutes success (Albert, 1994; Cotton, 1996; McKenna,

1997; Saltzman, 1991; Schor, 1998). Albert and to a lesser extent McKenna also highlighted women career changers reclaiming their feminine identities to incorporate relationships and personal integrity, which they previously sacrificed to organisations valuing power and status.

2.4 Chapter summary

- (a) This thesis focuses on voluntary career downshifting. Three criteria are involved in defining career downshifting in this study: (i) there is a move away from a career path that is onwards and upwards; (ii) there is a consequent change in lifestyle; and (iii) the choice is voluntary.
- (b) The review of literature in this chapter reveals a picture which is consistent with Schor's (1998) opinion that the downshifting phenomenon lacks data, and that knowledge about the phenomenon is mainly anecdotal. Very little systematic research has been undertaken on career downshifting and very few statistics are available to provide indications on the extent of career downshifting and the profile of downshifters. While there are a number of books based on case studies, there are very few models or frameworks derived from career downshifters themselves, with which to understand the phenomenon of career downshifting.
- (c) The most important contributions apart from Schor's systematic surveys are Saltzman's (1991) account of alternative patterns for career downshifting and Albert's (1994) stage framework for understanding the process that career downshifters are likely to experience. To date, however, there has been no published psychological research on career downshifting, let alone any Australian research on the phenomenon. This thesis was an attempt to fill this gap.
- (d) Since there was little literature on downshifting, the literature review undertaken to provide background to this study was necessarily broad. Before considering the literature on career change and transitions generally (Chapter 4) and possible midlife issues which may play a role in choices to downshift (Chapter 5), the next chapter (Chapter 3) examines theoretical perspectives and concepts which might inform the nature of downshifting.

CHAPTER 3: PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES AND PERSPECTIVES ON CAREERS

There is very little systematic research on the experience of downshifting. As part of this study, the review of literature was therefore extended to broader areas which might provide insights into the phenomenon. This chapter reviews selected psychological literature on careers which were considered relevant to career downshifting. As such, this chapter is not a comprehensive review of career development theories, or the literature on careers. The main aim is to identify theory, concepts and ideas which would assist in understanding the phenomenon of downshifting. This chapter starts with a brief overview of the main theories in career development (Section 3.1), followed by major contemporary criticisms of these theories (Section 3.2). Next, I present some relatively new concepts in the career literature which are germane background to understanding downshifting (Section 3.3). I then move to considering the literature on midcareer renewal. A specific chapter (Chapter 4) is devoted to more specific literature on career change and transitions.

3.1 Theories of career development

In a recent handbook on vocational psychology, Blustein and Spengler (1995) grouped the major career theories into four broad categories: (a) person-environment fit theories; (b) developmental theories; (c) social learning and cognitive theories; (d) psychodynamic theories. Hackett and Lent (1992) in another handbook of counselling also proposed similar groupings, with the exception of replacing psychodynamic theories with theories which account for specific issues such as gender and ethnicity in the context of careers.

3.1.1 Person-environment fit theories

The two dominant person-environment fit (P-E fit) theories are those of Holland (1985a) and the Theory of Work Adjustment (Lofquist & Dawis, 1991). According to Holland, there are six broad categories of personalities which correspond to six broad

categories of occupations and occupational environments. These are Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional, collectively referred to as RIASEC. The main concepts in Holland's theory are differentiation (the extent to which a person can be ascribed to specific personality categories), consistency (the degree to which the personality categories co-exist with each other), congruence (the degree of fit between a person and the environment), and identity.

The three main areas of prediction from Holland's theory related to choice of field, stability of choice and stability of outcome. There is consistent support for the first proposition that a person's vocational personality has primary influence on choice of education and vocation. The second major proposition, that well defined persons who are high in consistency, differentiation and identity are more likely to choose educational and career fields that match their personality and experience stability of choices, is yet to be substantially researched (Hackett & Lent, 1992). Third, in relation to outcomes, one of Holland's fundamental propositions is that a person whose personality is congruent with (i.e. similar to) their occupational environment will, other things being equal, experience more satisfaction in the occupational environment and perform better than a person who is not in a congruent occupational environment. It is possible that the lack of congruence in occupational environment (i.e. poor P-E fit) is a precursor to career downshifting.

However, in spite of the appeal of this last proposition, meta-analytic reviews revealed inconsistent support for this proposition of congruence (e.g., Assouline & Meir, 1987; Tranberg, Slane & Ekeberg, 1993). Holland (1996) concluded that views on the congruence proposition vary from "it's a useful idea" to "congruency is dead" (p. 400). Other researchers have found that job satisfaction was better predicted by variables other than congruence; these include a sense of vocational identity (Carson & Mowesian, 1991) or the individual's expectations of job satisfaction (Gottfredson & Holland, 1990).

Similar to Holland's theory, Lofquist and Dawis' (1991) Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA) has a basic proposition that a good person-environment fit predicts job tenure and job satisfaction. In other words, good fit would lead to higher levels of job satisfaction and extrinsic success (Walsh & Srsic, 1995). While TWA leads to at least 20 major propositions to predict work adjustment, only two propositions have been

heavily researched (Hackett & Lent, 1992). First, job satisfaction is a function of the correspondence between the individual worker's values and the patterns of reinforcement that are available in the work environment. Second, voluntary work termination is inversely related to satisfaction. The higher the job satisfaction, the lower the employee turnover (Walsh & Srsic, 1995). Thus, TWA would suggest that some managers and professionals in higher level jobs may be unhappy despite of high salaries and status because of decreased occupational congruence since a greater number of tasks need to be performed (Tziner & Meir, 1997).

While a person-environment fit formulation of careers appears simple, Hesketh and Myers (1997) caution that considerable care must be taken in measuring, testing and applying P-E fit models especially with TWA where multiple measures are typically used. A number of studies documented difficulties of low reliability and high subjectivity in coding occupations and occupational environments into Holland categories (e.g., Robbins, Thomas, Harvey & Kandefer, 1978). Moreover, there is substantive theoretical debate regarding the definitions of fit (Hesketh & Myers, 1997). In summary, congruence and P-E fit generally are difficult to operationally implement with recent meta-analyses suggesting numerous complications.

Another major criticism of P-E fit models and related research has been that they tend to conceptualise careers as static, a legacy of the trait-factor dominated counselling approach. While Holland (1996) maintained his view that most people will gravitate towards activities, skills and occupations which are of greater interest, he conceded that in the future, "most people will become casualties of vast structural and social changes and take whatever part-time or full-time work they can find. Any job will become more important than a compatible one ... large proportions of the population must learn to cope with transient and unpredictable work opportunities. Among other things, the need for a personal identity will increase" (p. 404). Holland also proposed that the future of career counselling might become life counselling in which work is one facet, albeit an important one in the creation of a more satisfying life.

Brown (1993) proposed that personality variables could provide more insight into work adjustment and job satisfaction than congruence indices. For example, using the Five Factor model (i.e. the five broad factors of Extraversion, Neuroticism, Openness to

experience, Conscientiousness, and Agreeableness, which are often referred to as the Big Five), job dissatisfaction may be understood as a combination of high Neuroticism levels and low Extraversion. Conscientiousness is a good predictor of work performance (Brown, 1993) while Openness to experience is significantly correlated with higher likelihood of job or occupational change (McCrae & Costa, 1985). Similarly, Tokar and Fischer (1998) demonstrated that Holland's RIASEC personality types can be alternately accounted for by either (a) Prediger's (1982) two bipolar dimensions of data versus ideas, and things versus people; (b) Hogan's two personality dimensions of conformity and sociability. These two alternative conceptualisations in turn correlate significantly with the Big Five personality traits commonly used in psychological research. Previous studies reviewed by Tokar and Fischer showed that the interest-personality link is not especially robust. Research by Tranberg et al. (1993) suggested that some Holland personality types may be more satisfiable than others. For example, Investigative types are most satisfied in Investigative jobs, but Artistic types are happier in non-Artistic jobs. Furthermore, the salience of job satisfaction may be different for each Holland personality type. For example, congruence is more important for satisfaction in Social occupations, but not for Realistic and Conventional occupations.

In summary, research on congruence indicates numerous methodological issues which have yet to be resolved (e.g., low reliability in coding occupations and occupational environments; the existence of multiple approaches to measuring extent of congruence). While investigation of P-E fit before and after career downshifting would be a worthwhile contribution to understanding the phenomenon, such an investigation would comprise a study in itself. Given this context and the primary focus of this study being the experience of downshifting from a phenomenological perspective, the extent of P-E fit before and after career downshifting was not investigated.

Nordvik (1996) argued that in the area of career counselling, it may be more relevant to consider career goals and anchors, and that these career goals cannot be derived from assessment of vocational personalities. According to organisational psychologist Schein (1985), the function of work is to support a career anchor. For people with some career anchors, participation in the world of work is of primary importance, whereas for others, involvement in work is reduced such that it does not interfere with a certain way of life. The nine career anchors proposed by Schein were

technical competence, managerial competence, organisational security, geographic security, creativity, autonomy, service, challenge and lifestyle. In a factor analytic study with 725 adults, Nordvik (1991) found four main factors accounting for 71% of variance: (a) concern for stimulation; (b) concern for skill development; (c) concern for self direction; (d) concern for self-expression. These factors appear to be similar to Derr's (1986) five career orientations of **"getting ahead"** (related to stimulation factor), **"getting secure"** (related to Schein's security anchor), **"getting free"** (related to self direction and self expression factor), **"getting balanced"** (related to Schein's lifestyle anchor), and **"getting high"** (related to skill development). These career orientations potentially provide a useful way of conceptualising how career downshifters perceive their career goals. For individuals who value promotions, financial success and recognition (e.g., in professional and managerial occupations), "getting ahead" may be the most salient career orientation. In contrast, the downshifting literature previously reviewed in Section 2.3 suggests that career downshifting is typically motivated by a search for more balance between work and non-work domains (i.e. "getting balanced"), or a search for more fulfilling work which is more consistent with an individual's sense of identity (i.e. "getting free") (Albert, 1994; Cotton, 1996; McKenna, 1997).

3.1.2 Life-span development theories

One of the best known life-span career development theories is that of Super (1990) which is summarised in his Life-Career Rainbow and Archway model of career development. The Archway model is typically represented by an image of a Norman arch resting on two pillars representing the person and society. According to Super, an individual's career should be considered in the context of personal characteristics such as needs, values, interests, intelligence, aptitude and personality. Additionally, societal characteristics such as economic resources, economic structure, and social institutions should also be considered as influences on the person's development and functioning in society. The arch itself was used to represent the career and is made up of the components of roles and self concepts. Success in coping with the demands of the environment depended on the readiness of the individual to cope with these demands, or career maturity. According to Super, the degree of satisfaction people attain from work is in proportion to the degree to which they have been able to implement self-concepts.

With regard to the Career Rainbow, Super (1990) conceptualised an individual's life span as the spectrum of major life stages (i.e. childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle adulthood and old age). These life stages overlap with career stages of Growth, Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance and Decline. While Super conceded that the stages tend to overlap, and are not clearly defined by age limits, he held the position that the stages are biologically determined and progress in a well-ordered sequence. Consistent with developmental theorists, Super held the view that a career decision tends to be a series of mini-decisions of varying degrees of importance, leading to one maxi-decision. Therefore it was important for youths and young adults to anticipate and cope with these mini-decisions, which would add up to making flexible maxi-decisions. A longitudinal study of American men undertaken by Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson and McKee (1978) resulted in a stage model consistent with Super's theory.

Super's (1990) theory may be considered as providing added dimensions to Holland's model (which focused primarily in the single choice and assessment of personality and occupations for more effective matching). In considering environmental factors which impacted on an individual's adaptation within the social structure, the conceptualisation of life stages and substages assume progression through a cohesive framework. Life-span development models especially those of Super and Levinson et al. (1978) have been influential in the career field with other career models reflecting career stages. One such example is that of Dalton and Thompson (1986) who developed strategies for career management around four progressive career stages of Apprentice, Colleague, Mentor and Director.

Essentially, the life span development models regard adult life as a succession of distinct stages linked to particular behaviours and developmental tasks. Additionally, a progression towards stability tends to be implied as positive. These models do not reflect dramatic changes in career, or starting new cycles of interest, which downshifting would seem to represent. In the psychological literature, the main criticism of stage models is that these stages represent the likely patterns of development for middle-class males in the middle of the twentieth century who lived in industrialised western countries, and do not account for the full range of contemporary working individuals (Beijan & Salomone, 1995; Stotlz-Loike, 1995; Vondracek & Kawasaki, 1995).

Gottfredson's (1981) Developmental Theory of Occupational Aspirations is a stage model involving the development of the self-concept. According to this theory, the self-concept becomes increasingly differentiated and complex over the stages of development. Elements of the self-concept which are incorporated by the individual affects both the self-concept overall, as well as the individual's perceptions of the range of acceptable occupations. Therefore, there is a process of increasing circumscription of occupational alternatives. An individual's "zone of acceptable alternatives" is a result of the interaction between preferences and perceptions of opportunities and barriers (p. 548). Importantly, Gottfredson contended that people will sacrifice interest to maintain sextype (i.e. what occupations are appropriate for one's gender) and prestige (i.e. social desirability), and to some extent will sacrifice prestige level for sextype if that is necessary. Downshifting is a phenomenon which contradicts this last proposition. Many downshifters appear to sacrifice status and sextype in preference of occupations which hold greater interest and meaning (e.g., Saltzman, 1991).

In summary, career downshifting as a phenomenon does not appear to fit well with the major life-span career theories. Models such as those by Super (1990) and Levinson et al. (1978) view sequential progress as typical, while career downshifting, if permanent, represents a major discontinuity in a career. Downshifting also contradicts Gottfredson's (1981) propositions that prestige and consistency with prescribed gender roles are key criteria in occupational choice. Nevertheless, the theories of Super and Gottfredson incorporate the importance of self-concepts in career development. It may be that changes in an individual's self-concept play a role in the radical decision to downshift. Additionally, these changes in self-concepts may coincide with self-re-evaluations that may take place in midlife (to be discussed in Chapter 5).

3.1.3 Social learning and cognitive theories

A third approach to understanding careers is derived from Bandura's (1986) general social cognitive theory. According to Bandura, a person's cognitive and affective states, external environmental factors and overt behaviour mutually influence each other. In Lent and Brown's (1996) Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), people form enduring interests in an activity when they view themselves as competent at it (self

efficacy) and they anticipate that performance will produce valued outcomes (outcome expectations). In contradiction to one of Holland's (1985) assumptions, interests are not always reflected in occupational choice because people may be constrained by unsupportive environments (e.g., family dictates, economic needs, discrimination, educational considerations). An individual's interests are more likely to blossom into goals if they perceive beneficial conditions rather than hostile or unsupportive conditions.

SCCT may partly account for downshifters' initial career choice and maintenance of that choice due to selective perceptions of self-efficacy and environmental constraints. However, SCCT is not sufficiently comprehensive as a framework to understand the phenomenon of career downshifting. It does not, for example, account for downshifters' apparent rejection of the career culture (Albert, 1994). In other words, downshifters made career changes in spite of the lack of environmental reinforcement.

3.1.4 Psychodynamic career theories

The main psychodynamic career theory was proposed by Bordin (1990) to account for career choice and satisfaction. Bordin emphasised the importance of personality in career choice and development, in addition to variables such as economic conditions, cultural, ethnic and geographic factors. As with many psychodynamic models, Bordin's model places importance on the early development of an individual, and the individual's character style as influential on later career choice and development. Additionally, each individual is seen as building a personal identity that incorporates aspects of both father and mother, yet retaining elements unique to the self. Consistent with previous ideas of fit, Bordin considered a person's working life possibly consisting of a series of career decisions reflecting his/her moving towards an ideal fit between self and work. One source of difficulty at career decision points, however, will be doubts and dissatisfactions with current resolutions of self (i.e. intrapsychic difficulties, rather than difficulties with the occupational environment emphasised by P-E fit models). Bordin (1994) identified six sets of intrinsic career motivations: precision, nurturance, curiosity, power, aesthetic expression, ethics and concern with right and wrong. Brown (1990) however criticised these motives as being similar to Holland's vocational categories.

Nevertheless, Bordin's theories offer several ideas which are potentially useful in accounting for the phenomenon of career downshifting: (a) A decision to downshift may be just one of many decisions an individual makes throughout his/her life, progressively moving towards better fit between self and work; (b) Career downshifting may be an attempt by an individual to resolve dissatisfactions within himself/herself (e.g., unresolved conflicts or needs arising from childhood or adolescence, fear of success/responsibility, etc). In contrast to other theories which stress outcomes such as performance, stability, achievement and satisfaction, one of Bordin's (1990) key propositions is that people seek a sense of wholesomeness and joy in all aspects of life, including work. This proposition is consistent with the more eclectic and contemporary notion of finding flow and enjoyment in everyday life including work (Csikzentmihalyi, 1997). Bordin's psychodynamic model raises the possibility that resolution of identity and finding fulfilment in work may be relevant issues in understanding downshifting.

3.1.5 Women's careers

While there is no predominant model of women's careers, there has been substantial interest in comparing men's and women's careers. Levinson and Levinson (1996) in a longitudinal study concluded that women's lives were very similar to men's as documented by Levinson et al. (1978) with the exception that women were characterised by the dual dream of having both a career and family. Consequently, there may be several career patterns among women. For example, Vandewater and Stewart (1997) identified three career patterns of women aged between 28-43 years: (a) women with a **continuous career commitment** pattern, who are most similar to men; (b) women with a **midlife career commitment** pattern (i.e. women who resume careers after child bearing); (c) women with **alternative commitment** patterns (i.e. women who are not on a "career track" which involves work with status potential and opportunity for advancement). Similarly, Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) concluded from their review of research that women's career development is similar to men's but more complex in that they are more likely to experience conflict between work and family roles.

While work and family domains potentially have both positive and negative impact on each other, reviewers have concluded that the work-to-family conflict has

more impact on individuals and organisations than family-to-work conflict (e.g., Frone, Yardley & Markel, 1997; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; O'Driscoll, 1996). Moreover, women typically experience greater work-to-family conflict than men (Hammer, Allen & Grigsby, 1991; O'Driscoll, 1996; Williams & Alliger, 1994). While women generally are more likely to experience **role conflict** (i.e. stress due to conflicts between roles such as work and family roles), Wiley (1991) argued that men are more likely to suffer from **role strain** (i.e. stress due to demands from a specific role such as one's work role) due to societal emphasis to succeed in work.

Burke and Nelson (1998) reviewed literature which support this last contention, in that masculinity in developed countries is typically related to being competitive, powerful and strong. Technical mastery, status and dominance over others are also values encouraged in these definitions of masculinity. Furthermore, the literature reviewed indicated the dominance of masculine values in organisations, particularly authoritarianism, paternalism, entrepreneurism, informalism (socialising or using the old boy network), and careerism (preoccupation with upward mobility and career success, with a division between work and home life). Although androgynous behaviour has been shown to be most effective and is associated with psychological health, Burke and Nelson presented research which showed that organisations tended to reward masculine values and behaviours such as working long hours and putting the organisation first, which are taken to be measures of commitment to the organisation. These findings are consistent with propositions from the downshifting literature such as Albert (1994) and McKenna (1997) that many female managers and professionals subjugate their values of relationship and family when they adopt a masculine "careerist" model to succeed in organisations. As such, these women may be seen to suffer from both role conflict and role strain.

In summary, research and theory regarding women's careers contribute the concepts of role strain and role conflict to understanding the phenomenon of career downshifting. One or both of these types of stress are possible factors in an individual's decision to downshift to work that decreases role strain (e.g., work that involves less responsibility and reduced hours), and role conflict (e.g., work that is more compatible with family responsibilities such as child rearing). Additionally, women's career patterns demonstrate the existence of non-linear career patterns (e.g., midlife career

commitment, and alternative commitment patterns identified by Vandewater & Stewart, 1997).

3.2 Shortcomings in current career theories

Some of the main criticisms of the major career theories have been mentioned previously in the discussion of specific theories. Here, I will present the main shortcomings identified which apply to career theories overall. The first key criticism is that they conceived careers in terms of **continuity and stability**. As such, they emphasised congruence or fit in career choice and career outcomes such as stability of choice and outcomes such as tenure, achievement and satisfaction (e.g., Hackett & Lent, 1992).

Second, theories and previous practice assumed a relatively orderly progression through predictable **career stages** across a lifespan (Mirvis & Hall, 1996; Schlossberg, Waters & Goodman, 1995); the main exception being theories of women's careers. The possibility of alternative career trajectories were not considered previously and received attention only relatively recently (e.g., Driver, 1988; Hall, 1990). These assumptions of relative order, stability and opportunity have been criticised as no longer appropriate because of changes in the labour market characterised by uncertainty, structural unemployment, and fewer full time jobs offering job security (Borgen, 1997). Indeed, numerous writers have criticised psychological career theories for their focus on the individual rather than the environment (e.g., Harris-Bowlsbey, 1996; Lent, 1996; Roberts, 1981; Watts, 1996). While some psychological theories consider the organisational environment and culture, the wider context of social climate and economic context are not often addressed.

A third major criticism is that most theories of career development were based on **adolescents and young adults** entering the workforce. Few theories considered the experiences of mid-career adults (Hall, 1986; Herr, 1997; Lokan, 1996). Even theories such as Super's and models such as Dalton and Thompson (1986) which take into account a life-span approach tend to consider **careers within organisations**, not accounting for more contemporary phenomenon such as portfolio careers (Handy, 1994)

and boundaryless careers (Mirvis & Hall, 1994; 1996), where an individual manages a combination of work roles which may involve being employed by an organisation, being a contractor or consultant, or being self employed. These recent concepts which will be discussed further in Section 3.3.3.

While most people spend more time working than choosing their career, theory and research are focused on **career choice and issues surrounding choice** (e.g., indecision and career maturity), with little known about the process that adults go through when making a career transition (Heppner, Multon & Johnston, 1994; Hershenson, 1996). Myers and Cairo (1992) concluded from their review of the literature that career research and counselling practice has largely ignored the concept of career as a lifelong process. Instead, there is overemphasis on major transition periods (i.e. entry and retirement), and crises (e.g., burnout and terminations). Thus, there is a scarcity of research on midcareer transitions which could provide understanding on career downshifting.

Many approaches to careers have also been criticised by assuming that **decision making about careers is rational** and that career indecision is undesirable (Kidd, 1998; Phillips, 1994). On the surface, career downshifting may appear irrational, in that an individual voluntarily gives up a position associated with considerable financial rewards and status. Krieshok (1998) concluded from his review of the literature that career decision making is complex, rather than simple. Prescriptive models of decision making such as those advocated by Janis and Mann (1977) may be detrimental to making good decisions as they may foster the use of criteria which are not relevant to the individual, or limit the kind of behaviour that is considered intelligent and adaptive. Salomone (1993) cited Harren's views that there are three broad approaches to decision making which are not mutually exclusive when a person is making a career decision: (a) rational decision-making styles which are logical and involve step-by-step processes involving gathering and weighing of information; (b) intuitive decision-making styles which involve attention to one's internal state or feelings of "rightness" about a decision; (c) a dependent style which is influenced by opinions and expectations of others. Additionally, Krieshok argued that decidedness with career choice is not always a good thing in that it may promote foreclosure rather than an appropriate decision.

Vondracek and Kawasaki (1998) attempted to rectify the limitations of previous theories of career development and intervention by considering the person as a whole in the context of the environment. They developed a model which relied extensively on the Living Systems Framework (D. Ford, 1987), Developmental Systems Theory (D. Ford & Lerner, 1992), and Motivational Systems Theory (M. Ford, 1992). This model incorporates an individual's personal goals, personal agency beliefs and emotions, and focuses on how individuals can increase their probability of achieving their goals, making enduring changes and increasing competence. Given the limitations of major career development theories reviewed previously, Vondracek and Kawasaki's (1998) model appears to provide principles which are relevant to downshifting. The relevant principles include the need to consider an individual's **salient goals**, the importance of considering **multiple goals** which link to motivations, the **relevance of feedback** in shaping an individual's capability beliefs, the importance of aligning individual desires and beliefs to **reality**, and setting **optimum level for challenge**.

The model also differentiates between **incremental** and **transformative change**. While incremental change typically offers a less risky and more reliable means of change, transformational change typically involves a process of disorganisation and re-organisation. Importantly, M. Ford (1992) cautioned that transformational changes should be attempted only when strong social support mechanisms or expert professional guidance are available. Finally, the model incorporates the principle of equifinality, meaning that a variety of pathways can ultimately lead to the desired outcomes. Given the limitations of previous theories, the additional principles from Vondracek and Kawasaki (1998) provide potentially useful concepts for understanding the phenomenon of downshifting.

In summary, the major career theories have several shortcomings in relation to the present investigation. No single theory of career development provides a framework from which to understand career downshifting. Moreover, the major career theories do not include contemporary phenomenon such as the changing nature of relationships between workers and organisations which affect the types of career patterns that exist in western economies today. These new career patterns and their precursors are examined in the next section.

3.3 New ideas and concepts in the career literature relevant to downshifting

Within the last 15 years, new ideas and concepts have emerged in the career literature to match the shifts in careers which have resulted from large scale changes in developed economies.

3.3.1 Revised definitions of “career”

In recent times, various writers have suggested that in the future, it will become more common for individuals to have more than one career within one’s lifetime (e.g., Kelleher, 1973; Stetson, 1973). Myers and Cairo (1992) argued that this is a misrepresentation of the term “career” since a career is “a sequence of activities related to productive behaviour that occurs during the course of one’s life” (pp. 560-561). Arnold (1997a, 1997b) in his relatively recent reviews of the literature concluded that there seemed to be little consensus about the definition of “career” even among behaviourally-oriented writers. Indeed, some recent definitions of career have implied assumptions which do not hold in today’s patterns of careers. For instance, Dubrin (1983) defined a career as “a series of related job experiences that fit into some **meaningful pattern** ... If you have a series of odd jobs all your life, that is hardly a career” (p. 4). Perlmutter and Hall (1992) while not using the term career, specify that occupations are characterised by inter-related training and work experiences in which a person **moves upwards** through a series of positions that require greater mastery and responsibility, and that provide increasing financial return.

These last two definitions assume that there needs to be some meaningful connection within an individual’s experiences to constitute a career. For individuals who downshift, there may not be an obvious connection between careers, yet many would argue that these individuals have meaningful careers before and after their downshift (e.g., Cotton, 1996, Saltzman, 1991). More importantly, these definitions of career reflect cultural assumptions that progress in work life is ideally upwards in terms of responsibility, status and remuneration, reflecting Albert’s (1994) notion of the “career culture”, previously discussed in Chapter 2. Any career change that involved a

downward movement in terms of status and rewards would incur the suspicion that one had no choice in the matter, was “a loser”, or at best misinformed (McKenna, 1997).

Arnold (1997a) concluded that at least academics and career practitioners familiar with the literature agree that a career does not necessarily imply an upward or predictable movement within one kind of work. For example, Greenhaus and Callanan (1994) referred to career as the pattern of work-related experiences that span the course of a person’s life. Similarly, Miles and Snow (1994) described a career as an “evolving sequence of a person’s work experience” (p. 97). In other words, more recent definitions of career which encompass the flux of modern careers infer that there is typically more than one work role or experience, implied in words such as “series”, “sequence”, “succession”, “pattern”, or “accumulation” (Arnold, 1997a). However, even though Miles and Snow have a broad definition of career, they continued to reflect cultural prescriptions of success by describing an “effective career (as) one that allows the full development and utilisation of potential” (p. 97). In the case of downshifting, some individuals choose not to exercise or develop their full potential, whatever that may mean, but accept a position that does not fully utilise their skills or abilities. For instance, Saltzman (1991) offered case studies of several individuals who chose to “plateau” or “back-track”, accepting positions which they had previously surpassed to satisfy non-work roles, achieving more balanced lives, or simply wishing to avoid career burnout. Thus, downshifting is not a phenomenon which is easily accommodated within many definitions of “career” in the literature.

3.3.2 Definitions of career change

In their review of the literature, Black and Loughhead (1990) cited several studies which provided estimates of the high level of potential for career change. For example, a 1984 study by Dawis estimated that 20% of Americans were mismatched with their jobs and were working in areas that held little interest for them; a 1989 study by Hoyt estimated that 40% of employed American workers expected to leave their current jobs within the next three years. The literature, however, is not always clear or consistent as to what constitutes a career change. Black and Loughhead distinguished between job change and career change; **job change** was defined as “an alteration or switch in

employment positions that is within the same line of work or career field”, whereas a **career change** “involves a shift to a totally different line of lifework” (p. 3).

Having a broader perspective, Heppner et al. (1994) defined career change as incorporating task change, position change, as well as occupational change, whereas many other studies treat career change and occupational change as synonymous. In the framework of Heppner et al. (1994), **task change** involves a shift from one set of tasks to another set within the same job and same location (e.g., a dairy farmer switching to grain farming). A **position change** involves a shift in jobs with the same employer, or to a different employer or location, but with only a slight shift in job duties (e.g., a secretary changing to another department or different company). **Occupational change** involves a transition from one set of duties to a different set which may include a new work setting (e.g., a farmer becoming a factory worker).

Downshifting patterns previously reviewed in Chapter 2 include position changes (e.g., Saltzman’s (1991) “back-trackers” and “career shifters”) as well as occupational changes (e.g., career changers profiled in Albert, 1994; Cotton, 1996; McKenna, 1997). Therefore, in this thesis, “career change” will be used in the broadest sense of incorporating task change, position change and occupational change, rather than the narrow context of just occupational change.

3.3.3 Organisational influences on careers

Miles and Snow (1996) proposed that organisations determine the structure of careers, both in and out of organisations. Major shifts in career patterns have been shaped by the evolution of organisational forms. Toffler (1981, 1990) described distinct organisational forms across four waves of time. The first wave of organisations prior to the Industrial Revolution comprised small owner-managed businesses. Second-wave organisations are large organisations characterised by pyramidal organisational structures and management hierarchies. Organisational growth is through becoming bigger and better. Ideal careers in these second-wave organisations are typically regarded as up the pyramidal hierarchy, usually within the same company. Since the mid 1980’s, however, mature second-wave organisations have been downsizing and reducing the number of

hierarchical layers (delaying) at a rapid pace to achieve competitiveness and higher profits, making careers in such organisations less secure.

Third-wave organisations are more flattened and comprise desegregated hierarchies or networks. Careers in these organisations could proceed horizontally. Although career paths are less obvious, they are opportunities to positions of importance and impact in terms of decision-making roles. In these organisations, career progress relies on competencies and skills such as relationship management skills and extensive use of personal and professional networks, with individual recognition and promotions being tied to market responses. Within these third-wave organisations, members are expected to participate in the design of their own career paths.

Toffler (1990) proposed that the structure of fourth-wave organisations are not fully apparent at this time, but suggested that one possible pattern could involve triangulation of a technical organisation, a joint-venture partner, and a principal customer. Miles and Snow (1996) suggested that careers in fourth-wave organisations are likely to capture many of the organisational characteristics of the classic professions such as law, medicine, teaching and the clergy. In other words, careers would be built on systematic knowledge building on substantial education and training, with a number of jobs over a lifetime. Thus, the changes in organisational structures impact on the type of work available in relation to organisations. The remainder of this section now reviews new concepts which attempt to describe career patterns which are emerging in response to structural organisational change. An appreciation of emerging career patterns is essential for understanding career options that are available to career downshifters. Additionally, an appreciation of older career patterns is essential for understanding assumptions that career downshifters may have that create difficulties to their adjustment after leaving their previous occupations or roles.

In 1976, Hall coined the term “**protean career**” (Hall & Mirvis, 1995). This term was derived from the ancient Greek god Proteus who was able to change his shape at will. “The protean career is a process which the person, not the organisation, is managing. It consists of all the person’s varied experiences in education, training, work in several organisations, changes in occupational fields, etc. The protean career is not what happens to the person in any one organisation. The protean person’s own personal

career choices and search for self-fulfilment are the unifying or integrative elements in his or her own life. The criterion of success is internal (psychological success), not external” (p. 44). Thus, the protean career would be unique to each person and take place outside the boundaries of formal organisations.

More recently, Handy (1989) conceptualised future organisations as boundaryless, and comprising not only core employees, but also specialist contractors and contingent staff. Consequently, individual careers will not necessarily be bounded by organisations, (i.e. **boundaryless careers**). Individuals may be working in various roles (e.g., team member, consultant or client) when interfacing with different organisations within a given time frame of their career, or over the course of their career. As such, career development is likely to be more cyclical with periodic cycles of re-skilling and lateral moves, rather than conventional ideas of onward and upward movement (Mirvis & Hall, 1996). Moreover, the notion that hard work and diligence will be sufficient for career success may not hold true. Handy (1994) suggested that a career would no longer mean climbing the ladder of jobs, and that one’s life would not be defined by one’s job title.

Handy (1989) also introduced the concept of the “**portfolio career**” which included five categories of work: work for wages and fees, and work at home, study and voluntary work which are unpaid. More recently in Australia, Letcher (1997) elaborated the boundaryless career concept as “**modular career**”, a method of systematically integrating income-producing and potentially income-producing activities into a workable whole. Letcher advocated a “core module” of income-producing work centred around individual skills, talents and desires; “support modules” which provide financial and professional buttressing; and “gap fillers” of interim work which prevent income gaps from widening. Thus, part-time work, project or contract work and other forms of temporary work may be used by individuals as a core module, support module or gap fillers. For example an individual could have a core module of self employment as a computer network consultant, a support module as a part-time sales assistant for a department store, and gap fillers such as customer service roles in occasional computer trade shows. Thus, portfolio careers and modular careers can be regarded as specific forms of boundaryless careers. These emerging career patterns are potentially useful ideas to supplement Saltzman’s (1991) patterns of alternative careers in downshifting.

The advantages of the boundaryless career include opportunities for new stimuli, relationships and networks. Many writers (e.g., Mirvis & Hall, 1996) also see the boundaryless career as providing the possibility of flexible time and space to explore other life roles more fully and expand one's sense of self, find greater balance in one's life, and find greater engagement in one's life work, whether that is referred to as "one's calling" (Peck, 1993), "the path with heart" (Sheperd, 1984), or one's right livelihood" (Whitmyer, 1994).

Nonetheless, psychologists have identified several difficulties and challenges in pursuing such a boundaryless career (e.g., Carson, Carson & Bedeian, 1995; Hall & Mirvis, 1995; Mirvis & Hall, 1996). These include: (a) not having the time to find out what is personally meaningful; (b) having fewer stable attachments due to the need to quickly respond to changing work requirements; (c) having few constant elements to gauge work identity and work aspirations; (d) a lack of opportunities to be part of a larger concern; (e) financial costs, in that people who change occupations generally have lower overall lifetime earnings than someone who stays in a traditional single career path; (f) psychological costs, in that the boundaryless career could heighten self-fragmentation; (g) distress and alienation among some individuals due to the less stable employment contracts between employers and employees (e.g., fewer health care benefits). Indeed, Mirvis and Hall (1996) caution that the combination of financial insecurity and psychological challenge of self-defining one's identity within a boundaryless career could be very stressful, compounding "the syndrome of career success/personal failure" (p. 245). According to Handy (1994), "Flexilife is now the mode ... The new maps offer the chance of greater individual choice, but also of individual calamity ... It puts responsibility on the individual in return for more independence" (pp. 167, 182). Thus, the current cohort of midlife career downshifters are likely to have resigned from large hierarchical second-wave organisations. Even if they are self-employed, they face the challenge of constructing new career patterns which are typically modular and/or less bounded by organisations.

Psychologists such as Mirvis and Hall (1996), as well as other management writers (e.g., Bridges, 1995; Handy, 1994, 1996) have identified several requirements for individuals to successfully negotiate the emerging pattern of boundaryless careers.

These include: (a) the need to adjust any expectations about continuous upward mobility and career progress; (b) the need for people to move through a number of career cycles of exploration, establishment, maintenance and disengagement, rather than trying to prolong the maintenance stage of their career; (c) the wherewithal to integrate diverse work and life experiences into a larger sense of self; (d) the ability to quickly form close, personal and authentic relationships with new people in new settings; (e) being able to derive satisfaction from temporary work situations; (f) being able to resource social supports; (g) having technical and social meta-skills which enable people to accommodate to new tasks, roles, responsibilities and relationships in their personal identities. The potential difficulties with a boundaryless career and the requirements needed to manage such a career are factors which may be relevant in understanding successful downshifting.

Hall and Mirvis (1995) described changes in employment conditions as “**the new career contract**”. They argued that the “career contract” or the set of mutual expectations between employer and employee have changed over the last decade, reflecting an environment of rapid change and complexity. The recent changes in the career contract have great impact on older workers, especially those who developed their lives and careers around the “one-life-one-career imperative”; the idea of changing work identity and acquiring new skills would be daunting for many of these workers. Moreover, the change in the implied career contract, leading to shorter periods of employment and fewer benefits (e.g., health care) towards the latter part of a worker’s life could be construed as betrayal, especially in the context of prejudice against employment or contracting of older workers.

The term “**psychological contract**” is commonly used in the career literature, being first utilised by Argyris (1960) to refer to the relationship between employees and representatives of the employing organisation. Anderson and Schalk (1995), in their review, highlighted the subjective nature of such contracts which may be implied, rather than explicitly stated. They described past forms of psychological contracts as characterised by structure, predictability, fairness, security, continuity and loyalty. In contrast, emerging psychological contracts are characterised by flexibility, negotiation, determined by market forces and dependent on a worker’s skills, added value and employability. Thus, while a psychological contract typically concerns reciprocal

obligations, in economies where jobs are becoming scarce and less permanent, it would appear that employing organisations have more advantages on their side. Thus, midlife downshifters who have established themselves in their careers take great risks in decreasing any tenure or security they had, making themselves more vulnerable to emerging psychological contracts that are less advantageous.

3.3.4 Career plateauing

The notion of career plateauing is relevant in that some authors (e.g., Saltzman, 1991) identified voluntary plateauing as one possible form of career downshifting. Ference, Stoner and Warren (1997) defined career plateauing as “the point in a career when likelihood of additional hierarchical promotion is very low” (p. 602). Ettington (1998) suggested that plateauing may be due to lack of opportunities in organisations, although it is commonly attributed to individual characteristics such as complacency and being promoted to a level of incompetence. Bardwick (as cited in Tan & Salomone, 1994) identified three types of career plateauing: (a) **structural plateauing** which is due to the limitations in organisational structures which are typically pyramidal; (b) **content plateauing** where an employee lacks further challenge to expand vocational expertise; (c) **personal plateauing** which corresponds to a period in one’s life stage development. Tan and Salomone proposed that the factors which contributed to career plateauing included: (a) organisational structures, with only one percent of employees reaching the highest level of corporate decision making; (b) the current economic environment of mergers, acquisitions, buy-outs, restructuring and downsizing, leading to fewer jobs; (c) some organisations which take a defensive stance in their industries, leading to fewer job opportunities; (d) organisational cultures which may not actively enhance employee career movements; (e) the nature of specific jobs or supervisors; (f) individual employee variables.

Karp (as cited in Tan and Salomone, 1994) categorised plateauers into four categories: (a) “**the immune**” who did not want or need promotion, and valued work in and for itself; (b) “**the adapters**” who accept their situation and look for support from the system, including their supervisors, to modify their expectations and de-emphasise promotion as an index of value; (c) “**the deniers**” who reject the reality of being at a plateau, and increase their work efforts, but not their productivity; (d) “**the**

internalisers” who view the problem as a personal deficiency and therefore suffer decreased self-esteem and productivity. Tan and Salomone included a fifth category (e) **“leavers”** who overcome their plateaued career in one organisation by moving to another organisation. Ference et al. (1997) proposed a simpler typology for those who had plateaued in organisations: (a) **“solid citizens”** who continued to deliver high level performance; and (b) **“deadwood”** whose performance was ineffective or substandard. These employees were contrasted to **“stars”** whose career paths were on the rise, and **“learners”** whose performance were below optimum, but whose future prospects would brighten once they adjusted to their new positions. From Saltzman’s (1991) descriptions, downshifters who voluntary plateau correspond to **“solid citizens”** who may also either **“immune”** to promotions, or **“adapters”** to organisational realities.

Driver (1980, 1988) proposed that people develop one of four broad career styles: (a) a **steady state style** where there is a life-time commitment to an occupation, where the main motives are security and competence; (b) a **linear career style** where career activity continues through life with steady advancement or upward mobility and the main motives are achievement and power; (c) a **spiral style** where career development is cyclical, with major changes every seven to ten years, since the central motive is growth; (d) a **transitory style** where there are frequent changes every one to four years, with variety and challenge being the main motives. Similarly, Hall (1990) viewed the ideal career style internalised by many people as characterised by a linear style fast-track of upward mobility. He presented eight alternative career development styles including **“early-peaking”**, **“late-peaking or slow-burn”**, **“steady-state or calling”**, **“multi-channel”**, or a series of growth curves in a number of work-roles, **“floundering”**, **“temporary advancement”**, **“midcareer renewal”**, and **“phased retirement”**. Thus, plateauing may be a reflection of a preference for a steady state style of career, or a reflection of dedication to a particular vocation

As long ago as 1980, Near’s survey of human resource managers estimated that 60% of employees had plateaued. However, as many as two thirds of these could be classified as **“solid citizens”**, with only one third being classified as **“dead wood”**, using the terminology of Ference et al. (1977). In other words, career plateauing is likely to be more pervasive than expected within a culture which promotes selectively on the fast track. Thus, the literature suggests that career plateauing (a form of downshifting) does

not necessarily have to carry negative connotations of failure since most plateauers make sound contributions to organisations and society. In fact, it can be argued that plateauing may be the equivalent to the maintenance stage of career cycles described by Super (1990).

3.3.5 Subjective aspects of career and success

“Psychological success” is a term coined by Hall in 1976 to refer to “achieving goals that are personally meaningful, rather than those set by parents, peers, organisations or society”, reflecting the increasing importance that people “make sense of their constantly changing work agendas, and to integrate their work experience into a coherent self-picture” (Mirvis & Hall, 1996, p. 238). In their review of the literature and their own empirical work, Kanchier and Unruh (1989a) found evidence of greater attention being paid to psychological success, compared to material success. They concluded that there was a trend towards people defining success in personal terms, with decreasing loyalty to employers, and increasing dissatisfaction with authoritarian and impersonal work environments.

Mirvis and Hall (1996) predicted that in the future, the factors which support most people’s notions of psychological success (e.g., job security, remuneration increases, status from one’s position) will be less available in workplaces. Warnath (1975) proposed that it is not logical to expect self-fulfilment from careers in our increasingly technological society. Indeed, Hutton (1995) predicted that the UK would see a 30/30/40 society in the future, with 30% of the population either unemployed or economically inactive, 30% in insecure and intermittent employment with few benefits, and 40% in relatively privileged positions, usually with marketable skills in relatively stable employment or self-employment. Mackay (1993, 1999) also forewarned of a similar polarisation in Australian society. In sum, it is important to re-examine expectations and aspirations, and even to look to other sources of psychological success, or risk disappointment or a sense of failure. The popular literature on downshifting (e.g., Cotton, 1996, McKenna, 1997) while not directly referring to Hall has used this concept of subjectively defined psychological success extensively.

Closely related to the notion of psychological success is the concept of the subjective career – the career from the individual’s perspective. Barley (1989) conceptualised career as a dual concept involving subjective and objective aspects which are experienced simultaneously. The subjective side of career links the image of self and felt identity, while the objective side concerns objective facts such as official position and job history which are publicly accessible. Ball (1984) distinguished **subjective** explanations of career as centring around an individual’s aspirations and orientations, in contrast to more mainstream **objective** explanations or theories. Miller-Tiedman and Tiedman (1990) have criticised career theorists for neglecting the individual’s processes in career development, especially the capacity to adapt, change, explore and renew oneself.

A number of psychologists have advocated a more subjective and constructivist approach to conceptualising careers which would involved paying greater attention to an individual’s feelings, passions and purposes (e.g., Collin, 1997; Collin & Watts, 1996; Kidd, 1998). Such an approach would help people to give meaning to their careers by identifying themes and tensions in constructing a coherent story for their future career management. This approach would also allow them to integrate fragmented work episodes, accommodate work discontinuities and experiences outside paid employment to construct a career as a portfolio of skills and accomplishments. In other words, the subjective career, or the story a person chooses to tell, is the connective glue rather than the objectively observable organisational pathway of steps up a ladder (Collin, 1997). Thus, this notion of the subjective career more readily accommodates the phenomenon of downshifting, away from a “career culture” (Albert, 1994) which promotes idealised career styles such as the linear fast-track.

3.3.6 Midcareer renewal

The literature on careers has tended to focus on career choice, entry of young adults into organisations and more recently, work exits such as retirement and involuntary terminations. Hall (1986) pointed to a gap regarding midcareer adults. He defined **midcareer** as the middle phase of a specific career which may occur at various points in a person’s life. Typically, this is between 36-51 years, but it could be between 52-61 years for a person with an interrupted career, such as a woman who had time off to

have a family. At this midcareer stage, the person has mastered a work role, is no longer a “newcomer”, has become an “insider” within an organisation, but has not begun to disengage from work. Hall’s research revealed the following themes in the midcareer experience: (a) perceived constriction of career opportunities; (b) ambiguity or uncertainty about one’s future role; (c) a heightened awareness of identity issues and the need for adaptability; (d) an increased awareness of personal responsibility for one’s own career.

Beijan and Salomone (1995) proposed that there is now accumulating evidence for an additional stage of “**career renewal**” which occurs between Super’s (1990) stages of “establishment” and “maintenance”. This stage is particularly relevant to adults between 35-45 old and those in transition since Super’s theory does not account for significant career change in midlife, reflecting an era of stable organisational structures of an earlier time. Reviewing the literature on midlife and career, Beijan and Salomone (1995) suggested that the main tasks to be performed during career renewal are: (a) re-appraisal of career commitment and choice; (b) integrating the polarities in one’s personality; (c) modification of one’s life structure. In sum, individuals at the career renewal stage have three broad alternatives: (a) renewing their commitment to their current career (e.g., updating skills and acquiring new competencies); (b) entering a maintenance stage while developing new aspects of themselves (e.g., devoting more time to leisure and family); or (c) change their careers (i.e. entering a new cycle of establishment, stabilising, consolidating and advancing). Beijan and Salomone’s (1995) article provides a bridge between the career and downshifting literature. Individuals who choose to enter a passive maintenance stage would include Saltzman’s (1990) categories of “plateauers”, “back-trackers” and “career shifters”. Those who choose to change careers would include Saltzman’s category of “self employed” as well as those who make radical changes in occupation described by Albert (1994) and McKenna (1996).

Inevitably, career transitions involve difficulties such as decreased income, financial loss that affects other family members, sacrifice of career identity, and emotional upheaval that affect personal, social and work relationships (Black & Loughhead, 1990; Louis, 1982; Newman, 1995). Not surprisingly, many workers in their midlife and older tend to resist career changes that threaten self-concept (Super, 1990) and career identity (Hall, 1990). It is more common to observe a conservative shift in

career strategies and increasing emphasis on protecting financial resources acquired over a lifetime (Bailey & Hansson, 1995). Moreover some people in midcareer may be more concerned with protecting themselves from failure and establish a work routine that minimises risk. Carson et al. (1995) asserted that professionally trained workers are especially prone to **career entrenchment**, due to investments made in acquiring and maintaining specific career expertise. Furthermore, any downward move to a position or occupation of lower status or responsibility often has the connotation of (career) death, failure and despair, which may also arouse negative social judgements (Hall & Isabella, 1985; Carson et al., 1995).

Seen in this context, downshiffters apparently risk a great deal in changing their careers, especially to careers which involve less financial reward and status. Nevertheless, Hall and Isabella (1985) maintained that some people are able to define success in broader terms (e.g., family involvement, community participation, leisure activities). In other words, for downshiffters, psychological success or success in relation to one's own goals and values may become more important than conventional definitions of material success.

3.4 Chapter summary

- (a) In this review of major career theories, I concluded that no single theory provided a comprehensive model for understanding downshifting. Moreover, older definitions of career assumed the predominant organisational values of hierarchical progress and rewards.
- (b) However, the research on plateauing (one specific form of downshifting) suggests that plateauing is not uncommon, and potentially advantageous for both individuals and organisations.
- (c) The literature review also uncovered alternative conceptualisations of contemporary careers such as boundaryless careers and modular careers as new career patterns potentially encountered by downshiffters who leave their positions in hierarchical organisations.
- (d) The review of the psychological literature in the broad career domain has also uncovered potential difficulties for downshiffters such as decreased earnings overall

life span, the lack of stable attachments if they adopt boundaryless careers, self-fragmentation and pressures to define their own identity, and possibly distress and alienation from the mainstream “career culture”. On the other hand, individual characteristics which would facilitate successful boundaryless careers include being able to quickly move through career cycles of exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement; the ability to integrate diverse work and life experiences into a cohesive sense of self; the ability to engage new people in new settings; and being able to resource social supports.

- (e) Other useful concepts which are potentially relevant to understanding downshifting are: (i) Derr’s (1986) career orientations – it may be that career downshifting is motivated by “getting balanced” and “getting free” orientations, which markedly contrast with a “getting ahead” orientation of those on an upwardly mobile career path; (ii) Driver’s (1988) career styles – while upwardly mobile career paths are typically linear in style, career downshifterers may be demonstrating a preference for a steady state style (where they plateau), or a spiral style (where they change occupations); (iii) Bordin’s (1990) proposition that people seek wholeness and joy in life including work.
- (f) Also of possible relevance are Vondracek and Kawasaki’s (1998) distinctions between incremental and transformative change. It may be that some forms of career downshifting (e.g., occupational change) represent change of a greater magnitude than other forms (e.g., plateauing).
- (g) Notions of the subjective career and psychological success may help account for downshifterers’ radical career changes which run counter to predominant cultural values of material success and hierarchical advances. The next chapter reviews the psychological literature on career change and transition in an attempt to identify models which may be relevant to the experience of downshifting.

CHAPTER 4: VOLUNTARY CAREER CHANGE AND TRANSITION: A REVIEW

The review of literature in the last chapter indicated that none of the major career theories provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the phenomenon of career downshifting. Nevertheless, some contemporary concepts were noted which are potentially useful in expanding our understanding of particular aspects of downshifting. Within this context, the review of literature is next extended to the areas of career change and transitions generally, with the hope of identifying frameworks which could further contribute to understanding the process and experience of career downshifting. From this perspective, career downshifting may be regarded simply as a specific form of voluntary career change.

The voluntary career change literature is sparse. For example, a Psychlit database search of journal articles for “career change” from January 1996 to June 1999 yielded only 61 articles, most of which related to involuntary job change or career counselling. There is also considerable research on inter-role transitions such as intra-company transfers, job turnover and exits such as retirement or retrenchment, but little on voluntary career change (Blau & Lunz, 1998). Collin (1990) remarked that it was not until the 1970’s that career change became more acceptable, and was not regarded as an aberration or evidence of floundering. The changes in society which account for more frequent career change in the last 20 years include increased social tolerance of career change, broader concern for quality of life (e.g., personal growth, fulfilment), and new lifestyle patterns (e.g., dual career families, longer lifespans) (Kanchier & Unruh, 1989a; Louis, 1980; Thomas, 1979).

In their review of the literature, Loughead and Black (1990a) concluded that research about job change has primarily been from an organisational perspective, concentrating on employee retention and turnover. With rapid organisational changes, however, there is now more research on the impact of organisational changes on employees (e.g., Carson et al., 1995; Tan & Salomone, 1994). Nevertheless, career researchers have identified a critical gap in the literature in the area of how workers

experience and survive career transitions other than career entry and career exit (Bruce & Scott, 1994; Louis 1980, 1982; Heppner, Cook, Strozier & Heppner, 1991).

Furthermore, the research methods employed in the career field have tended to yield aggregated responses which do not provide insights from a phenomenological perspective – that is, how individual workers perceive themselves (Myers & Cairo, 1992). The array of literature is also limited by a proliferation of research which considered intentions to change careers, rather than actual career change (e.g., Blau & Lunz, 1993; Rhodes & Doering, 1993). Moreover, longitudinal studies on occupational change are scarce (Breedon, 1993). In summary, we know relatively little about occupational change and job change, as opposed to career transitions such as entry and exit.

According to Chusid and Cochran (1989), the career change literature has largely been concerned with understanding the reasons for career change and the consequences of the change, rather than the process or people's experiences of career change. Similarly, Leong and Boyle (1997) noted that the literature on midlife career change typically addressed whether midlife career change is an unavoidable developmental stage, and what motivates midlife career change. As such, research on career change has focused on factors that contributed to career change, personality traits of career changers, types of career change, and person-occupation congruence. This chapter now provides a brief review of the career change literature as it applies to midlife career downshifters.

4.1 Reasons underlying voluntary career change

Myers and Cairo (1992) concluded from a brief review of the relevant literature that dissatisfaction with one's current occupation is a major motivator for change, and that such dissatisfaction is best explained by the personal changes one undergoes at midlife. In contrast, Thomas (1980) emphasised the importance of avoiding single-cause explanations of midlife career changes. In the literature reviewed by Leong and Boyle (1997), a common theme was the diversity of motivations for career change. For example Sinick (1975) identified 26 possible motivations for career change including the following: (a) original aspirations not met by the first career; (b) the purpose of the first career was accomplished; (c) inadequate outlet for creativity; (d) desire to implement

avocational interests, (e) work pressures and deadlines were too demanding; (f) personality conflicts with supervisors.

Other researchers have accounted for career change using a combination of organisational and personal factors. For example, Hall (1986) suggested organisational factors contributing to career change would include organisational maturity and consequent constriction of career opportunities for individuals or plateauing. With regard to organisational factors, Kanchier and Unruh (1989b) found, in their study of 166 job changers, that 15% cited disillusionment with the employing organisation's personnel policies. In contrast, the other main reasons for leaving were largely related to personal considerations: desire for greater autonomy (22%), desire for greater achievement (14%), desire for better fit of values and work (11%), desire for more challenge (11%), desire for more meaningful work (9%), desire for greater responsibility (5%), and the perceived need to use skills (4%).

Thomas (1979) summarised three broad hypotheses concerning midlife career change from high status occupations: (a) a **counter-culture hypothesis** that dissatisfaction with the present social system leads individuals to leave the mainstream of society to live in less complicated settings such as rural areas; (b) a "Gaugin" or **developmental hypothesis** where career and personal goals are re-evaluated as part of the transition through midlife, leading to a radical career change for some individuals; and (c) a **macrosocial hypothesis** where rapid social and economic change cause dislocation such that some careers become obsolete or require frequent upgrading. Thomas found little support for the counterculture hypothesis in his study of 73 men aged between 34 and 54 years who changed from high status careers, in contrast to the reports by Krantz (1977) and by Roberts (1975). There was no widespread rejection of the social and economic system, with a third going into business for themselves. Thomas explained this difference as due to limitations of sampling utilised by Krantz and Roberts such as recruiting respondents who had moved to the Southwest area of the United States, or who were subscribers of a counterculture magazine respectively. There was some support for the macrosocial hypothesis, in that external pressures were a major factor in the career change decision for less than one in five study participants. Thomas' study largely supported a developmental hypothesis, in that 76% said they left their careers to find **more meaningful work**, and 69% said they wanted a better **fit between**

their values and work. Many of the men interviewed chose careers which were considered traditionally less masculine (e.g., education, nursing, social work and the helping professions). Even those who went into business for themselves chose traditionally less masculine fields (e.g., pottery and crafts). The time between contemplating a change, and actually doing so typically involved several years. Similarly, Kanchier and Unruh (1988) found that occupational cycles of entry, mastery and disengagement averaged 7.5 years, which is consistent with the typical transition period of about five years found between stable life structures suggested by Levinson et al. (1978).

Perosa and Perosa (1984) identified five main patterns from the life histories of 134 people – 46 who had changed their careers, 43 people who were in the process of changing their careers and 45 non-changers whom they called “persisters”. The main pattern for the majority (73%) was for a first career that was good, but where the fit gradually broke down. With the second pattern (27%), the fit had been poor or terrible from the beginning. The third pattern (23%) was where change was provoked by divorce or threat to marriage which led to an assessment of what was meaningful for the individual. This third pattern applied to 29% of women who found enhanced independence, and 17% of men who moved to careers which related to people. The fourth pattern (15%) was related to the theme of seeking a lost dream, while the fifth pattern (3%) applied to pursuing an avocational interest. Loss was a common catalyst to career change (e.g., loss of an aspect of self, divorce, threat to marriage, death of a child, death of parents, or loss of community through a job move).

From a sociological perspective, Glassner (1994) interviewed 120 midlife men and women from the “Baby Boomers” generation who “instead of looking for the straight line they once followed, (took) detours, backtracked, pursued parallel routes, made forays into uncharted territories” (p. 18). Not all of those interviewed were voluntary downshifters, some of them included people who lost employment from organisational downsizing and restructuring. In any case, Glassner was interested in why so many people “simply walk away from positions that others in their profession would kill to have” (p. 14). Glassner concluded that in cases of people who downshifted, there was a strong theme of **premature closure** in their earlier lives. Many had chosen their careers too early without exploring who they were. They had chosen careers to escape

unsatisfactory situations at home, or used their careers as a refuge which failed to work in midlife. Alternatively, some people had lived their parents' dreams and expectations, without considering what they themselves would have liked. This theme of **foreclosure** and living the dreams of parents was also found by Osherson (1980) in his interviews of men who left professional careers to pursue artistic careers. Midlife career change then became an opportunity to **reclaim a self** that had been lost in adolescence or young adulthood.

In summary, this section has identified a variety of reasons which may contribute to career downshifting. There are two broad categories of reasons: (a) external circumstances or events which contribute to work dissatisfaction and/or need to change careers; and (b) factors within an individual such as a need for more meaningful work. Precursors to inner pressures to seek alternative work include previous premature closure of career options, and changes in self-concept in midlife.

4.2 The congruence hypothesis

One of the main hypotheses found in the voluntary career change literature is that individuals change their career to increase the extent of congruity with their occupations and/or their working environments. According to Breeden (1993), evidence regarding whether occupational change increases congruence (in Holland's terminology) or correspondence (using TWA terminology) is mixed. In opposition to the greater congruence hypothesis, Thomas and Robbins (1979) reported that most of their midlife career changers did not move to occupations more congruent with their personalities. Additionally, those who did change to more congruent occupations were no more satisfied with the career change than non-changers. Leong and Boyle (1997) emphasised that congruence between work environment and personality were not predictive of job stability or job satisfaction. Robbins et al. (1978) found that among their sample of 63 men aged between 33 and 54 years in managerial and professional occupations, the net effect as a group was for no move into work environments that were more congruent with personality. While 42% moved to careers which were more congruent with their tested personality type, 39% moved to less congruent occupations and 19% made no change in their congruence score.

In support of the greater congruence hypothesis, Oleski and Subich (1996) found that students with an average age of 34.4 years who attended college to attain a new occupation were moving towards a direction of greater congruence with their personality. Wiener and Vaitenas (1977) found that in their study involving managerial and sales occupations, career change was due to personality incongruity. In contrast to 66 controls who did not change their careers, their 45 career changers were lower on all five traits of ascendancy, dominance, responsibility, endurance and order, the first two of which would be more congruent for enterprising careers where power and influence orientation are desirable. In a study of 436 adults with an average age of 32 years who sought career counselling, Breeden (1993) found that over a two year follow up period, 36% had changed jobs and 39% had changed occupations. There was only weak support for the hypothesis that those who changed occupations would have higher occupational fit following change. However, among those who changed either job or occupation, there was higher job satisfaction following the change.

Using American longitudinal data from 300 engaged couples recruited over 1935-1938, Leong and Boyle (1997) investigated the extent of congruence between environment and personality at two different survey periods (1935-1938 and 1953-1954). They found overall congruence for both genders increased slightly over time, although congruence was higher for men (37% at Time 1, and 44% at Time 2) than women (15% at Time 1, and 20% at Time 2). In Australia, Fuller and Kendall (1992) using six levels of goodness of fit, found that among 86 people aged between 26 to 45 years seeking midcareer counselling, 23% had "very poor fit" or "below average fit", while a high proportion (58%) had "low average fit" or "high average fit" with their current occupation. Surprisingly, 19% already had "above average fit" or "very good fit". Considering their career interests, there was some potential for some movement towards greater fit: 17% would have "very poor fit" or "below average fit", while 47% would have "low average fit" or "high average fit", with 35% having "above average fit" or "very good fit". In other words a higher percentage of those seeking career counselling would experience greater fit if they moved to careers of interest.

Vaitenas and Wiener (1977) considered both vocational choice theories and adult development theories to hypothesise that for younger career changers under 35 years,

issues of incongruity, emotional difficulty and lack of differentiation, postulated by career theorists such as Holland, would be more salient. In contrast, they hypothesised that issues that would be more relevant to older career changers over 35 years would be those related to generativity, fear of failure and lifestyle doubts. In their study of 65 men who had undergone voluntary career change, they found that younger career changers were the least differentiated, as to be expected. However, all career changers were characterised by lower congruity. Older career changers did not manifest a higher degree of social service interest or generativity. There were also no differences in fear of failure motives among career changers, irrespective of age. In other words, among midlife career changers, lack of congruity was a feature, while developmental issues of generativity did not feature strongly.

In summary, the research suggests that some individuals do move to occupations of greater congruity, but depending on the sample researched, net movement towards congruity is not necessarily found. Additionally, Oleski and Subich (1996) cautioned that research findings are subject to difficulties in occupational coding, and choice of congruence indices influences findings. These findings confirm the difficulties in congruence and P-E fit measures previously reviewed in Chapter 3. Given the mixed findings of researchers, the methodological difficulties with congruence research, and the primary focus of the research on the experience of downshifting, the issue of congruence was not actively pursued.

4.3 Individual differences between career changers and non-changers

A third area of career change research has focused on contrasting career changers and non-career changers. Kanchier and Unruh (1989b) conducted a study of 166 job changers and 298 non-job changers. While no age details were provided, all study participants were mid level and senior executives. Among the job changers, 75% were men; among the non-changers, 81% were men. Using Super's Work Values Inventory (WVI) and Self and Work Perception Questionnaire (SWPQ), Kanchier and Unruh found that, compared to non-changers, job changers placed higher value on creativity, variety, independence, achievement and intellectual stimulation. Less value was placed on security, economic returns, associates, surroundings and prestige. In other words, job

changers placed more emphasis on intrinsic work rewards and having a self-directed lifestyle rather than upward movement on the organisational hierarchy. According to Kanchier and Unruh when job changers' work environments no longer provided them with conditions necessary for psychological success, they moved on. On the other hand, non-changers preferred more traditional extrinsic work rewards, and work was valued for its economic returns, status, prestige, power, social interaction and structure of time. Kanchier and Unruh also concluded that job changers had higher-order needs compared to non-changers. These findings and conclusions are in sharp contrast to Wiener and Vaitenas (1977), previously summarised in Section 4.2, who were more disparaging of career changers.

Gilkison and Drummond (1988) found changers in the midst of re-training were high in self-esteem, self-confidence and achievement motivation. McCrae and Costa (1985) found that individuals high on Openness as measured by Big-Five personality inventories were more likely to change their careers. In summary, the few studies investigating individual differences between career changers and non-changers typically resulted in significant differences. However, not all studies reported the traits of career changers to be more positive in contrast to non-changers. From this brief review of the available literature, I concluded that it was worthwhile to incorporate some investigation of personality characteristics of career downshifters as a component of the research (Section 6.4.3).

4.4 The outcomes of career change

Kanchier and Unruh (1989a) found that compared to 298 career non-changers, their 166 career changers reported better health and more satisfaction with life generally, higher self-esteem, achievement motivation, self-actualisation, intelligence and maturity. Similarly, Black and Loughhead (1990) reported that the positive effects of voluntary job change included personal growth, satisfaction, innovation, enhanced overall well-being and greater economic returns.

Osherson (1980) found that among his sample of 20 men who had made a dramatic midlife career change from professional occupations to the creative arts, the

effects of the career change included large changes in everyday routines and a large drop in earnings resulting in consequences on social position and status. Additionally, there was a need to develop and test new skills and abilities as artists or craftsmen. Outcomes related to work included excitements as well as disappointments which involved hostile environments, or work that did not live up to expectations. Relationships with partners, friends and family-of-origin were also affected, either positively or negatively.

Considerable change was also experienced in relationship with themselves. Many of Osherson's participants realised that their career choices were previously made in relation to other people's values (e.g., the idealised father), and that parts of themselves had been suppressed. There was typically a struggle between "higher spirituality" and "lower materialism", as well as a cycle of conflict between external pressures and what Osherson called the "wished-for self" (p. 73, 91). Nevertheless, an important outcome was maturation of self by way of increasing complexity. This involved recognition of the complexity in self and others, increased capacity for autonomous choice and decision making, ability to consider multiple viewpoints and tolerate conflicting perceptions, and the capacity to use both affect and intellect in major decisions.

It would also appear that career change has a significant impact on the individual's identity. Among O'Connor and Wolfe's (1987) 64 midlife career changers aged between 35-50 years, there was a strong theme of "becoming one's own person" (p. 813) and being more in touch with feelings and values. Thomas (1980) emphasised the importance of reordering of the individual's personal values as part of a midlife career change. Similarly, Driver (1988) and Osherson (1980) perceived the search for a new career as an opportunity to deepen one's identity towards a fuller, richer, confident definition of self.

In sum, available literature indicates that there may be a variety of positive outcomes as a result of voluntary career downshifting. Since career downshifting is radical in its move away from mainstream culture's prescription of upward mobility, I decided to incorporate systematic investigation of the outcomes from career downshifting in this research (Section 6.4).

4.5 Types of career change

Louis (1980) studied various types of career transitions and provided a typology of career transitions which were broadly divided into (a) inter-role transitions, and (b) intra-role transitions. Inter-role transitions included **career entry and re-entry** (e.g., starting a new career or job), **intra-company moves** (e.g., transfers from one division of the same company to another), **inter-company moves** (e.g., change from one organisation to another which would involve changes in task requirements, organisational climate and even industry), **inter-professional moves** (e.g., occupational changes) and **exits** (e.g., sabbaticals, maternity leave or retirement). Intra-role transitions include **intra-role adjustments** to a role that an individual makes over time, **extra-role adjustments** which involve taking on other additional roles which may be in the work or non-work domain, **career stage transitions** (e.g., from early to mid career stages), and **life-stage transitions** (e.g., moving towards generativity).

Additionally, Louis (1980) advanced five propositions regarding career transitions. First, she proposed that during career transitions, individuals face differences between old and new roles, orientations and settings. Second, the greater the differences, the more the individual has to cope with. Third, the type of transition indicates the nature and magnitude of differences that the person has to cope with. Fourth, there is a typical coping process of making sense of the transition. There is a **need to revise cognitive maps** used to interpret and describe experiences in the new role and setting. While there is a tendency to attach meaning using interpretative schemes (maps) developed from previous roles and settings, there is a need for interpretations based on current context and roles. Finally, an understanding of the coping process can be used to foresee the needs and facilitate adaptation during the career transition.

Bruce and Scott (1994) advanced Louis' ideas by conducting research on various types of transitions by 742 Navy officers. They designed several measures for their research to investigate Louis' propositions. They measured magnitude of career change, desirability of the career change, the extent of stress associated with the career change, the extent of role ambiguity, the adjustment difficulty engendered by the career change, an individual's eagerness for the career change, the perceived net personal gain, and the perceived career gain. Bruce and Scott found that the experience of the above variables

differed for each type of career transition. Contrary to Louis' (1980) expectations, Bruce and Scott found that one transition type is inherently no more stressful than another in spite of differences in desirability and magnitude of career change. However, they suggested that this finding may not apply to extremely undesirable events such as involuntary job loss. Moreover, leaving an organisation is more difficult than intra-organisation transitions. Since voluntary career transitions are self-initiated, there is greater likelihood of control over the transition and undesirable consequences.

Robbins et al. (1978) found that it was difficult to determine whether an individual had voluntarily left an old job or had been forced out. Subsequent research by Thomas (1980) asked respondents to indicate the amount of external pressure placed on them to leave their former jobs and the extent to which they personally desired to make a career change using a 10-point Likert scale. Using a cut-off point at 4.5 for external forces and 5.5 for personal desire for change, Thomas (1980) classified his 73 men who left professional and managerial occupations into four categories (Table 4.1). The largest group (34%) was called "**Forced-outs**" who had very low desire to make a career change, but experienced a lot of pressure from their organisations to change. The next largest group (26%) was called "**Bow-outs**" who experienced a lot of pressure from their organisations to change, but had high internal pressure to make a career change. The third group of "**Drift-outs**" (23%) had low external pressure to leave, but were not really motivated to leave them either. The last group of "**Opt outs**" (16%) were under low external pressure to leave but were highly motivated to change. Thomas (1980) considered this last group as corresponding to what is typically referred to "**Drop-outs**" in the popular culture and media.

Table 4.1 Thomas' (1980) typology of career changers

		Pressure from self to change	
		Low	High
Pressure from Environment to change	Low	"Drift-out" 23% (Routine)	"Opt-out" 16% (Self-determined)
	High	"Force-outs" 34% (Situation determined)	"Bow outs" 26% (Accommodation)

$N = 73$

Thomas (1980) found that men in each of the four groups differed from each other. The “**Forced-outs**” were found to have had the least amount of education in preparation for their first career, were the least likely to pursue formal education in service of their career transition, and were likely to take the shortest time with the career change. The majority (60%) took less than six months to make the decision to change careers. This group were the least influenced by a desire for greater achievement, or the desire for more congruence between personal values and their work. The “**Bow-outs**” had the highest amount of prior education but made the least radical career changes. They were most motivated by the desire for greater achievement. To describe this group, Thomas provided the image of the more conventional businessman who changed careers to advance his career when doors appeared closed in one area. This group was the least satisfied with their new careers. The “**Drift-outs**” were the least likely to make their decisions in a short time, with only 18% taking six months or less to decide to change careers. This group had the least distinguishing characteristics of the four groups of career changers. The last group of “**Opt-outs**” most frequently pursued formal education in preparing for a change (80%). They were most motivated by a desire to harmonise values and work. As a group, they were the most satisfied with their new careers. Thomas concluded that in studying career change, it would be better to distinguish various groups of career changers, since aggregation would mask important motivational differences and characteristics. Previous aggregation of career changers may also have contributed to inconsistent results regarding to personality-occupation congruence and job satisfaction following career change previously reviewed in Section 4.2.

In the career downshifting literature previously reviewed in Chapter 2, none of the authors distinguished between external and internal pressures to change. The research by Thomas (1980) suggested that career changers (of whom downshifters are a subset), are not a homogenous group. Moreover, there are important differences in precursors, motivations, and outcomes to the career change across the four groups identified by Thomas. By definition then, “force-outs” cannot be classified as voluntary career downshifters since their career change is largely situation determined. Thus, voluntary career downshifters would be mainly “opt outs” where there is a large degree of self-determination, and possibly “bow outs” where career change is voluntary.

Interestingly, Thomas (1980) also investigated the extent of career change using Hiestand's (1971) distinction of a "**45-degree change**" which involved relatively minor discontinuity with former careers, and a "**90-degree change**" which involved major discontinuity. Operationally, a "90-degree change" was defined as a career change for which previous training was unnecessary and for which more training was needed. A "45-degree change" was one where previous training was either unnecessary or insufficient (but not both) for the new career. In Thomas' investigations of career change, he rejected those whose previous career training was necessary and sufficient for the second career. In other words, career changers selected had made either a "45-degree change" or a "90-degree change". However, no significant results relating the extent of change to career change typology or consequent job satisfaction were reported by Thomas. This is unfortunate since Louis' (1980) propositions would suggest that those making a "90-degree change" would experience greater difficulty in their career transition compared to those making a "45-degree change".

There are some conceptual overlaps with the downshifting literature of Chapter 2. Those making "45-degree changes" would include Saltzman's (1991) **career shifters** who use similar occupational skills in a different setting, the **self employed** who leave organisations to work for themselves, and **urban escapees** who use their skills in viable businesses in smaller towns or rural areas. Saltzman did not have any categories for those making "90-degree changes"; these are likely to be those making radical **occupational** changes. On the other hand, Thomas' distinction of "45-degree change" and "90-degree change" do not account for two of Saltzman's downshifting groups – **plateauers** (who remain at their current level within an organisation), and **backtrackers** (who choose to take a few steps down an organisational ladder). Nevertheless, Thomas' distinction provides a potentially useful objective indicator regarding the extent of career change undertaken. A further conclusion is that a combination of the downshifting and psychological literature is required to provide a more complete view of the varieties of career downshifting.

4.6 The career change process

A number of researchers have outlined the nature of the process experienced by career changers. Osherson (1980) found that radical career change was preceded by confusion, uncertainty, doubt and depression. A re-examination of work and personal directions led to an awareness that assumptions of oneself were no longer satisfying. This led to new alternatives since old solutions were no longer satisfactory. According to Osherson, the central crisis is loss of the self as expressed through career and marital choices made in adolescence or young adulthood. Grief reactions may be chronic, inhibited or delayed. Typically the loss involves the disruption of trusted interpretations of the self in the world, and the emergence of ambivalent feelings about a lost self. This ambivalence is related to discrepancies in self-definition which requires a long trail of deeper questions about self. The individual experiences a “**crisis of discontinuity**” between the sense of “who one was” and “who one will be” (p. 60)

In Osherson’s view, the key to adequate grieving is refrain from premature closure. By this, Osherson means that an individual needs to develop capacity to tolerate oscillating between exploring discrepancies of midlife and the underlying ambivalent feelings, in order to obtain new information about himself/herself, and experimenting with new roles and objectives before reconstituting his/her identity. In contrast, inability to tolerate this oscillation leads to rigidly holding onto or letting go of the past, both of which are attempts to safeguard a threatened self. Thus midlife and career change are an opportunity for self-exploration and self-testing. Ideally, the individual would have a fuller “**sculpted resolution**” where there is greater resolution of ambivalences and discrepancies, rather than a “**premature or foreclosed resolution**” where decision making is undertaken without a careful stocktaking and discrepant experiences are distorted to avoid painful feelings of loss (p. 105). With foreclosed resolutions, there is incomplete differentiation of self and the absence of psychological separation from childhood images of parents. There may be a letting go of the past, but without integration of discrepant experiences, there is a brittle fragile sense of self and purpose in life.

Osherson (1980) considered three dimensions essential for a “sculpted resolution”: (a) exploration and integration of discrepant experiences; (b) differentiation

in the perception of self and others; (c) decision making from a position of autonomy and responsibility for self and others, rather than from the values, attitudes and beliefs of others, or attempts to live up to fantasised images of perfection. Nevertheless, Osherson emphasised that while sculpted resolutions are ideal, they are not necessarily better in any given individual. Confrontation with ambivalences about self often skim close to primitive wishes and anxieties, and may be beyond the capacity of an individual, or not in his/her best interest given the practical realities of his/her particular life situation. Illusions about ourselves may at times be life saving or self-preserving. Thus, a career change could emphasise the recovery of the lost self, but it could also be defensive in that the transition avoids or suppresses conflict. There may be a sharp devaluation of the initial career, and/or an over-idealisation of the second career, accompanied by a repetition of work conflicts found in the first career.

Perosa and Perosa (1983) used Hopson and Adam's (1976) model of general transition to contrast the experiences of 46 career changers, 43 people in the process of career change, and 45 non-changers or persisters. In Hopson and Adam's model, there are typically seven stages within the transition experience: (a) **shock and immobilisation**; (b) **minimisation and denial**; (c) **self-doubt, depression and meaninglessness**; (d) **letting go**; (e) **testing options**; (f) **search for meaning**; (g) **internalisation and renewal**. In the research by Perosa and Perosa, all subjects were voluntary career changers and did not express any sense of shock or numbness characteristic of Hopson and Adam's first stage. Virtually all *those who had completed their career change* experienced the remaining six stages of Hopson and Adam's model. Nearly all of *those who were in the process of changing* experienced the second stage through to the sixth stage, but only about half had experienced the last stage of internalisation and renewal. Among *persisters* who chose to stay with their careers even though they wanted to change, virtually all experienced the second stage of minimisation and denial, the third stage of self-doubt, depression and meaninglessness, and the sixth stage of search for meaning. However, none experienced the fourth stage of letting go, the fifth stage of testing options, or the last stage of internalisation and renewal.

These results are consistent with Osherson's propositions outlined above. Career renewal with adequate resolution needs to involve restructuring of the self. Perosa and Perosa (1983) would say that this restructuring involves letting go, testing options,

search for meaning, and finally internalisation and renewal. Osherson would say that restructuring involves both selective holding on and letting go, as well as differentiation of self from idealised images, before integration.

O'Connor and Wolfe (1987) proposed a model of midlife career and family transition that paralleled Hopson and Adam's (1976) model above. Their model was based on a qualitative research design using depth interviews and co-inquiry processes with 64 men and women aged between 35 to 50 years. The model proposed a transition sequence of five steps. In the first step of **stability**, there is no evidence of engaging in change. In the second step of **rising discontent**, there is a desire for change without knowing exactly how and without a realistic grasp of the consequences. In the third step of **crisis**, the person experiences uncertainty and upheaval. The crisis can be externally imposed or brought on by a person's own actions. While there may be different experiences of crisis, there is a common theme of a familiar world and style collapsing, with no new directions. There are often deep emotions such as anger, depression, anxiety, grief or loss, confusion, despair, boredom and alienation. There are often efforts to stay in control and maintain an image. However, the crisis provides the shock, motivation and unfreezing necessary for change to take place. In the fourth transition step of **re-direction and adaptation** there are moves towards a tentative new direction. People actively pursue and create changes at different rates with varying consequences. During this stage, reactions vary from an opening up to change through to strong resistance to change.

In the fifth transition step of **re-stabilising**, choices of direction based on information from the third stage of crisis and the fourth stage of re-direction converge, and more permanent commitments to a particular life structure take shape. Consistent with Osherson (1980), O'Connor and Wolfe (1987) emphasised that a full elaboration and meaning of one's choices requires a secure life structure and a sufficient period for development. Re-stabilisation is viewed as "an (assertion) of some particular identity and purpose" (p. 807). Interestingly, O'Connor and Wolfe constructed a scale for their transition step framework. The inter-judge reliability coefficient for this transition step scale was 0.98, using two judges who had access to all the qualitative data. This high reliability co-efficient indicated that transition step is a dimension that can be reliably coded.

Nicholson's (1990) work transition model based on his research on job mobility and work role transitions is also applicable to career transitions. Four stages of preparation, encounter, adjustment and stabilisation were proposed. The main goal of the **preparation stage** is to develop helpful expectations, motives and feelings. However, many people at this stage may become fearful and reluctant to change, or become too idealistic and have an exaggerated optimism. Realistic self-appraisal is considered important in this stage. In the second stage of **encounter**, the individual will have new and unexpected experiences. The ideal orientation is confidence in one's competence to cope, and enjoyment in exploring and meeting challenges. However, many people may experience bitterness, regret, hostility, and withdrawal. Nicholson suggested that at this stage, individuals in transition would do well, metaphorically speaking, with "a map" (insights and perspectives), "a bicycle" (psychological freedom to explore and pathfind in the new environment), and "good weather" (a climate of psychological safety), together with social supports (p. 93).

With the third stage of **adjustment**, an individual needs to achieve a consonant relationship between self and the environment through personal change and role development. There may be grieving for one's lost past or forgone opportunities. At this stage, early successes, feedback with failure, and prevention of declines in morale and self-esteem are important. In the last stage of **stabilisation**, the main goal is personal and work effectiveness. While some people may underachieve, fail or feel trapped, goal setting and appraisal for role evolution are important. However, due to the nature of his research, Nicholson's framework emphasised adaptation to an organisational environment.

Kanchier (1992) provided a framework of seven stages of making a career change, based on her previous empirical research. In Stage 1, there are **uneasy feelings** and cues that the career is not going well. This could include feelings of being trapped or stagnant. In Stage 2, **the problem takes shape**. There are stronger feelings of discomfort and yearning for change, but no clear ideas about what changes are necessary. In Stage 3, **high anxiety** is experienced. There is ambivalence, weighing losses as well as gains, fears as well as hopes. In Stage 4, there is **revving up** for change. The person may prepare for change financially, explore options and seek support. Risk may be

reduced by contingency plans and alternative courses of action. In Stage 5, there is **narrowing of options** after evaluating pros and cons of possible alternatives. In Stage 6 which Kanchier (1992) called **go for it**, the career changer makes a commitment and implements the change. In Stage 7, **view from the other side**, career changers have made the change and gained a sense of mastery, competence and achievement. They may have drawn on skills, talents and perceptions that they had never used before.

While Kanchier (1992) wrote this seven-stage framework for a popular publication, rather than for professional colleagues, her framework is similar to that of Albert (1994) previously reviewed in Chapter 2, in that it emphasised experiences prior to the career change, while minimising the difficulties of the crisis stage described by O'Connor and Wolfe (1987), or the pain of self-doubt, depression and loss depicted by Hopson and Adams (1976) and Osherson (1980). The difficult processes of necessary confrontation of discrepancies and resolution (Osherson, 1980), letting go and searching for meaning (Hopson and Adams, 1976), re-direction and adaptation (O'Connor & Wolfe, 1987) were also not included by Kanchier (1992). While Kanchier's model does consider the importance of including intuitive insights into the career change process, her framework emphasised a rational decision making perspective, without consideration of processes which would involve a possible re-construction of identity. Nevertheless, Kanchier (1992) reminded career changers of the need to prepare for a change by considering material and emotional resources, and minimising risks.

More recently in Australia, Smart and Peterson (1997) conducted a study of 226 men and women with an average age of 30 years. They classified all participants into one of five categories based on Super's progression from an old career to a new one: (a) non-changers; (b) contemplating a change; (c) choosing a new field; (d) implementing a change; (e) change fully completed. Using the Adult Career Concerns Inventory (ACCI) and the Job Descriptive Index (JDI), Smart and Peterson (1997) were able to ascertain the types of concerns that predominated at each stage of career change. Contemplators (Group b) and Choosers (Group c) were more concerned with career exploration compared to Non-changers (Group a). Completers (Group e) had less concern with the exploration than Implementors (Group d) and Choosers (Group c). Completers (Group e) had higher levels of job satisfaction than Non-changers (Group a). These results were

consistent with Super's (1990) concept of recycling through the stages of exploration, establishment, maintenance and disengagement through a career.

Smart and Peterson (1997) concluded that people should not be dissuaded from opting for a new career by the belief that midlife is uncertain and career instability is abnormal. While stress and temporary loss of satisfaction can diminish confidence during the process of contemplating and implementing a career change, they emphasised Super's notion that career decision-making is a lifelong process in which people strive to match their ever changing career goals to the realities of the world of work. Within this context, recycling through career stages is a means of enhancing maturity, coping power and creative productivity. As such career change can be psychologically advantageous.

From his research on Baby Boomers who left conventional career paths, sociologist Glassner (1994) suggested that successful career transitions take place gradually over a three-step process: (a) "cutting loose"; (b) "hanging out"; (c) "moving on". In the first stage of "**cutting loose**", career changers need to resist the temptation to hang on to old friends and titles associated with the previous role. It was also imperative to resist foreclosure by settling into a new work role straight away. Instead, Glassner recommended sorting through ambitions and values unencumbered by a clear professional identity. In this process, it was important to give up what status, salary and security in favour of criteria which were more compatible with the individual. In the second stage of "**hanging out**", there needs to be a willingness to relinquish an old role and go without a clear identity before adopting a new way of life. The essential process for this stage was "standing on the limen or threshold", and tolerate being "neither this nor that", being "neither here nor there" (pp. 185, 191). While many cannot afford to take a sabbatical like this, Glassner found that a surprising number of his interviewees did, using savings, and/or relying on a partner's income or inheritance. In the third stage of "**moving on**", work is no longer the first priority that consumes most of a person's waking hours, and the primary source of self-esteem. According to Glassner, "this last stage is less about finding a new place to work, than it is about finding a new place for work in one's set of priorities" (p. 192). Many career changers at this stage are self-employed, work as consultants, or have work where they can incorporate family and community life.

Thus far, I have reviewed six major frameworks for conceptualising career transition. The frameworks which stem from psychological empirical research are those of O'Connor & Wolfe (1987), Nicholson (1990), Kanchier (1992), and Smart and Peterson (1997). Glassner (1994) is a sociologist who based his framework on empirical research with 120 men and women, together with being informed by the work of anthropologist van Gennep (1960/1977). To recapitulate from Chapter 2, Albert (1994) was previously a university administrator who downshifted her career; her framework was based on interviews with 80 women who had changed careers. These are summarised in Table 4.2. with stages I perceived as equivalent presented on the same line. Each of the frameworks has its strengths and weaknesses, emphasising particular parts of the process, while not providing sufficient details for other parts of the process. For example, Albert and Kanchier provided much detail on processes which lead to the decision to change careers, but little detail on what happens during the process of adjustment. Some of frameworks emphasised crisis around the time of leaving the first career (Albert; O'Connor & Wolfe), while others imply a more neutral, even rational process. Nicholson described the corresponding stage as "Encounter" while Smart and Peterson called the stage "Implementing". Importantly, almost all the frameworks in Table 4.2 show that adaptation is necessary after leaving the first career. Interestingly, the psychological frameworks have used descriptions which emphasised **activity**: "implementing" (Smart & Peterson), "adjustment" (Nicholson), and "re-direction and adaptation" (O'Connor & Wolfe). In contrast, the non-psychological frameworks have used metaphors which describe **phenomenological experiences**: "the black hole" (Albert), and "hanging out" (Glassner). No single framework in Table 4.2, however, fully described what the career changer experiences during this stage since some frameworks describe processes not accounted for in other frameworks, or what needs to happen for the transition to be successful.

There are also differences in emphasis with the last stage. Psychological frameworks with the exception of Kanchier emphasised **stabilisation** (O'Connor & Wolfe; Nicholson; Smart & Peterson). In contrast, non-psychological frameworks and Kanchier emphasised a **different work life**: "work of her own" (Albert), "moving on" (Glassner) and "view from the other side" (Kanchier). In sum, the review of alternative frameworks for career transitions suggested various processes, feelings and behaviour

Table 4.2 Summary of six career transition models

Albert, 1994	O'Connor & Wolfe, 1987	Nicholson, 1990	Kanchier, 1992	Smart & Peterson, 1997	Glassner, 1994
Women's experience of downshifting	Midlife career and family transitions	Career transitions	Steps in making a career change	Stages of career change	Sociological perspective
	1. Stability				
1. Doubting	2. Rising discontent		1. Uneasy feelings		
2. Reflecting on self			2. Problem takes shape 3. High anxiety	1. Contemplating	
3. Weighing options		1. Preparation	4. Revving up 5. Narrowing options	2. Choosing	
4. Career crisis	3. Crisis				1. Cutting loose
5. The black hole	4. Re-direction and adaptation	2. Encounter 3. Adjustment	6. Go for it	3. Implementing	2. Hanging out
6. Work of her own	5. Re-stabilising	4. Stabilisation	7. View from the other side	4. Stabilisation	3. Moving on

which may be part of career downshifter's experiences. This wide range sensitised me to issues and procedures which may be present in career downshifter's accounts of their experiences during the research process (Section 6.6).

However, the frameworks collectively also have shortcomings in their application to career downshifting. First, all the frameworks imply a systematic or rational approach in the decision to change careers. The literature review in Section 3.2 previously documented criticisms of assumptions of rationality in career decision making processes. Similarly, the frameworks summarised in Table 4.2 incorporate a rational decision making model prescribed in much of the psychological literature, rather than reflecting the complexity involved in actual career decision making (Krieshok, 1998). With the exception of Albert's model, the other frameworks in Table 4.2 also suggest that what happens after career change (i.e. leaving the organisation in the case of downshifter's) is systematic and relatively easy. They do not allow for specific issues in downshifting such as loss of income, status and professional identity. The main emphasis of these frameworks are largely on essential tasks that move the career change process forward, rather than the experience during a career change, which could apply to career downshifter's. Given these shortcomings, I next considered other frameworks that apply to life transitions generally to glean further insights into processes which may apply to career downshifting.

4.7 General models of life transition

Glassner (1994), whose career change framework was previously reviewed in Section 4.6, based his three stage model of career change on van Gennep's (1960/1977) work on rites of passage in the field of anthropology. Broadly, rites of passage include important times such birth, puberty, marriage and death, but also entry into a new achieved status such as a new work role, or membership into a religious group. According to V. Turner (1977), these rites of passage are found in all societies but reach their maximum expression in small-scale, relatively stable and cyclical societies. Transformative rituals or confirmatory ceremonies may mark these rites of passage. In van Gennep's framework, there are three phases – separation, liminality and re-incorporation which mirror Lewin's (1951) psychological model

of change (unfreezing, changing and refreezing). These were adapted to career change by Glassner as three stages called “cutting loose”, “hanging out” and “moving on”.

In the **separation stage** of rites such as initiations among African tribes studied by van Gennep, initiates were separated from the rest of their society, often secluded from the realm of culturally defined and ordered states. In the **liminal stage**, they were treated as if they had no status, clothing, rank or kinship position – invisible, as if they had a physical but no social reality. In the **re-incorporation stage**, there is a rebuilding process where practical skills and tribal esoterics are taught, usually in a sacred enclosure or sequestered site (V. Turner, 1987). Thus, the main characteristics of these rites of passage include relinquishing former structural ties, leaving behind old ways of being, and divesting oneself of ego claims to rank and social function in order to attain a more highly individuated stage of growth, and complete submission to the terms of the liminal passage in order to attain the next life stage, inwardly transformed and outwardly changed (V. Turner, 1977, 1987).

Liminality is a key concept in van Gennep’s framework. V. Turner (1987) defined a limen as “a very long threshold, a corridor almost, or a tunnel which may, indeed become a pilgrim’s road or passing from dynamics to statics ... those undergoing it, call them ‘liminaries’ are betwixt and between established states of politico-jural structure. They evade ordinary cognitive classification, for they are neither-this-nor-that, here-nor-there, one-thing-not-the-other” (p. 37). According to V. Turner (1977), liminal processes are “analogous to gestation, parturition and suckling. Undoing, dissolution, decomposition are accompanied by processes of growth, transformation, and the reformulation of old elements in new patterns” (p. 9). A potent metaphor of the liminal period is a snake shedding its skin. The advantage of a liminal period is that individuals have the opportunity to reflect and see elements of life in a different way when not acting within institutionalised roles (V. Turner, 1977).

T. Turner (1977) elaborated on van Gennep’s model by suggesting that a transition could involve two axes which intersect. The horizontal axis contrasts two social states represented by the van Gennep phases of separation and re-incorporation (e.g., the two states of being boy and man). The vertical axis would represent the potential for transformation. Thus, in the liminal phase, there may be a direct experience of the transcendent or sacred. In writing about her own career downshift, Sandroff (1993) described her experience of liminality as a “bardo” state, using a Tibetan term for the limbo state the soul occupies

between incarnations (p. 36). Bridges (1994) equated the liminal period in career change to the 40 years of wandering in the desert the Biblical Jews experienced between leaving Egyptian slavery and reaching the promised land.

Bridges (1993, 1996) also adapted van Gennep's framework to describe the process of career transition and life transitions generally as endings, the neutral zone, and beginnings. The typical experiences Bridges (1996) identified with the **endings stage** include disengagement from the social order; dis-identification or an inner process of disengagement with one's current role; disenchantment with the world as it was before; and disorientation. Endings are characterised by a sense that something is wrong. There is confusion, emptiness, feelings of dying, stuckness, or being "lost in some great dark non-world" (Bridges, 1996, p. 103). With the **neutral zone**, there is a sense of loss and emptiness, which may be accompanied by an urgency to replace missing elements as quickly as possible. Contrary to V. Turner (1977, 1987) and T. Turner (1977), Bridges (1996) considered the neutral zone as an unimportant part of the transition process – "a temporary state of loss to be endured" (p. 112). The **beginnings stage** may be untidy, but involves a reintegration of the new identity with elements of the old one. Bridges however admitted that the inner realignment and a renewal of energy that characterises this last stage "depend on immersion in the chaos of the neutral zone" (p. 136). Furthermore, he considered that individuals had a less difficult transition if they had faith in processes of metaphorical death and rebirth.

In keeping with the cyclical philosophy alluded to by Bridges (1996) and V. Turner (1977), McClelland (1998) proposed a framework for transitions based on the seasonal cycle. **Autumn** is equated to **preparing** for what is to come. There may be waiting and worrying, or denial and jumping at the first option. The major tasks for this stage are regarded as acknowledging the need for change, reviewing options, getting support and creating a refuge. **Early winter** is equated with **retreating and reflecting**. In this stage, the individual is likely to feel tired and uncertain, although they may resist by being busy, starting something new or forcing themselves to be happy. The major task for this stage include purposeful reflection, protecting and renewing oneself and reconnecting to essential parts of oneself. **Late winter** is equated to **defining one's vision**. This includes opening up to new ideas, following insights, clearing out old ways are no longer useful, and creating new plans. **Spring** is equated to **struggling with re-entry**. Essential tasks include trusting one's own timing,

“preparing the soil and watering the dirt”, stretching, growing and coming to age. **Summer** is equated with **celebrating one’s harvest**. Here, individuals are likely to have clarity and feel more confident. Recommended tasks include allowing time for ripening, savouring success and celebrating.

An important perspective provided by McClelland (1998) is that there are at least five ways of approaching change. In order of decreasing personal control, these are: (a) change by replacement (i.e. finding a replacement object, or in the case of this thesis, a replacement occupational role); (b) change by formula (i.e. finding a quick and easy algorithm to solve a problem; perhaps implied by some career change frameworks reviewed in Section 4.6, such as Kanchier’s, 1992, 7-step model); (c) change by growth (i.e. actively attending to processes which are required for the change to occur); (d) change by metamorphosis (i.e. a transformative change which typically involves abrupt shifts in form and function); and (e) change by magic (i.e. instantaneous change via an external force or event, such as winning a lottery). Change by replacement, often advocated by consumerist societies, and change by magic typically take less time, while **change by growth** and **change by metamorphosis** typically takes the most time. It may be that in a culture and age where people are used to change by replacement (Brandt, 1995; Schor, 1991, 1998), a career transition, especially if it requires a radical occupational change implies a change by growth or metamorphosis which is more time consuming and difficult.

Next, I will consider selectively the psychological (as distinct from anthropological) literature on life transitions. According to Schlossberg (1981), a “transition can be said to occur if an event or non-event results in a change in assumptions about oneself and the world, and thus requires a corresponding change in one’s behaviour and relationships” (p. 6). Similarly, Magnusson and Redekopp (1992) consider a transition as “any change of status encountered by an individual” with such changes “inevitably (producing) a discontinuity of experience” (p. 135). In contrast, a crisis was defined by Moos and Tsu (1976) as a “relatively short period of disequilibrium in which a person has to work out new ways of handling a problem” (p. 13). Hopson (1981) and Schlossberg pointed out that crises often imply a dramatic event. In contrast, transitions are not necessarily dramatic and they do not always involve observable events. Basically, transitions occur when an individual perceives a change which requires new responses. In other words, transitions are essentially personal in

nature and a phenomenological understanding of career transitions would seem critical in a period of rapid change in the workplace.

Schlossberg (1981) suggested that some of the key questions in understanding transitions include: (a) What determines whether a person grows or deteriorates as a result of transition? (b) Why do some people adapt with relative ease, while others suffer severe strain? (c) How can we understand and help adults as they face transitions in life? Schlossberg considered adaptation necessary in facing transitions, and defined adaptation to be “a process during which an individual moves from being totally preoccupied with the transition to integrating the transition into his or her life” (p. 7). An individual’s ease of adaptation to a transition was considered dependent on his/her perceived and/or actual balance of resources to deficits, the pre-post environment and the individual’s sense of competency, well-being and health, a view echoed by Baumeister (1994).

These ideas were further elaborated by Schlossberg, Waters and Goodman (1995). Essentially, transitions comprise of three broad phases: (a) preoccupation with the event; (b) establishing new norms; (c) integration. The intensity of stress experienced by an individual was regarded as dependent on the degree to which an individual is required to make new adaptations associated with the environmental change, not on the individual’s subjective interpretation of the change. In short, the more the transition alters the person’s life and the more coping resources it requires, the longer and more difficult adaptation and assimilation will be. Moreover, stressfulness of the event will depend on the balance between a person’s liabilities and assets at the time of the transition. The strength of Schlossberg et al.’s model is in the factors which impact on adaptation, rather than the process of transition itself. These will be presented in the next section.

Hopson and Adams (1976) proposed a more elaborate model of transitions, since there was an absence of comprehensive transition frameworks at the time. Smart and Peterson’s (1997) adaptation of this model was previously described in Section 4.5. In the first stage of **immobilisation**, an individual typically feels frozen and overwhelmed. Understanding the situation, reasoning and planning are difficult. In the second stage of **minimising the change**, an individual is likely to be in denial, taking a temporary retreat from reality while internal forces regroup so as to regain strength to comprehend losses incurred. Next, is the stage of **depression** where the individual begins to face the fact that

there has been a change. Even if the transition is voluntary, some sense of loss and depression seems inevitable. In the fourth stage, the individual begins to **accept reality**. Optimism becomes possible and there is letting go of some aspects of life prior to the transition. This is followed by **testing** of the new situation, trying out new behaviours, new lifestyles and new ways of coping. In the sixth stage, individuals **seek meaning**. According to Hopson and Adams (1976), it is not until people can get out of their routine activities and withdraw a bit that they can begin to understand deeply the meaning of the change in their lives. Finally, there is a stage of **internalising** where individuals incorporate the meanings of the transition with their behaviours.

Since loss is a feature commonly noted in models of career change and transition, it is interesting to note Weiss' (1990) composite model to depict phases of recovery from loss of relationships of community, which may include relationships associated with work. The five phases of recovery include: (a) denial or shock, as a defensive but temporary refusal to accept the loss; (b) protest, pain and panic; (c) despair and lethargic depression; (d) cognitive and emotional acceptance of the loss; (e) identity change.

Table 4.3 overleaf summarises the general life transition models presented in this section. Tri-phasic models are particularly popular (van Genneep, 1960/1977; Bridges, 1996; Schlossberg et al., 1995). However, irrespective of the number of stages, the common themes identified across models is the difficulty of the initial stages which involve separation, endings, shock, denial and depression. The middle stages are typically characterised by psychological theories as involving tasks such as acceptance, reality testing, establishing norms and seeking meaning which have a cognitive bias. While Bridges (1996) minimised this middle stage as a temporary neutral zone, later revisions of van Genneep's model (e.g., V. Turner, 1977; T. Turner, 1977) suggested that this middle stage potentially offers an opportunity for identity reconstruction. The final stage uniformly includes some form of integration, although Weiss (1990) emphasised identity change.

Table 4.3 Summary of general life transition models

van Genneep, 1960/1977	Bridges, 1993, 1996	McClelland, 1998	Hopson & Adams, 1977	Schlossberg et al., 1995	Weiss, 1990
Anthropology Perspective	Consulting perspective	Personal development perspective	Psychology	Psychology	Phases of recovery from loss
		1. Preparing (autumn)	1. Shock and immobilisation 2. Denial and minimisation		1. Shock and denial
1. Separation	1. Endings	2. Retreating and reflecting (early winter)	3. Depression	1. Preoccupation with event	2. Protest, pain, panic 3. Despair, lethargic depression
2. Liminality	2. Neutral zone		4. Accepting reality 5. Testing	2. Establishing new norms	4. Acceptance
		3. Defining new vision (late winter)	6. Seeking meaning		
3. Re-incorporation	3. Beginnings	4. Bursting into bloom (spring) 5. Celebrating the harvest (summer)	7. Integration	3. Integration	5. Identity change

Borgen (1997) did not advance a model of career transition. However, his recommendations for counselling approaches to career transition highlighted the feelings of loss and emotional flux in the middle of a transition. Additionally, he cautioned that a transition could result in either positive or negative consequences. In other words, the outcomes of a career transition are ambivalent and by no means guaranteed. Similarly, Bolen (1990, 1994) warned that in liminal periods, individuals are in the process of change and are exceedingly vulnerable. Transformation and growth, or destruction and regression are often equally possible at these times. The next section reviews the literature on factors influencing adaptation during transition periods.

4.8 Implications of general models of life transition for traversing a career transition

This section is concerned with identifying factors which influence the ease or difficulty in traversing a career transition.² Schlossberg et al. (1995) in their general model of transitions identified four factors which largely influence adaptation and consequent levels of perceived stress during a transition: (a) characteristics of the situation; (b) characteristics of the individual; (c) supports available; and (d) strategies used to adapt to a transition. These factors correspond closely with key resources for coping with stressful situations identified by Pearlin and Schooler (1978). These were: (a) psychological resources, or personality characteristics that help people manage distress; (b) social resources, or interpersonal networks that people have available to them for social support; (c) coping responses, which refer to the concrete efforts that people make in dealing with distressing situations.

Influential aspects of a **transition situation** include triggers to the transition and whether there are external and internal consequences, the timing of the situation (e.g., whether the transition corresponds to an individual's sense of being on time for their life plans, or being off time), the extent of control, the extent of role change, the duration of the transition (e.g., temporary or permanent, the level of uncertainty), whether a transition is

² I have used the term "traversing" rather than "adapting" or "adjusting" to reflect the uncertain nature of the career transition highlighted by Borgen (1997). "Traversing" suggests a crossing of terrain which may involve a back and forth movement, and overcoming both external and internal hindrances and obstacles. It has connotations of a phase in an individual's life journey. In contrast, "adapting" or "adjusting" has connotations of altering oneself to situations which are externally imposed, or changing oneself to fit a given situation.

familiar, and the individual's assessment of the situation (i.e. whether it is viewed positively or negatively).

According to Schlossberg et al. (1995), **personal characteristics** which influence adaptation and levels of stress include demographic characteristics such as age, sex and socio-economic status, as well as psychological characteristics such as ego development, locus of control, and perceptions of self-efficacy. In a similar vein, Magnusson and Redekopp (1992) suggested that the ability to make occupational transitions depends not only on competencies (e.g., resume writing, interview skills, job maintenance skills, etc.), but also on abilities in relation to self-management including goal setting, self monitoring, self evaluation, effective work habits, a sense of control and self esteem.

In terms of **support**, Schlossberg et al. (1995) considered four sources of support – one's partner, friends, organisations and experts. Support may serve several functions such as helping to mobilise psychological resources, helping the individual master emotional burdens, providing resources (e.g., money, materials, tools, skills, guidance), providing feedback, and sharing tasks. House (1981) proposed a four-component model of social support which is often cited in the literature. These components are: (a) **emotional support** (e.g., esteem, trust, concern and listening); (b) **appraisal support** (e.g., affirmation, feedback, social comparison); (c) **informational support** (e.g., advice, suggestions, directives, information); (d) **instrumental support** (e.g., money, labour, time, help in modifying the environment).

In their review of the social support literature, Gibson and Brown (1992) found two basic models. The **buffering model** proposes that social support provides a buffer during times of significant stress, and as such is unnecessary during times of low stress. Conversely, the **direct effects model** proposes that social support contributes to well-being regardless of the level of stress. There is evidence to suggest that social support has both buffering and direct effects. Bailey, Wolfe and Wolfe (1994) later established that informational and instrumental support enhance mechanisms for coping, while socio-emotional support and companionship go beyond coping and directly enhance the quality of one's life. Their empirical research showed that support tends to be domain specific, such that support at home does not necessarily enhance coping at work. Secondly, while a few supportive relationships may enhance quality of life, a few are not sufficient to buffer an individual from

the adverse effects of stress. Thirdly, supportive relationships enhance coping with episodic stress, even when it is experienced strongly, but not with chronic stress.

With regard to **strategies** used in transitions, Schlossberg et al. (1995) refer to Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) dichotomy of problem focused coping which is aimed at changing the situation, and emotion focused coping which is aimed at minimising emotional distress. Brammer and Abrego (1981), however, argued that a more comprehensive model of coping with transitions needs to consider interactive coping processes of cognitive appraisal, adaptive behaviour, as well as management of emotional distress. Their taxonomy of essential transition coping skills include: (a) an ability to mobilise a response to change; (b) assessing, developing and utilising external support systems; (c) assessing, developing and utilising internal support systems; (d) reducing emotional and physiological distress; (e) planning and implementing change.

Schlossberg et al. (1995) proposed a model of worklife transitions that categorised different types of work transitions into three basic categories, each with its own key issues to be addressed. The first category called "**moving in**" applies to new employees, with the critical issue being "learning the ropes". The second category called "**moving through**" applies to being on the fast-track as well as career plateauing. For being on the fast-track, the key issues to be addressed are competence and loneliness, while plateauers face issues of boredom and stuckness. Both career paths require an element of "hanging in there". The last category of "**moving out**" applies to retirement, which requires articulation of ambivalence, involuntary job loss which requires facing issues of loss and reformation of goals, and career change whose specific issues were not specified by Schlossberg et al. All three types of career transition are described as requiring "leaving, grieving and striving".

Thus far, we have considered a variety of personal, support and environmental factors which are relevant to career transitions. While many of the stage models of career change and transitions generally previously summarised in Tables 4.2 and 4.3 provide useful cross-sectional snapshots of a longitudinal process, they fail to capture the complexity of career changers' experiences, particularly in relation to downshifting. Catsoupes (1998) argued that theoretical formulations and empirical research provide "the important ingredients affecting career change, but does not describe the actual experience", or the dynamics of career change with the exception of Osherson (1980). In agreement with Catsoupes, I

would also include the notions of liminality and the formulations of V. Turner (1977, 1987) which emphasised disengagement with previous life roles and positions, and adoption of a new identity.

Other useful ideas were suggested by research conducted by Heatherton and Nichols (1994a) who used a micronarrative or autobiographical approach to interviewing 119 people who made major life changes, including career changes. They found that change is often precipitated by repeated hassles, frustrations and problems associated with what a person wants to change. Focal events can precipitate a crystallisation of discontent, a term coined by Baumeister (1991). Heatherton and Nicholson found that major life change is a complex process involving emotional, motivational, interpersonal, situational and cognitive components. Furthermore, life change seems to be easier for those who find new activities, change their priorities and establish new relationships before making the major change. These changes help to create a new sense of identity with altered sources of meaning. Indeed, Heatherton and Nicholson concluded that genuine and permanent life change was possible only if the person simultaneously experienced a **change in identity**. Social support is likely to be effective only when the supporter already values the attitudes and identity the person is trying to adopt.

Schouten (1991) proposed a process of **identity reconstruction** which incorporated notions of liminality. He argued that people spend most of their lives with self-concepts that are relatively stable, reflecting established social roles. This is consistent with psychology's definition of "identity" and Levinson et al.'s (1978) ideas of stable life structures. Typically, transitions begin with a separation from some key role, relationship or key component of the extended self. This separation may be triggered by some external event, or it may be triggered by psychological needs (e.g., for intimacy, security or control). When separation begins, liminality sets in. According to Schouten, liminal people face the task of constructing congruous, integrated self-concepts. As such, they begin to formulate **hypothetical selves** and elaborate them in a speculative fashion, implying a period of experimentation. These hypothetical selves as equivalent to **possible selves**, initially suggested by Markus and Nurius (1986).

The amount of time and energy invested on elaborating these possible selves vary across individuals and situations. Rejection of a possible self occurs when it is considered

undesirable, unattainable or incongruous with other aspects of the self-concept which the person wishes to retain. Rejection of possible selves lead to continued liminality and the formulation of other possible selves, until more well-elaborated, desirable and plausible selves can be actualised. Incorporation of a new identity occurs as the new self is cultivated. Finally, according to Schouten (1991), successful incorporation leads a person out of the liminal state with an increased sense of completeness and self-congruity.

Applied to career downshifting, the general models of transition, particularly the work of Schlossberg et al. (1995) suggested specific parameters that may influence the downshifting process. Applied to downshifting, these include aspects of the transition situation (e.g., consequences, timing, extent of control), personal characteristics (e.g., perceptions of self-efficacy, work related competencies, self-management skills), available supports (e.g., resources and significant others), and coping strategies. In other words, there are many factors which could mediate and facilitate the process of career downshifting. Finally, it is likely that an individual's identity will be affected in the course of career downshifting.

4.9 Two non-psychological frameworks influencing the downshifting literature

Before concluding the review of relevant models and frameworks that may inform the research, it was judged worthwhile to summarise two models which influenced two accounts of radical career change, previously mentioned in the review of the downshifting literature (Chapter 2). These two models are Ebaugh's (1988) "Role exit" theory, and Joseph Campbell's (1949/1988a) model of "The hero's journey". Ebaugh's model of voluntary role exit strongly influenced Albert's (1994) formulation of stages in radical career change among women. This model, while generalised across all types of role exit, incorporated empirical research among those who voluntarily changed their occupations, some to occupations with less income and status (i.e. career downshifting). Campbell's model was the structure adopted by Cotton (1996) in her study of how 10 selected Australians had radically changed their lives, including their careers.

Ebaugh's role exit model was based on research initially undertaken for her PhD thesis submitted in 1971. In this study, she interviewed 57 nuns who had left the Roman Catholic church around the time that the Second Vatican Council required all religious orders to examine their structure and lifestyle to accommodate to the needs to the twentieth century. As such, Ebaugh's original research focused on a very specific type of career change since leaving one's vocation as a nun is a radical change that incorporates re-evaluation of both career and spiritual calling. Later, as professor of sociology at Houston University, she extended her study to include follow-up interviews with 12 nuns from her initial study, together with 106 other people who had left roles they had occupied for at least five years. These 106 people included occupational exits, relationship exits, exits from ideological groups (political and religious), stigmatised roles (e.g., prison inmates and alcoholics), and transsexuals. The 40 people who made occupational exits were previously physicians, dentists, police officers, teachers, mental health workers, nurses, and air traffic controllers. Ebaugh's study aimed to delineate characteristics of the ex-role, describe the process of exiting, and specify variables which influence aspects of the role-exit process. In terms of data collection, Ebaugh used a qualitative approach, with face-to-face interviews which were tape recorded and transcribed. A grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used in analysis.

Role exit was defined as "the process of disengagement from a role that is central to one's self identity and the re-establishment of an identity in a new role that takes into account one's ex-role" (Ebaugh, 1988, p.1). If a role had a central meaning in an individual's life, role exit was usually traumatic and painful. Ebaugh stressed that role exit was a **social process that occurred over time**, and did not happen as a result of one sudden decision. She also concluded that in the process of voluntary role exits, there were **definite stages**. While the events that triggered each role exit, and the duration of each role exit could differ, the sequential ordering and the emotions and the experiences at each stage were very similar. The four major stages in the process were: first doubts, seeking and weighing of role alternatives, turning points, and establishing a role identity.

In Ebaugh's initial stage of **first doubts** individuals experience dissatisfaction in a generalised way. The circumstances which could give rise to first doubts include organisational changes, burnout, disappointments and changes in relationship, and other specific events. This stage is usually gradual and prolonged over many years, but could

occur rapidly. Ebaugh's second stage of **seeking and weighing alternatives** emphasises rational decision making process where would-be role exiters considered their options, associated risks, and benefits. Ebaugh also introduced the important concept of "role entrapment" (p. 93). Especially with roles that individuals have held for a considerable period of time, benefits or "side bets" (e.g., status, retirement benefits, security, friendships, emotional attachment to the job, public respect) are likely to accumulate (p. 94). Side bets and prolonged identification with a role make it more difficult to leave the role, resulting in role entrapment. With the advantage of investigating several types of role exit, Ebaugh also concluded that irreversible exits were associated with more intensive deliberations and more involved anticipatory role rehearsal (i.e. imagining new roles, or trying out new roles in reality). While professional careers were technically reversible in that professionals could resume their professional careers at a later stage, Ebaugh concluded that professional norms tend to inculcate a sense of changed identity and lifetime commitment. As such, she found that individuals who gave up professional careers tended to view their exit as permanent and irreversible.

The third stage of Ebaugh's role exit model is **turning points**. Ebaugh found that most people experienced a dramatic and identifiable turning point in their process of becoming an ex. In other words, there was a definite "event that mobilise[d] and focus[ed] awareness that old lines of action [were] complete, [had] failed, [had] been disrupted, or [were] not longer personally satisfying, and provide[d] individuals with the opportunity to do something different with their lives" (p. 123). There were mixed feelings after the final decision. On the one hand there were positive feelings of euphoria, relief, excitement, feeling of freedom and a sense of being released from pressures. Ebaugh's participants described feelings of a "weight being lifted off [their] shoulders", or "being released from a cage" (p. 142). On the other hand, there was also fear of independence, apprehension about the future, feeling lost and useless, anger, resentment and self-pity. Additionally, about three quarters of Ebaugh's sample experienced what she calls "a vacuum" – a period of feeling anxious, scared, at loose ends, feelings of "being nowhere", or being caught in a vacuum between the past which no longer existed and the unknown future" (p. 143-144). They used metaphors such as being "in limbo", "in no man's land", "ungrounded" or "in mid-air" (p. 143). According to Ebaugh, "the vacuum experience is one in which taken-for-granted anchors of social identity are suspended for the individual, leaving him/her feeling rootless and anxious ... The resolution of these feelings of worthlessness and anxiety were closely tied to

successful efforts to begin to create and adapt to a new role in society” (p. 145). These feelings of uncertainty and metaphors of being betwixt and between are descriptions of being in a liminal space between a role that is well known, and a future that is not yet fully formed. The literature review in Section 4.7 showed that this liminal state was originally identified by van Gennep (1960/1977) and also referred to as “the neutral zone” (Bridges, 1993, 1996) and “hanging out” (Glassner, 1994), in their respective models of transitions and career change.

Ebaugh also found that “exiters who created bridges between the old role and the new tended to have greater coping resources than individuals who burned bridges before they moved on to creating a new social identity as an ex” (p. 147). While bridges across her whole spectrum of role exiters were in the areas of jobs, friends, family and hobbies, for occupational exiters, those who had a definite job or alternate career arranged before their exit had a far easier adjustment than individuals who quit one career with no definite alternatives.

In the last stage of **establishing an ex-role identity**, Ebaugh identified six issues of struggle, five of which were directly relevant to occupational exiters. First, role exiters expected to be treated differently than in the past, yet had to learn to emit the right social cues to other people. For example, ex-nuns changed their physical appearance such as their hairstyles and what they wore, as well as their social behaviour. (This issue identified by Ebaugh was further developed by Schouten (1991) who found evidence that a change in body image and impression management may be part of transitions where there is a reconstruction of identity.) Second, social reactions were problematic in that other people reacted to role exiters based on their previous roles. Socially undesirable roles including exits from prestigious occupations also had the added complication of “status degradation” (p. 161). Third, exiters would encounter shifting friendship networks due their leaving a role behind.

Fourth, the more central to identity the occupational role was, the greater the degree of role residual (i.e. the more aspects of the previous role there were to integrate into the new identity). This was especially the case for professionals than non-professionals who made career changes. Fifth, Ebaugh found that role exiters also had issues with how they would relate to group members and other exes. For example, when a number of ex-nuns left their religious orders, they frequently lived together in the first few months after exiting as a way of maximising financial resources as well as for mutual support. However, an overly

cohesive group could form an “us against them” attitude (p. 172) which may or may not be to their best interests. On the other hand, transsexuals tended to move away emotionally from other transsexuals after sex change surgery, since there was a strong desire to blend into society. Last, social adjustment regarding intimacy, specifically sexuality and intimate relationships was a significant issue for three of the groups in Ebaugh’s sample (i.e. ex-nuns, divorcees, and transsexuals).

Besides developing the four-stage model of role-exit, Ebaugh also articulated the role of significant others at various stages of an individual’s role exit. In the initial stages of first doubts and weighing of alternatives, the roles of significant others are to facilitate reality testing, suggest alternatives, and help an individual to make a private problem public so that the individual can no longer avoid facing the unsatisfactory situation. Around the time the role exit decision is made, significant others can help by assisting role exiters in getting re-established (e.g., in finding alternative occupations or jobs), and also to provide understanding as a buttress for the individual making a role exit. In Ebaugh’s last stage of establishing a new identity, significant others could provide support by assisting an individual adjust to leaving behind the old role, and taking on new ones.

The second model to be considered here is even broader than Ebaugh’s model. Joseph Campbell was previously professor of literature at Sarah Lawrence College. His model of “The hero’s journey” was based on common themes identified across his comparisons of myths throughout the world (Campbell, 1949/1988a). The model incorporated van Gennep’s (1960/1977) tripartite structure in rites of passage. Essentially, Campbell considered the hero’s journey as incorporating three basic stages – separation, initiation and return. In the first stage of Separation, there are five subsections: (a) “The call to adventure” or the signs of the calling of the hero; (b) “Refusal of the call”, or the flight from the call; (c) “Supernatural aid” or the unsuspected assistance that comes to one who has undertaken his proper adventure; (d) “The crossing of the first threshold”; and (e) “The belly of the whale” (which refers to the Biblical Jonah’s initial refusal to preach in Ninevah, resulting in his being swallowed by a whale), or “The passage into the realm of night”. In the second stage of Initiation, there are six subsections: (a) “The road of trials” or the dangers encountered in the journey; (b) “The meeting with the Goddess” or the bliss of infancy regained; (c) “Woman as temptress” or the agony of the hero; (d) “Atonement with the father”; (e) “Apotheosis”, or glorification of the hero; and (f) “The ultimate boon”, or

attaining rewards. The third stage included six subsections: (a) “Refusal of the return” or the world denied; (b) “The magic flight” or the escape of the hero; (c) “Rescue from without”; (d) “The crossing of the return of the threshold” or the return to the original world of the hero; (e) “Master of the two worlds” or the hero incorporates the rewards from the journey into his/her original world; (f) “Freedom to live”.

Campbell (1949/1988) argued that “The hero’s journey” is a universal pattern underlying the stories, folk tales and myths in both the oral tradition and recorded literature. While there are many variations, the basic patterns remains constant. For example, “The hero’s journey” incorporates a “standard path” of separation, initiation, and return (p. 30), and characters such as mentors, allies and threshold guardians. As such, Campbell’s ideas parallel Jung’s (1934/1968) notions of archetypes (i.e. recurring images and motifs which occur in myths and dreams across all human culture). “The hero’s journey” can also be viewed as a general pattern for redemption and renewal of life. Campbell (1988b) defined a hero as “someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself” (p. 123). Moreover, Campbell (1949/1988a) regarded the hero as a “redemptive image” (p. 39), and “a symbol to be contemplated [rather] than an example to be literally followed” (p. 319). Thus, heroic actions and triumphs are not necessarily physical (as depicted by traditional stories and myths), but may be psychological in nature (as may be experienced by individuals).

The two models from Ebaugh and Campbell both incorporate an implied sense of sequential progress, either as stages or a journey. Ebaugh’s model is relevant to downshifting in that downshifters exit their previous roles such as professionals or managers. Campbell’s model is relevant in that downshifting (as radical career change within a culture where values of materialism and career success are predominant), is likely to require heroic characteristics. Moreover, Campbell’s model, while incorporating van Gennep’s tripartite structure, is more detailed in identifying events and challenges which are likely to be encountered in a perilous or risky undertaking. Thus, these two models are more complex frameworks which sensitised me to possible issues I could encounter in my investigation of career downshifting.

4.10 Chapter summary

- (a) There is little research on voluntary career change compared to career entry, career exit, intra-job changes such as transfers, and involuntary career changes such as terminations.
- (b) Existing research and theorising on voluntary career change strongly points to **multiple motivations** for the change which incorporate both external reasons such as organisational changes, and internal reasons such as desires for greater meaning and a re-prioritisation of values.
- (c) While there is mixed evidence regarding the role of **incongruity** between personality and occupation or working environment, there is no strong evidence to suggest that career changes that lead to greater congruence necessarily predict job satisfaction. Nevertheless, many **positive outcomes** result from voluntary career changes including better health and a sense of well-being.
- (d) A number of career change and general transition models were reviewed in this chapter. Common themes include initial difficulties such as loss, uncertainties and depression, a re-orientation of values, consideration of alternatives, a possible restructuring of identity, followed by some form of resolution and reintegration.
- (e) However, no single model of career change was considered sufficient to account for the downshifting phenomenon. Indeed, the majority of psychological models imply a rational linear transition process of logical decision making and implementation. While models of general transition tend not to imply a rational process, they are not sufficiently specific to account for career downshifting.
- (f) Nevertheless, these models together with other empirical research suggest issues and processes that are likely to be encountered in career downshifting, which is a specific form of career change, which in turn is a specific form of transition. Additionally, these models suggest factors which might mediate or facilitate the career downshifting process (e.g., characteristics of the situation, characteristics of the individual, supports, and coping strategies).
- (g) Since the models reviewed in this chapter were designed to apply across the majority of adults, they did not provide any specific insights on any midlife issues which might contribute to the decision to downshift, or the experience of downshifting. Consequently, a brief review of the literature on midlife was undertaken and presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: THE LITERATURE ON MIDLIFE S IT RELATES TO DOWNSHIFTING AND VOLUNTARY CAREER CHANGE

The available literature on downshifting (previously reviewed in Chapter 2) did not consider the possibility that downshifting may be related to general issues of midlife transition. Indeed, there is a tendency to view downshifting as a reaction to current work pressures originating from changes in the economy and structure of organisations, or technological changes (Section 2.3.2). Even when individual factors were considered, downshifting was typically viewed as a reaction to personal crises such as death of a significant other, the break-up of a marriage/partnership, or decreased quality of life stemming from work stress. In contrast, the psychological literature (previously reviewed in Chapter 4) indicated that external situations and events were not the only precursors to voluntary career change. Internal reasons, specific to individuals were also pertinent. These included desires for greater autonomy, achievement, challenge and meaningful work. Voluntary career change (of which downshifting is a specific form) may be a result of a period of re-evaluation of life goals and priorities, which in turn may coincide with midlife.

To recapitulate, Thomas (1979) in his study of midlife career change from high status occupations found support for both a developmental hypothesis (i.e. the career changes were related to midlife re-evaluation), as well as a macrosocial hypothesis (i.e. the career changes were related social and economic change). Other researchers (e.g., Osherson, 1980; Glassner, 1994) also found evidence that those who previously foreclosed their identity and career choice in early life were among those likely to make voluntary career changes at midlife. Nevertheless, the relevance of midlife in models of career change (previously reviewed in Section 4.6), and general models of life transition (previously reviewed in Section 4.7) has hardly been considered. Greller and Stroh (1995) also considered careers in midlife to be a relatively under-researched area. Given this context, I examined the literature on midlife with the aim of clarifying whether midlife issues played a role in the decision to downshift, and whether midlife issues were present in the process of voluntary career downshifting. As such, this chapter does not provide a comprehensive review of the midlife literature, but considers the literature that is pertinent to midlife career change.

In their anthology of research on midlife, Lachman and James (1997) proposed that midlife is generally considered to be between 35 to 65 years of age. Chronological age, however, may not always be the best indicator of midlife, nor is the presence of specific events (e.g., having grandchildren) due to the wide fluctuations in life events for individuals. Moen and Wethington (1999) in their collection of midlife writings agreed that midlife largely begins at 35 years, but suggested that midlife typically coincides with one's children moving to school age, adolescence or early adulthood, and career peaking. The common ground among both sets of researchers is that in midlife, adults typically attain maturity in terms of responsibilities in both family and work domains.

Given the importance of midlife as a time of responsibility and achievement, Levinson and Levinson (1996) considered it ironic that we know the least about this period of life compared to childhood, adolescence and later adulthood (i.e. gerontology). According to Lachman and James (1997), the limited amount of research on midlife to date, is largely because of the widespread assumption that little happens in midlife, except for the "midlife crisis". Additionally, midlife is not a clearly demarcated time period and it is difficult to get middle-aged adults to participate in research. Indeed, midlife appears to be characterised by two paradoxical ideas: (a) midlife is uneventful and rather boring; and (b) midlife is marked by crises and turmoil (Chiriboga, 1997). This chapter considers three areas which are pertinent to midlife career downshifting. First, influential models about midlife will be presented in Section 5.1. This is followed by a review of the evidence and contemporary views regarding whether midlife is characterised by crisis or stability in Section 5.2. Last, I review the characteristics of the midlife transition in Section 5.3

5.1 Influential models of midlife

Fassinger and Schlossberg (1992) proposed that theoretical perspectives on understanding adult years could be broadly classified into four categories: contextual perspectives, developmental perspectives, transitional perspectives and individual perspectives (summarised in Table 5.1). An example of a **contextual perspective** model is that of Kanter (1977) who proposed that people's problems stem from organisational structures rather than from intrapsychic issues. Dissatisfaction with work

Table 5.1: Theoretical orientations to adulthood

Orientation	Example	Brief description
1. Contextual perspective	Kanter (1977)	Adults' problems stem from organisational structures, not intrapsychic issues
2. Developmental perspective		
(a) Models assuming age-based development	Levinson et al. (1978)	The human lifecycle is a sequence of eras consisting of structure-building periods and transitional periods
(b) Models assuming progressive stages	Erikson (1963, 1982) Marcia (1987); Josselson (1987;1996)	There are eight stages of psychosocial development, each with a crucial issue to be resolved. Identity status is classified on two key dimensions of exploration and resolution
(c) Models of development in specific domains	Loevinger (1976) Perry (1970)	Model of ego development Model of cognitive development
3. Transitional perspective	Schlossberg et al. (1995)	Several factors influence adult adaptation to anticipated and unanticipated life events
4. Individual perspective	Jung (1968a)	Midlife is a time when an individual can mature towards greater wholeness and balance (Individuation)

(which may then result in career downshifting) is a consequence of realities such as organisational demands and limited avenues for hierarchical advancement. This contextual perspective would correspond to Thomas' (1979) macrosocial hypothesis to downshifting.

In terms of **developmental perspectives**, there are three broad types of models: (a) models that assume age-based development; (b) models based on progressive stages; and (c) models pertaining to development in specific domains such as Perry's (1970) model of cognitive development, Loevinger's (1976) model of ego development and Kohlberg's (1981) model of moral development. The most well known **age-based model of development** was based on the work of Levinson et al. (1978). The lifecycle is conceptualised as a sequence of eras, each having its own biophysical characteristics. These eras are age-linked, but partially overlapping. The major eras are pre-adulthood (0-22 years), early adulthood (17-45 years); middle adulthood (40-65 years), late adulthood (60-85 years) and late late adulthood (80 years and over). Within each era, there are structure-building periods of about six to eight years alternating with structure-changing or transitional periods of four to five years. In each transitional period, the primary developmental task is to re-appraise the existing life structure, explore possibilities for change and to move towards a new life structure. Thus, the midlife transition typically experienced between 40-45 years, is regarded as a developmental link between the two major eras of early adulthood and middle adulthood. This period would correspond to Thomas' (1979) developmental hypothesis where re-evaluation of life structure may result in radical career change such as downshifting.

The first major criticism of Levinson's model is that adult development does not necessarily correspond to age. Levinson (1986) conceded that social roles and personality do not necessarily evolve through a standard sequence of age-linked stages, but there is an underlying order in the course of a human life shaped by the major eras. The second major criticism is that the model was based on research with white middle-class men, and consequently did not fully describe women's lives. Roberts and Newton (1987) found that women's lives were characterised by greater complexity because of the dual dream of success in both work and family domains. Thus, the strategies for addressing life tasks and outcomes were different for women. Moreover, women have a

greater diversity of roles compared to men, resulting in less correspondence with age-based determinants of behaviour (Wrightsman, 1988).

The predominant **developmental stage model** in psychology is Erikson's eight-stage model of psychosocial development. Erikson (1963, 1982) postulated that each of the eight stages is characterised by a crucial issue to be resolved. The adult stages involve the issues of identity versus role confusion, intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation or self-absorption, and ego integrity versus despair. Vaillant (1977) conducted a 40-year long study of Harvard graduates and found that Erikson's model applied to the life course of these men. Furthermore, he suggested an additional stage of career consolidation in between intimacy and generativity. Vaillant found that men who achieved intimacy were then able to deal effectively with their careers, which in turn led to achieving generativity and integrity.

Erikson's work also formed a context for Marcia's identity status model which is often interpreted as a developmental model (Meijers, 1998). In Marcia's (1987) model, identity status is classified according to two Eriksonian dimensions of exploration and resolution, resulting in four identity statuses: **Achievers** (those who have successfully explored and resolved identity issues); **Foreclosures** (those who have adopted identities which fit with expectations of their society without much exploration); **Moratoriums** (those who are currently exploring identity issues and have not yet resolved them); and **Diffused** (those who neither fully explore nor resolve identity issues). To recapitulate, some researchers of voluntary career change (e.g., Osherson, 1980; Glassner, 1994) found that those who foreclosed their identity and career choice early in life were among those making voluntary career changes at midlife (including downshifters).

Male Achievers and Moratoriums were found to possess higher levels of self-esteem than Foreclosures and Diffused who were not able or willing to engage in identity exploration (Fassinger & Schlossberg, 1992). In other words, identity exploration among men typically results in positive benefits such as high levels of self-esteem, but requires a capacity to tolerate uncertainty in the initial period of exploration. In contrast, Josselson (1987) found that among women, Achievers and Foreclosures had the highest level of self-esteem, suggesting that women may be discouraged by society to have extended periods of identity exploration. Moreover, Josselson suggested that women's

development is tied to relationships, with a central aspect of identity being self-in-relation, rather than a self alone facing the world. In a later revision of her model, Josselson (1996) renamed the identity status categories of Achievers, Foreclosures, Moratoriums and Diffused as respectively: **Pathmakers** (“I’ve tried out some things, and this is what makes most sense to me”); **Guardians** (“This is how I am because it’s how I was raised, or how I’ve always been”); **Searchers** (“I’m not sure about who I am, or what I want to be, but I’m trying to figure it out”); and **Drifters** (“I don’t know what I will do or believe, but it doesn’t matter much right now”). Additionally, Josselson emphasised that identity is both product and process, and continues to be modified throughout our lives, building on earlier choices made. As such, it incorporates both continuity and change. The implication for career downshifters is that career change is likely to require identity exploration which may be unsettling and difficult for some individuals. However, empirical research suggests that successful identity exploration and resolution may lead to positive benefits such as increased self-esteem.

In terms of the third orientation of **transitional perspectives**, there are no predominant models of adult transitions in psychology. Neugarten and Neugarten (1987) pointed out that people live their lives with a sense of age-appropriate behaviour within a given social context. As such, individuals have a sense of whether they are “on-time” or “off-time” with their life achievements. Schlossberg (1981) and Schlossberg et al. (1995) developed a transitional model which considered factors which influenced adaptation to anticipated and unanticipated life events. This model was previously described in Section 4.7. To recount, individual factors (e.g., personal characteristics and coping strategies), and external factors (e.g., characteristics of the transition situation and the availability of supports) are both pertinent. Here again, the implication for career downshifting is the necessity of considering both external and internal factors as mediators of the downshifting process and experience.

The fourth orientation of **individual perspectives** focuses on individual continuity and change. While Fassinger and Schlossberg (1992) did not cite Jung’s view of midlife, Jung’s model fits into this category and is pertinent to this review of the literature. In contrast to Freud who believed that there would be no personality change past the age of 50 years since mental processes in middle-aged individuals lacked the elasticity (Freud, 1906/1942), Jung (1939/1968) considered midlife as a time when

personality matured to levels that could not be attained in earlier years. Previous inclinations and interests which were put aside in childhood come to the fore, with opposite tendencies or issues within an individual requiring resolution. Jung considered the main goals of the first half of life as being ego development, establishing one's place in society and procreation. In contrast, the aim of the second half of life was **individuation**, which involves a process of psychological differentiation with the ultimate goal of the development of the individual personality (Sharp, 1991). As such, changes in midlife are not due to fear of death, but due to the psyche's tendency towards wholeness and balance. In this process of individuation, polarities within the individual need to be resolved. It is likely that Jung would hypothesise that career downshifting is part of a person's process of individuation, or his/her process of becoming more whole or balanced. It may be recalled from Chapter 2, that several writers on downshifting (e.g., Albert, 1994; McKenna, 1997) proposed that many career downshifters were motivated by desires to have more balance between their work and personal lives.

According to McAdams (1993), the main polarity requiring resolution at midlife is that of agency vs. communion, often encapsulated as masculine versus feminine modes of being by Jungian writers (e.g., Corlett & Millner, 1993; O'Connor, 1981). This sharp division between masculine and feminine modes of being was called **gender splitting** by Levinson and Levinson (1996). While the precise form of gender splitting may vary across cultures and time periods, the underlying process permeates human life. In modern western cultures, men typically sacrifice the internal feminine, (typically their feeling and imaginal life) in order to be highly independent, masterful and heroic. Women typically sacrifice the internal masculine modes of active mastery in the service of enhancing relationships. In more recent times, however, technology and institutional changes have blurred and modified traditional forms of gender splitting.

5.2 Crisis versus stability

There are two broad hypotheses about career downshifting in the context of midlife. Is career downshifting (and other radical forms of career change) a manifestation of the "midlife crisis"? Or, is career downshifting an aberration to a normal course of midlife stability? Chiriboga (1997) highlighted the fact that two paradoxical

conceptualisations of midlife exist in the psychological literature: (a) midlife is a stable and uneventful period; and (b) midlife is a time of crisis. This section examines the evidence of each of these perspectives. According to Gergen (as cited by Chiriboga, 1989), there are three underlying views of adult development (i.e. the stability template, the orderly change position, and the random change position). First, the **stability template** views change as occurring out of the continued development of characteristics established in earlier life. This is very much the view of Freud and the classic psychoanalytic perspective which views the trajectory of adult development is already determined by the time of the oedipal stage around age of five or six. Recent findings, however show that no one stage of life assumes primacy in development outcomes and personal development continues throughout life (Chiriboga, 1989). Trait psychologists such as McCrae and Costa (1990) and Kruger (1994) regarded the concept of a midlife crisis as unfounded, or at best a social construct that has outlived its usefulness. Indeed, they argued that it is the trait of neuroticism that correlates with subjective reports of dissatisfaction with life events, low morale and high anxiety. Schulz and Ewan (1988) further proposed that those who suffer such personal crises tend to experience them across the whole range of adulthood and tend to be more neurotic.

Second, the **orderly change position** regards development as an orderly and typically invariant over time. Models include the stage theories of Piaget, Loevinger and Kohlberg. A variation is a combination of orderly change and stability templates where individuals are grounded in the past but interact with the present such that a number of futures are possible. Examples include the models of Erikson and Levinson. Third, the **random change position** which emphasises the role of chance and fate in individual lives. The situational context is an important determinant of quality and stability in personal functioning. This position is reflected in the writings of Neugarten, Mischel and Baltes. Chiriboga (1989) concluded that empirical research findings seem to favour the stability perspective in midlife, with the most stable characteristics being values and vocational interests.

This conclusion is challenging, given the common concept of the midlife crisis, frequently described as incorporating a re-evaluation of self, a crisis of identity, symptoms such as depression, anxiety or flight, realisation of time passing and increased introspection (e.g., Rosenberg, Rosenberg & Farrell, 1999). Moreover, Huyck (1989) in

her review of midlife models found that a common theme is the normative crisis precipitated by the recognition of the finiteness of time and the inevitability of death.

It is clear that researchers typically disagree on the severity and pervasiveness of the midlife crisis (Robbins, 1978). For example, Waskel and Phelps (1995) found that only 29% of 37 women aged 30-60 years in their sample felt that they did not have a midlife crisis, described as “turmoil that may result in changes in attitudes, and values, or changes in personality and behaviour” (p. 1213). In their sample, crises were experienced in the following domains: changes in self (23%), marriage (12%), work (7%), death (7%), health (5%) and relations with children (3%). Other studies however, found more evidence of stability. For example, in a survey of 395 men aged 40-55 years, who were all married and fathers, only 39% expected a change in personal lifestyle, 26% expected change in their family life, and only 33% expected a change in occupation (Lomranz, Shmotkin, Eyal & Friedman, 1994). This study however is not conclusive because it considered expectations for change, rather than actual experience of change. Lomranz et al. suggested that the results could also reflect sampling during stable and satisfactory subphases in the lives of the men interviewed, and that longitudinal studies were needed to discern between stability and change perspectives in midlife. Vaillant’s (1977) 40-year longitudinal study of Harvard graduates shows evidence of both stability and crisis. Whereas some individuals remarked that midlife was their most stable and productive period, others experienced marked changes and stormy periods that resembled adolescence around the time they were 40 years.

Wethington, Cooper and Holmes (1997) suggested that much of the literature focussing on the midlife crisis emphasises struggle, rather than the fulfilment that is possible during midlife. Similarly, Reid and Willis (1999) proposed that midlife can be a time of hopelessness and despair, but also a time for possible psychological and personal growth. Wethington et al. (1997) and Rosenberg et al. (1999) proposed several reasons why people may describe their midlife period as a crisis. First, people in midlife are in a “sandwich generation”, being in between a younger generation of children who place demands on time, energy and financial support, and an older generation of ageing parents who also require support of one form or another. Midlife is therefore a peak time for mastery and productivity as well as responsibilities in both family and work domains. As such, the coping efforts required may be unusual on their part. There may be some

inflation of the severity of minor events. Secondly, many people in midlife grapple with the awareness that they do not have control, or fear losing control. What people perceive as midlife crisis is the adjustment they make in their goals, aspirations, interpretations of events, and views about their possibilities for achievement. Thus, conceiving midlife as a crisis provides a rationale for despair and justification for a lifestyle change. Third, the concept of the midlife crisis emerged during the 1960's and 1970's where there was rapid social change. Rosenberg et al. (1999) suggested that the midlife crisis accounted for general feelings of alienation and strain in western culture at that time. Moreover, crisis stories are more engaging than stability stories, and therefore have greater media reportability.

In more recent times, several psychologists have suggested that it is more realistic to conceptualise midlife as a transition. While midlife is typically a time for re-evaluation of commitments to self and others, or altered perspectives of one's life narrative, Tamir (1989) considered a crisis as optional. Similarly, while midlife can be a potential stressor, Klohnen, Vandewater and Young (1996) pointed out that individual experiences are mediated by personal resources such as ego resiliency and coping styles, and mediating conditions such as social support systems and meaningful work involvement.

McAdams (1993) considered the midlife crisis to be "a good concept that has been trivialised by popular culture" (p. 195). He criticised Levinson's work as over-dramatising and over-generalising the midlife crisis. Midlife can be an important time of re-assessment and revision of one's life story or narrative for many people, but not all those in midlife. McAdams regarded four key issues fundamental to midlife. First, there is **sublimation of passion**. Midlife adults tend to become more philosophical and concerned about ultimate meanings of life and death. The passion in adolescence and younger adulthood becomes more tempered, refined and philosophical, with greater care taken in how psychic energy is spent. Second, there is a move to **postformal modes of thinking** where thinking becomes more contextualised and more radically subjective. There is a move away from absolute truth and ideally a greater capacity for dialectic thinking which can accommodate paradox and seemingly contradictory states.

Third there is a **confrontation of opposites** and a move towards greater wholeness of self, comparable to Jung's concept of individuation. There may be a confrontation with contrasexual selves which Jungian writers (e.g., O'Connor, 1981) would describe as the encounter with one's inner woman (anima) for a man, and one's inner man (animus) for a woman. Fundamental conflicts in one's life narrative or what McAdams refers to as one's personal myth may also be confronted. Adults may seek to resolve the tension and begin to reconcile opposites, or they may choose to live with the tension, or they may despair over their inability to handle the tension effectively. Fourth, there is an **apprehension of a sense of ending**. Even though the midlife adult is halfway through life, there is a perception that there is less time ahead, which may push adults to create legacies of the self in the form of generative behaviours. Thus in McAdam's (1993) perspective, a crisis in midlife involves a radical revision of one's personal myth or life narrative.

This perspective is echoed by Whitbourne and Connolly (1999) who proposed that the midlife crisis is an extreme accommodative reaction to an individual's experiences. In their theoretical model of adult development, identity is regarded as "an organising schema through which the individual's experiences are interpreted" (p. 28). Development is achieved through two basic processes: (a) **assimilation** whereby life events are interpreted in terms of a person's cognitive and affective schemas, and are incorporated into his/her identity; and (b) **accommodation** whereby a person changes his/her identity in response to experiences since assimilation is no longer possible. As such, midlife is a potential time for greater identity achievement. Using Marcia's (1987) identity statuses, Whitbourne and Connolly (1999) proposed that Achievement status is arrived at through a process of serious exploration and accommodation, while Foreclosed status involves a high degree of identity assimilation. A person who is in Moratorium status is in the midst of an identity crisis, with no firm commitments, but earnestly seeking to define these for themselves. Those with Diffused identity status have no clear set of commitments and no strong desire to arrive at a clear identity.

Similarly, Tamir (1989) suggested that in midlife, some men confront the issues of middle age with little or no trauma, while some men struggle. On the other hand, some men deny issues which need to be confronted, with denial possibly being the most detrimental approach. Research by Farrell and Rosenberg (1981) of 200 men aged 38-48

years found four groups of men which correspond to Marcia's (1987) identity statuses. With **Trans-generative** men (Achievers) who comprised 32% of their sample, there is no evidence of crisis. They appeared to sail through midlife with increasing self-improvement and maturity. In contrast, the **Pseudo-developed** (Foreclosed; 26% of sample), denied stress and appeared perfect. However, probing revealed self-deception and rigidity of personalities. The **Anti-hero** (Moratorium; 12% of sample) were in crisis, and experienced stress, alienation and distress. They expressed regrets and wanted to start anew especially in the work domain. The **Punitive disenchanted** (Diffused, 30%) were truly in crisis. They were dissatisfied with life, depressed, and alienated, but blamed others. With the lowest level of introspection, they had the poorest prognosis for a positive future.

Wethington et al. (1997) also acknowledged Foreclosed and Diffused identity states in stating that in midlife, there are some adults who will resist social and personal changes as these are perceived as difficult to accomplish. These individuals may present a picture of stability rather than change. Nevertheless, they argued that it may be more accurate to see midlife as a **psychological turning point**, rather than a crisis. Clausen (1995) defined a turning point as a period or point in time in which a person reinterprets past experiences in a way that changes long-held fundamental assumptions. This concept corresponds to O'Connor and Wolfe's (1991) suggestion that **paradigm shifts** involving fundamental changes in a person's beliefs, values, feelings and knowledge may occur at midlife.

Clausen (1995) identified four types of turning points: a change or reformulation of commitment to a major life role, a major change regarding perspective on life, a change in important life goals, and a major change in views regarding the self. Importantly, Wheaton and Gotlib (1997) remarked that turning points are difficult to see as they are occurring because they are only recognised as such after some time, and as it becomes clear that there has been a change in direction in a person's life. The implication is that some individuals may not recognise midlife as a significant psychological turning point until after a substantial period of time, reinforcing the notion that longitudinal studies are superior to cross-sectional studies in ascertaining whether midlife is a significant turning point.

In summary, it is more accurate to describe midlife as a potential, rather than mandatory, psychological turning point for many adults. While some adults may experience crisis, a larger proportion may undergo a transition without trauma. However, under-reporting of midlife transitions may also occur due to resistance of change among some people, and also due to lack of awareness of a psychological transition among others. Thus, the implication for career downshifting is that it may coincide with midlife re-evaluation for some individuals. As such, career downshifting may represent more than career change. In the light of Clausen's (1995) four types of turning points, career downshifting may include: (a) a re-assessment of commitment to a professional/managerial careers; (b) a change regarding perspective on life (e.g., career is not the most important priority in life); (c) a change in important life goals (e.g., family or other goals assume greater importance); and/or (d) a change regarding the self (e.g., identity incorporates possibilities other than the work identity).

5.3 Important themes in midlife transitions

In the previous section, the four cardinal features of midlife identified by McAdams (1993) were discussed: sublimation of passion, contextualisation of thought, confrontation of opposites, and apprehension of a sense of ending. This section reviews other themes in midlife highlighted by other psychologists and Jungian writers which may inform the career downshifting experience. The Jungian writers reviewed in this section are relevant since Jung's model of individuation particularly applies to midlife. While psychologists such as McAdams have largely made their conclusions on the basis of empirical research, the Jungian writers reviewed in this section have derived their ideas from clinical observations (e.g., Hollis, 1993; Stein, 1983) and qualitative interviews (e.g., O'Connor, 1981).

A midlife transition leading to change may be triggered by either **external events** or **inner experiences**. Datan (1985) postulated multiple determinants of a crisis in midlife. They include stagnation in marriage or career, declining opportunities with advancing age, and the effects of physical ageing. O'Connor and Wolfe's (1991) study with 64 men and women experiencing transitions found that a review of current operating paradigms may be stimulated by external events (e.g., death of a significant

other) or inner processes (e.g., dissatisfaction with either marriage or career). Another experience which may trigger a midlife re-evaluation is the apprehension of ending identified by McAdams (1993). According to Neugarten (as cited in O'Connor & Chamberlain, 1996), midlife adults re-orient themselves to *time-left-to-live* rather than *time-since-birth*. This leads to a process of taking stock, heightened introspection and a re-evaluation of priorities and commitments, or what McAdams (1993) called sublimation of passion.

A second theme of **increased introspection** or interiority was identified by several researchers such as Gould, Lowenthal, Neugarten and Vaillant (Tamir, 1989). Introspection may involve existential questioning, active review of the past and reconstruction of future commitments. From their review of the literature, Corlett and Millner (1993) conceptualised midlife as a shift from outwardly focused adaptive persona, based on wishes and expectations of others, to an inward exploration of the genuine self. Typically, midlife adults in transition need to question appropriate goals for the next period of life. O'Connor (1981) from his research on men experiencing midlife crisis suggested that the most appropriate approach to this phase was to stop, think, listen to one's inner promptings, reflect and wait for an appropriate resolution. The inclination, however, in a culture that reinforces active mastery is to tackle the problem before it gets on top of oneself, or to create enough movement and action that will distract oneself from attending to one's inner life. Thus for some men, going back into one's inner life of feelings and rediscovering what is important to oneself may be too threatening. They may go back to a remodelled version of the traditional male role which avoids the pain of the midlife crisis, but also denies its creative possibilities. This corresponds to Marcia's Foreclosed identity status.

Thus, **growth and personal development are not guaranteed outcomes** from midlife. This theme is similar to Bolen's (1990) idea previously mentioned in Section 4.6 that in liminal periods, there may be transformation and growth, or destruction and regression. According to Jung (1921/1971), midlife can be a time of psychological renewal, or increasing rigidity and intolerance. Operationally, some individuals may achieve greater balance between their inner and outer lives, or family and work domains at midlife, while others may become stuck, one-sided and pulled towards particular

psychological polarities (Schadt, 1997). Levinson (1986) also emphasised that development in midlife is not necessarily synonymous with growth.

Potential **positive outcomes** from a midlife transition could include greater complexity, competence, productivity and altruism (Helson, 1997). Previous research conducted by Helson and McCabe (cited by Helson, 1997) showed that single women around the age of 40 years saw midlife as a time to establish a stable relationship; traditional homemakers made attempts to achieve a more egalitarian relationship with their husbands; and divorced women worked hard to establish a new life structure that would support themselves and their children. According to Helson there was evidence for change in self-descriptions as well as personality using broader conceptions of personality and research not used by trait psychologists such as McCrae and Costa (1990), a view echoed by McAdams (1994,1996). Similarly, Moen and Wethington (1999) in their review of recent midlife literature concluded that contemporary midlife is characterised by a growing diversity of roles, resources and relationships.

Research by Robbins (1978) showed that men who changed their occupations at midlife tended to become less interested in material things and conventional measures of success, resulting in greater emphasis on inward satisfaction. This result is consistent with findings of Kanchier and Unruh (1989b), previously reviewed in Section 4.3, that job changers placed higher value on creativity, variety, independence, achievement and intellectual stimulation. Robbins interpreted her results as indicating that when outer world or material needs are basically satisfied, people can deal with higher order needs such as self-actualisation, a view which mirrors Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1954; 1968).

A fifth theme in midlife is the addressing of **undeveloped aspects of one's personality** and the **resolution of polarities** within the psyche. Gutmann (cited in Huyck, 1989) concluded from his research across several cultures that men about 55 years previously used active mastery styles with an emphasis on aggressive pursuit of external goals (stereotypically masculine), but later changed to a passive mastery style emphasising accommodation of relationships, security and pleasure (stereotypically feminine), or a bimodal style which blends both active and passive mastery styles. In contrast, women typically used passive mastery styles and later shifted to active or

bimodal mastery styles. However, a minority of men and women in later life displayed magic mastery styles where reality is distorted to preserve some sense of security. Lacking a sense of power and authority, they feel unable to influence others and cope by using denial or redefining situations, rather than taking any active steps to change those situations.

James and Lewkowicz (1997) proposed that there could be a crossover of characteristics in men and women at midlife, with women becoming more assertive, and men becoming more expressive and affiliative. Jung's model of individuation conceived this addressing of contrasexual characteristics as integration or balancing of the personality rather than a full crossover or reversal of gender characteristics. On the other hand, it was not clear about whether Gutmann saw the phenomenon as integration or crossover of attributes. Research using longitudinal data conducted by James and Lewkowicz found no support for the crossover hypothesis. They did, however find that there was an increase in the need for power among women in midlife, and a slight decrease among men. There was also an increase in the need for intimacy among men, but this level did not approach the level measured among women.

As discussed previously, masculinity and femininity are not the only polarities which require resolution in midlife. Apart from gender polarities, Corlett and Millner (1993), identified several other polarities found in midlife that may press for resolution. These include: old patterns/new meanings, expansion/constriction, attachment/separation, dominant/inferior, inner/outer, private/public, entrapment/freedom, confusion/clarity, and regrets/yearnings. To this list I would also add the polarity of family and work.

According to Stein (1983), the self goes through a transformation of psychological identity during midlife, where old selves are lost and new ones come into being. In line with van Gennep's tripartite model (1960/1977), Stein conceived of midlife as a drama in three acts: loss of some sort, liminality with an accompanying return of the repressed, and reintegration. In the first stage, there is a **loss of the heroic defence** accompanied by feelings of grief for a lost past. The ego is unable to identify fully with a former self-image constructed from specific internal imagoes or schematas and certain roles. **Liminality** then occurs when the ego is separated from a fixed sense

of who it has been, leading to a sense of floating in ambiguous spaces. Individuals may become unhinged and lose their secure footing in their customary social and psychological worlds. They may make radical changes in their efforts to rectify their sense of loss. The unconscious is stirred up and the Self (the potential for wholeness) is constellated, which may lead to vivid dreams, powerful intuitions, fantasies, synchronistic and symbolic events. From a Jungian perspective, this process ideally involves a dis-identification with how the person presents to the outside world (the persona), followed by confrontations with repressed aspects of the ego (shadow) and the contrasexual complex (anima or animus for a man or woman, respectively). However, as with O'Connor (1981), Stein also warned that there can be a defensive reconstitution of persona, with a retreat into former patterns of identity and defences.

Thus, in the liminal period, a person has a chance to realise he/she has a soul, rather than just an ego. The task then is to build a bridge between ego-consciousness and the unconscious. According to Stein (1983), this is a central psychological task in midlife and the greatest opportunity for individuation. Ideally, a person will then move into the third phase of **reintegration**, which is characterised by ability to hold conflicting polarities and come to a resolution without identifying with one polarity. In Stein's view, the optimal outcome of the midlife transition is the creation of a reworked, more psychologically inclusive and complex identity.

Similarly, O'Connor (1981) saw midlife as a critical time in the journey towards individuation. He suggested that what differentiates a successful midlife crisis resolution from an unsuccessful one is whether a man develops a relationship with his inner world, representing the restitution with the Eros principle (which values feeling, imagination and capacity for relationship) in contrast to the Logos principle (which values rationality and outer world achievements). Furthermore, his recommendations for building Stein's bridge between the unconscious and unconscious included attending to inner promptings by honouring dreams, reflectiveness and/or expression of one's inner landscape via outlets such as writing, music and drama. O'Connor suggested that a midlife crisis can be experienced productively as a creative illness, similar to that experienced by Freud, Fechner and Jung such that there is a restructuring of one's vision, with substantial increase in self-knowledge that would sustain an individual through the rest of his/her life.

Another significant theme in the midlife literature is the possibility of a **re-evaluation of work**. In her review of the empirical literature, Tamir (1989) disconfirmed the stereotype of middle age men being less valuable at work. The reality is that many men in midlife are at their peak cognitive capacity, and are close to their highest earning power and prestige. They are also the most satisfied with their jobs at this stage. However, her previous research found that job satisfaction and life satisfaction were not correlated for men in their forties (correlation index of about 0.04) compared to those aged 25-39 and 50-59 years. She concluded that regardless of success level, most men wanted challenge at work.

Levinson and Levinson (1996) addressed previous criticisms that earlier research by Levinson et al. (1978) focused on men only. They studied equal numbers of women in three groups – homemakers, women with corporate-financial careers, and women with academic careers. They found that at the time of research, less than a third of women experienced a midlife transition. However, women undergoing a transition typically asked “What do I now want for myself?” and “What do I give to and receive from my work?”, or “How satisfying is my relationship with my work?” Of less importance was the question “How successful am I in the eyes of the world?”. The Levinsons concluded that about 10-20% of women in midlife have a moderately or highly satisfying with their work. Another 20-30% have limited psychological satisfaction from their work, but have no major grievances, while 50% find their work to some extent demeaning, empty and damaging to the self. These dissatisfactions may manifest in symptoms such as alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, absenteeism, burnout, marginal work performance, early retirement, searching for youthful forms of excitement, or problems in the family domain. In their opinion, women with work dissatisfactions have three broad options: becoming a bigger fish in a smaller pond, shifting to a different career path, or continuing in the same organisation in a position that pays well but leads nowhere. The Levinsons noted that the higher a woman’s position, the fewer the attractive alternatives and the greater the potential fall. Moreover, Moen and Wethington (1999) remarked that the greater the time invested in a role, the greater the subjective identification with it. Thus, the literature suggests that career downshifting among those with high status occupations are likely to involve loss of some form or another (e.g., loss of status, loss of identity).

In their review of the career change literature, Beijan and Salomone (1995) concluded that re-evaluation at midlife is prompted in part by conflicts in personal and career values. Outward manifestations include increased physical and mental fatigue, depression, inability to concentrate and social withdrawal. A crisis is experienced when an individual is consciously aware of alternatives and feels compelled to choose among them. This state of instability is perceived as a loss, propelling the individual to develop a new self concept by reconsidering life motives and values, and expressing aspects of the personality that were previously less developed, a view which is consistent with Jungian writers such as O'Connor (1981) and Stein (1983).

In O'Connor's (1981) research, men experiencing midlife crisis typically felt imprisoned in their present occupations since a large part of their identity was derived from their work which was not unsatisfactory. Frequently, the man's career reflected his father's unfulfilled ambitions, his father's heroes or values, a finding similar to research by Osherson (1980) previously described in Chapter 4. Most of O'Connor's interviewees were successful in conventional terms, but felt disconnected from their inner life. O'Connor concluded that these men paid a high price for achieving conventional definitions of masculinity in having "I-It" relationships with the world, rather than "I-thou" relationships, using Martin Buber's terminology (p. 53).

Typically, these men experienced tension between holding on to the past and its successes and letting go in order to move forward – a theme previously identified by Osherson (1980) in his research on radical career change among men (reviewed in Chapter 4). Five fantasies of alternative occupations predominated among O'Connor's interviewees: a farmer, a nurseryman, a helper, a writer or dropping out altogether. O'Connor (1981) proposed that these fantasies represented an attempt to reconstruct a radically different sense of self through a drastic change of occupation. The hope is that the occupational change would bring a resolution to their experience of distress and confusion. However, there was also a sense that the fantasised occupation would be simple and uncomplicated, a reaction against work that is characterised by competition, pressure and aggression.

From a Jungian perspective, O'Connor interpreted the *farmer fantasy* as related to a man's need to sense his own rhythm and recover the lost feminine within. There was a need to dig, fertilise, cultivate and nurture one's inner worlds that had previously been eroded by ambition and power. Similarly, the *nurseryman fantasy* was about the inner need to be watered, fertilised and weeded, or cared for. The *helper fantasy* was considered to reflect an inner need for intimacy and the restitution of the Eros principle. The *writer fantasy* was related to the inner drive to be creative and experience a way of being that was not rational and logical (the Logos principle). The *dropping out fantasy* which his Australian interviewees typically described as escaping to a desert island possibly corresponds to American fantasies of "back to the land" described by Saltzman (1991). O'Connor interpreted this fantasy as being equivalent to running away in adolescence. It provides relief from depression and anxiety, but the relief is only temporary. O'Connor warned that dropping out totally would be too severe a shock to men, given their conditioning regarding the centrality of work in defining their sense of manhood.

Nevertheless, O'Connor suggested that the first four occupational fantasies may provide the basis of sound occupational changes. However, such a change could only be viable if it was made after much self-reflection and clarification of one's values – in other words, after working through most of the fundamental issues presented at midlife. O'Connor's research and conclusions about occupational fantasies are pertinent to midlife career downshifting in that they serve as a warning that radical career changes could be distractions to addressing important psychological issues, rather than a resolution of the midlife transition.

Earlier research by Jacques (1965) who originally coined the term 'midlife crisis' was undertaken on artists' lives and creativity. Jacques found that artists typically experienced a period of anguish, depression and mourning for the loss of youth, which he described as purgatory, (which corresponds to the concept liminality previously discussed). There is a sense that one's life cannot be the same and there is a race against time. Jacques found three broad ways of approaching creativity at midlife: (a) the creative career may come to an end, representing a drying up or actual death; (b) creativity may begin to show itself for the first time; or (c) there may be a change in the quality or content of creative outputs.

An important area of midlife research has been in the area of **psychological well-being**. While the psychological literature on subjective well-being has traditionally focused on life satisfaction, positive and negative affect (e.g., Diener, 1984; Diener, Emons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985), Ryff (1987, 1989a) considered alternative measures of psychological well-being in adulthood. She took into account Waterman's (1984) distinction between hedonic enjoyment based on pleasurable sensations, and eudamonism, "the feelings accompanying behaviour in the direction of and consistent with one's true potential" (p. 16). Thus, Ryff's model of psychological well-being focuses on more enduring life challenges and incorporates the six dimensions of Autonomy, Environmental mastery, Purpose in life, Positive relations with others, Personal growth, and Self acceptance. Ryff (1989b) found that middle aged adults scored higher than young adults and older adults in terms of Autonomy, Environmental mastery, and Purpose in life. Moreover, Ryff and Heidrich (1997) found that about two thirds of midlife adults sampled anticipated future improvements on all six dimensions of psychological well-being. These results suggest that midlife is a time for high levels of psychological well-being.

Finally, the last area of midlife research that relates to this thesis is **generativity**. Erikson (1963) had previously suggested that generativity versus stagnation is a psychosocial issue to be resolved in middle adulthood. According to Erikson, there are conflicting impulses to invest in one's legacy and indulging oneself as if one were one's own child. Kotre (1984) identified four main types of generativity: biological (e.g., begetting, bearing and nursing children), parental (e.g., feeding, sheltering, loving and disciplining children); technical (passing on skills to those less advanced than ourselves); and cultural (mentorship, and engaging another in a vision of what he/she could become). Kotre and Kotre (1998) later identified acting as intergenerational buffers (not passing something negative on to others) in all four domains as another form of generativity.

McAdams, Hart and Maruna (1998) constructed a model of generativity which involved seven elements: (a) an inner desire for communal nurturance; (b) age-graded societal norms experienced as cultural demands; (c) concern for the next generation; (d) belief in the goodness or worthwhileness of the human enterprise; (e) generative

commitment; (f) generative action; and (g) narration of generativity. The key with generativity is providing for the next generation. According to Mansfield and McAdams (1996), generativity combines tendencies for both agency and communion, in that it is about extending the self in a powerful way (agency) and assisting the next generation (communion). Thus, academic psychology and Jungian writers overlap in identifying the need to combine agency (the masculine principle) with communion (the feminine principle) as important in midlife and beyond. Research by McAdams and his colleagues across several studies showed that midlife adults scored higher on generativity measures overall compared to both younger and older adults (e.g., McAdams, de St Aubin & Logan, 1993; McAdams, Ruetzel & Foley, 1986). Similar findings were found by Stewart and Vandewater (1998).

5.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed models and conceptualisations of midlife which may provide an understanding of issues which may be pertinent in the experience of career downshifting. The key ideas are:

- (a) Levinson's ideas about a life course consisting periods of stable structure-building interwoven with transitional periods of structure-changing;
- (b) Erikson's ideas about crucial issues that needed to be resolved in adulthood (i.e. identity versus role confusion, intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, and ego integrity versus despair);
- (c) Marcia's ideas about identity statuses (i.e. Achieved, Foreclosed, Moratorium and Diffused) and the difficulties that may be involved in the process of identity exploration and resolution;
- (d) Jung's ideas about individuation (with an emphasis on greater wholeness and balance) being the aim of the second half of life;
- (e) The idea from Jung and post-Jungians that individuation needs to incorporate reclaiming un-lived aspects which were previously put aside, and the resolution of psychic polarities, such as masculine and feminine modes of being (i.e. agency and communion, or the Logos principle and the Eros principle);

- (f) McAdam's proposition that the four cardinal features of midlife are sublimation of passion, contextualisation of thought, confrontation of opposites, and apprehension of a sense of endings;
- (g) Midlife may be triggered by either external or internal events, lead to greater introspection, and lead to possible outcomes such as greater complexity of an individual's personality, although positive outcomes are not necessarily guaranteed;
- (h) Re-evaluation of work, in terms of the appropriateness of its current form (e.g., occupation and role) and centrality or otherwise of work in life can come into review at midlife;
- (i) Ryff's research that psychological well-being is likely to be high at midlife;
- (j) Research from various researchers including McAdams that generativity is high at midlife.

5.5 Concluding the literature review

This chapter concludes the literature review undertaken prior to the empirical research phase of this project. Thus far, I have considered the limited literature on career downshifting, and identified gaps in our current understanding. Extending the literature review to the area of careers, I have also found that while there were some contemporary ideas which might inform the phenomenon of downshifting, no one major career theory provided a comprehensive framework to understanding career downshifting. Moreover, general models of career change and general models of life transition were also not sufficient in accounting for the phenomenon of downshifting. Nevertheless, the review of career change, transition models, and conceptualisations of midlife suggested issues which could underlie the experience of career downshifting. In summary, the literature review sensitised me to collecting and analysing data on career downshifters' experiences. The next chapter (Chapter 6) describes the methodology used, while the findings are presented in Chapters 7, 8 and 9. Conclusions and how the research findings relate to the literature review are presented in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 6: METHOD

6.1 Overview of research methodology

The main aim of the research was to understand individuals' experiences of career downshifting. A primary qualitative approach using semi-structured depth interviews was adopted, supplemented by selected quantitative measures. Due to the time frame for completing a D.Psych. degree, a retrospective cross-sectional design was chosen, where individuals recollect their experiences of a relatively recent period of their life (about 5 years), rather than a longitudinal data collection design where individuals are interviewed several times over a substantial period of time (e.g., a 5-7 year transition period as found in previous research by Levinson et al. 1978, and Robbins, 1978).

Participants in this study were 30 individuals who had downshifted from managerial or professional occupations within the last 5 years. To ensure an adequate cross-section of downshifters, quota controls were imposed so that equal numbers of men and women were interviewed. Additionally, to ensure that the range of downshifting experiences were covered, quota controls were imposed so that downshifting in earlier and later parts of their transition were equally represented.

The analysis of qualitative data comprised the procedures appropriate to heuristic enquiry of phenomenological experience suggested by Moustakas (1990, 1994). Due to the small sample size, analysis of the quantitative data was largely restricted to descriptive statistics and tests of significant differences between groups of individuals. Numerous quality control measures were specifically incorporated into the research methodology to enhance the reliability and validity of the data collected and the resultant findings.

The remainder of this chapter justifies the choice of qualitative research approach (Section 6.2), before providing further details of sample selection (Section 6.3), field materials used (Section 6.4), data collection procedures (Section 6.5), data analysis procedures (Section 6.6), and quality control procedures undertaken (Section 6.7).

6.2 Methodological considerations

In academic psychology, there are two broad methodological approaches in empirical research – quantitative approaches emphasising measurement and hypothesis testing, and qualitative approaches emphasising open-ended discovery without hypothesis testing. Quantitative research tends to be theory driven, with precise operationally defined variables. Detailed hypotheses are derived and objectivity is paramount. In contrast, qualitative research assumes that people create individual meaning structures which determine and explain their behaviour. The focus is on understanding lived experience, with the researcher committed to illuminating subjective experience and their meanings. While quantitative designs and approaches have dominated psychological research, the number of qualitative studies reported over the last 10 years has increased (e.g., McLeod, 1996; Sherrard, 1997).

According to Stevenson and Cooper (1997), a rigid positivist position using a quantitative research approach allows psychology to maintain “scientific respectability”. Kvale (1994), however argued for the definition of science as being “the methodical production of new, systematic knowledge” (p. 150). As such, researchers should use whatever methods are responsive to particular questions and the area being studied. Moreover, the results of qualitative methodology can still yield scientific results. Stiles (1993) suggested that qualitative and quantitative approaches are not necessarily oppositional: “Accepting qualitative research as viable need not deny the value of traditional experimental design, quantitative measurement, and statistical analysis ... accounting for the range and depth of human experience” (p. 594). Pernice (1996) concurred with this viewpoint that sound research does not need to restrict itself to the use of either qualitative or quantitative methods, which was an approach of the 1980’s. An emerging trend is to select from both quantitative and qualitative methods, those which are most likely to be appropriate for specific aspects of a study. From a different perspective, Kotre (1984) warned that if we over-stress the idiographic (i.e. qualitative methods), we could miss the universal for the particular, ending up with a string of unrelated lives. On the other hand, if we overemphasise the nomothetic (i.e. quantitative methods), we could overlook important differences between individuals.

6.2.1 The qualitative approach adopted

There are several typologies of qualitative approaches to research (e.g., Hoshmand, 1989; Stiles, 1993). A typology which is broader than Hoshmand's three broad qualitative approaches, and less extensive than Stiles' 10 qualitative approaches is that of Moustakas (1994). In this scheme, there are five main streams of qualitative methods: (a) Ethnography which centres on participant-observation data collection methods; (b) Grounded theory research which focuses initially on individual experiences with the ultimate aim of constructing an integrated theory; (c) Hermeneutics which considers history, art, politics and other human enterprises to explain human experiences; (d) Phenomenological research as applied by researchers at Duquesne University in Canada; (e) Heuristic research which aims to discover the nature and meaning of experiences, but also incorporates the researcher's self-processes.

The **ethnographic approach** would involve observing downshifters in their natural settings (i.e. homes and work environments). Because of time constraints governing a thesis and the intrusive nature of an ethnographic approach, it was considered inappropriate for this study. A **hermeneutic approach** involving a consideration of economic, historical and political aspects of career downshifting was also considered inappropriate because of the need for this study to have a psychological focus for a D. Psych. thesis project.

While **grounded theory** (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was a possible framework for this thesis project, it was not entirely appropriate because the focus of the study was understanding, rather than theory development and verification. Additionally, there are already multiple theories of career development (previously reviewed in Chapter 2). Nonetheless, specific elements of grounded theory methodology were used as guidelines for the method employed. These were: (a) An emphasis on dense, or thick, description which was rich and nuanced; (b) Theme analysis and elucidation of patterns; (c) Employing an inductive iterative approach extracting themes and patterns from the data; (d) Fluid propositions or models which were provisional, modified with subsequent iterations or considerations of the data; (e) Transparent reduction involving summaries, coding, themes, and clustering (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

The **phenomenological approach** was also judged to be not the ideal framework for this study. First, while I was explicit in detailing my experiences in a separate journal before and during this research, it was not possible for me to completely bracket my own career downshifting experiences as required by the phenomenological approach. Second, the phenomenological approach aims to reduce subjective experiences to essences (i.e. essential or invariant characteristics), while I wanted to avoid too much abstraction in analysis which would lose the nature of participants' experiences (as recommended by Moustakas, 1994). Nevertheless, several useful guidelines were distilled from the phenomenological framework: (a) The focus on understanding subjective experience; (b) Indwelling and immersion in the data, involving reading and re-reading of the data until meaning stands out; (c) Descriptive and inferential analysis; (d) Distilling themes of what is essential to the experience studied; and (e) Willingness to explain methods of interpretation and providing samples of the data for review (Giorgi, 1994; 1997).

The fifth approach, **heuristic research** was chosen as the framework guiding this study. This approach, as articulated by Moustakas (1990), includes six main phases: (a) The initial *engagement*, where the researcher distils the key question that holds social meanings as well as personal, compelling implications; (b) *Immersion* into the topic, where the researcher lives the research question; spontaneous self-dialogue, self-searching and pursuing intuitive clues are part of the immersion process; (c) *Incubation*, where the researcher retreats from an intense and concentrated focus on the research question, or a period of gestation where growth is taking place nonetheless, through allowing intuition and tacit knowledge to emerge; (d) *Illumination*, which involves a breakthrough into conscious awareness of qualities and clustering of qualities into themes; (e) *Explication*, where a more complete apprehension of the key ingredients of the phenomenon are discovered, including additional angles, textures, features, refinements and corrections; and (f) *Culmination* of the research in a creative synthesis.

Thus, my own involvement with downshifting was not an inherent disadvantage within the heuristic research framework, but incorporated as another source of information and means of making sense of the data collected. Minimising the bias of my experience on analysis was addressed in several ways: (a) Explicit documentation of my own downshifting experiences, processes and issues prior to data collection; (b) Detailed and periodic discussion of interviews with my initial two supervisors during the data

collection phase; (c) Provision of 40% of transcripts to my initial two supervisors throughout the data collection phase; (e) Provision of a summary to each participant after each interview for member checking; (e) Provision of summary items clustered into themes to my supervisors; (f) Provision of summary results, including emergent themes to research participants for member checking.

However, there are two main points of departure from a purely heuristic framework. A heuristic researcher typically seeks out other sources of data, beyond narrative descriptions provided in interviews (e.g., self-dialogues, stories, poems, artwork, journals and diaries which depict the experience). While one of the participants, prompted by checking the summary provided to him after interview, spontaneously provided a dream to amplify his experience of downshifting, I did not actively seek extra material from participants due to the large amounts of data already produced from the research. Second, in addition to the processes of immersion and incubation in the data, I also used Moustakas' (1994) procedure of horizontalisation to systematically cluster issues and topics which emerged from the raw data. This process of horizontalisation is part of Moustakas' development of heuristics to what he called "transcendental phenomenology".

In summary, the primary qualitative method undertaken has several common bonds with the five main qualitative approaches identified by Moustakas (1994): (a) Recognising the value of qualitative approaches to investigating phenomenon which cannot entirely be elucidated by quantitative approaches; (b) Focusing on the wholeness of experience, rather than specific parts; (c) Searching for meanings and essences of experience rather than measurements and explanations; (d) Obtaining descriptions of experiences through first-person accounts in conversations and interviews; (e) Regarding the data of experiences as imperative in understanding human behaviour; (f) Formulating questions that reflect the interest, involvement and personal commitment of the researcher.

6.2.2 The use of stories

In the same vein as Ritchie, Fassinger, Prosser and Robinson, (1997) who used qualitative methods to understand the career development of high achieving women, and

Collin (1990) who used qualitative methods to explore career change among working class men, I wanted to explore the experiences of downshifters from their own points of view, and in their own words. I was more interested with discovering the nature of downshifting experiences and the essential themes which characterised the phenomenon. Eliciting stories or narratives of downshifting experiences appeared to be the most productive method which was consistent with Moustakas' (1990) heuristic framework.

Stiles (1993) argued that in natural discourse, people often tell stories in interviews and conversations. With discovery-oriented research, stories are often more vivid, compelling, engaging and realistic than research designed with hypotheses developed in advance. Moreover, research findings from narrative accounts are of heuristic value.

“By indicating what might happen, stories enable us to prepare for a range of eventualities. For example, physicians can use stories about interviews to build a repertoire of demonstrated possibilities for process-outcome relationships – scenarios that permit recognition of similar situations ... This use of stories represents a scientific epistemology more akin to a systematised clinical wisdom than to lawlike generalisations” (p. 601).

Furthermore, Baumeister and Newman (1994) stated that it is more natural for people to think and talk in a narrative mode with stories, rather than “a paradigmatic mode” involving context-free abstractions, causal relationships and generalisations which are the common mode of discourse of science, logic and mathematics. Instead, the narrative mode allows for coherent stories about particular experiences which are temporally structured and context sensitive. There have been more published research using narrative methodologies in recent times (e.g., Collin, 1990; Ritchie et al., 1997)

For example, McAdams (1993) extended the use of life stories to the study of over-riding life themes and patterns, particularly the issue of generativity. Heatherton and Nichols (1994a) used micronarratives in their research on people who claimed to experience quantum changes in their lives. They defined micronarratives as autobiographical stories that focus on specific events, representing the person's subjective evaluation of the event. While these stories may not be totally accurate in a historical sense, in that people selectively construct, retrieve and distort narratives to fit

their own self concepts, they do represent what the person believes is important. Collin (1990) recommended stories as one way of accessing the subjective notion of career (i.e. people as actors, and careers as interpreted entities, rather than mere descriptions of facts). Thus, I chose to focus on a qualitative approach which encouraged narratives or stories of career downshifting experiences.

6.2.3 Triangulation

Even though the emphasis of this research was on discovering the nature of career downshifting experiences, I also included quantitative measures to assess specific aspects of career downshifting (e.g., perceptions about the degree of change and the effects of change). The use of both types of methodologies may be regarded as methodological triangulation.

Neimeyer and Resnikoff (1982) outlined two basic types of triangulation or convergent methodology: (a) Theoretical triangulation which brings diverse theories to bear on the same issue; (b) Methodological triangulation which brings different methodologies to the study of the same phenomenon. Methodological triangulation can be (a) within-method, for example using multiple measures for the same phenomenon, and (b) between-method, for example using dissimilar methods to study the same phenomenon. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), using both quantitative and qualitative research methods within one study produces a rich composite which could not otherwise be obtained with a single approach. In the last 10 years, there have been more studies combining the strengths of qualitative and quantitative approaches. For example, Ryff (1989a) used a combined approach to research psychological well-being among middle-aged and older adults. McAdams et al. (1997) also used a combined approach to identify themes distinguishing people who are high on generativity from those who are low on generativity.

According to Stiles' (1993), triangulation, which uses multiple data sources and multiple methods to assess convergence of research findings, provides a stronger claim to validity. Similarly, Sherrard (1997) suggested that interpretations from qualitative studies would be fortified by building in methods such as triangulation, specifically

carrying out more than one type of analysis and seeking additional sources of information.

This present study incorporated several meanings of triangulation: (a) Between-method triangulation has been incorporated using both qualitative and quantitative methods; (b) Within-method triangulation was incorporated using multiple quantitative measures to assess possible benefits of career downshifting (Section 6.4); (c) Research findings were compared to other models of midlife career change (Chapter 10).

6.3 Participants

Participants in this study were 30 individuals who had downshifted from managerial or professional occupations within the last 5 years. Initially two individuals, a woman and a man were interviewed as part of a pilot of the field materials. Since very few changes were made to the field materials after the pilot, the results from these two individuals were included in the final sample, resulting in 30 participants altogether, 15 women, and 15 men.

6.3.1 Sourcing of participants

Essentially, participants of the study were recruited via snowballing or chain sampling (Patton, 1990). In this approach, the process of accessing “information rich” critical cases starts by asking a number of people for possible participants for this study (i.e. career downshifters known to people I initially contacted). Through asking a wide range of people for referrals, as well as those who had been referred, who else I could interview, the snowball accumulated a number of potential participants. Thomas (1979, 1980) used a similar process which he called “referral sampling”. He chose this method since it seemed to be the most feasible means of reaching a widely scattered population for whom no point of central contact was available, and would also minimise bias which might arise from using a single source of research participants. For example, Roberts (1975) recruited participants for his study of “career dropouts” via subscription lists to a counter culture magazine, resulting in a disproportionate percentage of participants citing

counter culture reasons for their career change; these findings were not duplicated by later researchers who used unbiased samples (e.g., Robbins, 1978; Thomas, 1979).

For this study, the main sources of participants were personal contacts, work contacts, and contacts which I established: (a) at seminars I attended, (b) at cafes, bookshops and other public venues in St Kilda and Fitzroy, (c) with postgraduate psychology students at Swinburne University Hawthorn, (d) with contacts at other universities, (e) with two psychologists and a psychotherapist. I used a one-page leaflet describing my research project, with requests for referrals and inclusion criteria for participants (i.e. a flier). The fliers for each point of contact was tailored to suit the audience receiving the fliers. Copies of the fliers are included in Appendix B.

Two publications were also instrumental in recruitment. The editor of "Psychotherapy in Australia", a journal for practising psychotherapists had sighted a recruitment flier in a Fitzroy café, and suggested that she could assist by placing an advertisement in the August 1998 edition. The journal then had an approximate readership of about 4,000 people in Australia, the largest group of subscribers being psychologists practising counselling and psychotherapy. Similarly, a journalist of the Melbourne Weekly who sighted one of the fliers volunteered to put an advertisement in the publication, in return for a subsequent interview regarding research results. Unfortunately, the journalist wrote a distorted article about the research, without the inclusion criteria. While four people rang the contact phone number, none were suitable as research participants since they did not meet the inclusion criteria.

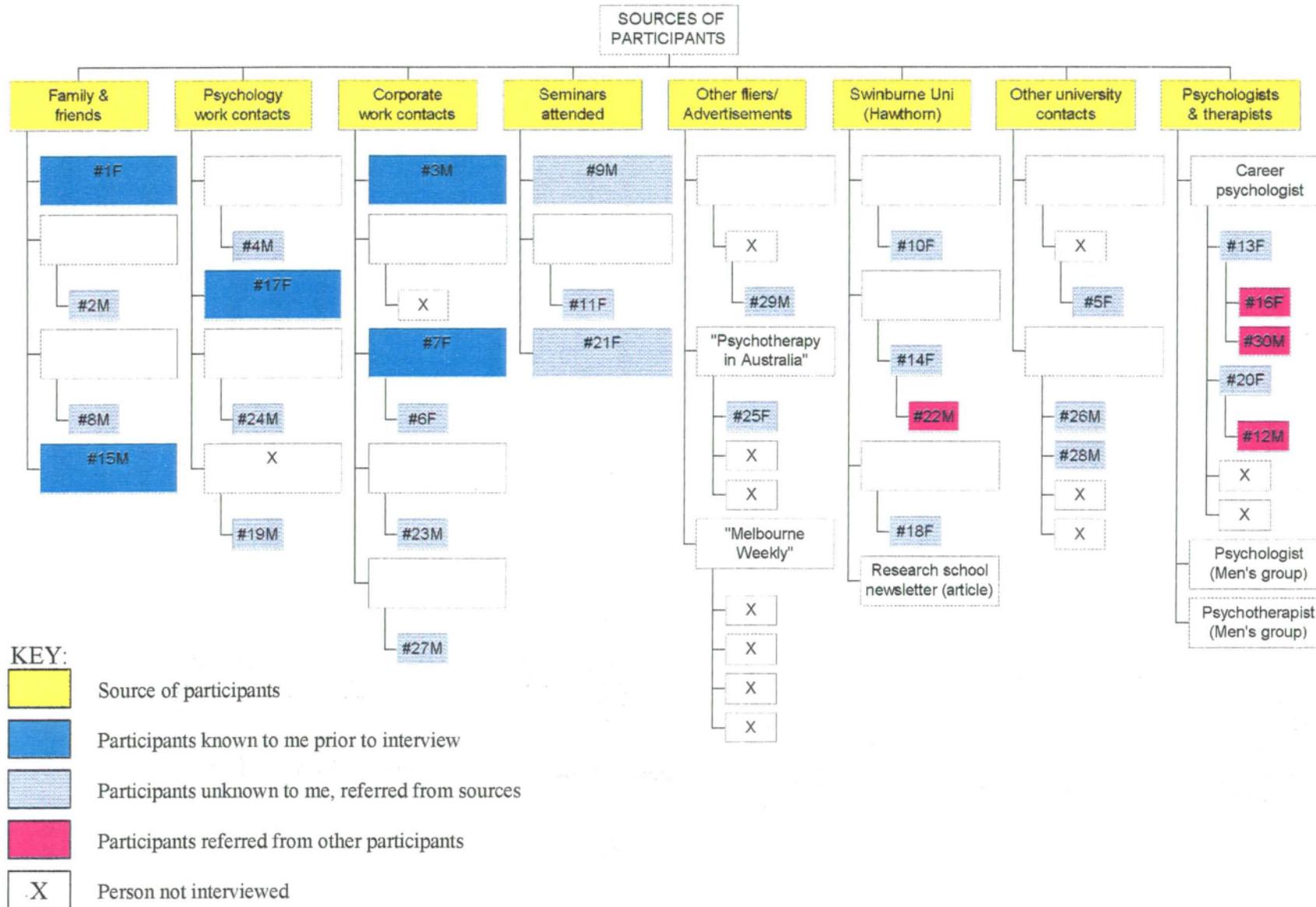
During the recruitment stage, I also contacted two psychologists and a psychotherapist who were known to have career downshifters as clients. One of these psychologists who specialised in career counselling sent out 20 letters to a sample of her client base – 10 to men, and 10 to women. Four women contacted me as a result of these letters, resulting in two interviews. These two participants in turn referred three other suitable participants. Since recruitment of male participants was proceeding at a slower rate than recruitment of female participants, I tried to recruit male participants from facilitators of men's groups. The psychologist and psychotherapist contacted were known to run men's groups in Melbourne. While they acknowledged personal contact

with downshifters, and agreed to pass my recruitment fliers to appropriate potential participants, no contacts resulted from these two sources.

The process of snowballing or chain sampling is summarised in Figure 6.1. In the top row, the yellow boxes indicate sources of participants that I contacted. All other boxes represent single individuals. The blue, grey and red boxes indicate participants interviewed. The number following “#” indicates the order of interviewing from 1 to 30; M and F indicate male and female respectively. Only five participants were known to me prior to interviewing (blue boxes). Of these five, only one was a personal friend at the time of interview. While I knew directly of other friends and acquaintances who qualified for inclusion in the study, I chose not to approach them so as to limit the number of people who were directly associated with me. The other four participants known to me prior to interviewing were acquaintances at the time of interview. Most participants (21) were unknown to me prior to interview and not referred by another participant (grey boxes). Four participants interviewed were referred by other participants (red boxes). The white boxes represent people who referred participants for the study. The boxes marked “X” represent people who were not interviewed, mainly because they did not meet one or more of the inclusion criteria (Section 6.3.2 below), or the quota of female participants was already completed. The diagram serves to demonstrate that, notwithstanding the use of a “snowball” sampling procedure, participants were recruited from reasonably diverse sources.

In summary, eight different types of sources were used to recruit participants. Among 44 people who were initially considered as potential research participants, 14 people did not qualify for inclusion, resulting in 30 completed interviews.

Figure 6.1: Sources of participants



number M/F; indicates order of interviews and gender of participant

6.3.2 Inclusion criteria

The main criteria for **inclusion** in the study were that the participants:

1. Were aged 35-55 years when they changed their careers;
2. Changed their careers within 6 months-6 years (i.e. 6-72 months);
3. Were in their previous career for at least 5 years;
4. Had changed their career voluntarily;
5. Previously occupied managerial or professional occupations;
6. Were willing to self disclose and articulate experiences;
7. Did not view my research as a substitute for counselling and therapy.

The criteria for **non-inclusion** in the study were as follows:

1. People who had been involuntarily terminated through retrenchment, involuntary redundancy, or being fired;
2. People who had left their career to retire;
3. People who had left their career to drop out (e.g., to be a homemaker, go on holiday or study for an extended period of time).

A recruitment script was used to systematically screen and recruit potential participants for inclusion in the study (Appendix B). While there is a range of definitions of what constitutes midlife, the definition of 35-55 years (Lachman and James, 1997) was adopted. While participants were aged 35-55 years when they left their previous careers (mean of 44.1 years), they were aged 37-58 years at the time of interview (mean of 46.7 years). Further demographic characteristics of participants are detailed in Section 7.1.

Initially, the career change time period inclusion criterion was set at career change within the previous 12-60 months. This period was initially selected since my supervisors and I considered this time span sufficient enough for participants to experience a range of issues and processes related to downshifting, but not long enough to forget essential experiences and processes. Thomas' (1980) study of male midlife career changers had also interviewed men who had made midlife career changes within the past five years. During the fieldwork phase, however, this time span was extended to include one man who had left six months before the interview, and two men who had left

six years before the interview. This was because it was more difficult recruiting men who had downshifted, but also because these three men widened the cross-section of participants in terms of previous occupations and industries.

Following Perosa and Perosa (1984), the third inclusion criterion specified people who had established previous careers of at least five years or more. This criterion ensured that the sample would comprise people who had demonstrated previous commitment to their career, for whom downshifting would be a significant change, rather than including individuals who did not evidence any stable pattern of previous career development.

The fourth criterion, voluntary career change, ensured that participants chose to downshift of their own accord. Inclusion of people who had been involuntarily terminated would have contaminated the sample with additional issues related to involuntary termination (e.g., Feather, 1997; Fineman, 1983, 1987a, 1987b; Jahoda, 1982; Leana & Feldman, 1990; Winefield, 1995). However, it should be noted that six participants (20%) had accepted voluntary redundancy packages. These participants were included in the sample since they claimed that they would have undertaken a career change of some form in any case, irrespective of a package, although the package did facilitate the form and timing of the downshift (e.g., some left earlier than expected, given the opportunity). Individuals who left their previous career to retire or adopt another non-remunerated role were excluded from the study since they were essentially undertaking a career exit, rather than a career change.

While it was theoretically possible to include a broad section of previous occupations, this study focused on those who left managerial and professional occupations (defined as occupations for which a person would have invested education, training or effort, or involved in a career structure which provided potential for advancement or promotion). The reason for this focus was because the phenomenon of people leaving what appear to be rewarding and promising managerial or professional careers for alternatives which involve less money and possibly less status (i.e. downshifting) is a notably under-researched topic. Moreover, downshifting from a managerial or professional role represents a radical departure from the mainstream prescription of materialistic success.

All participants were screened for their likely willingness to self disclose and articulate experiences. One potential female participant chose not proceed after her initial phone call enquiring about the research. The final criterion for inclusion ensured that there would be no expectations from research participants that I would be engaging in counselling or therapy during their interview. One interview was terminated within 10 minutes because one woman became emotionally upset in discussing personal circumstances which had complicated her downshifting experiences. After debriefing, this woman was referred back to her existing therapist, and did not participate further in the study.

6.3.3 Sample quota controls

To maximise an appropriate cross-section of downshifters, a quota design was implemented. Not only was there a quota of half men and half women, there was also a quota for early and late downshifters. Early downshifting was operationalised as being within two years of leaving the previous career, while late downshifting was operationalised as being over two years of leaving the previous career. The resulting number of interviews achieved is shown in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: Quota sample of research participants achieved

	Males	Females	Total
Early downshifters (change under two years)	7	8	15
Late downshifters (change over two years)	8	7	15
Total	15	15	30

According to O'Connor and Wolfe's (1987, 1991) grounded model, the five key stages of midlife transition are: Stage 1: Stability; Stage 2: Rising discontent; Stage 3: Crisis; Stage 4: Re-direction and adaptation, and Stage 5: Stabilising. Quota controls for early and late downshifters were an attempt to ensure that there would be sufficient numbers of downshifters in the crisis stage and stabilising stage to provide experiential accounts of their processes.

The order of interviewing participants was spread throughout the four quota cells during the course of data collection. Data collection was not systematically biased in its focus on any particular type of participant at any period of data collection.

6.4 Field materials

As indicated previously, the primary method used to investigate individuals' experiences of midlife career downshifting was depth interviews using a semi-structured interview protocol, incorporating broad topic areas and prompts (Appendix B). A short self-completion questionnaire (Appendix B) and the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (Form G) were also administered at the end of the interview. This section provides the rationale for the design of field materials, and rationale for the quantitative measures selected, while the next section (Section 6.5) describes the procedure for data collection.

6.4.1 Interview protocol

The interview protocol was designed to encourage participants to reflect on their experiences of downshifting, particularly issues they faced, and processes they experienced. The interview basically opened with an orienting of both participant and researcher with regard to the participants' occupation and role before their career change, and their work activities at the time of interview. This was followed by a general question "Looking back on your experiences from now, how has it been for you?" The questions listed on the interview protocol were designed as prompts, rather than a series of questions directed at participants. The only constraint was that wherever possible, each participant was prompted to reflect on each of the eight main sections of the interview protocol, if they did not spontaneously do so.

The eight sections were:

1. Situation – What led to the career transition?
2. Sequence of events – What happened and what did they experience?
3. Issues and outcomes – What were the consequences of the change?
4. Key events – What were the major turning points in the transition?
5. Self – What were the changes in identity and self-concept?

6. Supports and difficulties – What was experienced?
7. Strategies – What approaches helped them through the transition?
8. Overview – What were their major learnings?

Prompts were worded as open-ended questions, with an emphasis on “what” questions, rather than “why” questions, as suggested by Patton (1990) and by Stiles (1993). The predominant use of “what” questions was designed to elicit narratives and accounts of individual experiences of their career downshifting process. “Why” questions were avoided to minimise theorising or rational post hoc justifications regarding downshifting. I also took care to use words that matched the participants’ vocabulary and style of expression.

In summary, the interview protocol was designed to assist participants to reflect and elaborate on their recollection and experiences of their career change, without offering interpretations or judgements. The rationale was to elicit narratives which were not necessarily linear, following narrative pathways defined by central preoccupations of participants, rather than logical or socially acceptable accounts of their career change.

6.4.2 Self-report questionnaires

Two self-report questionnaires were used in this study (Appendix B). The first questionnaire was used to collect participant demographics and perceptions of career downshifting outcomes. It was administered after participants had finished their narrative accounts of their downshifting experiences (as guided by the interview protocol). The second self-report questionnaire was a brief follow-up questionnaire designed to collect information on participants’ work role since their interview.

The first self-report questionnaire was printed on two sides of an A3 sheet and folded as a four-paged A4 booklet. Demographics collected included gender, age at the time of interview, age at the time of career change, number of dependants, marital status, and number of years at university (full-time equivalent years).

To provide some quantitative assessment of the magnitude of specific aspects of the transition, eight questions were included. They were based on previous research by

Bruce and Scott (1994) who extended Louis' (1980) original work on the varieties of career transitions. The eight questions regarded:

1. How large in magnitude was the career change?
2. How desirable was the career change?
3. What was the extent of work role ambiguity at the time of resignation?
4. What was the extent of work role ambiguity at the time of interview?
5. How easy or difficult was it to adjust to the career change, for the participant?
6. How easy or difficult was it to adjust to the career change, for the participant's significant other(s)?
7. How much personal gain resulted from the career change?
8. How much work gain resulted from the career change?

While Bruce and Scott's research mainly used 5-point scales, this study used 11-point scales ranging from 0 to 10, with a true midpoint at 5, to provide for the possibility of a greater range of responses. The two ends of each scale were anchored using labels identical to those of Bruce and Scott, except for the question relating to adjustment difficulty where I used "extremely difficult" and "extremely easy", rather than "very difficult" and "very easy" to provide a wider range of responses.

In order to provide some objective indicators as to the extent of career change (as opposed to subjective perception of change measured by the Bruce and Scott measures), participants were also for the ratio of their current income to their previous income. Participants were asked to provide estimates to the nearest thousand dollars, based on net income or after-tax figures. To maintain rapport, participants were not asked for their actual income figures, although half the participants spontaneously provided these figures during the course of the interview, or at the point of calculating the income ratio. Additionally, participants were asked how they perceived their socio-economic status relative to the Australian population before and after their career change.

Potential positive effects of the career change were also assessed using measures of global life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1995), and psychological well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). According to Diener et al., "life satisfaction refers to a cognitive judgmental process of a person's quality of life according to his/her chosen criteria (p. 71). The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) constructed and researched by Diener and

his colleagues was chosen because it was a global measure of life satisfaction which could be easily administered. Moreover, it consists of five items, making it more robust than single item measures. Using a sample of 176 undergraduates, Diener et al. found that two-month test-retest correlation coefficient was 0.82, and reliability coefficient (α) was 0.87. Moreover, Australian norms on the SWLS were available for comparison.

The six subscales in Ryff's assessment of well-being are Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with Others, Purpose in Life, and Self Acceptance. The Ryff scale for psychological well-being was used to provide further information on whether the career change had impact on specific aspects of well-being. Since measurement of psychological well-being was not the primary focus of this study, the three-item per subscales version of Ryff's scale was used, rather than the 20-item per subscale version. The reliability coefficient (α) for the subscales listed previously were found by Ryff and Keyes (1995) to be 0.37, 0.49, 0.40, 0.56, 0.33, and 0.52 respectively. While these coefficients were lower than for the SWLS, they were within acceptable range for reliability (Cohen, Swerdlick & Phillips, 1996).

Participants were asked to rate each item on both scales for two time periods – a month before they left their previous occupations (Time 1), and the present time (Time 2). Participants were asked to provide overall assessments for each of the time periods, rather than based on their current mood at the time of interview. The time period rated was also recorded.

So as to ascertain whether the change between Time 1 and Time 2 ratings were due solely to their career change, or to some other intervening events, participants were asked whether there were other events which could have influenced their ratings. Only five participants mentioned such events. These included a daughter's wedding, divorce, end of a romantic partnership, caring for an ageing mother, and death of a parent. None of the participants had experienced a major trauma or windfall outside the range of events typically experienced during midlife. Therefore, considering the sample as a whole, differences between Time 1 and Time 2 ratings can be largely attributed to the career downshift undertaken since as a group, Time 2 ratings were not affected by other events or extreme circumstances.

Table 6.2 shows that reliability coefficient values (α) for Diener's five-item SWLS were quite high for both time periods assessed. The corresponding coefficients for Ryff's subscales were lower, although mostly within acceptable range, given that each subscale comprised only three items. The reliability of the Environmental Mastery subscale after downshifting (Time 2) was poor.

Table 6.2: Reliability coefficients (α) for Diener's Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) and Ryff's Psychological Well-Being subscales

		Before change (Time 1)	After change (Time 2)
Diener's SWLS	Satisfaction with life	0.75	0.84
Ryff's Psychological Well-Being scale	Environmental mastery	0.54	0.30
	Self-acceptance	0.63	0.52
	Autonomy	0.59	0.59
	Personal growth	0.65	0.42
	Positive relations with others	0.64	0.52
	Purpose in life	0.55	0.52

The second self-report questionnaire was designed to collect information regarding participants' work roles since the interview. The opportunity was also taken to collect information on participants' perceptions of external pressures to change career from their previous employing organisations, and internal pressure from within themselves to change career. These two measures were collected so that I could ascertain the proportion of "opt-outs" and "bow-outs" in my sample, following research by Thomas (1980; previously reviewed in Chapter 4). A copy of this one-page follow-up questionnaires is in Appendix B.

6.4.3 Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

While the main aim of this study did not include ascertaining the personality characteristics of downshifters, a personality inventory was included in the study to provide some initial indicator as to whether career downshifters tended to be of particular personality types. The Myers-Briggs indicator was selected because it is widely used in business and government, particularly in the context of training and consultancy (Furnham, 1996), and there was a high likelihood that many participants had been

exposed to the MBTI, or were aware of their type, hence reducing the respondent load from an already long interview process.

The MBTI was designed originally to identify, from self-report measures, preferences in regard to how an individual approaches and perceives the world. Based on Jung's (1921/1971) theory of psychological type, the MBTI measures four basic preferences: (a) Extraversion versus Introversion (i.e. whether an individual's perceptions is directed toward the outer world or the inner world respectively); (b) Sensing versus Intuitive perception (i.e. whether a person prefers relying primarily on the process of sensing through one or more of the five senses, or through less obvious intuitive processes, respectively); (c) thinking versus feeling judgement (i.e. whether a person prefers to decide impersonally on the basis of objective rules or logical consequences, or to decide on the basis of subjective feeling); and (d) judging versus perceiving orientation (i.e. whether a person prefers to deal with the outer world with making a judgement and coming to closure, or perceiving the outer world, respectively); (Myers & McCaulley, 1995).

Hammer (1996) indicated that based on National Research Council findings, 97% of survey respondents remembered taking the MBTI, with 97% remembering their type, and 84% felt that the results confirmed what they already knew about themselves. Validity of using previous MBTI results is based on high internal consistency reliability figures (α) ranging from 0.64 to 0.84, and high test-retest reliability ranging from 0.54 and 0.93, depending on the dimension measured and sample tested (Myers & McCaulley, 1985). MBTI norms were available from another study of midlife career changers (Fuller & Kendall, 1992), as were recent American populations norms (Hammer & Mitchell, 1996). Comparative Australian data exist (Ball, 1999), but do not reflect the Australian population generally. The MBTI was also easy for participants to complete after the interview and mail back to the researcher at a later date.

The main criticisms of the MBTI were summarised by McCrae and Costa (1989) as: (a) being inconsistent with Jung's original theory on which it was developed; (b) lack of validation for the JP dimension as an index of preference for structured versus spontaneous living; (c) lack of empirical evidence of bimodal distribution of types; and (d) lack of sufficient differences among the sixteen types proposed by the MBTI. Even

proponents and researchers of the MBTI acknowledge limitations which overlap with McCrae and Costa's (1989) objections (e.g., Garden, 1991, 1997). Furnham (1996) argued that the persuasiveness of MBTI usage in business and industry provides researchers with opportunities for data collection. Moreover, the MBTI has favourable validity assessments, internal reliability (alpha), and test-retest reliability (Carlson, 1985; Furnham, 1996). Waller and Ben-Porath (1987), together with Barbuto (1997) argued that none of the most frequently used inventories adequately tap all factors claimed to be of pre-eminent importance; while empirical studies have shown the reliability of the five factors measured using the five-factor paradigm advocated by McCrae and Costa (1989, 1990), the comprehensiveness of the paradigm has yet to be confirmed. Harvey, Murry and Stamoulis (1995) found that confirmatory factor analysis of the MBTI yielded four orthogonal factors, although model fit could be improved. Barbuto (1997) proposed that the key to understanding a person's behaviour lies not in identifying absolute type, but the relativity within each MBTI dimension or polarity.

Considering the above arguments for and against the MBTI and the scarcity of personality inventories which are both psychometrically rigorous and practical in the field, the MBTI was selected for the limited purposes it was employed for this study – that is, to ascertain whether or not downshifters as a group were significantly different to other reference groups. At the time of interview, the new Form M based on item-response theory (IRT) with claims of better psychometric properties (Myers, McCaulley, Quenk & Hammer, 1998), was not yet available in Australia. Thus, the MBTI Form G (Myers & McCaulley, 1985) was used in the study.

6.5 Data collection procedures

As described previously, potential participants for this study were referred by various sources (Figure 6.1) or by direct contact (typically telephone calls) from potential participants. Thus, initial contact with each participant was via a telephone conversation, explaining the reason for the research, the relevance of the research, what would be involved in participating in the study, and some details about the researcher. A telephone interview script was used in screening and recruiting all participants (Appendix B). In the main, irrespective of whether a person qualified to be interviewed

according to the inclusion criteria, they were asked whether they knew of anyone else who was a potential participant in the study. However, only four participants were recruited via secondary referral.

Each participant who agreed to participate in the study were sent by mail the following materials: (a) an initial letter to confirm details of the appointment, and to provide written information about the research (Appendix B); and (b) an informed consent form (Appendix B). Once individuals agreed to participate in the study, and appointments made on the phone, none of the participants changed their minds about participating in the study. In other words, no participants were lost through realising what was involved with participating in the study. The majority of participants (20 out of the 30) were interviewed in their own homes. Six found it more convenient to be interviewed in their office, while the remaining four chose to be interviewed at my home.

While all interviews were audio taped, as far as possible, they were conducted as conversations. The interview protocol was used as a guideline only with prompts used only where necessary. The main questions which were typically used as prompts across the majority of interviews were about turning points (Topic 4), and overall views of success, guidelines for potential downshifters, and whether they would do anything differently (Topic 8). After the depth interview, the self-completion questionnaire was completed by participants while I waited, just in case any questions needed further clarification. The only exceptions were two respondents who could not complete the questionnaire due to work commitments. These two questionnaires were subsequently returned by mail.

The MBTI (Form G) was completed by about half the participants (14) and mailed back to me for scoring. The rest of the participants (16) who elected not to complete the MBTI had previously completed the MBTI within two years of the interview and provided me with their types as well as anecdotes of type stability for cases of retests. MBTI typology was thus obtained for all 30 participants.

At the end of the interview, each participant was provided with: (a) a list of selected references on downshifting, career change and midlife transitions as a potential resource (Appendix B); (b) a referral sheet for counselling, if the need arose (Appendix

B). While the first handout was more appropriate for participants, the second handout was considered to be a responsible procedure for the research study.

All interviews were conducted in a single session, with the exception of one interview which had to be split across a seven day period across two sessions due to the work commitments of one participant. All interviews were audio taped and later transcribed by me or by a typist. The majority of audio tapes were of adequate quality for transcription. The exceptions were interviews from two men. One interview was distorted by background computer hiss, and the other due to variable voice volume of the participant. Interview transcripts ranged from 53 minutes to 124 minutes, with an average length of 80 minutes.

Each interview was transcribed, summarised and the summary returned to each participant within four weeks of completion, together with a letter of thanks. A return envelope was provided for each participant to encourage checking of the summary and further comments. Eleven participants returned their summaries with minor amendments. Three participants requested full transcripts, which were provided.

Participants who had completed the MBTI were also provided with their relevant scores on a standardised MBTI feedback sheet, together with the relevant one-page type summary from Hammer's (1993) booklet "Introduction to type and careers", together with a short reference list to follow up MBTI profiles (Appendix B).

The interviews were conducted during the period between March and November 1998. Subsequently, the follow-up questionnaire, requesting information on work role since the interview was mailed to participants in October 1999. A summary of results was included; all participants were invited to comment on the veracity of the summary as it applied to themselves. Following the interest of several participants, I also provided a facility by which participants could meet to network and form mutual support groups (Appendix B). Virtually all participants (97%) returned their follow-up questionnaire. One participant could not be contacted because he had moved residence and had a telephone number which was not accessible.

6.6 Data analysis procedures

Since this study generated both qualitative and quantitative data, two sets of analyses were undertaken.

6.6.1 Qualitative analyses

The analysis of the qualitative data was strongly influenced by the heuristic methodology detailed by Moustakas (1990). The outputs Moustakas recommended were: (a) “individual depictions” or descriptions of the phenomenological experience being studied, including verbatims; (b) “composite depictions” of the phenomenological experience across all study participants including core qualities and themes; (c) “exemplary portraits” or case studies which are unique to individuals but also characterise the group as a whole; and (d) “creative synthesis” of the findings which summarise the essence and quality of the experience studied.

As the first step in analysis, each interview was initially transcribed and checked for accuracy. This resulted in 534 pages of single-spaced transcripts, an average of 19 pages per participant. For each interview, summaries of all key points for each of the eight sections of the interview protocol were written and sent to each participant for checking and comments, within four weeks of the interview.

(a) “Individual depictions”: summary of each participant’s experience

Following a four-month incubation period, I read each of the transcripts again and wrote **individual depictions** or descriptions of each participant using a more elaborated structure of topics covered across interviews. These individual depictions were also compared to the summaries initially sent to participants shortly after their interviews. All individual depictions included issues and key points previously summarised. Additionally, nuances and subtleties which emerged in a third reading of transcripts and sensitisation of additional issues from having completed 30 interviews, together with discussions with my supervisors, led to individual depictions which were more detailed than the original summaries. With the third reading of transcripts, quotes

illustrative of an individual's experience or central preoccupations were also extracted. This step was in line with Moustakas' recommendation for individual depictions.

(b) "Composite descriptions": Extracting themes across interviews

The next step involved extracting themes across all participants. This meant sorting each issue from individual depictions so that themes across all participants could emerge. This sorting process departs from Moustakas' (1990) heuristics methodology which relies heavily on the researcher's intuition and imagination. Instead, this procedure is consistent with Moustakas' later transcendental phenomenology methodology (Moustakas, 1994) of systematic "horizontalisation". This is not to say that I did not employ intuition and imagination in the process, but that I used both systematic conscious processes, as well as less conscious processes for this task. The procedure resulted in a total of 295 issues. These 295 individual issues in turn, were then summarised into seven higher order themes with 44 constituent issues. Commentary of the themes and constituent issues identified with illustrative quotes from individual depictions are in Chapter 8.

(c) "Exemplary portraits" or case studies

Next, two participants' narratives were then selected as illustrative case studies. **Exemplary portraits**, unique to the individuals, but characteristic of the group of a whole were written. Moustakas (1994) remarked that this is an important distinction to the phenomenological approach of Duquense University; that in heuristic analysis, the individual is not lost in analysis of core essences. The aim of this step was to present individual portraits such that both the phenomenon of downshifting and the individual persons emerge in a vital and unified manner.

(d) Creative synthesis

The last stage of heuristic analysis is called **creative synthesis**. Moustakas' (1990) framework encourages a wide range of freedom in characterising the phenomenon. "It invites a recognition of tacit-intuitive awareness of the researcher, knowledge that has been incubating over months through processes of immersion,

illumination, and the explication of the phenomenon investigated. The researcher as scientist-artist develops an aesthetic rendition of the themes and essential meanings of the phenomenon.” (p. 52). This synthesis is in keeping with Denzin and Lincoln’s (1994) notion that the product of qualitative research is a *bricolage*, “a complex, dense, reflexive collage-like creation that represents the researcher’s images, understanding and interpretations of the world phenomenon under analysis” (p. 3). Moustakas suggested that a creative synthesis could be expressed in the form of a story, poem, art, or metaphor. The findings from the qualitative analysis procedures as well as my personal interests resulted in a collage of art images depicting the experience of career downshifting (Section 8.4).

I did not use a text based analysis program such as NUDIST because meanings rather than words were sorted and grouped using a combination of Moustakas’ methods (1990, 1994), which was more open to other researchers’ scrutiny, rather than coding using computer programs which would have been more difficult to check and less transparent. For this data set, I considered that using the computer program route would be falling into the trap of appearing to be “scientific”, but possibly decreasing the actual trustworthiness of the qualitative analysis process as described by Stiles (1993).

In sum, the four approaches to analysis of the qualitative data resulted in the depiction of career downshifting experiences in four different formats: (a) an outline of themes (Section 8.1); (b) thick description of themes (Section 8.2); (c) “exemplary portraits” (Section 8.3); and (d) a creative synthesis (Section 8.4). Each of these formats presents the phenomenological experience of career downshifting from a different vantage point. Collectively, they offer a potential downshifter, or helping professional (i.e. psychologist or psychotherapist), insights regarding the essential experiences in the process of career downshifting.

6.6.2 Quantitative analyses

The first source of quantitative data was from the self-report questionnaires. However, since participants’ accounts of their downshifting experiences (narratives) constituted the main data for the research, additional quantitative data was generated by coding specific information from participants’ narratives. These additional variables are

summarised in Table 6.3. For variables 11 and 12 shown in Table 6.3, the rating scales of emotional tone and arousal used by O'Connor and Wolfe (1986) were adopted in this study because the inter-rater reliability coefficients for the two scales were high (0.91 and 0.86 respectively).

Table 6.3: Additional variables generated from participants' narratives

-
1. Time taken between initial thoughts of changing careers to actually leaving the previous career;
 2. Whether the onset of the transition was gradual or sudden (i.e. whether the individual left suddenly or after a period of deliberation);
 3. Whether the duration of the transition was known (i.e. whether the participant had an idea of how long the duration would take);
 4. The extent of change (i.e. whether it was a 45 degree change where some previous training or experience was relevant to the new career, or whether it was a 90 degree change where virtually completely new training or experience were required for the new career; this classification was previously used by Thomas, 1980);
 5. The specificity of career change when leaving the previous career (i.e. whether the participant had a career in mind);
 6. Whether the participant had notions of being self-employed when leaving the previous career;
 7. The predominant types of work undertaken during the transition process (i.e. whether it was part-time or full-time, and whether it related to previous career expertise);
 8. Which stage of transition, the participant was in (i.e. O'Connor & Wolfe's (1986) stages of crises, re-direction/adaptation or re-stabilising).
 9. The career orientations that predominated in the participant's narrative (Derr, 1986);
 10. The career style which dominated the participant's narrative (Driver, 1983);
 11. The emotional tone at the interview (this ranged from -2 for "predominantly negative affect and tone; depressed and angry", 0 for "neutral, expressing both negative and positive emotions equally, and 2 for "positive, optimistic, zestful, able to express negative emotions but not dominated by negative affect"; O'Connor & Wolfe, 1986);
 12. The level of emotional arousal at the interview (this ranged from 1 for "under-aroused, subdued, lacking in energy; 3 for "well-energised", and 5 for "over-aroused emotionally, spending a lot of time dealing with or defending against own emotions and responses"; O'Connor & Wolfe, 1986).
 13. Factors for leaving previous career were coded according to Thomas' (1979) broad categories of reasons (i.e. counterculture or rejection of the mainstream social and economic system; macrosocial or technological displacement or external pressures; and developmental which incorporated a better fit between values and work, or acting on a dream);
 14. Whether professional support was sought before or during the transition;
 15. The predominant types of support mentioned irrespective of source of support (i.e. socioemotional, informational, or instrumental, as suggested by Bailey et al, 1994).
 16. Whether retraining or higher education was undertaken as part of the career change;
 17. Whether retraining or higher education was started before leaving the previous career;
 18. Whether the participant had any postdecisional regret.
-

The data from the self-report questionnaires, the MBTI typology, and extra variables from participant narratives were keypunched and analysed using SPSS for Windows Version 6.0. The main quantitative analysis procedures undertaken included basic frequencies, cross-tabulations with appropriate non-parametric tests of significance (chi square), and reliability analysis of Diener's Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) and Ryff's scale of Psychological Well-being.

Originally, I was interested in how participants who had successful downshifting transitions differed from those who were less successful. As the research progressed, it occurred to me that this distinction was not appropriate, since: (a) most participants had redefined their notions of what constituted success (Chapter 8), and it would be more relevant to the phenomenon of downshifting that participants were considered within their own notions of success, rather than conventional mainstream notions which they had left behind; and (b) participants who were experiencing difficulties at the time of interview tended to be those who were in the crisis or adaptation stage of their transition. In other words, downshiffters would eventually come to their own resolution with their transition; it was more a question of "when" and "how", rather than "if".

With this in mind, and considering that the research would be of interest to potential downshiffters and practitioners, I considered whether there were differences between downshiffters who experienced more difficulty and those who had less difficulty. Fortuitously, there was sufficient variance in the degree of difficulty encountered in adjustment after the career change to permit this analysis. A Principle Components analysis was undertaken on selected variables, as a data-reduction procedure, indicating the adjustment to the career change (i.e. personal adjustment, adjustment of significant others, and career gains resulting from the change). The resultant factor loadings were used as weights in the calculation of an index of "perceived ease of transition". This index was then used as a dependent variable to explore the supplementary question of which factors were associated with more easeful career downshifting. Chi-square analyses and analyses of variance were then undertaken to identify characteristics of those who had more easeful transitions. The results of this last set of analyses are found in Chapter 9.

6.7 Quality control procedures

While many of the quality control procedures undertaken were described as part of the data collection or data analysis procedures, the purpose of this section is to explicitly detail all the quality controls undertaken to enhance the scientific trustworthiness of this study, since qualitative methodology is relatively new in academic psychology.

Huberman and Miles (1994) saw four different movements in the interpretation of qualitative data. **Positivists** took the position that the standards of validity, reliability and objectivity should be equally applicable to qualitative data, as it is to quantitative data. **Postpositivists**, on the other hand proposed that there should be another set of criteria unique to qualitative research. Constructivists, a subset of postpositivists suggested that the criteria of trustworthiness and authenticity were more appropriate than validity, reliability and objectivity. The third position, **Postmodernism**, proposed no criteria for judging products of qualitative research. The last position, **Poststructuralism**, argued that a new set of criteria needed to be constructed for evaluating qualitative data.

Since quantitative measures of validity and reliability were not applicable to the qualitative data collected, a strictly positivistic orientation to evaluating the narratives was not practicable, let alone desirable. The third position of postmodernism was deemed untenable in that not every account of qualitative data is as good as any other (Stevenson & Cooper, 1997): it is important to discern what constitutes sound psychological research, as distinct from individual fantasies. Since there are no universally acknowledged criteria, as suggested by Poststructuralism, I adopted the guidelines of the postpositivists in designing quality control procedures for this study.

6.7.1 “Reliability” of the qualitative data

Stiles (1993) equated traditional notions of reliability to trustworthiness of qualitative data. The procedures used by Ritchie et al. (1997) and recommendations by

Stiles (1993) and Kvale (1994) were considered to build in procedures to maximise reliability of the qualitative data collected.

First, the interview focused on exploring “what” questions instead of “why” questions to avoid protection of experiences from criticism, and intellectualising-type defences (Hollway & Jefferson, 1997; Stiles, 1993; Wiersma, 1988). I conducted the interview to encourage the approach that stories (narratives) about the downshifting experience are interesting, relevant and valued. This was actively constructed in the recruitment phase, letter of confirmation sent to participants, as well as during the interview itself, since most people expect interviews to consist of a batch of questions for which one-word or short replies are required (Hollway & Jefferson, 1997). Second, all interview transcripts were reviewed for accuracy.

Third, the summary of each transcript which distilled initial issues arising from narratives were sent to each participant for member checking and correction (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To recount, 11 participants returned their summaries with slight amendments.

Fourth, interviews were progressively discussed with my primary supervisors, including the provision of six transcripts (20% of interviews) to my first supervisor, and a different six transcripts (20% of interviews) to my second supervisor. Among the 12 transcripts submitted for review, four transcripts were selected from the first ten interviews conducted, the second four transcripts from interviews 11-20, and the last four transcripts from interviews 21-30.

Fifth, I engaged in a process of alternating between immersion with the data, and incubation as suggested by Moustakas (1990). This allowed greater cycling between observations and interpretation. Each interview transcript was read at least three times: (a) when checking the accuracy of transcripts; (b) when preparing the summary for participants; and (c) when preparing “individual depictions” (the first descriptive step of analysis suggested by Moustakas) and extracting illustrative quotes. Lastly, detailed categorisation of horizontalised issues into themes were provided to my primary thesis supervisor for checking and alternative viewpoints. According to Ritchie et al. (1997),

this use of more than one analyser for the data set allows for assumptions to be challenged, and alternative explanations of the data.

6.7.2 “Validity” of the qualitative data

Stiles (1993) equated notions of validity to trustworthiness of interpretations or conclusions. Consistent with the recommendations of Ritchie et al. (1997), and Nagy and Viney (1994), the following procedures were adopted.

First, to enhance **credibility**, the equivalent of internal validity, I triangulated findings of this study by comparing themes with findings from other similar studies on midlife transitions, or voluntary career change, albeit not specifically about midlife career downshifting. These comparisons are made in the last chapter. Additionally, member checking and testing of the interpretations by stakeholders was undertaken by way of providing the analysis of themes to research participants and my primary thesis supervisor for comment and alternative interpretation.

Second, to enhance **transferability**, the equivalent of external validity, thick description has been provided through Chapter 7 which provides a description of the 30 participants, and Chapter 8 which reports the results from the narratives. This allows other researchers to determine whether the results of this study are transferable to their settings and applications.

Third, to enhance **dependability**, the equivalent of consistency of interpretation, my supervisors served in the role of auditors of the data and outputs of analysis procedures, examining the processes and products of the study for fairness. Fourth, my supervisors also provided an alternative view of **coherence**, or a check on narrative truth to my interpretation of the qualitative data.

Fifth, to enhance **confirmability**, the equivalent of objectivity, or whether conclusions can be affirmed by others, I have provided thorough documentation of the processes undertaken throughout this study to enable the reader to judge whether other researchers at this time and place, using this methodology would arrive at similar conclusions.

6.7.3 Researcher “objectivity”

Kvale (1994) argued that there is lack of consensus on the meaning of “objectivity”, that objectivity is a subjective notion in any case. However, objectivity as in free of bias can still be the aim in good qualitative research. Her recommendations for this were by way of doing good, solid craftsmanship in research, producing knowledge systematically with checking and verification procedures in place, together with intentional fidelity to the phenomena investigated. Stevenson and Cooper (1997) suggested that researcher reflexivity, the extent to which the researcher reflects on the process of research bridges the extremes of constructivist qualitative and positivist quantitative positions. Their suggestions include considering whether the researcher’s own involvement has enhanced or detracted from findings, and keeping a journal alongside the research process which could be open to external audit. These suggestions are in keeping with the phenomenological methodology of the researcher identifying his/her presuppositions and biases prior to data gathering, an activity of self-reflection or bracketing (Hoshmand, 1989; Giorgi, 1997).

Within this context, the procedures I adopted were to keep an on-going journal about the research process as it unfolded through the three year time frame. As suggested by Moustakas (1994), I wrote my own account of my own downshifting experience before any data collection commenced, together with my initial expectations of what I could possibly find. The first narrative was already known to my primary thesis supervisor through the process of selection for the D.Psych. course. The set of expectations were documented and provided to my primary supervisors before data collection commenced. Keeping a journal alongside undertaking the research were in line with three suggestions made by Stiles (1993) to enhance trustworthiness of the data – disclosure of the researcher’s orientation, explication of the social and cultural context of the research, and description of the internal processes of investigation.

CHAPTER 7: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DOWNSHIFTERS AND PERCEIVED OUTCOMES OF DOWNSHIFTING

This chapter describes quantitative findings from the research as background for the account of downshifting experiences to be presented in the next chapter. The major outcomes of downshifting as assessed by the self-report questionnaire are also summarised in this chapter.

Of the 30 individuals who participated in this study, the majority were interviewed within six months and five years of leaving their previous occupations. Thirteen percent were interviewed within six to twelve months of their leaving their previous occupations, 30% within 13 to 24 months, 27% within 25 to 36 months, 10% within 37 to 48 months, and the remaining 20% were interviewed more than 4 years after they left their previous occupations. The median length of time which had elapsed between leaving their previous career and the research interview was 29 months. The main “outliers” among the sample are three men for whom the time lapse was 6 months, 78 months and 92 months respectively.

7.1 Description of the sample

7.1.1 Demographic characteristics

As discussed previously in Chapter 6, the sample was quota-controlled to provide 15 men and 15 women. At the time of interview, the participants ranged in age from 37 to 58 years (mean of 46.7 years, $SD = 5.79$). Participants had left their previous careers when they were between 35 and 53 years (mean of 44.1 years, $SD = 5.18$). The majority of respondents (57%) were in a relationship (40% married; 17% defacto), while 43% were single or divorced. The majority of participants did not have any dependant children (67%), while 20% had one dependant child, 10% had two dependant children, and 3% (one respondent) had three dependant children.

As a group, the participants were extremely well educated, with an average of 5.6 years of tertiary education (full-time equivalent years; SD = 3.22; Median = 5 years). Only one participant had not attended university, and only two had not completed undergraduate degrees. Two had completed doctorate degrees.

7.1.2 Occupations before and after downshifting

Ideally, I would have preferred to list the occupations of each research participant before and after downshifting. This was not possible because two participants asked for their occupations not to be disclosed, even though anonymity has been provided throughout the study. It is possible, however, to say that participants were previously employed in construction, education (primary, secondary and university), engineering, finance, human resources, information technology, law, media, medical services, sales and marketing, strategic business consulting, and social services. Five of the 30 participants previously held senior positions in their organisations (director level or equivalent). After the career change, many of the participants had moved to occupations involving social welfare (e.g., counselling, welfare work), the creative arts (e.g., artist, photographer, writers), part-time specialist consulting roles, as well as less stressful support positions (e.g., customer service, education co-ordination, librarian). A few participants took on temporary administration, driving, or labouring work after they left their previous occupations as an interim while moving towards other occupations in the longer term.

The Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO; second edition) was used to systematically present in a quantitative format the occupations of downshifters before and after their career change (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996). In the main, occupations were classified at the two-digit code level (rather than three or four-digit codes). The exception was ASCO code 25 “social, arts and miscellaneous professionals” which was coded as three separate codes at the three-digit code level (251, 252 and 253) since half the participants were involved in these types of occupations after downshifting.

Table 7.1 shows that there was a predominance of “business and information professionals” (ASCO code 22) in previous occupations (40% of the sample). These

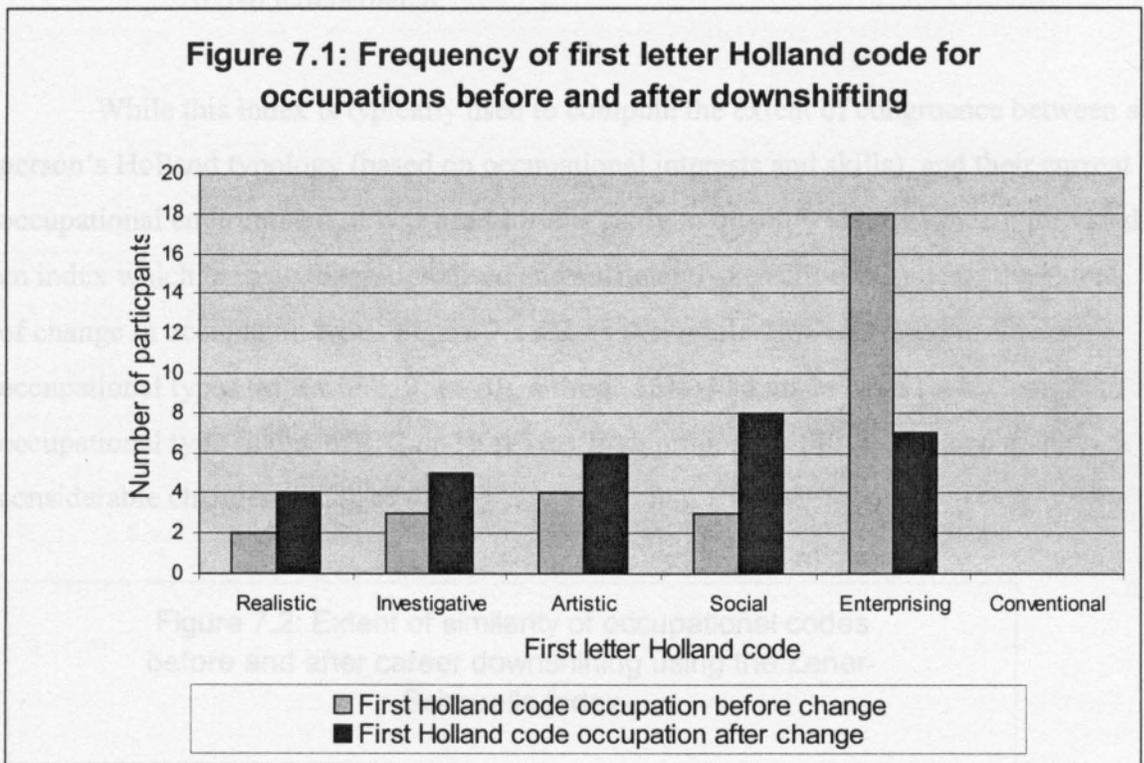
included professionals in computing, human resources, business information, sales and marketing. Interestingly, subsequent occupations were skewed towards education, social welfare and the creative arts (ASCO codes 24, 251 and 253), comprising 60% of the sample. After downshifting, “business and information professionals” (ASCO code 22) only comprised 13% of the sample. Thus, Table 7.1 shows a strong shift away from commercially oriented occupations towards service occupations and the arts.

Table 7.1: Occupations before and after career change using the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) classification

Occupation after career change	Occupation before career change								Total
	ASCO 11-13	ASCO 21	ASCO 22	ASCO 24	ASCO 251	ASCO 252*	ASCO 253	ASCO 32	
Senior managers (ASCO 11-13)	1								1
Science & engineering professionals (ASCO 21)		1							1
Business & information professionals (ASCO 22)	2		2						4
Education professionals (ASCO 24)			4	1					5
Social welfare professionals (ASCO 251)		1	2	1	1	1		2	8
Artists and related professionals (ASCO 253)	1			2			1	1	5
Business and admin associate professionals (ASCO 32)			1					1	2
Intermediate service workers (ASCO 63)		1	1						2
Road & rail transport drivers (ASCO 73)				1					1
Labourers (ASCO 99)			1						1
Total	4	3	12	4	1	1	1	4	30

* ASCO 252 = Miscellaneous social professionals (e.g., lawyers, economists, urban and regional planners)

Within a career psychology framework, occupations were also classified using Holland’s typology (Holland, 1985b). A listing of Holland three-letter occupational codes for occupations before and after participants’ career downshifting is provided in Appendix C (Table C.1). Figure 7.1 below compares the frequencies for each of the six Holland categories using the first Holland code for occupations before and after participants’ career changes. Among previous occupations, there was a predominance of Enterprising occupations featured in the Holland first letter codes (60%). After career downshifting, Enterprising occupations featured less prominently in Holland first letter codes (23%), while there was an increase in Social and Artistic occupations (27% and 20% respectively). These results mirror the findings based on ASCO classification in Table 7.1.



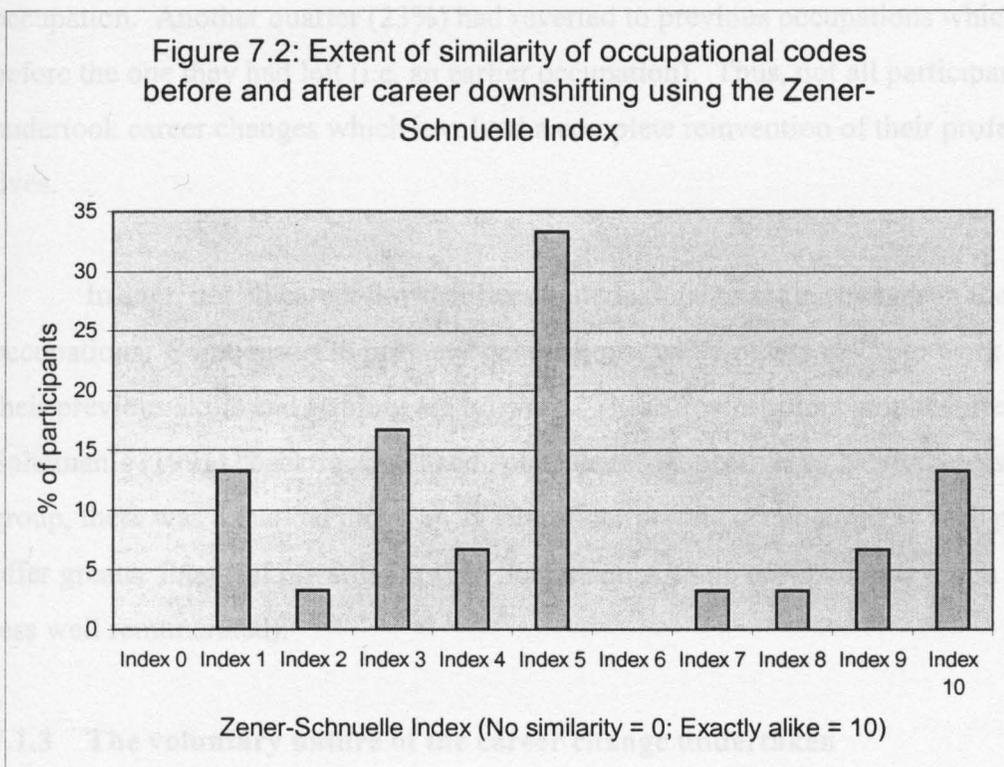
To investigate the extent of change in occupations, Holland three-letter occupational codes for occupations before and after downshifting were used to compute the revised Zener-Schnuelle Index as used by Robbins et al. (1978). Occupations before and after downshifting were compared to ascertain the extent of similarity. The Zener-Schnuelle index provided a numerical index of the extent of similarity in each pair of occupations, with a higher number (maximum of ten) indicating greater similarity in the pair of occupations. The index as documented by Robbins et al. (1978) is as follows:

- 10: Are they exactly alike?
- 9: Are the first two letters in the same order?
- 8: Are the first three letters the same, but out of order?
- 7: Is the first letter in each code the same and one other letter the same?
- 6: Is the first letter in each code the same?
- 5: Do the first two letters of one code match any two letters in the other?
- 4: Does the first letter of either code match any letter in the other code and is one other letter the same?
- 3: Does the first letter of either code match any letter in the other code?
- 2: Do any two letters in one code match any two letters in another?

1: Does any one letter in one code match any one letter of another?

0: No letters match.

While this index is typically used to compute the extent of congruence between a person's Holland typology (based on occupational interests and skills), and their current occupational environment, it was used for this study to quantify change since it provided an index which is easily operationalised and sufficiently sensitive to indicate the extent of change in occupation type. Figure 7.2 shows that while 23% remained in similar occupational types (index of 8, 9, or 10), a third (33%) had made large scale changes in occupational type (index of 1, 2 or 3). A very high proportion (40%) had also made considerable changes (index of 4 or 5).



10: Are they exactly alike?

9: Are the first two letters in the same order?

8: Are the first three letters the same, but out of order?

7: Is the first letter in each code the same and one other letter the same?

6: Is the first letter in each code the same?

5: Do the first two letters of one code match any two letters in the other?

4: Does the first letter of either code match any letter in the other code and is one other letter the same?

3: Does the first letter of either code match any letter in the other code?

2: Do any two letters in one code match any two letters in another?

1: Does any one letter in one code match any one letter of another?

0: No letters match.

Another quantitative indicator of the extent of occupational change is provided by using Hiestand's categories as operationalised by Robbins et al. (1978) and Thomas (1979), as previously mentioned in Section 4.5. A major change was classified as a "90-degree" change for which previous training was unnecessary, and for which more training was needed. Minor discontinuity was classified as a "45-degree" change, operationally defined as one where previous training was either unnecessary or insufficient (but not both) for the new career. Half the participants (50%) had made a "45-degree" change which involved minor discontinuity in their career, in that their occupation after downshifting made use of their previous education or work experience. Over a quarter, however, (27%) had made "90-degree" changes where previous education and work experience were not necessary and insufficient for the new occupation. Another quarter (23%) had reverted to previous occupations which they had before the one they had left (i.e. an earlier occupation). Thus, not all participants undertook career changes which involved a complete reinvention of their professional lives.

In sum, not all career downshifters undertake large scale changes in their occupations. Some resort to previous occupations, while others resort to work where their previous skills and training are relevant. These downshifters would correspond to Saltzman's (1991) "backtrackers" and "plateauers" respectively. Nevertheless as a group, there was a marked move away from Enterprising occupations (which potentially offer greater financial rewards) toward Social and Artistic occupations (which tend to be less well remunerated).

7.1.3 The voluntary nature of the career change undertaken

As stated previously in Section 6.3, only six participants (20%) had accepted a voluntary termination package. All six had stated that they probably would have downshifted irrespective of a package; the package had assisted them in changing careers earlier than expected. Nevertheless, it was difficult to ascertain the extent to which the career change was voluntary for some participants. This issue was encountered previously by other researchers including Robbins et al. (1978), and Thomas (1980).

In a follow-up self-report questionnaire mailed out to participants 11 months after the completion of all interviews, participants were asked to rate on a scale from zero to ten, the extent to which they experienced: (a) external pressure from their previous employing organisations to leave their previous occupations, and (b) the internal pressure from within themselves to make the career change. The results in Table 7.2 (based on the 29 participants who responded) show that overall, there was greater internal pressure experienced ($M = 8.7$, $SD = 0.93$) compared to external pressure from organisations ($M = 4.8$, $SD = 2.57$). Indeed, for most participants (90%), internal pressure to change was greater than perceived external pressure from employing organisations to leave. For the remaining 10%, the ratings for external and internal pressure were equal.

Table 7.2 Classification of participants using Thomas' (1980) typology based on external and internal pressures to change

		Pressure from self to change	
		Low	High
Pressure from Environment to change	Low	"Drift-out" 0%	"Opt-out" 79%
		(Routine)	(Self-determined)
	High	"Force-outs" 0%	"Bow outs" 21%
		(Situation determined)	(Accommodation)

$N = 29$

Nevertheless, using Thomas' (1980) typology of career change previously described in Section 4.5, not all participants in this study could be classified as "opt-outs" whose career changes are largely self-determined. According to Thomas' classification, 79% were "opt-outs" whose career change was primarily self-determined, as shown in Table 7.2. The other 21% were "bow-outs" who accommodated to both internal desires and external pressures to change their occupations. Since these "bow outs" experienced high levels of pressure from within their previous organisations to change, successful traversing of the career downshift might need to include coming to terms with the impact of previous environmental factors (e.g., loss of self esteem and confidence). Nevertheless, it should be noted that none of the participants were "drift-outs" or "force-outs". In other words, irrespective of organisational pressures, all

participants experienced high internal pressure to make the career change, suggesting that the career downshift had a strong voluntary component.

7.2 The decision to change from the previous career

7.2.1 Contributing factors

Participants' narratives regarding the factors contributing to their decision to change careers were classified using categories developed by Thomas (1979). The categories were: (a) "counterculture" (i.e. dissatisfaction with the present social system leading to leaving the mainstream society); (b) "environmental" which included organisational factors outside the individual, rather than Thomas' original (1979) category of "macrosocial" which referred to broad social and economic changes causing dislocation in occupations such as careers becoming obsolete; (c) "developmental" which refers to re-evaluation of career and personal goals, especially a resurgence of previously submerged ideals, goals and dreams. Since many factors contributed to participants' decisions to change their careers, some participants' narratives were classified in more than one of the three categories used.

Only one participant's narrative (3%) was classified as "**counterculture**", where the main impetus for career change was to establish a counterculture lifestyle in a rural area where he and his family could be self-sustaining. Eighty-seven percent of participants had narratives which included "**environmental**" factors contributing to their decision to change careers. These environmental factors incorporated unpleasant incidents at work, changes in work culture, overall social and economic change causing increased pressures in the working environment such as the need to work longer hours. Seventy-seven percent of participants had narratives which included "**developmental**" factors to their decision to change careers. These developmental factors incorporated dissatisfaction with their current work role, nature of work, feeling stagnated, or actively wanting other types of work. In the main, it seems that, at least with this sample of career downshifters, both external "environmental" factors and internal "developmental" factors contributed to the decision to downshift careers.

7.2.2 Career directions before and after downshifting

In a further analysis of narratives, it was found that about a third of participants (30%) did not have any specific new career in mind when they left their previous career. Another third (33%) had a general sense of a future career direction, but no specific career in mind when they left their previous occupations. Only 37% had specific careers or occupations in mind when they left. Thus, it appears that only a minority of downshifting participants were clear about their future specific career directions when they left their previous occupations.

Analysis of participant's narratives also indicated that 33% were **self employed** at the time of interview, while 17% were not self-employed at the time of interview but were **working towards eventual self-employment**. The remaining participants (50%) were **not self-employed** at the time of interview and gave no indications that they were moving towards self-employment in the future. In other words, about half the sample had goals of self-employment, suggesting a strong theme of a desire for autonomy.

Driver's (1988) classification of career styles or patterns was also used to examine participants' narratives about their careers previous to their downshifting career changes. It may be recalled from Section 3.3.5 that Driver (1980, 1988) proposed that people develop one of four broad career styles: a steady state style, of relative stability; a linear style of continuing progress; a spiral style of cyclical career development; or a transitory style where there are frequent career changes. Roughly a quarter (27%) had a **steady state style** where they largely maintained an established stable career for a long period of time. About a half (47%) had exhibited a **linear style** where they progressively advanced to positions of greater responsibility and greater remuneration. Roughly a quarter (27%) had a **spiral style** where they had already demonstrated a pattern of periodic career change prior to the downshifting career change. For example one participant had started out as a photographer, trained as a teacher eventually being promoted to school principal, and then had a successful career in human resources in the corporate sector. None of the participants had a transitory career style. These results show that not all downshifter had a linear style of continuous advancement which tends to be promoted by the mainstream "career culture" described by Albert (1992; previously reviewed in Chapter 2).

The content of participants' narratives were also analysed to provide an indication of predominant career orientations using Derr's (1986) classification previously described in Section 3.1.1 ("getting ahead", "getting secure", "getting free", "getting balanced", and "getting high"). The main purpose of analysing career orientations in this manner was to ascertain whether participants' motivations had changed since the career downshift. It was not possible to classify each participant's narrative post-interview into a single predominant career orientation. Thus in Table 7.3 below, which shows the career anchors identified in participants' narratives before and after the career change, the number of career anchors in each column exceeds 100%.

Prior to their career change, it appears that as a group, participants in managerial and professional occupations were mainly preoccupied with "getting ahead" (i.e. advancing in one's occupation), "getting high/skilled" (i.e. gaining mastery in one's occupation), or "getting secure" (i.e. establishing material and financial security). While some participants still had these career orientations after their career change, there was an overall trend towards "**getting balanced**" (i.e. having more time for non-work activities), "**getting free**" (i.e. having more autonomy) and "**being authentic**" (i.e. having work that was more meaningful and congruent with one's values and priorities in life). This last career orientation was not part of Derr's original career anchors, but emerged from participants' narratives.

Table 7.3 Classification of narratives according to Derr's (1986) career orientations

Derr's career orientations	Career orientations before career change (N=30) %	Career orientations after career change (N=30) %
"Getting ahead" (advancement)	77	17
"Getting high" (skilled)	83	37
"Getting secure" (security)	53	13
"Getting free" (autonomy)	0	60
"Getting balanced" (balance)	0	77
"Being authentic"* (congruence)	0	57

* This career orientation was not part of Derr's original anchors but emerged from participants' narratives

In summary, the results of this section indicate that downshiffters are not homogenous in terms of the nature of their career changes undertaken. Some career downshiffters were clearer about their career directions, while others left without any specific career directions in mind. Although about half the downshiffters had exhibited a linear career style of upward progress, the predominant career orientations for the sample before career downshifting were “getting ahead” and “getting high”. Career downshifting, at least for this sample, appears to be motivated in part by desires for greater autonomy and balance.

7.2.3 Time taken to decide to change from the previous career

In this section, the timing aspects of the downshifting process are considered. First, the narratives of participants were analysed for the duration between first thoughts of leaving and the time of actually leaving the previous occupation. The results are shown in Table 7.4 below, together with comparable results from a study undertaken by Robbins (1978) with 91 men in midlife who undertook an occupational change. The most important aspect of Table 7.4 is that most people in this sample and Robbins’ (1978) sample came to the decision to change careers after much deliberation over an extended period of time. In both studies, the modal time period between first thinking of leaving and actually leaving is 1-5 years. In this study, 20% of participants took longer (more than 5 years) to decide to leave. Only three participants (10%) made a sudden decision, deciding to leave within a month of initially thinking of leaving. This result suggests that for the majority of participants, voluntary career downshifting was a considered decision, rather than an impulsive reaction to events in the occupational environment.

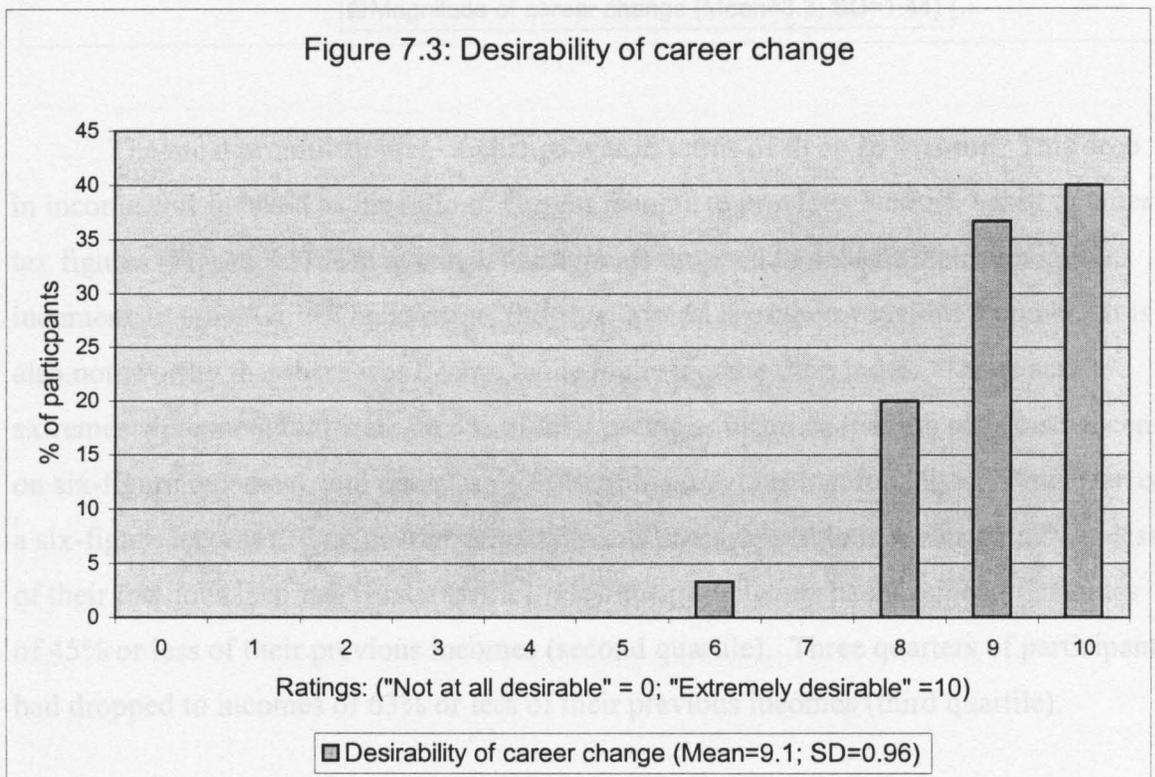
Table 7.4 Duration between first thinking of leaving old occupations and time of actually leaving

	Current study (N=30) %	Robbins (1978) (N=91) %
< 1 month	10	9
1-6 months	3	23
7-12 months	13	23
1-5 years	53	36
More than 5 years	20	7
Not stated	0	2

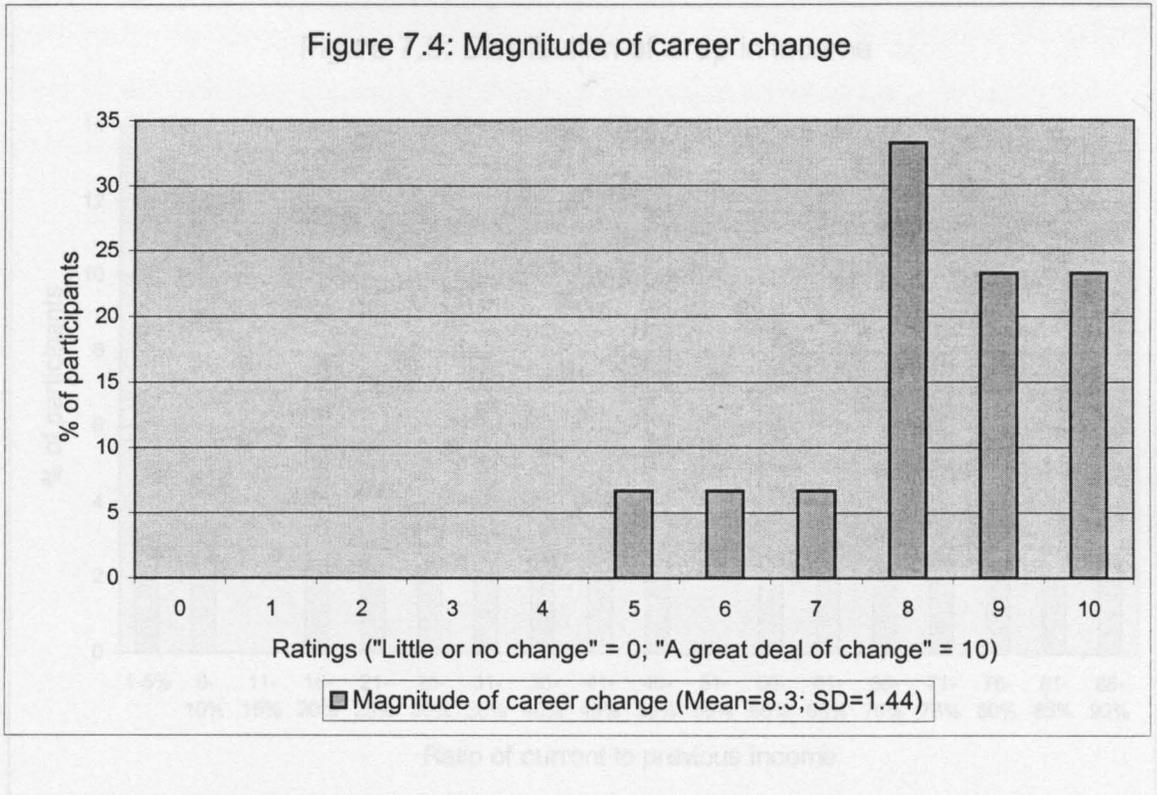
7.3 Effects of the career change

The self-report questionnaire administered at the end of the depth interview with participants included measures used by Bruce and Scott (1994) in their study of career transitions. However, in the present study, 11-point scales (ranging from zero to ten) were used to provide a larger range of possible ratings, rather than the 5-point scales originally used by Bruce and Scott. This section provides an overview of the effects of career downshifting as captured by the self-report questionnaire.

In the main, the career change was rated as very desirable (Figure 7.3). Virtually all participants (97%) rated the **desirability of change** between 8 and 10 points, with 10 anchored at “extremely desirable”.

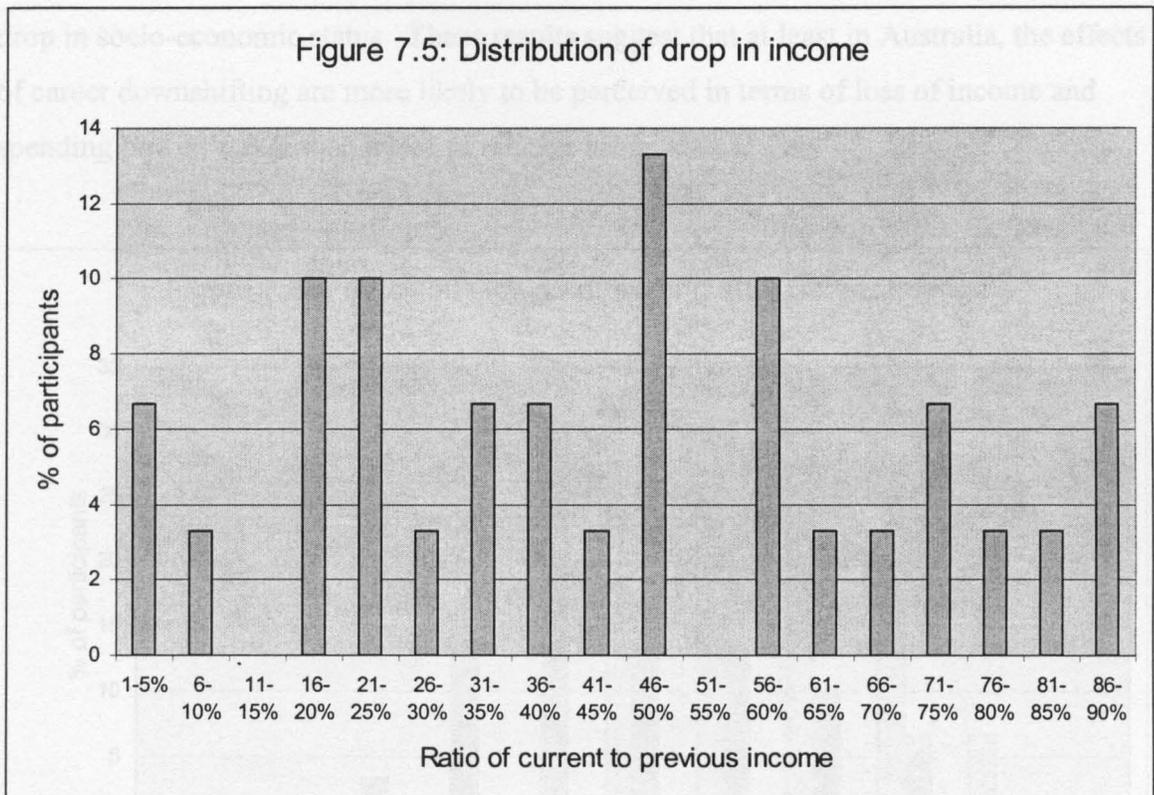


Nevertheless, the career downshift was perceived as involving considerable change (Figure 7.4). Eighty percent of participants rated the **magnitude of change** between 8 and 10 points, with 10 anchored at “a great deal of change”.



The most prominent area of change was in terms of **drop in income**. This drop in income was indexed as the ratio of current income to previous income, based on after tax figures (Figure 7.5). On average, participants dropped to 46% of their previous incomes. In other words, on average, they had lost 54% of their previous incomes. It is also noteworthy that there was a large range in the income drop index. Those at the extremes were men: two were on 5% of their previous incomes (having previously been on six-figure incomes), and one was on 90% of his previous income (also having been on a six-figure income). One quarter of participants had dropped to incomes of 25% or less of their previous incomes (first quartile). Half the participants had dropped to incomes of 45% or less of their previous incomes (second quartile). Three quarters of participants had dropped to incomes of 63% or less of their previous incomes (third quartile).

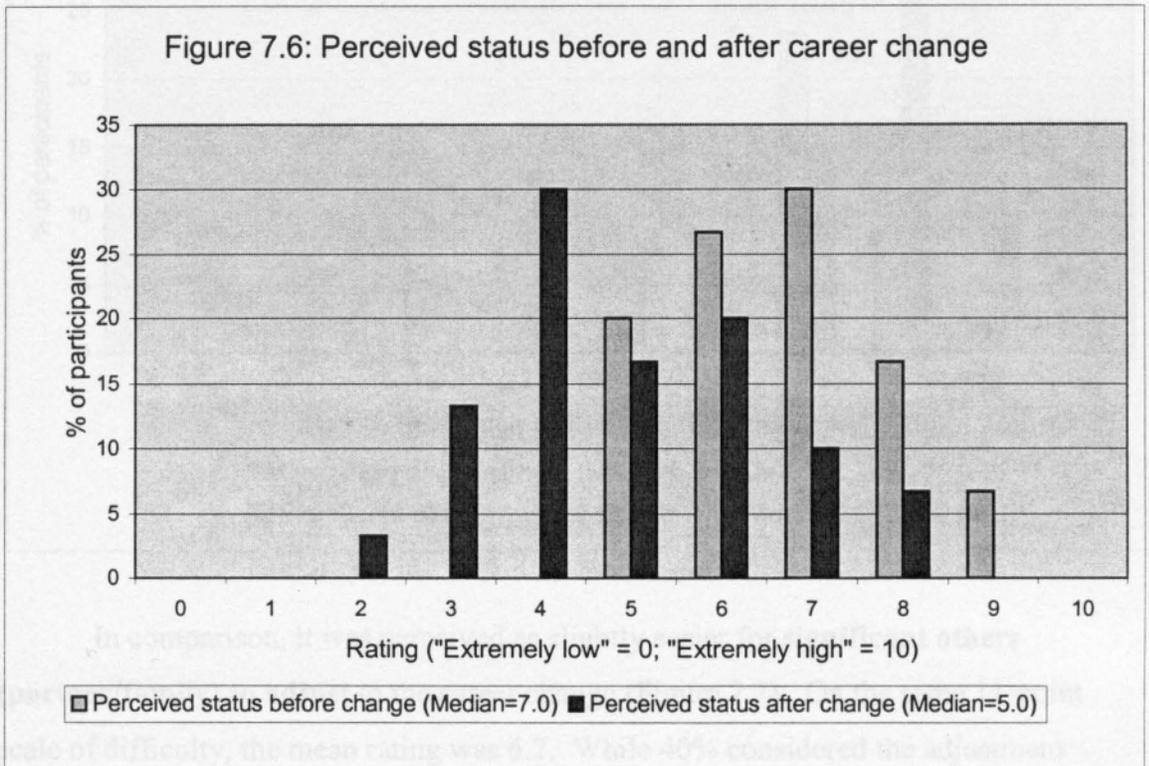
Together with the loss of income, there was also a drop in perceived status (Figure 7.6). Even though the majority of participants were above average in income compared to the Australian population, perceived status before the career change was not very high (mean of 6.6, median of 7). After the career change, participants tended to see themselves as being in the "middle" of "conventional Australian socio-economic terms" (mean of 4.9, median of 5). As a group, therefore, the downsifters perceived themselves as dropping 2 out of 11 points in terms of socio-economic status. Using



While participants were not specifically asked what their current or previous incomes were, so as to maintain rapport through the interview, 12 participants (40%) had spontaneously mentioned their incomes through the course of the interview, or disclosed the amounts while calculating the drop of income ratio. Among these 12 participants, previous income ranged from \$38,000 to \$250,000 per annum. (In November 1999, the annual average income among full-time workers in Australia was estimated as \$39,156; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1999). Among those participants whose incomes were disclosed, the median income was \$80,000 per annum suggesting that many of the participants in the sample had above average annual incomes prior to their career downshift.

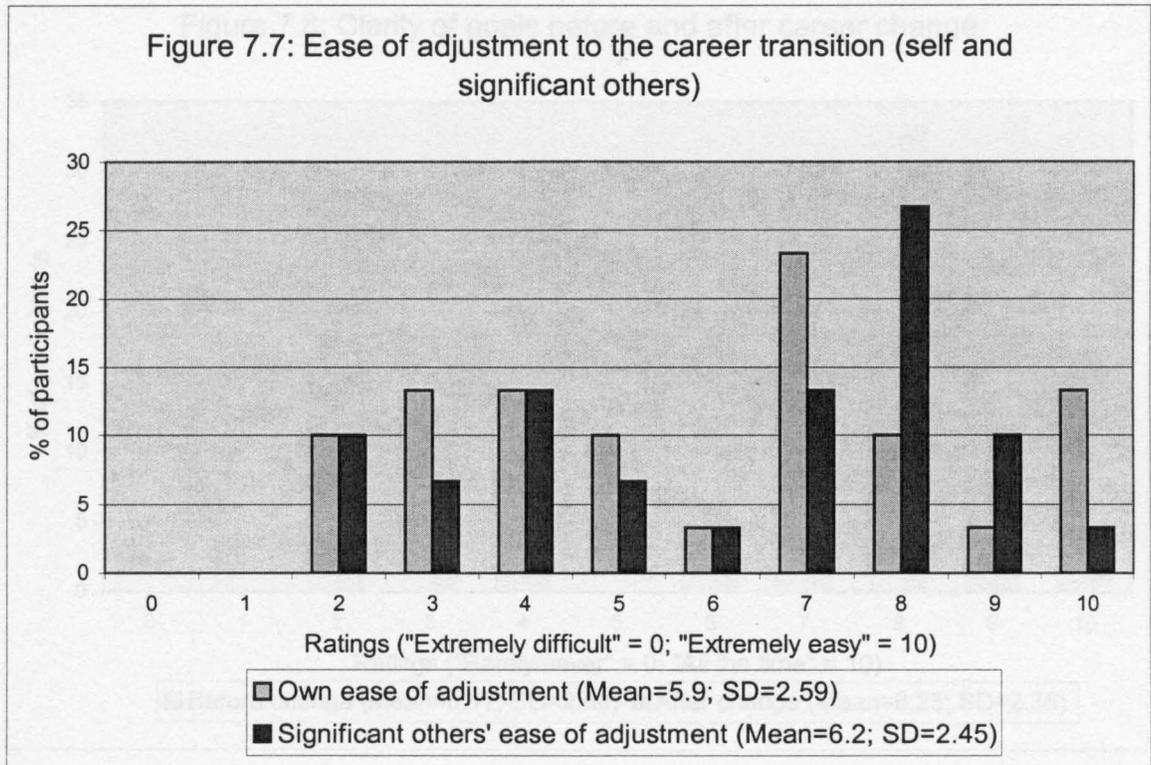
Together with the loss of income, there was also a **drop in perceived status** (Figure 7.6). Even though the majority of participants were above average in income compared to the Australian population, perceived status before the career change was not very high (mean of 6.6, median of 7). After the career change, participants tended to see themselves as being in the “middle” of “conventional Australian socio-economic terms” (mean of 4.9, median of 5). As a group, therefore, the downshifters perceived themselves as dropping 2 out of 11 points in terms of socio-economic status. Using

median ratings, a drop of two points from a base rating of seven points represents a 29% drop in socio-economic status. These results suggest that at least in Australia, the effects of career downshifting are more likely to be perceived in terms of loss of income and spending power, rather than a loss of relative social status.



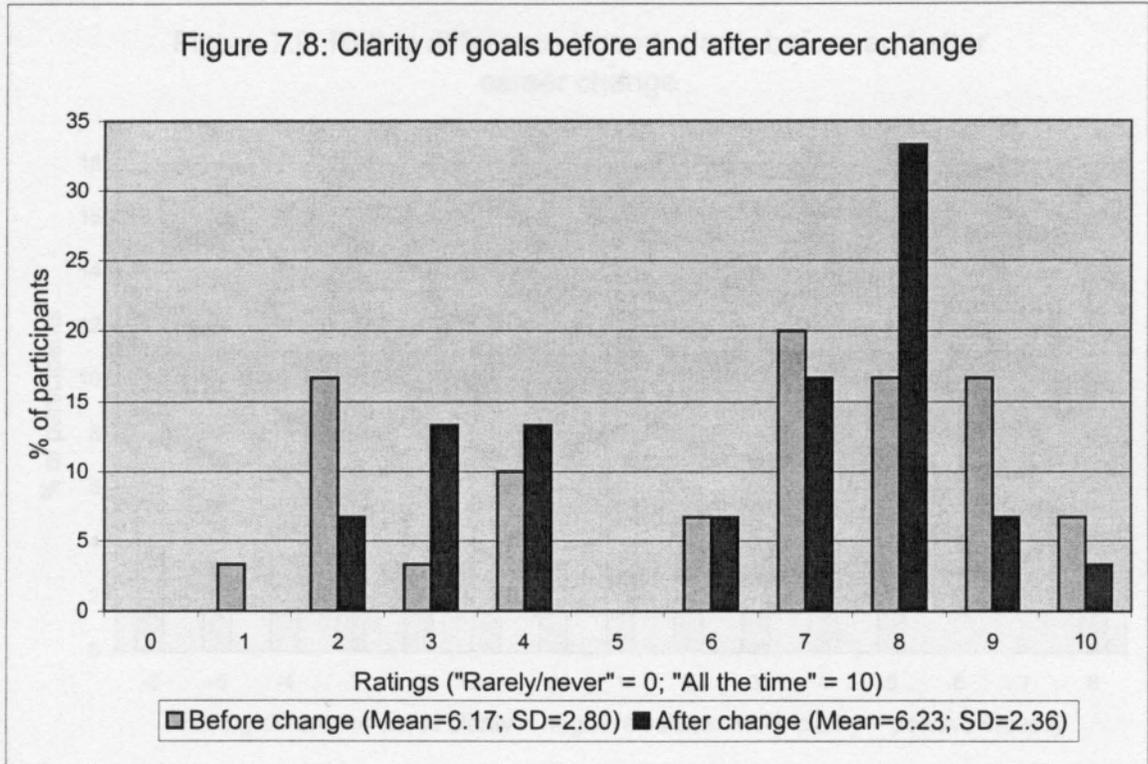
Three participants (10%), however perceived themselves as increasing slightly in status (by one point on the 11-point scale) because they had changed from being an employee to being self-employed, even though it involved less income at the time of interview. Four participants (13%) perceived no change in their status. Over a quarter (26%) perceived their status had dropped 3 or more points on the 11-point scale, with one participant perceiving a drop of 6 points. Thus, there was a range of income and status changes within the downshifting experience. Some downshifter may experience a large drop in income and/or status, whereas others may not.

There was also a wide range in terms of **personal difficulty in adjustment** to the career change (Figure 7.7). On an 11-point scale of difficulty, the mean rating was 5.9, neither too difficult, nor too easy. While 27% considered the adjustment relatively easy (rating of 8-10), 37% considered the adjustment to be relatively difficult (rating of 2-4). None rated their personal adjustment to be extremely difficulty (0-1).



In comparison, it was perceived as slightly easier for **significant others (partner/family) to adjust** to the career change (Figure 7.7). On the same 11-point scale of difficulty, the mean rating was 6.2. While 40% considered the adjustment relatively easy for their significant others (rating of 8-10), 32% considered the adjustment to be relatively difficult (rating of 2-4). None rated the adjustment of significant others to be extremely difficult (0-1).

There was also a wide range in the **clarity of work goals** before and after the career change (Figure 7.8) although in the main, participants were fairly clear about their work goals (mean of 6.2 before the change, and mean of 6.2 after the change).



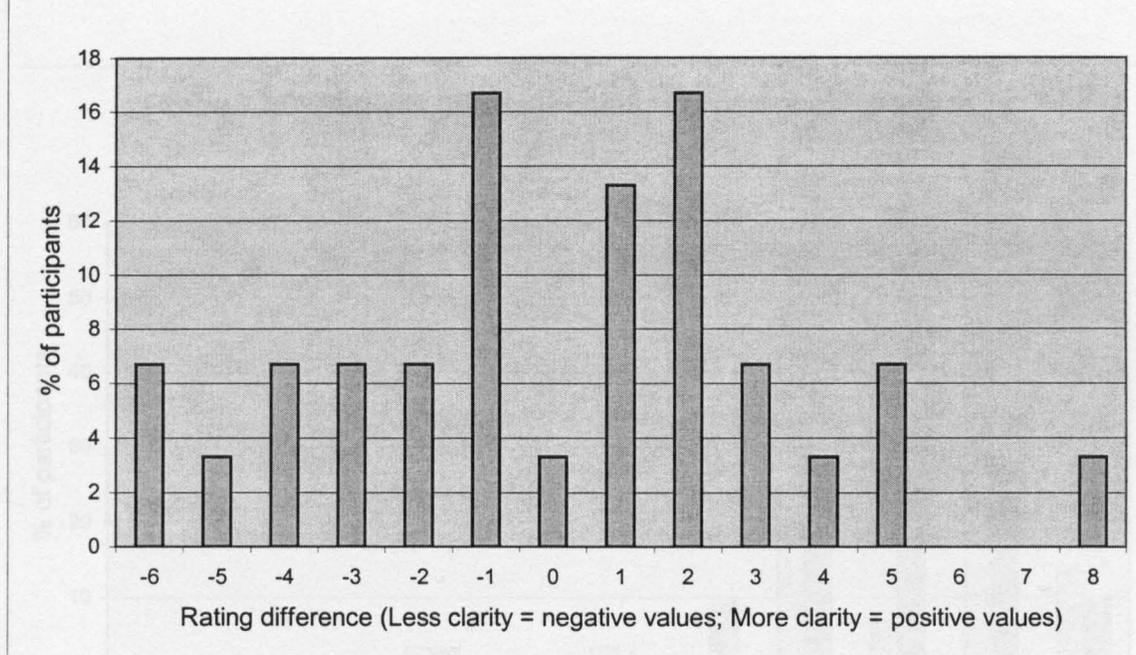
However, in comparing individual responses before and after the career downshift (Figure 7.9), half the participants (50%) reported **greater clarity** of work goals after the career change, while 47% reported **less clarity** of work goals after the career change.

Nevertheless, career downshifters were not homogeneous in their perceptions of the difficulty of the career transition – some individuals perceived the transition to be more difficult than others. Moreover, while some downshifters became more clear about their work goals after the career change, others became less focused or even confused.

7.4 Benefits of the career change

In spite of the difficulties encountered, downshifters experienced many positive outcomes. First, the majority of participants saw themselves as being better off, both in their personal lives, as well as in their work life (Figure 7.10). On an 11-point scale where 10 was "extremely better off", the average rating for benefits to one's personal life was 8.3, with 74% giving a rating of 8-10. Only one participant considered her personal life as relatively worse (rating of 3 points). As for one's work life, the average rating

Figure 7.9: Rating difference in work clarity before and after career change

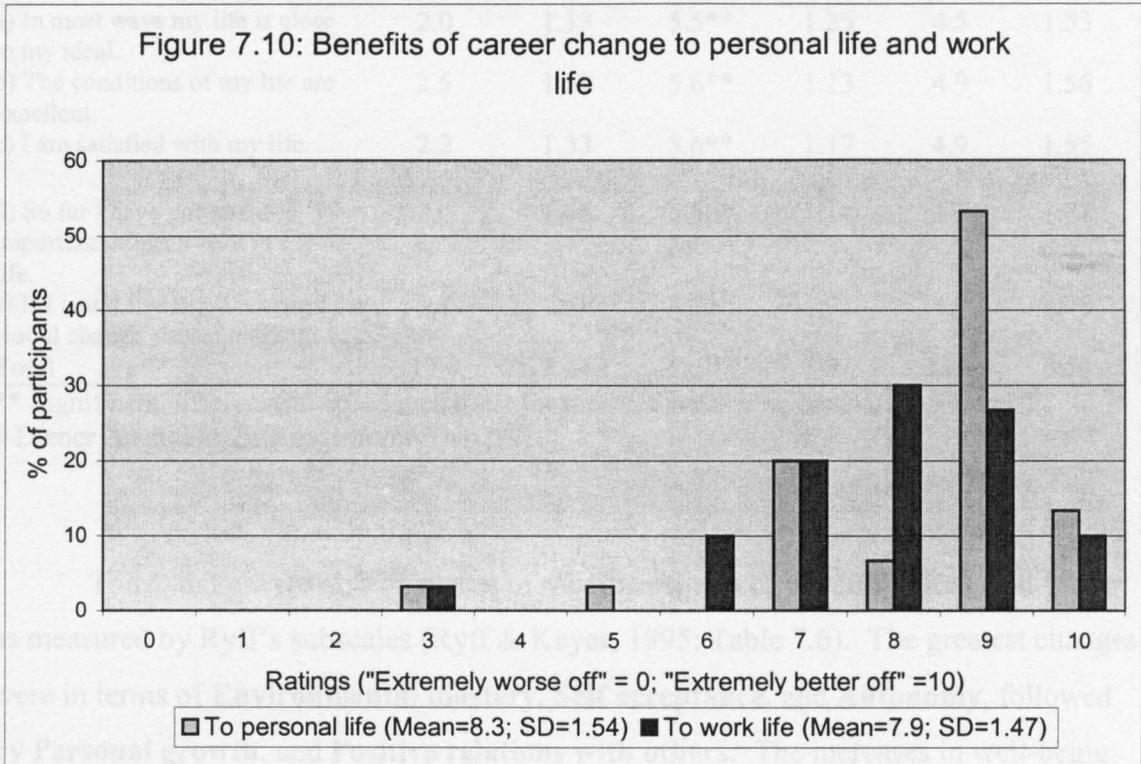


In summary, this section shows that overall, the career change was very desirable to individual career downshifters, but typically involved a lot of change. On average, career downshifters in this sample lost 54% of their previous incomes, and perceived a 29% drop in socio-economic status. Nevertheless, career downshifters were not homogenous in their perceptions of the difficulty of the career transition – some individuals perceived the transition to be more difficult than others. Moreover, while some downshifters became more clear about their work goals after the career change, others became less focused or even confused.

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was 7.9, with 67% giving a rating of 8-10. Only one participant considered her work life as relatively worse (rating of 3 points).



Second, **satisfaction with life** significantly increased since the career change (Table 7.5). In fact, the total score on Diener's satisfaction with life scale (SWLS) virtually doubled. This is a large and significant increase ($p < 0.01$). There were also significant increases in the ratings of all five individual items on the SWLS scale, indicating a unilateral increase in satisfaction with life overall. Compared with available Australian norms, (E. Diener, personal communication, October 20, 1999), the SWLS ratings before career downshifting (T1) were significantly lower ($p < 0.05$). The SWLS ratings after career downshifting (T2) were slightly higher than the Australian norms, although not significantly different. The exception was on the fifth item (item (e)) where the values were similar.

	T1	T2	AN	SD	AN	SD
Total score	11.1	23.0	14.1**	2.31	18.9	3.1
Personal growth subscale	12.1	23.2	14.2**	2.15	18.2	2.4
Positive relations with others subscale	14.9	25.3	16.5**	1.76	15.7	2.5
Purpose in life subscale	13.3	23.1	14.9**	2.33	14.4	1.2
Autonomy subscale	13.5	23.1	14.5	2.71	14.4	1.2

** significant at 0.01 level, t-test for repeated measures, comparing T1 and T2
 ns indicates not significant

Table 7.5: Mean ratings for Diener's Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

	Before change (T1)		After change (T2)		Australian norms#	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
a) In most ways my life is close to my ideal.	2.0	1.13	5.5**	1.25	4.5	1.53
b) The conditions of my life are excellent.	2.5	1.59	5.6**	1.13	4.9	1.56
c) I am satisfied with my life.	2.2	1.33	5.6**	1.17	4.9	1.55
d) So far I have gotten the important things I want in my life.	3.0	1.48	5.5**	1.14	4.7	1.72
e) If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.	3.2	2.0	4.1**	1.91	4.1	1.78
Total	13.0	5.44	26.2**	5.27	23.0	6.54

** Significant difference at 0.01 level, t-test for repeated measures, comparing T1 and T2

Diener Australian data base norms (N=292)

Third, there were also increases in specific aspects of **psychological well-being** as measured by Ryff's subscales (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Table 7.6). The greatest changes were in terms of **Environmental mastery**, **Self acceptance**, and **Autonomy**, followed by **Personal growth**, and **Positive relations with others**. The increases in well-being on these five aspects of well-being were significant ($p < 0.01$). Indeed, there were significant increases in virtually all items on these five subscales ($p < 0.05$); details are provided in Appendix C, Table C.2. While, there was no significant increase in terms of **Purpose in life**, it should be noted that participants already had very high levels of purpose in life before the career change.

Table 7.6: Mean ratings for Ryff's Psychological Well-Being subscales

	Before change (T1)		After change (T2)		Ryff & Keyes (1995)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Environmental mastery subscale	10.7	3.21	14.5**	1.91	14.9	2.8
Self acceptance subscale	11.3	3.30	14.1**	2.31	14.6	3.1
Autonomy subscale	12.1	2.52	14.3**	2.15	15.2	2.6
Personal growth subscale	14.9	2.83	16.5**	1.76	15.7	2.5
Positive relations with others subscale	13.3	3.31	14.9**	2.33	14.8	3.2
Purpose in life subscale	13.3	2.81	14.6	2.71	14.4	3.2

** significant at 0.01 level, t-test for repeated measures, comparing T1 and T2

ns indicates not significant

Table 7.6 also shows the results of a cross-section of the American population using Ryff's 3-item well-being measures as used in this study (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). (Australian norms using Ryff's three-items subscales were not available.) In this sample all 1,108 people were aged over 24 years (average age of 45.6 years), with 70% married, and 42% having some college education or higher. Comparisons with rating after the career change (T2) show that the downshifting sample had comparable high levels of **Purpose in life**. Other subscales with comparable ratings were **Environmental mastery**, **Self acceptance**, and **Positive relations with others**. With **Personal growth**, however, the downshifting sample had significantly higher ratings. The reverse is true for **Autonomy**, with the downshifting sample reporting significantly lower ratings. In other words, the downshifting sample reported considerable gains in most aspects of psychological well-being. However, downshifters in this study had only slightly elevated ratings on **Personal growth** as a group, and reported lower levels of **Autonomy** compared to available American norms.

In sum, the results presented in this section show that participants reported being better off in their personal and work lives as well as satisfaction with life and increased levels on all aspects of psychological well-being, after their career downshift. These positive benefits are in sharp contrast with the difficulties previously detailed in Section 7.3 – reduced income, a drop in social status and for some, personal difficulties in adjusting to the career change.

7.5 Personality indicators

It will be recalled from Section 6.4, that the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) was used to provide some personality profile description of downshifters. While this was not a central aspect of the study, the MBTI was included to ascertain whether the study sample of downshifters was notably different from the general population in terms of general personality characteristics. The results from the current sample were compared with two available data sets: (a) 86 midlife career changers who had presented at a private practice careers service in Melbourne, but were not necessarily downshifters (Fuller & Kendall, 1992); and (b) 1,276 randomly selected adults in USA (Hammer &

Mitchell, 1996). A composite data set collected by Ball (1999) was also available for comparison, but was deemed to be less useful because of lack of information concerning the contexts in which the MBTI was completed. No other representative Australian data base was available for comparisons (I. Ball, Psychological Type Research Unit, Deakin University, personal communication, August 19, 1999). It should be noted that while two participants in the current study were sourced from Ms Fuller (Figure 6.1 previous), they were not included in the 1992 data set reported by Fuller and Kendall (1992).

Compared to the random sample of Americans, there was a slightly higher proportion of **introverts** in the study sample (Figure 7.11A). However, the most prominent difference was the very high proportion of **intuitives** (Figure 7.11B). While this is similar to the sample of midlife career changers, the proportion of intuitives in the sample (73%) was more than double that found in the random US sample (32%). The study sample was not notably skewed on the **thinking/feeling** dimension (Figure 7.11C). On the **judging/perceiving** dimension, the study sample was comparable to the sample of midlife career changers reported by Fuller and Kendall (1992), but there was a slightly higher proportion of perceiving types compared to the random US sample (50% compared to 42%; Figure 7.11A to Figure 7.11D).

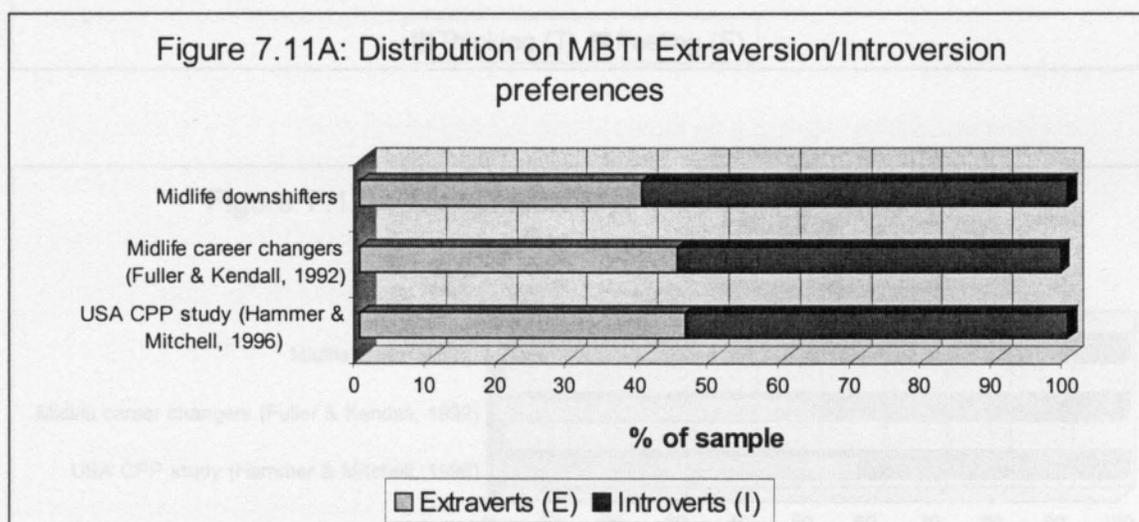
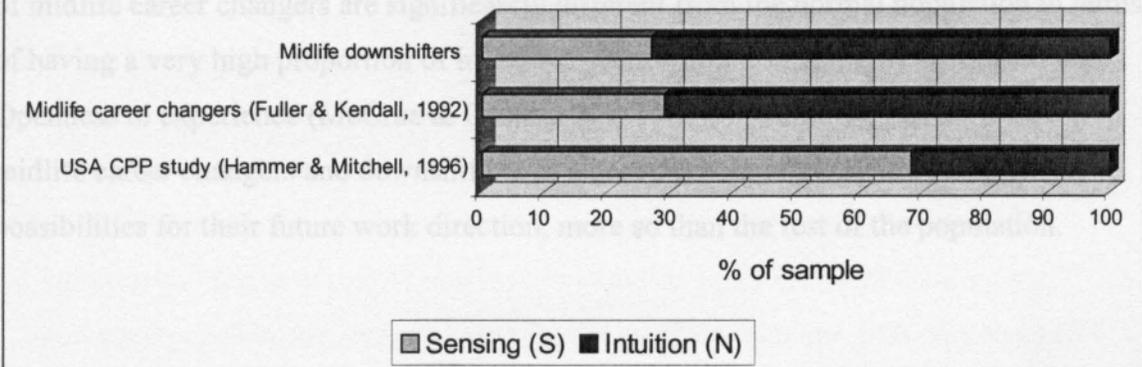


Figure 7.11B: Distribution on MBTI Sensing/Intuition preferences



7.6 Chapter summary

Figure 7.11C: Distribution on MBTI Thinking/Feeling preferences

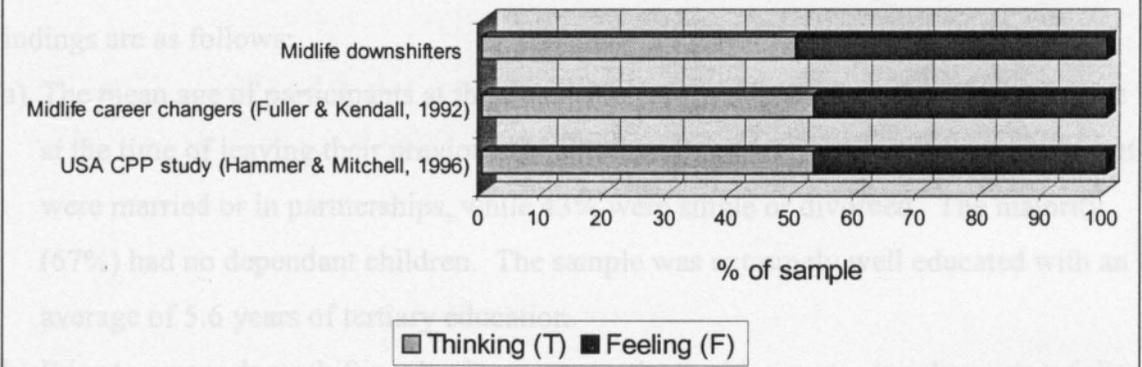
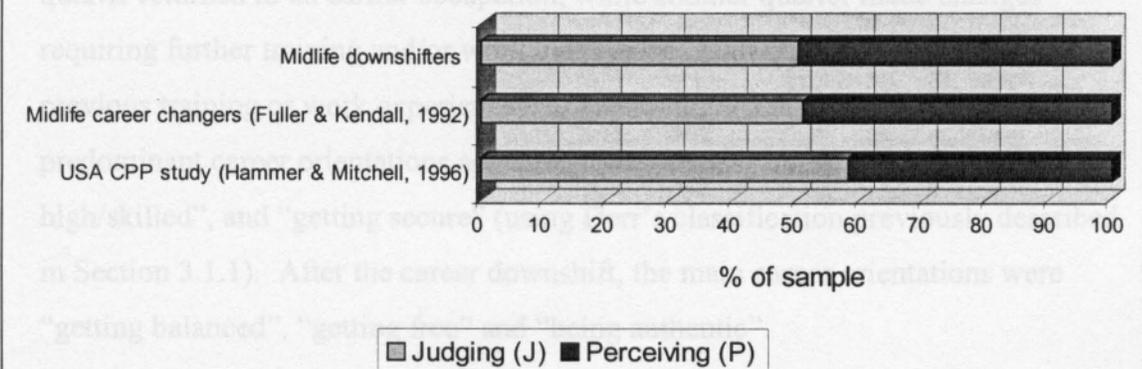


Figure 7.11D: Distribution of MBTI Judging/Perceiving preferences



In summary, the study sample does not appear to differ markedly from a comparable sample of midlife career changers, suggesting that the sample of downshiffters is representative. However, the sample of downshiffters, as with the sample of midlife career changers are significantly different from the normal population in terms of having a very high proportion of intuitives. Since intuition is highly correlated with Openness to experience (McCrae & Costa, 1985; 1989), this finding indicates that midlife career changers and downshiffters as a group are more likely to consider possibilities for their future work direction, more so than the rest of the population.

7.6 Chapter summary

This chapter aimed to provide background on the participants prior to in-depth discussion of their experience of career downshifting in the next chapter. The main findings are as follows:

- (a) The mean age of participants at the time of interview was 46.7 years. The mean age at the time of leaving their previous occupations was 44.1 years. Fifty-seven percent were married or in partnerships, while 43% were single or divorced. The majority (67%) had no dependant children. The sample was extremely well educated with an average of 5.6 years of tertiary education.
- (b) Prior to career downshifting, business occupations with a commercial or enterprising orientation were predominant among participants as a group. After downshifting, there was a shift towards service and artistic occupations. However, not all career downshiffters in this sample undertook radical changes in their occupations. About a quarter returned to an earlier occupation, while another quarter made changes requiring further training and/or work experience. Half made changes where previous training or work experience were relevant. Prior to the career change, the predominant career orientations appeared to be “getting ahead”, “getting high/skilled”, and “getting secure” (using Derr’s classification previously described in Section 3.1.1). After the career downshift, the main career orientations were “getting balanced”, “getting free” and “being authentic”.
- (c) In the main, participants experienced more internal pressure from within themselves to change their careers, rather than external pressure from organisations to leave. Nevertheless, environmental factors such as changes in work culture and difficulties

at work were cited in 87% of narratives. Developmental factors such as dissatisfaction with work, stagnation, and interest in other work were found in 77% of narratives. The majority (73%) took a year or more to decide to change their careers.

- (d) While the career change was highly desirable, participants dropped to 46% of their previous income and 29% in perceived status on average. However, there was a wide range in income drop, difficulty of adjustment to the change, and clarity of work goals among participants. Nevertheless, as a group, participants reported significantly higher levels of satisfaction with life, environmental mastery, self acceptance, autonomy, personal growth, and positive relations with others, when comparing their lives after the career change to before the change.
- (e) Compared to available normative data, there was a higher proportion of Intuitive types, as measured by the MBTI, in the study sample.

CHAPTER 8: THE EXPERIENCE OF DOWNSHIFTING

Analyses of the 30 interview transcripts were undertaken using a combination of procedures outlined by Moustakas' (1990, 1994). Details of these procedures were previously outlined in Chapter 6. The main thrust of the analyses was to create "a story that portrays the qualities, meanings, and essences" of the experience being studied (Moustakas, 1990, p. 13)

Four formats were used to present the results:

1. A listing of **core themes and issues** which depict the essence of the career downshifting experience as a whole;
2. A **composite description** which provides both structure and thick description in depicting the essences and meanings of career downshifting experiences of participants;
3. "**Exemplary portraits**" or individual descriptions of two selected participants which are supplemented by demographic and biographic material to illustrate the career downshifting experience while retaining the individuals' experiences;
4. A "**creative synthesis**" which reflects the researcher's intuition, imagination and personal knowledge of meanings and essences of the downshifting experience as a whole.

Each of these major outputs is presented in the following sections. Using a system similar to one used by Ritchie et al. (1997), I discuss the results according to the following notation: (a) The words "generally", "most", "often", "the majority", "usually", "typically" and "tended" indicate the characteristic response of a majority (16 or more) of the participants; (b) the words "some", "several", and "a number of" indicate responses from 7 to 15 participants; and (c) "a few" indicates responses from 6 or fewer participants; more specific wording (e.g., "all", "one") is used occasionally.

8.1 Core themes and issues in the experience of downshifting

Seven consistent themes were identified from content analysis of interview transcripts, describing what appears to be the essence of the career downshifting experience. Each of these seven broad themes were basic components in the experiences reported by all participants to a greater or lesser extent. There were also 44 constituent issues around these seven themes. While each of these 44 issues may or may not be reported by any given individual, all participants described the seven themes in their experience of downshifting.

To provide an initial overview, the seven consistent themes and 44 variable constituent issues are listed below. The themes and constituent issues correspond to delineate a structural description of the meaning and essence of the career downshifting experience (Moustakas, 1994).

Theme I: Awareness of the need for change

- A. I'm encountering difficulties
- B. I'm dissatisfied/ things are not right
- C. Work takes too much away
- D. I feel stagnated
- E. I want some other type of work
- F. I want a better life
- G. Something happened

Theme II: Struggle with the need for change

- A. But I don't want to rock the boat
- B. I'll try to fit inside the organisation
- C. I'll see what's possible
- D. But I'm fearful
- E. But this career change is a risky proposition
- F. Do I really have to change my old way of doing things?

Theme III: Feeling down

- A. Feeling down/low
- B. Grief/loss
- C. Doubt/remorse/regret
- D. Metaphors of a descent of some kind

Theme IV: Facing difficulties and confronting issues

- A. How do I live with less money?
- B. But I miss the recognition and respect
- C. How do I deal with fear and uncertainty?
- D. Who am I now that I don't have my previous job?
- E. I didn't think the new direction would be this difficult
- F. How do I deal with being out of step with the career culture?
- G. Do I have enough time?
- H. What is the contribution I want to make?

Theme V: Incubation

- A. Taking some "time out"
- B. Re-evaluation
- C. Finding resources

Theme VI: Emergence

- A. Finding the financial wherewithal
- B. Coming to terms with decreased status
- C. Managing remorse or regret
- D. Dealing with uncertainties and being flexible
- E. Gaining clarity and having a plan/direction
- F. Being a beginner
- G. Constructing a new structure
- H. Revision of identity

- I. Redefining success
- J. Trust in subjective state in evaluating the transition

Theme VII: Possible positive outcomes

- A. More suitable work
- B. Better quality of life
- C. Autonomy
- D. Enhancement of identity
- E. Personal growth
- F. Authenticity

The seven consistent themes identified in career downshifting experiences do not imply **linear** progression through seven phases in downshifting. While the themes may represent a progression through a career downshift, and many participants experienced these core themes approximately in the sequence presented above, cycling back and forth through themes, and/or experiencing multiple themes simultaneously was common.

For example, some participants might have initially experienced a need for change due to multiple dissatisfactions (Theme I), and struggle with whether they actually needed to change their career, often trying to adapt to current circumstances, eventually leaving their previous careers (Theme II). They might have felt low or even depressed after leaving their previous career (Theme III). Some participants, however, felt down **before** they perceived the need for change (Theme I), or struggle with the need for change (Theme II).

Participants typically faced difficulties and confronted issues (Theme IV) after leaving their previous careers. Nevertheless, some issues such as potential loss of income and status, and less certainty with career direction and work identity may have already been issues prior to leaving an established career. In the course of facing difficulties and confronting issues, participants were incubating new possibilities regarding their new career and work identity (Theme V). At some stage, participants showed signs of emergence of their new career and work identity (Theme VI) such as resolving issues with money, status, regret, and redefining success, such that they could move on in their new career direction.

Positive outcomes (Theme VII) did not necessarily emerge only after all difficulties and issues had been resolved. Indeed, many participants experienced better quality of life by way of less stress and better health soon after leaving their previous careers. Incubation (Theme V), signs of emergence (Theme VI) and experiencing positive outcomes (Theme VII) did not always indicate that participants were “out of the woods”. Many participants at the time of interview had not completed their career transition. At the time of interview, many participants reported facing difficulties and issues (Theme IV) through most of their career transition, with a few experiencing low periods (Theme III) more than once as a result.

As noted previously, while all participants’ experiences encompassed all seven core themes, not all 44 constituent issues were experienced by each participant. For example, with incubation (Theme V), not all participants took some “time out” (constituent issue V.A) by having a holiday or a period where no career related activity was undertaken. Secondly, participants may have experienced a particular constituent issue to a greater or lesser depth. For example, with re-evaluation (constituent issue V.B), some participants spent extended periods re-evaluating their life in terms of their values, priorities and even family-of-origin issues by undertaking reflective activities such as journal writing and psychotherapy, while others primarily focused on career issues, such as the role of work in their lives.

8.2 Structural and textural descriptions of the downshifting experience

In this section, the structure of the downshifting experience is elaborated by commentary around each theme. Each constituent issue is illustrated by one or two exemplary quotes to provide “thick description” as recommended by qualitative researchers such (e.g., Patton, 1990; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), and greater understanding of the experience. In many instances, quotes include details of the person’s circumstances. This was deliberately included so that the quote would not be taken out of context.

Quotes were selected across all participants interviewed, with the exceptions of two participants whose transcripts have been used to provide “exemplary portraits” recommended by Moustakas (1990) (Section 8.3 below). Through this chapter and the next, each participant was quoted between two and eleven times. While efforts were made to choose quotes across all participants, some participants were more reflective, candid, or articulate than others, which led to a higher frequency of quotes being extracted from their transcripts. Men and women were represented in approximately equal proportions in the quotes used in this chapter and the next (46% and 54% respectively). Nevertheless, it is emphasised that all transcripts were systematically coded and analysed in the process of distilling the themes and constituent issues describing the career downshift experience (previously described in Chapter 6). Pseudonyms have been used to protect the anonymity of participants. The bolded text in quotes highlight the theme or constituent issue being described.

Theme I: Need for change

Participants’ initiation into the experience of downshifting typically began with a perceived need for change. This could be by way of encountering difficulties in the organisation (e.g., restructure, downsizing, or the appointment of a new Chief Executive Officer or equivalent), or experiencing discrepancies between their values, (or their performance), and what is required by the organisation. Others began to be dissatisfied with the nature of their work. It could be that organisational demands were perceived as simply too high, or they felt bored or stuck in terms of their role or day-to-day work activities. Some participants had some other specific work that they would prefer to do. Others simply wanted their life to be different – more time to spend with their families, more balance in their lives, more integrity in their career, or more autonomy. Many expressed wanting a better quality of life.

The need for change in some cases coincided with external events. Changes in family lifecycle (e.g., children leaving home and becoming less dependent, ageing parents), or personal crises (e.g., death or severe illness of family members) led to a re-evaluation of how work and family commitments could co-exist in a more balanced way. External events at work were also triggers to re-evaluation of work and career, although these events did not necessarily precipitate an immediate change in work behaviour or

career direction. Organisational downsizing, or culture change due to new corporate directions or new leaders, had a cumulative effect on some individuals leading to growing dissatisfaction and disaffection with their roles and careers in large organisations, in spite of rewards and stability. Typically, multiple factors contributed to participants' sensing a need for change, with a considerable time gap between initial feelings of dissatisfaction and eventually leaving the previous career (Section 7.2).

The seven variable constituents of this first theme are now amplified with illustrative quotes and examples.

Theme I.A: I'm encountering difficulties

The quote below is an example of how organisational restructure led a senior executive to question her loyalty to a multi-national company where she had been promoted several times over the course of over fifteen years.

“Well, people would be moved sideways and shunted away in a little office somewhere, offered redundancies. You see that go on, and you often have to become a part of that and move your staff around and I said ‘Look I don’t want to do this. I can’t treat people the way that management wants me to treat people. I can’t do that.’ And I just thought ‘Look you have to make a choice – your principles, what’s important to you, how you treat people and how you want to be treated’. I thought I just don’t like that attitude and I don’t want that to happen to me. It would have happened to me sooner or later because I wasn’t going to toe the party line.”

Rosemary, 46

Organisational changes and increasing demands on professionals also exacted their toll. Below is the case of a professional who was moved back to a role she had left a few years previously, a role that she now was no longer interested in, and in an environment which was extremely stressful.

“I didn’t have a very positive self-image. I wasn’t functioning as well as I needed to in my previous job. That was just painful, accepting that I really

wasn't doing well. I had to say to myself 'It's affecting me. Do I want to continue this?' That was very painful emotionally."

Yvonne, 54

Theme I.B: I'm dissatisfied/things are not right

Several participants became increasingly aware that their work was associated with a lifestyle which was not satisfactory. They were unhappy and felt that work was no longer meaningful or engaging.

*"I was really unhappy in my previous job. I think I was too self-sacrificing in a way. They were severely understaffed. And I'm single. I found that my **life was sort of empty**. I'd come home to this empty flat, and it gets freezing, especially in winter. I wouldn't eat properly. I'd watch TV, go to bed, get up, and go back to work. It was really grim. I do have a social life, and I have a lot of friends, but I found that I wasn't seeing them as much as I wanted to. Towards the end, I just found it was not satisfying. I felt **soulless** when I left. Like something barren. Empty. It was just dreadful."*

Kathy, 37

Theme I.C: Work takes too much away

The demands of work did not allow much time or energy left over for other non-work activities. Indeed, work pressures often contributed to decreased physical and psychological well-being. A few participants were aware that work related stress was affecting their physical health and they could not continue this form of work.

*"I'd have to go in there and make sense of it. Put out fires. It was **very, very intense**. I found that working those sorts of hours, under that sort of stress, and running three or four major projects on opposite ends of the world, just did nothing for my health. I just felt that my physical and mental health deteriorated, because I just couldn't keep it up anymore. I suppose you'd call it **burnout**, but I think it was just my body saying, 'Look, what are you doing?' The hours and the*

constant jetlag and never being able to eat good food because you're in and out of hotels and so forth just does nothing for your health."

Carolyn, 45

Theme I.D: I feel stagnated

Many of the participants had been in their senior or middle level positions for a number of years and were simply bored or felt a lack of personal challenge.

Organisational pressures were no longer perceived as challenges but as difficulties.

*"I got to about 41 and thought, 'I've done this for 20 years. **What am I going to do for the next 20 years of my working life?**' In terms of financial security and assets, you reach a level where dollars don't become as important to what you're doing. You reach a very comfortable level. I had no debt. All I was doing was working harder for not a lot of extra value. Except perhaps the bank account getting bigger. Becoming parents late in life also changed my priorities and I really was concerned that I wasn't spending a lot of time with my daughter. I wasn't finding work fulfilling, and I really wanted to be somewhere else. I was really just maintaining the status quo. I wasn't extending myself at all. I've chosen to actually go back to the university to learn some new skills. It gives me a chance to take a step sideways and go into a new area and learn some new skills"*

Lawrence, 44

Theme I.E: I want some other type of work

A few participants were dissatisfied with their work because they preferred to be involved in other careers. The previous occupation could originally have been selected because it felt right at an earlier time in one's life, it was part of a family tradition, or it was one adopted virtually due to circumstances. For one reason or the other these participants had remained in their previous occupations before downshifting to a career which was more in line with their perceived vocation. Some of these reasons for previously continuing in their former careers included supporting the family, or paying off debts/saving money while exploring an alternative career direction.

*“In one sense, the downshifting was me **lining myself up** more with what I’d always considered my **vocation**. I knew it was my vocation by what I felt drawn to, and preoccupied with. I’m dealing with people’s lives and pain, and teaching people how to cope with life, and how to be good at something – the two areas that have always interested me. I’ve **always felt** that my life has revolved around these two areas.”*

Vanessa, 50

Theme I.F: I want a better life

Often, the impetus for career downshifting was the hope for a better life, which was often associated with the words “more balanced”, or “healthier”, or “happier”.

*“My hopes and expectations were to live **a happier and more balanced life**. I think the shock for me was waking up and thinking, ‘**I am really unhappy**. I am really unhappy with my life,’ and that’s a pretty awful thing to wake up and suddenly realise. Mainly I wanted to feel more balanced and to feel more **sense of community** rather than being separate and in an ivory tower in the corporate world.”*

Carolyn, 45

Theme I.G: Something happened

Events were often triggers for re-evaluating work and its place in one’s life. These events could be from the non-work, personal realm, or from the work environment, or possibly a combination of both. The first quote is an example of a personal external trigger, and the second quote is an example of a trigger from the work environment itself.

*“**Separation** was a turning point. That’s probably a high and a low point. In one respect, there was a great deal of relief, and that sense of freeing up, the sense of the world opening up in terms of what direction your life takes. And the low point of that is obvious there were changes. I also had to re-establish somewhere to live. The other thing was I can recall coming to a recognition that to be*

*committed to parenting the children, I could no longer continue at [previous organisation]. That became the **crystallising kind of moment**. If I wanted to be around to pick up the kids from school, to take them to school, to do those sort of things, I couldn't continue working at the [previous organisation]."*

Sam, 43

*"The **culture change**, for me, was almost unbearable. We really went from being relatively relaxed and informal group, as an organisation, to being quite a bureaucratic, hierarchical type of organisation. It may have taken three entire years, from the start of the merger to finally get to the point where I really was convinced that, 'Yes, **out of here**' was the best thing to do. There was certainly a basic feeling of **loss of power, loss of autonomy, and loss of the ways in which I liked to work**. But they were all elements, I think. In the end, it was probably a **wearing down**."*

Lucia, 37

Summary of Theme I: Awareness of the need for change

In summary, participants became aware of the need for change in a variety of ways. Some encountered difficulties at work. Specific events such as changes in an organisation's corporate culture also contributed to feelings of dissatisfaction. Many participants spoke of burnout, physical exhaustion, stagnation and the lack of meaning in their work lives. Some felt that work demanded too much time and energy, and wanted a better life. Others were drawn to alternative careers. In a few cases, personal events such as death of a significant other, or breakdown of a significant relationship led to a re-evaluation of work, its nature and place in the broader perspective of life.

Theme II: Struggle with the need for change

Even though the pull towards change was great, in many cases, there was also a pull towards maintaining the status quo, since many participants as managers and professionals, had established for themselves a comfortable lifestyle that was fairly stable. This created an internal tension of wanting to leave, but being aware of the risks

involved in changing career in midlife, even fear of the consequences of career change. The two main routes explored by many participants were: (a) initially making changes within the organisation, for example making changes to their roles and activities taken, or working fewer hours; and/or (b) exploring possibilities outside the organisation in terms of similar activities, or a different career altogether.

Theme II.A: But I don't want to rock the boat

The following quotes exemplify the internal tension that many participants experience during their time of deciding whether to stay or whether to take a risk in changing careers in midlife. The quotes below also illustrate how some participants tried to cope with unsatisfactory work situations.

"There wasn't really anywhere really for me to go. So I spent a couple of years treading water, thinking you know, what do I do now? Do I stay here until I finish my time in the workforce and tread water, or is this a good time to make a change?"

Rosemary, 46

"I rationalised it – this is just a job, and focused on more of my private life. I tried to push it aside. It worked reasonably well for a period of time, but my life was not how I wanted it. But in the end it was a lot of time spent doing something that I was not really interested in."

Hans, 39

Theme II.B: I'll try to fit inside the organisation

The most common approach that many participants made was to see if they could make some adjustment to their role (e.g., change of activities, or extent of work commitments). However, many found that this provided only temporary respite.

*“I decided to persist [with the job]. I was uncomfortable, but I **had some counselling** about the discomfort and difficulties I was finding. I decided to stay in [year], but it didn’t get better.”*

Yvonne, 54

*“I could have left a bit sooner, but I think it’s like **the old straw that breaks the camel’s back syndrome**, really. I would imagine that most people who make the decision take months if not years, and have probably tried different solutions first. I did go to four days a week, instead of five. It was not just about having more time, it was the content of the work. I **became totally disillusioned with work**, and I just decided the time had come for me to leave. People can say what they like, but the main reason was that I was just **not coping with all that work and all this family stuff** [looking after ageing parents].”*

Gemma, 49

Theme II.C: I’ll see what’s possible

Some participants explored other career avenues and possibilities while they were still in their previous career. Popular career management literature (e.g., Chapman, 1988) refers to these searches for alternatives as “Plan B”. Even though many of these specific alternative plans do not eventuate, they form the basis of evaluating future career directions choices.

*“I spent six months exploring the idea of a [specific new business]. Again, it was a very masculine environment. It wasn’t very creative. At the end of the day, I’d be running a business. It would encroach in an area that I love – music. There’s sort of a romantic vision of doing something like that. But I think the people in the music industry are very difficult to work with. There are a lot of prima donnas in it. And I just thought ‘This is not for me. This is just more of the same.’ It would be stressful. It is very expensive to set up. You really need to have half a million dollars behind you to even consider doing it. And I just didn’t want to take those sort of risks. But it was a really **good learning curve** to go through – to work through it, and come out in the end saying ‘No, that’s not for*

me for these reasons.’ I think it was a very good experience. And I still have no regrets.”

Carolyn, 45

Theme II.D: But I’m fearful

Fear of change was common among participants. Given that many of the participants were in established, well-rewarded occupations with potential for further advancement within their organisations, or other organisations, the fear was typically related to moving into a relatively unknown career or industry, which would involve less money and status, at least initially.

*“But then again, it was difficult to make the change, or **make the jump** because you’re sort of thinking ‘Heck what am I going to do? There are the bills to pay, kids to bring up.’ We’d all like extra money but that nevertheless is tied to what you do and what your status is and the job what you’re doing is.”*

Robert, 44

*“The only thing stopping me from resigning was my **fear of insecurity**. Having been brought up in [European country] where I saw my parents struggle to put a meal on the table, this fear of not having enough money was very strong with me, and that’s the only thing that kept me going. Plus the fact that I knew that I didn’t want [my previous job], and the panic about what the hell could I do?”*

Jane, 50

Often, the career downshift was associated with the metaphor of making a jump of some sort.

*“Then there’s a question of changing to what. It’s like a fence I guess. It’s like a **gymkhana**, you’re not too sure until you’re over the fence, whether the horse is going to go. And quite often in your own mind, you come up to these fences, and you refuse. It’s **too scary** being out to whatever might be out there.”*

Bruno, 48 .

Theme II.E: But this career change is a risky proposition

Strongly associated with the fear of change was the fact that the career change was risky. Participants tended to view the change as non-reversible with material and psychological consequences if they failed in their subsequent careers.

*“I weighed it up for a long time. I tossed it all up for a long time. And it was because it was going to be **an irrevocable decision**. I mean, once it’s made, I couldn’t then turn around and say, ‘I want to come back’. The deciding factor was parenting the children. Probably if I could’ve had more flexibility with the hours at the [previous organisation], it might’ve been more difficult. But in the end the decision that was made had to be the decision, otherwise I would have simply ended up a weekend parent. Which is something I certainly didn’t want to do.”*

Sam, 43

Theme II.F: Do I really have to change my old way of doing things?

As part of the career change, many of the participants had to come to terms with the fact that the changes would be fairly substantial and cause discomfort.

*“I think the pull internally is always extremely difficult at the time because there’s the pull to run back to what you knew and **what’s familiar**, and hide in it. The other side, **the unfamiliar**, can be terrifying and exciting all at once. So it’s the two extremes.*

Carolyn, 45

It was tempting for many to accept their previous organisation’s terms, or revert back to a similar type of job after a break from their previous job or holiday. However, many participants found this to be equally distressing. It is as though they had let themselves down by reverting to a familiar pattern, rather than continuing to forge new ground with their career change.

*“One of my options was to accept the [previous] job on their terms, and use the time to find something else. But I couldn’t do that. It would have done terrible damage to my **integrity**. And I would have probably tried to find another job of similar ilk. I would have just gone into something similar. I wouldn’t have been courageous and try to strike out to find something new.”*

Zoe, 49

*“After my return to Australia from overseas, I was quite depressed. I spent the first couple of weeks pissing around the kitchen here, just feeling pretty shell-shocked. Then I had a telephone call from someone who knew a friend of mine who asked me if I would be interested in doing two days work for her. By the time I’d been there for 3-4 months, she asked me whether I’d do her job for her while she was away. I said I’d prefer not to, but she was fairly encouraging and they made it worth my while, so I accepted to do it for a further 6 months. I proceeded to **hate myself** for it, most of the time, because I felt **I’d let myself be slurped back** into my previous occupational style, rather than making a clean break that I’d obviously made by going overseas.”*

Lucia, 37

Summary of Theme II: Struggle with the need for change

Thus, the decision to change careers was not taken lightly. All participants struggled with the need to change their careers in some form or another. Participants initially tried to cope with feelings of dissatisfaction by making adjustments at work (e.g., changing work activities or reducing work commitments), or focussing on their non-work lives. Ultimately, they faced anxieties about making a possible change and assessed the risks associated with making a possible change.

Theme III: Feeling down

The third consistent theme among participants was feeling down, especially soon after leaving their previous occupations. This does not imply depression, but includes

negative moods, experiencing a sense of grief or loss, remorse or regret. Sometimes the metaphor of a descent of some kind was described.

Theme III.A: Feeling down/low

Here is an example of how one participant described her experience of feeling low during the initial period of her career transition. It was not uncommon to have issues other than the career transition surface during this time.

*“Oh, shocking depression, anxiety, feeling of terrible guilt. I think I’ve denied a lot of grief over a lot of things throughout my life, and they all came up to the surface during this time. It’s been a total clearing out of stuff, and allowing the new to come in, and unless I’d done that this side of it wouldn’t have happened. But that side was so dark and so horrible that I think most people wouldn’t have allowed themselves to go in that deep. It’s so hard, but it’s definitely part of the process of changing your career. You have to **clear the decks** to be truly able to concentrate on this new life.”*

Carolyn, 45

Theme III.B: Grief/loss

Feelings of grief or loss in career downshifting may be associated with loss of income or status, or specific aspects of work such as people or particular activities.

*“I said to my boss that I thought that I should resign. And he said ‘No, I don’t want you to resign because you have such a lot of experience in this place. You are very valuable. We wouldn’t want you to lose your expertise. Let me have a think about it.’ So a few days later he came back to me and said ‘Rather than resign, perhaps you would be prepared to take a **move downwards** to relinquish the management position, but stay here in some other role.’ I thought about that for a little while and that seemed OK. It wasn’t ideal, but it seemed OK. But the consequences in terms of it actually being put into place were very difficult. There was a lot of grieving over that. To move my office was very distressing. He then elevated one of the other staff members ... He gave my job to her. She*

*didn't compete for it, he gave it to her. **She got my office. She got my staff. She got my job.** And that was very difficult."*

Iris, 49

*"The only real negative which I hadn't anticipated was that I **missed the people.** I hadn't realised to what extent my social work revolved around work and my work colleagues. I think it was simply like I'd want to talk to someone, other than my partner. I'd have to make an effort. It's not like going around to corner office and having a cup of coffee and a chat. Again I'm an introvert anyway and I don't mind being on my own. But I did occasionally feel isolated."*

Francis, 57

Theme III.C: Doubt/remorse/regret

Perhaps not surprisingly, there could also be feelings of remorse or regret about the decision to downshift. Some participants questioned whether they had made the right decision. There may also be some remorse and regret about the loss of previous income and relative status in an organisation's hierarchy.

*"It is very **unsettling.** Extremely unsettling. Sometimes, maybe not so much now, but certainly in the first year, there was '**How could I have made that decision? I'm crazy.**' I guess there's a bit of **hurt pride** when I meet people I used to work with. People who are in managerial positions are hearing that I'm doing a lot of casual work. I have to go through the constant reminding myself, why I left. But there's a part of me which likes to get dressed up in the Italian suits and the shoes, and the silk shirt and look the executive. That hasn't died completely. It's changing slowly."*

Natalie, 41

*"There are a number of people left in the area that I left who are now **commanding quite high salaries.** They are people whom I had stripped past them in the move up the ladder. So I know full well that if I'd had stayed in [previous organisation], I'd have got a lot more money than what I'm getting now. However, the work would not have been as invigorating. Even people who*

are astute businessmen, probably go through 'What if?' On occasions, I've often thought back 'What if I had stayed there? What if?' But the thing is, bad luck. That decision is gone. There's always a bit of remorse."

Nicholas, 50

Theme III.D: Metaphors of a descent

Metaphors of a descent were also associated with describing this phase of feeling down or low. Typical were "jump" or words describing some downward movement.

"I worried that I might not actually have the guts to jump off. I guess that scared me."

Hans, 39

"It really is putting a whole phase of your life behind you. I call it a grief reaction. I suppose it's a sense of loss. It's a bit like slipping off the cliff. But once you do, you step out into the abyss, but who knows where you may fall? So many of the common, consistent, solid supports, like my job, my family and so on, just simply weren't there. It was like several huge shifts all at once. But where I'm at with it now is actually stepping off and flying. A soft landing somewhere."

Sam, 43

Summary of Theme III: Feeling down

Participants at some stage experienced feeling down, such as grief, loss, doubt, remorse, and/or regret. At one extreme a few participants recalled feeling depressed. At another extreme, a few participants experienced only slight feelings of loss (e.g., loss of income, status, work structure or social networks at work).

Theme IV: Facing difficulties and confronting issues

The fourth theme which participants inevitably encountered was facing difficulties and confronting substantial issues which arose from career downshifting. Virtually all participants faced the issue of how to live with less money. Other issues included coming to terms with loss of status, having to re-evaluate one's professional identity, if not the major part of one's identity without one's previous job, facing the reality of making one's way in a new career and/or industry, finding a way of dealing with being out of step with the mainstream culture where material success is the dominant cultural value. Whether there was enough time in one's life to do what one wanted was also a significant issue, especially in the context of participants being in midlife. Another issue was what new career direction an individual wanted to move towards.

Theme IV.A: How do I live with less money?

Virtually all participants had to scale down their lifestyle in terms of spending. (One participant, however, was in the fortunate position of being financially independent, and retained an independent source of high income from investments, in spite of his career downshifting.) This generally meant cutting down on expenses, discriminating between essential and non-essentials.

*“The consequences are largely the cash flow thing. I’ve downshifted my needs, like **clothing** for instance. I used the old **therapy of shopping**. I’ve stopped buying clothes. I am going to just wear everything out. I haven’t had to throw anything out because it is worn out. I like that idea. People don’t actually wear out their clothing, they stop wearing them because it is not in fashion anymore, or they don’t like the colour anymore. **Cars**, I’ve always liked cars. But now I am quite happy to have a very ordinary car, a very cheap car that gets me around. So being conscious about what we really need. Not being an impulsive buyer.”*

Hans, 39

A few participants were resentful of material limitations to their current downshifted lifestyle.

*“I’m not a great saver, and I just lived for the day. I was great at **retail therapy**. Dinner with friends used to be a regular occurrence. Without ever sort of thinking, \$25 here, \$25 there or whatever. I just did it. That has **changed dramatically**, really dramatically. So now when I go out with friends, I think about what I’m doing and what I’m spending. And there’s a little bit of **resentment** there at this stage in my life. But I guess I see it as a temporary thing. I feel that I can get quite a good job. I’m quite optimistic. I’m seeing this as a transition phase which is difficult.”*

Naomi, 50

Not all participants were resentful of having less money. Some were philosophical about how they would manage during their period of career change before they became more established in the new career.

*“The negative I can say first up, is financial. You do not get paid quite so much money for not working full-time. But that, I think, can be controlled by the amount of expenditure that you can get away with not spending. I **travel a lot less**. I used to take a lot **more holidays** further away, and I used to stay in fairly much **more expensive kinds of accommodation**. I guess it’s all about budgeting. I’m just going for the cheaper option with practically everything now. I’m not spending as much on **maintenance around the house**. I’m putting up with things that don’t absolutely necessarily need to be done. I’m looking at actually not earning a significant income again for the **next four years**, so there will be a series of **bandaiding approaches** happening for the next four years. After which, I expect that I’ll be earning a respectable income again, and I’ll catch up with all of these things that I’m simply letting slide for the four years. I figure my priorities, financially, now are to pay for my studies and to take fewer but still much-deserved holidays. But to do them differently. For example, the trip to Bali, was at very, very minimal cost. I was still able to do it because I used to travel so much that I’d built up an enormous bank of **frequent flier points**, so I*

got to Bali for nothing and it's a cheap place to travel."

Lucia, 37

Still others were philosophical in coming to terms with earning less money. They emphasised that they valued other things (e.g., inner states and relationships) more than money and material possessions.

*"I have been living on income that is quite low for someone who has postgraduate qualifications. I hear people saying 'I can't change jobs because it would mean a drop in income.' Whereas because of my history, and the type of person I am, I tend to consider the satisfaction of a job, or that I'm doing the right thing, or whether I'm getting somewhere, or I'm doing what I want, than whether I'm earning a particular type of salary. And I don't have children that I'm now supporting, so I can reduce my level of income. These two things probably are very important factors in my **equanimity** in downshifting. My family history is such that I came from a family that was quite poor and always managed. So in a sense I have lived on very small amounts of money most of the time when I was growing up. I **just do without**. It just feels like this is what life is like. Sometimes you have it and sometimes you don't. Money represents a capacity to be able to do things one wants to do. But it's not something that I absolutely invest myself in. I **invest myself in more ethereal things** – ideals, like contributing to society, being happy in a sense of experiences that don't necessarily cost money."*

· Vanessa, 50

A number of participants, however, were distressed when they had unexpected substantial expenses for which their savings were no longer adequate. The consequence of this was that they borrowed money from relatives, considered (although not necessarily accepted) unemployment benefits, or reverted back to a similar occupation which they considered a compromise.

*"I did some casual work. I was a census collector, and I found I liked that - knocking on people's doors. I did tutoring. And then I **broke a tooth** and had to borrow money from my father. When I had to **ask Dad for money**, that was*

*absolutely the pits. So that was dreadful and I found it awful contemplating **being on the dole**, unemployment benefits.”*

Yvonne, 54

*“Towards the end of last year, when our house started falling down, it became clear that the extension we wanted was more of a priority to my wife. I had just dismissed it with a wave of the hand when I quit, but it had meant something much more to her. As a result of this consulting retainer, we were actually able to reblock the house and to paint it, which were the two things which needed doing. But we have **not made a house mortgage repayment** for 2½ years, and we are nowhere near being able to afford a house extension ... [An ex-colleague] invited me to do some consulting in a specialist capacity to an organisation which was his client. And I initially refused because I was out of consulting. And he said ‘You can be whatever you like, you aren’t feeding your family.’ And I fought it for a long time, and eventually took it. And that assignment turned itself into what is now a retainer to provide services to that organisation. I felt it was a **compromise**. I’d quit that world. I was never going back to it again. It was a big struggle for me to come to terms with that. Here was something that I was absolutely, unequivocally and deliberately doing for money only. It was the only reason why I was doing it. And I had sort of made a commitment to never do anything for money ever again. I still feel guilty about it.*

Benjamin, 46

Theme IV.B: But I miss the recognition and respect

Some participants also had difficulties with coming to terms with the loss of status.

*“It’s an issue of **status**, particularly. I never thought I was particularly ambitious or sought management, but when I had it and the office, the American Express Corporate Card, the business card, the title, and when I relinquished it, it was a loss of status. It impacted enormously on my sense of self esteem and confidence in myself. I felt like I’m being diminished in the eyes of my friends by no longer having this status.”*

Iris, 49

For others, “status” per se was not the issue. It was a matter of loss of respect and recognition for the role and contribution they had previously made.

*“Because I was in a senior position, I carried a certain amount of authority and I got a certain amount of respect from the job, without even thinking about it. I had a **place in the world**. Now I have to generate my own sense of self worth, reminding myself that what I’m doing is worth doing. I still struggle with that because there is no feedback as there is in the world of work. No acknowledgement or recognition. There is no one who knocks on your door and says ‘Can you give us some advice on this?’”*

Francis, 57

Theme IV.C: How do I deal with the fear and uncertainty?

Since participants had been established for some time in their previous occupations and held relatively senior positions within specific organisational hierarchies, they were leaving situations which were known and familiar, even comfortable at some level. Since many participants did not have ready-made positions or careers to move into, they experienced fear and uncertainty. Even those who had jobs to go to after they resigned from their previous positions had adjustments to make in the new organisations.

*“Fear is the biggest hindrance. **Fear of the unknown**. Fear of gosh, will it happen? Waiting for an answer. Waiting for outcomes from interviews. Also the feeling as though there’s a certain **lack of control**.”*

Clayton, 53

Theme IV.D: Who am I now that I don’t have my previous job?

One of the most critical issues faced by participants was realising that their identity as a person was intertwined with their professional identity. The career downshifting created a rift in some participants’ sense of identity and who they were.

*“I’m still **taking refuge in work**, on the surface because it pays the bills. I have to do that. But I also think that there is an element of fear, that if I did actually stop completely, just who am I? It’s so easy to say ‘I work at [organisation]’ or ‘I’m a trainer’ or ‘I’m a consultant’. If I’m not all those things anymore, or if I’m only part-time, then what am I the rest of the time? **Who am I?**”*

Zoe, 49

A particular difficulty was how they would represent themselves to others who did not know them before their career downshifting, especially if they had not fully established themselves in their new career.

*“When you go out for dinner or something. You are introduced to other people, and the first question is **‘What do you do?’** It is not ‘who are you?’, but ‘What do you do?’ I don’t think it is right, but it is a fact of life. And I think we are slightly tinged with it.”*

Jane, 50

Theme IV.E: I didn’t think the new direction would be this difficult.

It was not uncommon for participants to strike difficulty in actualising their new career direction, including impasses, failures and lack of progress.

*“I’ve been a tax deduction for the last two years. I’ve **been my wife’s dependent** for two years because every cent that I earn is gobbled up by the business. So I’ve spent close to \$100,000 over the last two years on building and developing [business], and it is a long way from being profitable. It won’t pay me an income for a long time yet. We’re planning to have a baby. There are a lot of barriers in the way to that, but if we have a baby, I’ll just have to get a paying job. God knows what. I’m impossible to manage. I wouldn’t like to have a subordinate like me. And I can’t suffer fools gladly. I have worked for a lot of fools, and I can’t keep quiet about it. The emperor doesn’t appreciate being told he doesn’t have any clothes.”*

Mark, 47

Those who were hoping to find employment in areas where they had no previous expertise encountered the harsh realities of being one of many job seekers, feeling that their previous work experience was frequently not recognised, let alone valued. There was a large gap between deciding on a new career direction and actually succeeding in it.

*“I hope to do some [specific work]. But everyone was wanting experience. Everybody has to start at the bottom of the company and work up. I don’t have an objection to that, except to take 20 years to work up. I suppose I didn’t want to be there for 10 years, and never get to where I wanted. I knew I had a lot of good skills, and people would say that I had these skills, but I probably ran into a lot more brick walls. I thought that if they see me and they listen to me, I’ll be OK. But the trouble is you’ve got to get past the phone call and the job application and I don’t even make it, to even speak to them. **I was just a number**, one of many applying for the job. I thought that once I decided on what I wanted, I would be able to just go and get it. It doesn’t work like that.”*

Lyn, 43

Theme IV.F: How do I deal with being out of step with the “career culture”?

Since all the participants had left well paid managerial or professional positions for careers with less certainty, and less income, at least initially, they encountered the issue of being out of step with a culture where success is typically measured by more money or status as determined by position in a hierarchy. In Chapter 2, I reviewed Albert’s (1994) notion of the “career culture” and how a downshifter is perceived to be out of step by others, as well as themselves.

While partners of downshifting participants typically supported the career move, other relatives, particularly parents, or parents of partners, did not show much understanding, let alone moral support for the move.

“My wife’s parents were probably mildly concerned that I’d given up a good career and were certainly relieved when I started to find a bit of consulting work to do. My father was not really concerned. He probably thought it would be

*good for me to stop doing something that he perceived that I wasn't enjoying. I suppose that was supportive, in that way. But I think that for that **generation** of people, they **don't have a very good understanding** of what we see as the career change process. He didn't understand. He couldn't imagine the range of outcomes that I could imagine, or experience the types of emotional binds that I did. There was not really any way of bridging that gap; there was **no way that he could understand** or that I could explain."*

Paul, 41

Ex-colleagues were not always understanding or encouragement either.

"When I left my previous work, some of my colleagues -- it was very clear they could not understand how somebody could sort of leave something that's quite secure for something that's quite unknown and that uncertain. ... It may be that I had less responsibility. I only have responsibility for myself whereas most of my colleagues had families."

Hans, 39

For some participants, being out of step with the career culture was experienced as a generalised worry about what others might think about their unconventional career move.

*"I was concerned about **what other people would think**. I wondered whether people would think that I was **copping out**, or having a **midlife crisis**. I'm surprised at the number of people that say they envy what I've done. I sort of got on the **treadmill** and you think you've just got to keep going, power along and get a **better car and a better house** and better holidays. You're competitive. You're relentless in the way you go about doing your job. **Whoever has the most toys at the end wins**, sort of stuff. It's a childish exercise."*

Lawrence, 44

*"I don't know about hindrances, but obstacles. The mental obstacle was the fact that **people would wonder** about [my] redundancy. They would wonder about the terms of [my] redundancy. As we know in some industries, people who are*

made redundant, they're not made redundant voluntarily. They haven't planned it. Whereas, I believe I planned it."

Nicholas, 50

A few participants clearly articulated their career move as being antithetical to the norms they were socialised within, or to current societal norms.

*"I come from a Christian tradition, which is **Protestant work ethic**. You earn your place. You've been given a good education, you've been dealt good health, intelligence, energy, etc, etc, and you need to put that back into society.*

Zoe, 49

*"I think I'd become **very institutionalised** before I left. I just think I that I had gotten into this **9 to 5 rut** ... It felt as though it was going to be difficult to achieve [my dreams]. There was always a **family message** that one should work hard, and one should work full-time. Possibly, **society** says we need to be always working at a particular pace, to be **worthwhile and acceptable**."*

Lucia, 37

Theme IV.G: Do I have enough time?

Time was another challenge for participants. While many participants experienced having more time from their career downshift to spend with their families or pursuing their own interests, some participants failed to anticipate that they would not necessarily have more time after their career change. This issue particularly applied to participants who were undertaking training or explorations that would facilitate their new career direction.

*"I **don't have much spare time**. The lines have become very blurred between work and spare time. There is no clear cut line as before. Before you could say that's work and you leave the office, and then that's your spare time. Whereas now it seems like it's all my spare time, and sometimes I get paid for it. I have a tendency to do a lot of things. I hear about things, and I just think, wow I want to do this, I should do this, and then I have this list of things that I could do that I*

*have to add to my list, and it just gets bigger and bigger and bigger. I'm just trying to keep up with the day to day things. So it's kind of gets overwhelming. There are **limitations of time.**"*

Hans, 39

The second issue with time was whether one had enough time left in the course of one's lifetime to accomplish what one has set out to do – an issue typically linked to midlife and concerns about the consequences of ageing. This second aspect of time was more of a concern for participants over 45 years.

*"One of the huge things that I did not take into account was the effects of being the age I am. I had to do 6 years of study part-time. And when I finish, how old am I going to be? How is it going to be an older [professional]? There are also issues that come up around this age for a female – **menopause.** Another factor was my **elderly mother** – something that I had not considered. I didn't think it would be so competitive. And I guess, because of the menopause, because of having issues with my mother now, the energy that I had is much less than what I anticipated at the time. So **energy**, actual physical and emotional energy is much less than I have had, or that I anticipated."*

Naomi, 50

Theme IV.H: What is the contribution I want to make?

While some participants had a particular career direction in mind, a third (Section 7.2.2) had left their previous careers without any certainties. Many of these were aware of what they did not want, but less aware of what they did want. Thus, one of the difficulties encountered by participants involved finding a new career direction which would incorporate a meaningful way to contribute to society and provide an acceptable standard of living, to which they had been accustomed.

*"I've always said that the **leaving decision has two components.** There's the 'I've got to get out of here' decision, and the 'where am I going?' decision, which wasn't really made for me until a year later, 13-14 months later. The two things*

are quite unrelated. There was quite a deal of soul searching about 'where am I going?' decision in the year after the 'I have to leave here' decision."

Benjamin, 46

Summary of Theme IV: Facing difficulties and confronting issues

Participants faced several issues and difficulties associated with their radical career change. Besides having to adjust to earning less income and status, many were unprepared for challenges such as uncertainties and difficulties in establishing a new career. Negative or unsupportive reactions of others led many participants to realise that they were out of step with a culture which predominantly valued progress. A number of participants also sensed their identity undergoing some change and redefinition as a result of their disengagement from their previous careers.

Theme V: Incubation

At some stage of the downshifting experience, participants were involved in some aspect of reconstructing themselves. Typically, this process of reconstruction involved taking some "time out", re-evaluating one's life and one's identity, seeking support from others, overcoming hindrances, dealing with uncertainties, coming to a position of greater clarity and formulating a plan or direction.

Theme V.A: "Time out"

Many participants took some "time out" as part of their downshifting transition. This may or may not have coincided with feelings of feeling low. In effect, this period of "time out" is about slowing down, living at a slower pace than their previously stressful, active careers. Some participants went on holidays. Others stayed at home, being occupied by tasks such as home maintenance, recreational activities, or simply having unstructured time for reflection.

During this "time out" there was a retreat from the active pursuit of work related activities. Psychologically, participants consciously "shifted gears" to a much slower,

less active life, at least temporarily. The intended effect of “time out” was generally to disengage from the previous career and daily routines around the previous career structure, creating an “unfrozen” state where new beginnings and possibilities might emerge from within the individual, or might impact from the external environment.

*“I did that career assessment process, but I did that in a half hearted way. For quite a few months, I just didn’t want to do anything. Didn’t want to do work. I was so exhausted that I just wanted to basically **not do anything**. I was getting up late in the morning. I was **making motions to be seen to be doing something**, but in my heart of hearts, I didn’t want to do that.”*

Natalie, 41

*“For the next few months, it was a really interesting time because I had never had an extended period of long service leave, or maternity leave or anything like that. I had basically been working for 25 years, and had never had that space of time. There was a sense of ‘This is what I’ve needed to do. Time and space. I’d never had that before. I deserve it. I’ve worked hard. I’ve put into society for 25 years. I deserve this, and I’m going to enjoy this.’ I went to Port Fairy for the first time. Did a couple of CAE courses. Generally a rejuvenation. A sense of beginning to **recreate myself** and this is the transition that I am currently in, I suppose.”*

Zoe, 49

The participant quoted below was very clear about the impact of having “time out” – it provided her with a lived experience of how it would be like not to have a lifestyle different to that dictated by a previously well-paid but stressful job. It enabled her to choose a new career direction which incorporated elements of the lifestyle she discovered during her “time out”.

“So when I left, I really expected that I was going to miss work and that I would start going stir crazy, after not a very long time, like I’m talking about weeks or couple of months or something. And I would be desperate to get back into the workforce. It was only, 9 or 10 months down the track that I started to think about it. It wasn’t because I was craving getting back to work, at that stage I was

*getting concerned about money. I need to get out there and earn some money now and by that stage, I really decided that something part-time would be ideal. Having had the experience of those 9-10 months of not working, it was like, Woah, I actually quite like this. **This would be nice to have, retain this 2-3 days a week, but still have some income and have the stimulation from actually going to work.**"*

Libby, 43

Theme V.B: Re-evaluation

In participants' re-evaluation of their life priorities, typical questions wrestled with were: "What do I want to do with my life?", "What is the role of work in my life?", "Who am I?", "What is important to me?". Many participants disclosed that they had periods of self-confrontation. Others went through extended periods of introspection and attending to their inner life with activities such as journal writing, attending to dreams, and undertaking psychotherapy. Some participants who had come to better terms with their career change through this process of re-evaluation also mentioned that they had renewed appreciation of themselves, their skills, and ability to make meaningful contributions through their new work.

*"In my younger life, I spent 5 years travelling around Europe, and then you had a pack on your back, and you were the sum total of your pack ... I began to think like that again. I'm making all this money, but really I just don't want to do it anymore and there are other things more important than my work. If I could have existed all those years in Europe with a pack on my back with just enough money to get by on, then surely I can do the same sort of thing down the track when that sort of lifestyle is no longer important ... It was a process of **re-evaluating my life**, see what things were important. And it changes your whole perspective about who you are and what you want to do and why you want to them. What things are important."*

Rosemary, 46

Below is an example of a participant whose re-evaluation of work and the place of work in her life was interwoven with a reappraisal of who she was in the context of her relationships and family of origin.

*“I think I’m my own biggest hindrance. I’m not as acknowledging of my own skills as others are. Also, my **eldest brother** is one of those eccentric genius types who always excelled 100% at anything. He was a straight A student. Scholarships. Now, he’s earning over \$1 million a year [overseas]. I just don’t achieve to the same level as he does. He’s one of the exceptions, and I’m one of the above-averages. I found that quite difficult. I’m highly competitive. Actually coming to terms with who I am is the biggest hindrance for me. I’m still living with that. Just **coming to terms with things I don’t like about myself, my family, and becoming a bit more integrated.**”*

Kathy, 37

Theme V.C: Finding resources

An important part of reconstruction is finding resources to sustain oneself through the transition. These resources could be within oneself, or found in one’s partner, or in other significant others such as friends, family, a mentor, or in a professional such as vocational counsellor or psychotherapist. Other resources include books and tapes pertinent to the career change or transition process. Training courses (either vocational or general) were also relevant resources for some participants.

Participants spoke mainly of other people in terms of **socio-emotional** support. Less often did participants mention **instrumental** support from friends or colleagues (e.g., providing contacts regarding possible work opportunities, networking). Courses, books and tapes were discussed in terms of providing **informational** support, but these also provided socio-emotional support in terms of reminding participants that they were not alone in their downshifting or transition experiences.

Theme V.C1: Self as resource

Resources within oneself that participants cited included general qualities such as courage, belief in themselves, and confidence. Others mentioned particular skills such as being self-reliant, assertiveness, or ability to self-soothe (e.g., “escaping” into hobbies as a relief). Specific activities were also a resource; these included planning a trial run of a possible career before committing wholeheartedly to the new direction, or remembering memories of similar transition experiences and one’s success at the transition (e.g., migration to Australia, solo travel overseas).

*“It’s thinking about it and worrying about what’s going to happen and you make your decision then doing it is really easy. That’s the easiest part. Preparing for it and worrying about it, am I doing the right thing. That’s the hard part. Once you make a decision, you just do it, and you find the strength, and you find a lot of things about yourself. The **hidden strengths** that carry you through.”*

Rosemary, 46

*“In one sense it doesn’t matter going back in status in my actual job. In another sense it does matter because I am a much older worker, far more mature. I can feel the structural limitations and I can feel the patronising language. I am subject to the individual contracts from management and I can tell how they treat workers, with less respect than they do managers. But because I’ve been in other positions, I’ve got a bit **more hide or guts to stand up**. In a sense, they have structural authority, but I have more **personal authority** coming from my age. I can stand toe to toe a lot better.”*

Vanessa, 50

Theme V.C2: Relationship partner as resource

Participants with relationship partners consistently cited their partner as important supports through the transition.

*“[My partner’s support?] It is hard to be specific. **Everything** really. Being positive about the whole decision. Being encouraging. Making me realise that I*

*had nothing to lose. Being understanding. There was no pressure to say 'You should be doing this, or you should be doing nothing at all.' Really **positive** in helping me realise that I could do what I want, and helped me define what I wanted."*

Francis, 57

*"[Partner] has always been supporting of any decision I make. He was a bit anxious about going for a period of time without an income from me. But that was more about **his anxieties about money than wanting to stop me.**"*

Gemma, 49

Nevertheless, some partners were not initially supportive, or supportive in an unconditional way, as the following participant explained.

*"Supports? My **partner** always. Although I think she was a bit aghast when I said I was going to leave [organisation]. She was aghast when I relinquished the management position. I think she actually felt that I should have hung on because there was so much **reflected glory** in it for her. I don't think it is unfair to her to say that, but she has now come to realise that I needed to do it for myself. But in spite of what she might have privately thought, she has been a steady emotional support all the way through. And an encouragement in the things that I do."*

Iris, 49

While there may have been conscious or less conscious assumptions from participants for their partners to provide support, partners could not provide all the support required by the downshifting participant. Often, other people were also important resources.

*"My wife is a significant source of support. She's a very different person to me ... She tries, but she's **not terribly good at lifting me up**, at motivating me, but my **business partner** is great. She really gets me pumped up again, and reminds me what the big picture is. My **mentor** and **supervisor** has been fantastic. And we*

have a reasonably strong group of friends.”

Mark, 47

Theme V.C3: Other people as resource

Even though participants were in midlife, many considered their **parents** as important reference points. There was a tendency for participants to want their parents to understand and support their career direction, although many participants also faced the added issue of not having parents who could provide active support.

*“I guess my **parents** were supportive ... I was actually quite surprised by that because they were of the era where you joined a company and worked your way up and you don't change ... I expected them to think about financial security, but in fact they saw I was unhappy for 18 months and I wasn't comfortable with the environment anymore.”*

Rosemary, 46

*“My **mother and father** try hard to understand, but don't really cope with it. I guess they're there in the sense that they're my mother and father. And if something happened to me, they'd pick up the pieces, but they don't quite approve of my lifestyle ... So they're there, but they're **not the strongest support** ... There would also be a handful of friends ... They just **accept me as who I am.**”*

Iris, 49

*“My father, who's 88 is worried that I don't have a job. My sister's been all right, but my brother-in-law was quite negative one day ... **Why haven't I got a job? What's wrong with me?** Things like that. That surprised me, because I've always found my family supportive.”*

Yvonne, 54

Older **children** (e.g., teenagers) appeared more understanding of their parents career direction than were younger children.

*“Being around your kids is often more of a satisfaction for parents, than it is for the **children**. My teenagers are happy and self-sufficient. They don’t lack much. But the fact that you are around more, really doesn’t make much difference to them, because they have a lot of things that they want to do with their friends. The satisfaction is more for me. My daughter is 18, and she’s not really one for worrying about money. My son [who is younger] is more of a money bags person. So the negativity has come more in ‘I wish we could get such and such by now -- modem and computer equipment.’ But I think there was acceptance that there would be less money, a bit grudging sometimes, but not really seriously ‘I’m disappointed in you Dad’.*

Bruno, 48

*“Eighteen months after I quit my then 8-year old daughter got absolutely sick and tired of attempting to explain to her classmates what I did. So she got her teacher to invite me to address her grade and told them what I did. And when I finished, she said [to her classmates] ‘See, **I don’t understand [what my father does] any more [than you do]!’.**”*

Benjamin, 46

Friends were an important resource, even though many did not understand why the participant had undertaken a career transition with obvious disadvantages of less money.

*“Some of my long-standing friends didn’t desert me. They couldn’t understand it. They tried to understand it, but they **didn’t understand**, and still don’t understand. But they have tried. They’ve been very good. They’ve been bewildered, but they’ve **been steadfast**.”*

Bernard, 57

A few participants even actively sought out others who had undertaken similar transitions in order to obtain mutual support.

*“A friend and I had put together a **support group for our own needs** with two other female friends whom we met through [organisation]. We were all facing*

real issues in our lives. We'd meet fortnightly and we were using [organisation's] facilities, in a very unstructured way, for all of us. We'd meet and we'd tell our stories, of what we'd been doing, what's been happening for us, where we're at. That's been really helpful. There is no leader, or facilitator. It's completely unstructured. Sometimes one person will take up the bulk of the night, and sometimes we'll all say something. But companions along the way, if you like."

Zoe, 49

Not all participants were supported by their friends who were committed to specific world views and lifestyles. Here is how one participant made sense of reactions from others.

*"The supports were friends and colleagues whom I would seek out. Some were probably hindrances too. They said 'How can you do it?' I think for some people, their **own fears** would over-ride. They couldn't conceive of resigning. 'What's out there? How can you do it?' That's based on their own fears about security, stability, job status and so on. Others were very **envious**. They just felt sort of trapped, or unable to leave with the mortgages or concern that they couldn't get a position elsewhere. Because I had a position to go to."*

Sam, 43

Mentors or specific people who were working in areas of the desired career direction were important resources for some participants, in terms of being a role model or for providing motivation. In the first quote below, Ken describes his conscious choice of mentors or role models. In the second example given below, Benjamin also cited key books which influenced his world view, which in turn influenced his career direction.

"I was looking at my mentors in [specific industry]. I decided that you need to have a mentor, you have to have someone you accept as a teacher and do what they say. And the reason you do that is because they are where you want to be. How else can you get there if you don't have a mentor? Very hard to do it on your own ... At the end of the day I couldn't see I wanted to be where they were. It was a value thing ... At the same time I was involved in [another industry] and

my mentor in that business had what to me was the best of both worlds which was a good income and time to enjoy it ... So I compared the people I saw as my mentors and then I actually changed mentors."

Ken, 49

"In terms of personal world views, the three most important books have been 'A brief history of everything' by Ken Wilber, 'Blood, bread and roses' by Judith Grahn, and 'The creation of settings and the future of society' by Sarason. I might throw meeting and having in my home Ernesto Sirroli. He has made his living for 28 years doing economic development in rural communities. I've met quite remarkable people in the last few years, and that's probably been another revelation and another source of support in many ways, is the realisation that there is nothing new in what I'm saying ... What makes the difference is that they live what they believe."

Benjamin, 46

Vocational **counselling or psychotherapy** was cited by a number of participants as facilitating an alternative perspective on their life, or contributing a platform from which to launch a new career direction.

*"Well I actually went to the **Victorian Voice Dialogue** people who had been recommended by a friend. The weight of the world was gone from my shoulders, having realised that **my whole entire life had been driven by my Pusher, and my Achiever**, those unrelenting parts of me which just pushes and pushes, but never allows me to have the satisfaction with what I've actually done. Realising that there were other parts which needed to be satisfied and could have a say in my life, I relaxed significantly and whilst I kept looking for work, I **wasn't totally driven** and upset and anxiety ridden about it."*

Libby, 43

Below is an extended quote from a woman who cited numerous sources of support, but found psychotherapy to be the most important.

*“The **personal therapy helped enormously** in that I didn’t have to carry the stuff on my own as I did previously. I used to bottle up a lot of stuff ... it gave me a forum for having someone who was totally there for me during that period of time. I was able to see what I was experiencing in the total context of my life as a human being and being able to trace a lot of behavioural stuff back to my defences and my family upbringing. I didn’t have any comprehension of that process before. That helped enormously ... It also helped meeting other people who had very similar life stages and were questioning in a similar sort of way. The other thing that was supportive was my reading. Midlife change and women. The people that I met and the reading that I did confirmed what I was going through was not just a crazy thing. And the notion that change takes time and it is not a quick thing. Looking at changing patterns that have been ingrained like 20, 30 years and that it is very unrealistic to change those patterns in a couple of months. I guess my own realisation, and this is where the trusting comes to, seeing things in a bigger time frame ... I think **the personal therapy has been the greatest support**. If I didn’t have that I probably would have gone back after a short period of time. If I didn’t have the personal therapy, I just couldn’t see things in a different context. I would have felt bad about myself and I would still have a lot invested in that persona of me as a career woman. There were quite major shifts in attitude and the way I look at myself.”*

Natalie, 41

Training of one form or another was also a resource for some participants.

Below is a quote from a participant who attended the government funded NEIS (New Enterprise Incentive Scheme) which typically provides a training course of six weeks duration to equip course participants in business skills to set up their own businesses, as well as providing a fixed period of financial assistance while course participants are actualising their business plan. In this example, the course also provided examples or models of others who had undertaken similar transitions.

*“That preliminary course at **NEIS** helped me to sort out my ideas, that, yes, I could go into business, and I could manage it. That was very good. A little taster of what was to come. I really liked the training being given by a **group of women** because I think women do relate differently, have a different style, a different way*

*of presenting themselves, and lots of assurance and things. There were women who had made their way [in business] and done various things. They were terrific. We met people who had done the NEIS course and gone out into business -- they were young women. It sounded quite scary, like nothing happened straightaway. And it didn't necessarily **happen as you wanted it to**, or according to your business plan, so that was **very sobering**. It was good to hear that, that it doesn't necessarily work out easily. But these women were quite resourceful and they found alternatives and got customers and made money."*

Yvonne, 54

Theme V.C4: Non-personal resources

Books were the most popular non-personal resources cited, while two participants cited audio tapes (e.g., recordings of books or inspirational talks) as a resource. Interestingly, none of the participants spontaneously cited the internet as a resource during their downshifting career transition, although one participant praised e-mail as a critical part of his self-developed business, especially with overseas clients. The books cited by participants included the areas of careers, transitions generally, as well as the areas of personal growth and spirituality. Books that were cited are listed in Appendix D.

Summary of Theme V: Incubation

As part of the downshifting experience, participants consciously or less consciously were involved in a process of incubating or reconstructing a new identity and work/life direction. Often this involved taking some "time out" by not working for a period of time. Typically, there is re-evaluation of life priorities including the place of work within the larger context of life. Participants accessed assistance and support from their partners, families, friends as well as mentors, counsellors and psychotherapists, training programs, books and audio tapes.

Theme VI: Emergence

The sixth theme of “emergence” relates to participants’ movements towards beginning new directions, in terms of career, lifestyle and identity. “Emergence” also indicates that a new work or life direction and identity gradually becomes apparent through processes which are active and rational (e.g., further training, initial work in an alternative occupation) as well as more reflective activities which focus on individuals’ inner life (e.g., re-evaluating values and priorities, psychotherapy or journal writing). “Emergence” also conveys the notion that the new work or life direction and identity did not manifest fully formed, but gradually evolved over a period of time. Associated with this theme are the issues of (a) coming to terms with loss of income and finding financial resources; (b) coming to some resolution regarding their previous loss of status; (c) coming to terms with any remorse or regret with leaving their previous careers; (d) dealing with uncertainties and being flexible; (e) gaining clarity and having a plan/direction; (f) being a beginner; (g) constructing a new structure or lifestyle; (h) reinforcement of non-work identities; (i) redefining success; and (j) trusting in their subjective state in evaluating the progress or outcomes of downshifting.

Theme VI.A: Finding the financial wherewithal

Many of the participants used cognitive strategies to come to terms with reduced income. Typically, the cognitive strategy revolved around realising that they were in relatively fortunate positions of having no mortgage, or a low mortgage, or that they shared their partner’s income, or had access to savings such as superannuation. While it was necessary to cut back expenses and make adjustments to their lifestyles due to reduced income, many realised that they still had fairly comfortable lifestyles.

*“I have reduced my salary, but because we own a house and I am a **fairly frugal person**, I don’t need to work 5 days a week. I can manage quite adequately on 4 days a week.”*

Iris, 49

*“My wife and I talked about it, and we thought ‘Other people do it. They **get by**. We’re not going to be thrown out on the streets and things aren’t really going to*

be that bad.’ But we also knew that our lifestyle was also going to change, and we’re still coming to grips with that.”

Robert, 44

Another strategy was realising that while income was reduced, there were other resultant benefits. Below are two examples of these benefits. With the first quote, the challenge of having no secure income led Bruno to develop other abilities, leading to a growth in confidence. In the second quote, Paul found that total income had reduced, but the hourly income rate had improved, together with an increase in positive feelings about work.

*“I’ve actually grown in **confidence**, not in competence, because I’m basically a competent person. It seemed like a bit of a gamble. Would I make enough money? Over the last year or so, it’s proved to be reasonably OK. I’m fairly certain of that.”*

Bruno, 48

*“While my income has probably dropped this year to something like half of what it was in gross terms, I **doubt that it will continue** to be as low as that. I think it’s more likely to be three quarters. The **hourly rate** is actually hugely better. The amount of hours that I spend working for people is much less than the 70 hours that I used to spend working. The other thing is that tax efficiency is quite amazing. You can earn 50% less in gross terms, but your **disposable income** is probably closer to two thirds ... I get a better feeling about the work I do and the financial compensation that I get for it. I have a **better feeling** about that than what I did before.”*

Paul, 41

One participant who previously held a corporate position at director level realised that he was financially independent and could experiment with new career directions which would move him away from his previously well-paid but non-stimulating role.

*“I realised I was **financially well off**. I realised that I had really had enough assets. And another one is that it’s a **confidence thing**. I know I can always do*

that. I can get an \$80,000 - \$85,000 a year job tomorrow [less than half his previous package], without even trying. So there's sort of a fall back position that I could go to if I want."

Lawrence, 44

Theme VI.B: Coming to terms with decreased status

The methods with which participants came to terms with decreased status were varied. One method was putting status into perspective or undertaking some sort of cognitive restructuring to the effect that status was no longer relevant, or at least less relevant than other life goals.

*"I think a lot of people may measure how they're going by whether they're driving a BMW or money in the bank, etc. But to me, all of that is of **no relevance anymore**. It had some relevance, but not a great deal. I never believed in shelling out a lot of money for motor vehicles."*

Robert, 44

Another method was to realise that the new career also had status, if not more status than the previous career.

*"To have titles and all that, the company cars, is all fine. But that's not the most important thing. I haven't lost my ambition, but it's no longer the primary driving force. My ambition would be first of all, to be recognised as a darn good teacher ... I perceive my **teaching** profession to be of a higher status than the role I was playing previously."*

Clayton, 53

*"There is a fair bit of status in being involved in an industry with a lot of successful people and it's pretty high profile. And when people ask you who you work for and you tell them, most people know who you work for. Sometimes the associations and relationships that you have in that environment open a few doors for you. But on the other hand, in some ways being a consultant and **working for yourself** is quite high in terms of status for some people, higher than*

being a manager in a company. So I'm not sure what the overall outcome of that is. I don't think it's actually too important for me, really."

Paul, 41

It is important to note that for some participants, status remained a relevant issue. A third method was to realise that the loss of status was temporary and that downshifting did not mean that one was always going to be at the current level of income or status.

"In my downshifting, there was always the possibility of going ahead. It wasn't a dead end downshifting. The rewards wouldn't necessarily be monetary. I was always starting at the bottom at a ladder that could be climbed if I wanted to. I wasn't starting at the bottom of something that actually stopped the next rung up."

Vanessa, 50

Yet another method was finding ways to describe one's current occupation so as to highlight aspects which were more esteemed in general society, thus gaining higher status.

"When I was a student, for instance, I had no status. So when I mix socially, I've found various things to say to people, to redeem myself in my own eyes! If I say I'm a [current occupation], men in particular say, 'Well, you wouldn't earn much money at that!' ... But when I say that I've been writing text for a website, that is extremely prestigious! I've been to many parties lately on the strength of that one! Isn't that incredible? So I'm finding a way of creating status for myself!"

Yvonne, 54

Finally, some participants had highly individual ways of assessing status. The following example indicates that it is difficult to separate money and status, and status is often linked with the lifestyle that one can afford.

"I've still got all my same friends. I don't feel a loss of status. Just because I'm earning less money doesn't seem to create a loss of status ... I actually just feel so much better as a person. That far outweighs any cost that might come from

*leaving an organisation. I had a fairly privileged upbringing. I went to a good private school and all that sort of stuff, so in terms of loss of status, I think I lost status years ago. At my age, my father ran a big business. I'd have to have a huge change in my status to be able to do that now. Does that bother me? Not particularly. I'd just like to have more overseas holidays. And I don't have children. I think if I had children, it would be a completely different issue. I used to have a **cleaning lady** while I was working. After about a year of not working, I decided I couldn't justify having her because I wasn't earning the money. So I got rid of the cleaning lady and now I have to clean, myself. I really hate that. That's a loss of status!"*

Kathy, 37

Theme VI.C: Managing any remorse and regrets

Another important issue was coming to terms with any remorse or regrets regarding the career that had been left behind. One way of resolution was simply to realise that it was too late to reverse the decision, and thus to move on with life.

*"I had a feeling that some people would **think that I'm crazy** to give up a perfectly good job, well paid job, with a bit of status; to stop doing it. Why would you want to do that. Others would probably break their necks to get the chance to do it. I thought that I had my time. I didn't want to do it anymore. I think I'm fairly realistic about it really; I don't have regrets. I mean, it's history. You make the decision at the time with the best information you've got at your fingertips, with your attitudes and your experiences, and if you make the right decision, there's no point in 'if only', because the time has passed ... I'm realistic enough to say, 'Well, **c'est la vie. That's life.** I've done it. That's it.' Probably if someone had said to me, you can go back, would you go back? No way, I'm not going to go back. If I could pick and choose certain parts of it, I might, but I don't want the whole thing again."*

Hugh, 58

Another way was to realise the disadvantages of the previous occupation and similar occupations if one was tempted to go back to the old lifestyle.

*“There is no day that goes by when I look at my boss and say “Thank God I decided not to do that”. It is just an **enormous relief** not to have to be managing the crap that she does, justifying your performance higher up and spending half your life in meetings, counselling staff, dealing with behavioural issues, performance issues, and industrial relations issues. Just everything that goes with being a manager, basically.”*

Libby, 43

*“I think the negatives of leaving were not having that **job security**. There’s also the **drop financially**. Perhaps there was a **better career structure**. In terms of the public service, there was more of a hierarchy there. So there was more of an opportunity for promotion and increased pay. But I think it always comes at a huge cost. It was such a narrow focus. The further people go up the hierarchy, the more narrow their thinking becomes. I don’t think that’s a healthy thing for people, especially working in a human service industry. The higher I’ve seen people promoted, the more they’ve become more bureaucratic and lose touch with the grass roots of the work. It’s like power corrupts, bureaucracy corrupts, or **the system corrupts**.”*

Sam, 43

Theme VI.D: Dealing with uncertainties and being flexible

Emergence of an alternative career and lifestyle appeared to be facilitated by tolerance of uncertainty and capacity to be flexible with career opportunities. Dealing with a relatively uncertain future was particularly an issue for participants who did not have specific careers in mind when leaving their previous careers.

*“It’s very **frustrating not knowing what I want to do**. But there is a part of me which is trusting that I will find whatever that will suit me in my entirety rather than [only] part of me. And I will find what I love to do and make some money too. I haven’t found that yet. My personal therapy over the past 2 years has put me in touch with other ways of decision making, other than pros and cons. I am doing things like trusting my dreams, trusting my instincts, realising that if my*

heart and my soul doesn't want to do anything, it won't do it. That doesn't mean I don't make rational decision. I do, but the rational mind is not the only resource that I have at my disposal. Whereas before it was the only resource I had."

Natalie, 41

Even participants who had specific work directions in mind when leaving their previous careers benefited from being flexible with work opportunities, or career plans.

*"I think I'm lucky, and I'm so lucky I made the decision to go from [previous multinational employer]. And the other two jobs, I only looked at as being transitory until I found something I felt comfortable doing. That's how you have to approach leaving a company. I didn't want to swap for the same sort of thing in another company. So I think you have to **make several moves**, and it comes back to once you make the big move, **it becomes easier to move on again**, because you don't want to be trapped anymore. You think I don't want to do this anymore. I know I will find another job. I know I have skills to offer someone."*

Rosemary, 46

*"My approach is **fairly relaxed**. I'm not really frenetically going out there and really searching, searching, searching. But I have got myself the part time work as an assistant in [specific creative area], and I have got myself a few people that have invited me to do commissioned works for them."*

Lucia, 37

A few participants were aware that uncertainty was not necessarily a negative state. Indeed, uncertainty was a state that allowed possibilities and alternatives to emerge and be considered thoughtfully, before clarity could arise and feasible plans could be made.

*"I think there's room for much more uncertainty. I've discovered it's okay, to be unclear about who I am. A very good friend of mine said to me about three or four years ago while I was going through the decision phase, 'Sometimes you have to **create some space to allow things to emerge**'. I said to her 'If I leave*

[previous organisation], what on earth will I do?’ She said ‘Well, sometimes, you actually have to create a bit of space to allow new things to emerge’. She was absolutely right. When you’re very busy, new things can’t emerge.”

Bernard, 57

Theme VI.E: Gaining clarity and developing a plan/direction

A key part of the emergence theme was coming to some clarity about one’s desired direction, if not a specific career, and ideally having a plan for moving towards that direction. If nothing else, some participants are aware that they made the right decision to leave, even if they were unsure about whether their current work would be entirely satisfactory, or where their ultimate career direction would be.

*“I know I’ve done the right thing, [leaving previous occupation], but **I don’t know if I’ve gone into the right job**. It’s a good job and a very interesting job, but I don’t know if it’s the right job. But then that’s my personality. Maybe I’ll never know if anything is the right job for me. Maybe other people do and I’d never.”*

Lyn, 43

*“I was **head hunted** by a very large organisation. The more I pulled away, the more they wanted me. In the end they offered me the position of General Manager, with a starting package of \$150-\$160,000. It was like the old coming in and saying, ‘**Are you sure you don’t want to come back in?**’ It was this **huge carrot**. And I didn’t feel I’d be fair to them or myself if I took it on, which they respected. I knew exactly what that job meant. I knew how much of **my soul and blood it would take and I wasn’t prepared to give it**. I would prefer to be a pauper for the rest of my life than be in that environment; that’s how strongly I feel about it now, that **I could never go back**.”*

Carolyn, 45

For some participants, being clear about what they did not want to do, gradually enabled them to become clear about what they did want to include in their new career. Even though gaining clarity was a gradual process for many participants, many realised

that this process would reap longer term rewards for their career, their way of living and a meaningful work identity.

*“I tried to be very **open and straight forward with myself and other people** about what I wanted to do. The natural thing at a job interview is to impress the person that you’re dealing with and hope that they will offer you the job. I ended up taking a different view, which was go to a job interview to find out whether the job’s any good for you, as much as they go to find out whether you’re any good for them. It’s an **information sharing process** and if the information sharing process indicates that it’s not going to work, then it’s not right. Even in dealing with prospective clients about my consulting work - same deal. In the short term it was a **discipline** for me to focus on that. Not just fall back into doing something for other people, rather than what I wanted to do. I could have easily fallen into that habit. It’s like **redefining** for myself as I went along. ‘Why am I here?’ Don’t forget why you are here. Don’t go back and end up a year down the track in exactly the same spot’.”*

Paul, 41

*“The organisation I work for now is very sympathetic and supportive of women’s changing circumstances and lifestyles compared to the traditional male model and very supportive of women going off to have children and then coming back to work part time and adjusting the fraction according to the personal circumstances. I really got a receptive response to my application letter, which basically said, look I’ve taken a year off and here’s why I did it and during that time this is what I did, and I’m ready and eager to come back to the workforce, no longer motivated by money. I got the job. It was one of those cases of **getting my head around the issues**. I really did do a lot of thinking about what I wanted and what I didn’t want. I honed my wish list, basically.”*

Libby, 43

Some participants found that being clear about their direction was the first step in actualising the new career direction.

*“Some of my clients, when I told them what I was going to do, immediately asked me to come and do some work for them. So, I set up my own business. For the next two or three years, I found that I had all of the work that I wanted. I also had **all the flexibility** that I wanted ... I ended up doing a heck of a lot less work ... **I didn't do any marketing**. I just allowed the business to come from where it came from. I was getting enough work that way, to not have to worry. And that's basically the situation I'm in now.”*

Bernard, 57

Even those participants who had to find alternative employment while finding a more meaningful career found having some of sort of temporary structure of plan was beneficial. If nothing else, it prevented them from falling into negative states.

Theme VI.F: Being a beginner

As part of the emergence theme, virtually all participants found themselves a beginner in some aspect of their new career – either in terms of an occupation, or a new organisation, or being self-employed. This was not necessarily easy, especially since participants were previously in positions where they had attained some level of responsibility and were by no means beginners in their previous fields. Issues encountered in being a beginner included: (a) not having as much recognition in the new position; (b) having to work with senior staff members in the new organisation whom one did not necessarily respect, who could be younger than oneself; (c) needing to learn new skills in the new career; (d) needing to develop new structures and resources for the new career; (e) not being as effective or efficient as one was in the previous career.

*“That meant that I **started at the bottom**. It ditched my reputation as a [previous occupation]. I went into [next occupation]. I was in the most junior position, and on contract!”*

Vanessa, 50

“The other adjustment is that with teaching, you didn't have bosses, even though you had principals. You really were the boss of your class. Whereas in the job I'm in at the moment, you've got a boss, and then you've got a committee of

*management, and there is this hierarchy system, and I'm actually down the bottom of it, and I feel that. So that's never gelled terribly well with me, given that I'm not one to think or work like that ... It was a very strange, going in and being considered at the **bottom of the rung.**"*

Lyn, 43

Theme VI.G: Constructing a new structure

As part of the theme of emergence, participants faced the challenge of creating an alternative daily structure or rhythm to their lives since there was typically less structure defined by the previous organisational life and career. For those who were looking for alternative employment during their transition, a self-imposed structure helped to prevent negative states.

*"I **kept very busy.** If I wasn't working on house stuff, I was looking at jobs. So even if I didn't have anything on that day, my day started out as if I did. I made sure that my energy level each day was fairly high. I was going to make sure that I wasn't going to hang around in my pyjamas. My 6 o'clock routine of getting up everyday was always maintained. I am fairly organised, so I'd pre-plan and have a lunch with a friend, or I'd go in and see something, or do something. There was always something that I'd be involved in. That was very important for me."*

Lyn, 43

Those who had partners or a family found that they and their families had to adjust to a different daily pattern. Some wives who were used to their partners being occupied with full-time employment outside the home were challenged by the fact that their husbands were now spending more time at home. In some cases, it resulted in a redistribution of household chores which was more equitable to female partners.

*"My wife went back to work after the Easter break and I didn't. I really **felt quite weird, and aimless.** We had previously been both flat out, working hard and under pressure to perform and meet deadlines. We were both doing it, but when one of us wasn't doing it, the contrast was obvious. I **drifted around in a more relaxed fashion,** which didn't help. I thought if I can do whatever needs to be*

done today, I can do it tomorrow. But my wife felt now was the time she had to do something, so she'd better to it now. 'I can't leave it for tomorrow because tomorrow is busy.' She had to deal with those things, whereas I had a more relaxed outlook to it. I could sense it was difficult for her, so it made it difficult for me."

Hugh, 58

Theme VI.H: Revision of identity

Another part of the "emergence" theme was a revision of personal identity. This often included greater reinforcement of non-work identity, particularly in terms of greater importance of relationships. In other words, one's life was no longer consumed by being a professional or manager, with more time and energy being available for other roles as partner, parent or member of a social community.

*"My wife and I have a commitment to each other, that we would try to maintain an awareness of the impact of work on our private lives, and if either of us notices ourselves feeling overwhelmed, then we do something about it. I probably work 50-60 hours a week, but I'm now self employed and I can do it when it is appropriate for me to do it. I worked until 10 o'clock last night, but I'm quite happy to take next Monday off, and have a 3-day weekend, and go away to a B&B for the weekend. So, the degree of **flexibility** that being self employed has given is a real payoff. It has been absolutely fantastic."*

Mark, 47

Other participants found that they were becoming more aware of multiple identities and the benefits of not being locked into one particular identity, particularly one that was defined by one's work.

*"It was **easier in the past to classify myself** as a Chief Executive of this, or a partner of that, or whatever. Once you cut those away, there's this progressive discovery that there are **many selves** – different selves for different occasions. The more you allow it to emerge, the less vulnerable it becomes, the easier it is to start to see someone's so-called corporate selves as being nothing but major*

*delusional impediments. This is all a bit of tricky stuff. Some of those selves are very dear to me still. I'm still attached to them. The mental image of being a corporate chief executive, flying around in his own jet, first-class travel around the world, chauffeur-driven limousines. It's a very seductive and powerful part of image. I had some experience of that. I know how seductive that is. Or being a partner in a large international firm. Professor. Doesn't matter what the label is. They are very **seductive identities**. But of course, at the end of the day, they're just **ephemeral as the mist in spring** when the sun rises."*

Bernard, 57

Theme VI.I: Redefining success

Inevitably, emergence into a downshifted career led to participants redefining what constituted success. Not surprisingly, success was no longer equated with having a lot of money and relatively high status. This does not imply that money was not important, merely, that it no longer had central importance in an individual's life and determining the direction of an individual's career.

*"Success is fine with me ... It can mean different things to different people, and I think I've redefined it. For myself, anyway. I think whereas before it may have meant type of car, dollars in the bank, status of work position, it now means a smile on your face, ability to make choices and follow them through, and **enjoyment of your life**."*

Lucia, 37

*"Success now is very different to when I was in the corporate world. In the corporate world, success meant earning \$200,000 a year and getting flights here and there, and everywhere. So it was much more based on monetary situations. Success to me now means being happy with what I'm doing, being content and feeling like I am in control of it. This is me **driving the ship**, however little my business may be. What I'm doing is for me. It's brought back an element of **excitement into my life** that was really gone, and a feeling of this really is the beginning of the second part of my life, and that's quite exciting."*

Carolyn, 45

*“I guess **my priorities had shifted** after my daughter’s death. My career ambitions seemed to evaporate. I had been quite strong with career ambition. In whatever organisation I was at, I’d reach the top of the tree. But this changed. I started to question, **‘What the hell do I want to make money for? Be a business success? What good does it do you?’** I guess I started to go through that fundamental depression process. **‘What the hell is it all about really?’** You can’t take money with you when you die, anyway. Accumulated wealth doesn’t seem to make an awful lot of sense, and I started to see that there were more important issues in the world than the business life. My notions of success now are **knowing yourself, being able to feel valued by others, living well, and dying decently.**”*

Bernard, 57

Besides autonomy and self-knowledge (mentioned by the participants above), quality of life and enjoyment of life were typically included participants’ redefinitions of success.

*“Success to me is a word that belongs to that other world. And there is a part of me which still wants that. There is a part of me which still wants to be that professional woman who is out there and earning a 6-figure salary and what have you, but that’s that world. I wouldn’t use the word success. The words would be ‘valuable’, ‘satisfying’, ‘powerful’, ‘productive’, in the sense that there would be outcomes along the way. But it is more about ‘fulfilment’. I think it is more about a sense of wholeness and flow, a **fulfilment, satisfaction**, those sorts of words.”*

Zoe, 49

*“My definition now is different. Ten to fifteen years ago, it would have been material. Now, I’m very conscious when I look around at people who have everything material and they’re not happy. That’s not to say that I don’t have this financial worry. I like my creature comforts. But ideally given being **happy and enjoying doing what I’m doing, and not having anything material**, I’d take the former.”*

Jane, 50

Being able to contribute meaningfully to society using the vehicle of one's work was also an important ingredient of success for some participants.

*"I've always maintained for me, personally, and for my children, and socially, that success is a sense of being **relatively at ease with the world, with yourself, and making a productive contribution**. I think it's like what Freud talked about love and work – the key to happiness is love and work. There are always the ups and downs and so on, but just feeling okay about who you are. Also a reasonable level of social standing, or economic standing. I wouldn't like to sort of live in poverty. I do have some work goals. I had an article published recently, and that's some sense of recognition."*

Sam, 43

*"And that's what success is, isn't it? **Overcoming adversity**. I want to be in control of things. I don't want to dominate people, I mean I want to create the income I need to live the life I want to live, and not oppress anyone else, in fact help people. I'd like to tithe 10% of my income."*

Ken, 49

Theme VI.J: Trust in subjective state in evaluating progress and outcomes of downshifting

In conjunction with their redefinition of success, there was also a tendency for participants to rely on their subjective states in evaluating the outcomes of their career change. Many participants were clear that leaving their previous careers was a good decision by their emotions, bodily sensations and behaviours.

*"The **relief** when I actually signed that piece of paper was phenomenal. I can't explain it. It was like a huge weight had been lifted. And then I couldn't keep the **grin** off my face. There were no second thoughts that I had made the right decision."*

Jane, 50

*“I felt that I’d **grown an inch taller**. It was **quite a physical feeling**. A weight on my shoulders lifting. I hadn’t realised what it was. I really felt like I’d grown an inch taller.”*

Francis, 57

*“It was almost like there was an incredible **freeing up**. The [previous organisation] was like working in a straight jacket. Now, there is support to develop new programs, teamwork, etc. It’s all been wins. With the flexibility of hours to do parenting, that’s been terrific. I’m much more **at ease with myself**. I was not at ease in [previous organisation] for a number of years. I’m probably much more **optimistic** too about the future. It’s a bit like **breaking the shackles**.”*

Sam, 43

Rather than previous reliance on “objective” indicators such as money and status, participants used the criteria of whether they had positive inner states, such as feelings of peace, happiness or excitement.

*“It’s also a matter of **what makes you happy** in the first place. I mean, if you are only happy being in a top position at something ... then you’re open to thousands of disappointments. If your own criteria are internal and of my sort of nature, I find satisfaction all the way along. Because mine are based on getting individual things done. It’s a different feeling of success.”*

Bruno, 48

*“I know where I’m going now, and **it feels right**. Whereas before it never felt quite right ... I never lost the **sense of excitement** about it. I was very highly **motivated**. It was something like all this stuff that had been under the surface for many years, suddenly became a reality, very quickly.”*

Naomi, 50

*“I think it’s got to do with my inner state. How am I inside? Am I at **peace**? Am I disturbed? Agitated? Through meditation, I’ve learnt enough to know what it is like to be at peace, which itself is a major discovery. While I don’t pretend that I’ve gone very far down that path, I’ve certainly had enough glimpses of it to*

know that being at peace is an extraordinarily wonderful state ... Whatever's happening to me, if I start to look inside and I started to see myself getting all aroused and agitated, then I'm heading in the wrong direction."

Bernard, 57

*"I think it's probably done **spiritually**. I can't make sense of it any other way. It's a **feeling thing**."*

Iris, 49

The direction of the career change and outcomes were also considered positive if they were consistent with a participant's internal standards, or if a participant considered the change or outcomes meaningful.

*"My criteria for success has always been that **I'm doing something that I love and I think is worthwhile**, not whether other people see it as successful in the sense of having reached a high position or high salary. So I have an individual idealistic idea of success, I suppose."*

Vanessa, 50

*"I've learned to value things by **my set of standards**, not by what you might call the general public set of standards. I think that they are completely unrealistic and often quite false."*

Paul, 41

Summary of Theme VI: Emergence

Through confronting difficulties and issues (Theme IV) and reconstructing the form of work and possibly self identity (Theme V), gradually a different way of working and living emerged for career downshifters. Signs of an emerging lifestyle included coming to terms with reduced income and status, managing any feelings of regret, and finding work or sources of income which are more satisfactory. While radical career change often involved uncertainties, many participants gained greater clarity regarding a new work direction. Typically this involved being a beginner on some levels (e.g., in

anew profession, or a new organisation, or being self employed), constructing a new work/life structure, and ultimately a revision of personal identity. Revised definitions of success were often based on subjective evaluations and values of what was important for the individual, rather than what was prescribed by mainstream culture, (e.g., onward and upward progress as measured by money and status).

Theme VII: Possible positive outcomes

The last theme which emerged from the transcripts of downshifter's experiences was a range of possible positive outcomes. These include: (a) more suitable work; (b) better quality of life; (c) more autonomy; (d) enhancement of identity; (e) personal growth; (f) authenticity. Interestingly, many of these positive outcomes emerging from the transcripts correspond to Ryff's dimensions of psychological well-being (Ryff, 1991; 1995); (Section 7.4 previous).

Theme VII.A: More suitable work

More suitable work was sometimes identified by the **absence of negatives** such as stress, pressure, external organisational demands, or organisational politics.

*"It's **not the pressured sort of work** that I was used to. You can make your own pace. You can take work on or not, as you see fit. You're not pressured by external requirements, to provide reports, or to meet budget deadlines, or staffing, or building facilities. It's quite low key by comparison. The pressure is just of my own making, and that's quite different."*

Hugh, 58

"I don't regret leaving corporate life for an instant. I think I would have gone crazy if I'd stayed there. The politics, the inequities, the pressure that is being put on people now."

Mark, 47

More suitable work was also identified by the **presence of positive indicators** such as higher motivation and positive subjective states.

*“I was suddenly **wanting to get out of bed** and go to work again. I’m enjoying what I’m doing ... The positives certainly outweigh the negatives ... It has a bit of stress, but it’s a different sort of stress. More of a time constraint. You know you can **comfortably do the job.**”*

Robert, 44

“Now, I feel much more positive that I’m making my way in the ‘new world of work’. I’m managing in this time of high unemployment – tapping into different job markets. Finding contracts. I’m happy that I’m doing something that I hope to be able to sustain for 10 years.”

Yvonne, 54

By leaving their previous careers, downshifting participants were able to move towards work that was more aligned to their vocation, what they felt called to do, or work that was more meaningful to them. While not all participants had reached this stage at the time of interview, all were engaged in work or looking for work that would provide a sustainable level of income, and be consistent with their values and goals. In the example below, the participant was more interested in having work that did not involve a career with managerial responsibilities, since this would defeat one main purpose of the career change – spending more time with her family.

*“I look at this job as **just a job** -- just somewhere to go and do the work to the best of my ability and I come home and I don’t think about it anymore. I don’t have to worry about staffing problems and budgetary problems. All those sorts of things are someone else’s problem. It’s just amusing to watch people just running around like that, like rats around a treadmill. I have friends in the neighbourhood who have high powered jobs and I see them doing that, and I think ‘You’re crazy. Why are you doing that? You’re going off every morning, you’re coming home late every night. You never see your kids. For what? To make money for someone else, a big corporation which doesn’t care about you and who you are and would retrench you and wouldn’t even think about you.”*

You're just a number in a big company. I can be who I am and think about who I am, walk to work, and smell the flowers and the freshly mowed lawn and hear the birds, and just take life at a different pace."

Rosemary, 46

Theme VII.B: Better quality of life

Another positive outcome for many participants was a better quality of life, perceived subjectively in feelings states, although visible objective indicators included better health and more time for relationships and interests outside of work. Life was perceived to be less stressful, happier and more easeful.

*"I was just absolutely and totally **bored**. I was filling in the day and working a long day, but I was just bored doing it. Now, I'm just enjoying this. It's not very hard to work that out. It's a good deal of fun. I'm nowhere near as physically tired or mentally tired as I have been in the past. It's a **sense of wellbeing**."*

Lawrence, 44

*"I've been able to re-establish contact with a lot of my friends. We **get to see each other more often**, so I've re-established those contacts with friends which has also been good. One of the things that this new **lifestyle** does for me is that it removes a little bit of the highs and lows that I experienced previously in professional life. It's a more **gentle way of living**."*

Paul, 41

Theme VII.C: Autonomy

Another relevant potential benefit was more autonomy in both areas of work and personal life, especially if the participant was self-employed or moving towards self-employment. With this issue, participants typically mentioned a sense of being more in control, having more flexibility with their time, and being more self-directed with their work.

*“I see myself as much **more in control** of my life. Whereas before I saw myself as **trapped**. In a way, it was sort of safe, stable, whereas now it is fairly unstable. I was finally taking charge of my life. Doing what seems to be right, not being a passenger in this vehicle. I decided which turns to take.”*

Hans, 39

*“In terms of what I earn, it’s been a half time job. It’s probably earned me about \$15,000 - \$20,000 a year, which is not much money. In terms of survival, it’s a reasonable amount, given my wife is working too. One of the pluses of working at home is the opportunity to do other things. I can work for an hour and a half, say two hours. I often then get up and then take the dog for a walk, or I can do some washing up. I can be really more, overall, **more efficient**. I can work for a time, concentrate, knowing that I can do something more physical. I need to do things that are more physical, in between what is essentially very sedentary, sitting at the computer for hours. That was a big plus for me.”*

Bruno, 48

Theme VII.D: Enhancement of identity

Some participants perceived themselves as having enhanced their identity outside the realms of work as one of the benefits of having undertaken their career downshift. There was a move away from identification with work, more time for relationships and non-work activities. The example below is from a woman who had previously invested most of her time and energy into her career, and while she had not yet found a satisfactory career at the time of interview, felt that she had developed other aspects of herself during her time away from full-time work.

*“I’m starting to see myself more as a complete person, rather than the professional working woman, and that is like an internal resource. That’s given me strength ... I have to explore other areas of my life which were neglected for so long – **being a woman in a total sense**, as opposed to an Athena type woman, because that was all I was.”*

Natalie, 41

Theme VII.E: Personal growth

Another potential outcome from the career downshifting is personal growth which may or may not relate to the work domain. Many participants mentioned their increased confidence as a result of the career change, often accompanied by expectations of a positive future.

*“The drop in pay is astronomical, but the increase in fun is equal to that. I’m actually doing something I’d rather be doing. And I’m challenged because it’s stuff that I haven’t been doing in the past ... I’ve **developed technically**. A **lot more confident** than I had to begin with. I don’t have a fear of going out on a job, and not being technically competent to complete the job.”*

Lucia, 37

Theme VII.F: Authenticity

Authenticity or moving towards a more “solid sense of self” (Kerr & Bowen, 1988) and away from a “pseudo self” was also a potential outcome. Participants were more interested in work and lifestyles that were more compatible with their values and priorities in life, rather than what was necessarily lucrative or fashionable.

*“Something else, **the core, is reasserting itself**. I don’t want to waste any more time on things that mean less and less to me. It is less and less consistent with my values.”*

Zoe, 49

Summary of Theme VII: Possible positive outcomes

The quantitative measures previously reported in Chapter 7 showed that participants perceived increased levels of subjective well-being, environmental mastery, self acceptance, autonomy, personal growth, and positive relations with others after their career downshift (Section 7.4). Their narratives indicated that other possible positive outcomes include finding more suitable forms of work, better quality of life, and ultimately enhancement of who they are. Even though all these possible positive

outcomes may not be experienced by any given career downshifter, identifying them presents desirable outcomes which counterbalance their earlier experiences such as the struggle with the need to change (Theme II), feeling down (Theme III), and confronting difficult issues (Theme IV).

Some of the participants interviewed for this study were at the time facing many of the challenging consequences of their career downshift, or what Nicholson (1990) would term the “Encounter” stage of their career transition (previously reviewed in Section 4.5). Perhaps these participants would be encouraged to realise that they were not alone and that resolutions to their difficulties and positive outcomes were possible.

8.3 “Exemplary portraits”

In this section, two “exemplary portraits” are presented, as recommended by Moustakas (1990). The purpose of the exemplary portraits is to illustrate wholistically the phenomenological experience of downshifting and the themes described in Sections 8.1 and 8.2, while preserving the individual person’s experience. Since both participants portrayed in this section agreed to the disclosure of selected occupational details, the reader is provided with a better appreciation of both downshifting context and experience, which was not possible in the previous description of themes. Thus, the exemplary portraits represent condensed versions of complex interviews, edited for clarity. These exemplary portraits may be regarded as illustrative case studies. Pseudonyms and general descriptions of the previous and current occupations have been adopted to protect the identities of the participants. The two portraits include both genders, both corporate and government sectors, gradual and sudden downshifting experiences. This cross-section was deliberately chosen to indicate the general nature of the themes identified.

8.3.1 Neil

At the time of interview, Neil was 37 years old. Previously, he worked as a corporate lawyer, both in Australia and UK. Neil’s pattern is one of progressive downshifting, from international corporate lawyer to part-time law consultant, before

downshifting to work in psychology. He was also studying for his postgraduate qualifications in psychology when he was interviewed. Neil is single and has no dependants.

‘I’d always studied hard and got good marks at school and through uni. I’ve done things to satisfy pressure from family or society. Conformity, all that sort of stuff. Dad was a lawyer, and it was very acceptable. And the school said ‘Yes, do law’ ...

‘I remember, I had a week where I couldn’t eat, I couldn’t sleep. I was on tranquillisers, all sorts of weird things, just trying to cope. But this had been building for several years, really. I was giving 150% and it was still nowhere near enough. You say to yourself ‘I’ll get better. I’ll get the hang of it. I’ll get used to it.’ That just wasn’t happening. The money was good. I had no idea about what I’d be going to, but I just couldn’t stand it anymore. It was destroying me physically. And in the London firm, it wasn’t just me. Other people were leaving. People had nervous breakdowns, and even coming back after that. Marriages breaking up. So it does devour people. Very stressful. So I finally, out of pain or courage, or some mixture of that said to the partner, ‘I’m sorry I have to go back to Australia, I just can’t cope with London.’ And that was really the turning point in this whole process ...

‘The work became so arid, I couldn’t stand it. Law is very powerful, but it is also very narrow. You had to repress very forcefully, your whole somatic life, your intuitive life, your imaginal life, your creative life to a large extent, and you become a robot processing words on to a page, drafting things. And if I hadn’t had this specific role where there was social interaction and problem solving, I would have found it an unbearably long grind. It was never easy. There was always a challenge to do the next thing. It was more and more of a struggle to force myself. So arid, pointless. It didn’t seem to have any value ... I just had to repress my whole emotional life. It is a cliché, but my authentic nature started to erupt ...

“So I went back to university and just started exploring really. Opening up the horizons. Reading, reflecting on things. Did two years of literature, and then somehow, I don’t know how, suddenly thought to do psychology. I knew I had to go back to university as a process, as a step toward some goal. So I stuck at it. I knew it was right for me. I moved to part-time work and really gradually easing myself out, opening up more and more to do studies and immerse myself. I went to many lectures and seminars, just looking around. What do people do? Exploring. I was gradually getting out of law, and still paying the bills ...

“The people at the firm were really pissed off because I was breaking out of the mould, not being conventional. Even now I get all sorts of friends who say ‘You’re throwing away the best working years of your life’. Financially, I’ve given up a taxable income of about \$100,000 a year to do this. Family have been pretty good about it. I always dress it up and tell my family I’m doing particular things. They’re very into security and so I’ll always put bits into the story which keep them satisfied – that there is security, and I’m working hard, and all the rest of it. Good prospects. There hasn’t been active resistance, but there’s been ‘You’re throwing out a lot to do this’. A couple of professional friends had the same sort of reactions. I was regarded as being eccentric.”

Neil’s introversion and training in psychology, together with the depth of his reflections offer clear insights into the transition experience.

“Hindrances are almost exclusively inner, not outer events ... I was fairly conscious watching myself fighting between the two opposites of attachment to all the things I knew, and knowing that I had to get out. I’ve been incredibly lucky to get out. It’s something that really traps people. The money, the status ...

“Law is very much the energy of Apollo, clarity, light, understanding, order, structure, control, and also Saturn or Senex. I have a very strong Saturn or Senex aspect. So all those sorts of things like caution, moderation, rigidity, being very clear about consequences, all that sort of stuff. That’s why I was very good at what I did as a lawyer. But it doesn’t leave very much room for spontaneity and playfulness and exploration of the unknown. As a child, I was very

Dionysian, very spontaneous and very chaotic, quite creative. That's been a big overall theme in my life – recovering my emotional life. And I've been watching this inner struggle between analysing things and trusting things, doing and being. They're opposite ways of living. I'm cultivating imagination, finding my own creativity. But I'm starting to befriend this analytical side because it doesn't have so much power to overwhelm the whole process now. Now that there are other energies which keep it in balance. There is room to let it have a place as well."

Clearly, the transition has had to embrace a highly developed intellectual capacity, as well as valuing of spiritual dimensions.

"My role models are also important -- just watching various teachers, like Robert Bosnak [American Jungian analyst], like the people I encountered in the UK, just watching how they are in themselves, and how they're much more transparent. You see them as they are, and their genuine energies. Other people were also important. One woman in particular, she and I have been fellow travellers. We just talk to each other about things really. We understand each other more than any other human being. We talk quite openly and really trust. We're probably more willing to meet each other. I suspect that without her, it would have been a lot slower. I probably would have got there, but the pain would have been a lot worse. I still need that kind of person to echo back, to scrutinise. That reflective listening and unconditional regard. Just to have someone to sound out an idea, and to have one person whose view I respect."

While Neil was clear about his career direction when he resigned from law, and had a more well defined plan compared to other participants interviewed, his work transition was not entirely free of difficulties.

"It's quite possible that I will never do any legal work professionally again. All of the other jobs have been for friends or people that I've known. I don't seek out the work. I do it mainly for the relationship. I find easy what other people find difficult. There was resistance for a while, but not now. Now that I am relatively

settled in the other jobs, it doesn't particularly bother me. It's actually like light relief. Virtually everything else I'm doing now is outside my comfort zone ...

"I realise what I feel most like now is "The Fool" [reference to 'The Fool' in the Tarot, the archetypal beginner]. I feel like I've laid all sorts of foundations for this next vocation in psychology. There is no more than about two bricks above ground level. There's nothing there. So I feel like a total beginner again."

As part of the interview, Neil was asked to comment on what issues he faced during his transition, his ideas about identity and his notions of success.

"I don't look to the outer world for valuing. I look to the inner world, and my inner experience. I've often, for years, used the image of lying on my death bed and looking back, what would the feelings be. I reflect around success or failure, around was it all worthwhile. Did you learn the lessons? Did you contribute something? I have a very strong myth around contributing, making life just a little bit better for people, and living the genuine stuff. Financially, I've always had the money for what I need. I've started to live more authentically. I live moderately eccentrically. There have been down patches, but I've been very lucky with depression, it's always paralysing in nature. But I've been able to hang in there and learn a hell of a lot from it ...

"It is a series, an ever changing landscape of roles, rather than 'I am a lawyer', which is a fixed identity. I have multiple vocations and many work identities. There is no distinction between work and play. They're all mixed. Work is recreation or a hobby. I don't go to work as a lawyer and come home, with recreation at the weekend. I'm doing things which interest me. There has been a shift in how I see identity. When people ask what I do, I deflect it. Because it's basically a question about how you earn your money. I find it just tedious, not offensive, but just tedious ...

"If I'm doing something that's not right, then my body tells me. The other part of that is that if I'm doing something that's right, there is passion for it. I quite often can't sleep, I have ideas buzzing around, I get up at two in the morning and

work for a couple of hours on how I'm going to do that project. I'm getting better at listening to that intuitive sense. And then the other part of that would be synchronicities in the outer world. Life just unfolds and it is so beautiful and so interesting, so easeful, even when working full capacity, it is still easeful. And people have been there and you find the books you need, and I apply for a job and I get it without any effort, if you can get yourself in the right moment. I'm fascinated by the Taoist approach in trying to get myself on the Dragon line and getting better at sensing when I am on it and when I'm not. And so that's all my way of knowing ...

"Success is about finding out your own dreaming, your own myth, the mythology of your own life, and living it. That's what it is all about."

Neil represents a man who worked in the corporate sector who undertook career downshifting gradually in a considered manner. While he had been rapidly promoted in his profession, there were many indicators that success in his speciality would come at a high price to his physical and psychological well-being (Themes I and II). Difficulties experienced (Theme IV) included coming to terms with money and status, as well as the reactions of others. Neil exemplifies the notion that the process of re-evaluation and finding a viable work alternative (Theme V) can occur prior to leaving an occupation. The process of incubating a possible self who is other than a lawyer is clearly demonstrated by his immersion in literature and psychology, reflective processes and accessing mentors and supportive friends. The selected quotes from Neil's interview also indicate a tentative incorporation of previous work skills into his current life without reverting to the previous occupation, the subjective nature of his redefinition of success, and his awareness of being a beginner (Theme VI).

8.3.2 Amelia

Amelia was 44 years at the time of interview. She resigned from her management position in the public service when she was 40. When she resigned four years ago, she did not have a clear idea about a specific career. She is currently pursuing a career which incorporates creativity and human welfare. She had been living in a

stable defacto relationship for some years, with her partner who has three dependant children.

“It was the worst 18 months of my life. Everyone was being pushed every which way. Things that had been valued two years before were no longer being valued. Economic rationalism was in full force ... I never had an anxiety attack, but a couple of times I was close to it. It was just that sense of impotence. This particular director, his bottom line was that they were a bunch of jerks, dummies and they were lazy. Get rid of the lot and start over. But when they spoke to the staff, or when they sent out newsletters, they would talk about empowerment and team building. That was the thing that got to me the worst. It was schizophrenic ... If they had been one or the other, if they were congruent with one direction or the other, we could have found one way to deal with it. It put me in an awkward position ... When you're talking to staff about changes, how do you talk about it in a way that is honest, but still constructive? And when they asked the same questions that I'd been asking, sometimes it was just impossible to answer. I felt compromised in terms of my integrity. Ultimately I knew I was going to probably get closer and closer to an edge, a point of no return. And I wouldn't be able to live with myself ...

“Towards the end of the first year in that position, my father died. And I turned 40 that same year. Just as an indication of my response to the situation at work, my previous back injury flared up. It was so bad at that time, that I was standing at work. I couldn't sit. I arranged my computer so that I could stand and type ...

“I was fortunate in that with the death of my father I was left with some of his estate. I was in a financial position to leave. But what was interesting was, even though I had that money, it still took quite a bit of persuasion from some very caring friends, asking questions like 'How long are you going to stand the abuse?' before I actually said 'Enough is enough'. The organisation wasn't prepared to give me a package. It was crunch time. Would I rely on the money that I'd gotten from my Dad and leave, or would I toss it up? Would I go for a transfer to another department? I could take it for one more month, or I could work until whenever. It was just getting ridiculous, until I had dinner with a

friend who was negotiating a package, and I finally said 'Fourth of July. That's it.' I needed something to focus on and that was it. So that day I went in and gave two weeks notice."

After resigning, Amelia spent some time recovering her health and visiting her family overseas whom she had not seen since her father's death. She supported herself through consultancy work to various government organisations, as well as part-time positions. At interview, she was in the process of developing several options for her working future.

"After coming back from holidays the second time, I knew that it really was time to do something about the cash flow because I had been using assets that I was not intending to use. And so there was more actively going back to networks, looking in 'The Age', applying for the occasional job ... And alternating between absolute hysteria and panic. 'Oh my God, if something doesn't shift here, what am I going to do?' because my partner is not in a position to support me financially. Will I take anything? I was concerned that I would take anything depending on how anxious I got with the whole thing. And that would alternate with periods of just letting it go, knowing that the right thing would come. Things had always happened in the past, why would it be any different this time?"

"About a year ago, I decided that it was probably time to start thinking about getting back in the workforce and doing some things like updating my resume.. I didn't realise how far I had pushed it away. Just thinking about it, it was like selective amnesia, in what I had actually accomplished and done. It was that far away. As I applied for this, at times I doubted, did I really know what I thought I knew?"

"As you read someone like Robert Theobald or Charles Handy or authors who are saying that the world of work has already changed irrevocably, we must approach it differently. The world of 9 to 5 as we know it is ending. But what are the new paradigms? What are the new approaches? It's scary. There doesn't seem to be a lot of examples or certainty about what it is going to look like ... Right at the moment, what my mind knows is the HR work and I can get

the paper and apply for that. And I'm also open to saying 'OK Universe, if there is something else, if someone walks in my life and says this, I'll do that too.' I'm open to do all that. So, creating a whole again, that portfolio concept of core permanent part-time, maybe some casual, obviously work that is unpaid that really stimulates me, allows me to make a contribution and contributes to those areas."

The resources she accessed during her transition included specific processes or activities, and other people.

"From childhood I was told I was the smart one. My sister was the creative one. I know other people who wear labels as artists. I don't know if I'm quite there yet. But again, this woman that I'm working with as a mentor, is excellent. She says 'Yes you are. You are an artist and you do good work. And you need to know that ..."

"One of the things this other friend and I did was to form a small group of women called [specific name], to talk about issues and how can we do things differently. Various revelations and things came along the way. It was an enormous support. Membership jumped around the bit, but it's been stable at four for quite a while now ..."

"The other support is acknowledging the amount of personal growth work that I had done prior to this time and all the learnings assisted me; the fact that I was prepared and I was aware of those inner voices and have a process to actually deal with them. And a certainty that I could deal with the process, that it wouldn't overwhelm me, that there would be a mechanism there to keep it in balance. And I'm sure that there were plenty of other things, books and things along the way too. Journal writing, the creative work. Singing was good."

Amelia was articulate about the fears and issues she confronts as part of the transition process.

“The inner demons are fascinating. Some of the messages are around ‘I can’t do work that I love and get paid for it’. And the other side of it is ‘I have to give up something to be paid well’. And the other thing of course is that the adrenaline is pumping. It’s an approach that I’ve used for a long time, and I know at work and in a crisis situation, there seems to be only two models – I’m either bored, or I’m operating at full tilt. I haven’t yet been in the space of being calm, centred and absolutely confident ... That is one of my concerns about going back into the workforce -- that I’ll just go back into that routine. And when I do that, I’m back into that same situation that takes an enormous amount of time to get back to centre, so that I am able to do my creative work, to relate to people genuinely, to enjoy being in nature, to enjoy being with my partner ...

“One of the challenges over this last four years has been how I would respond when people ask ‘What have you been doing?’ And I’ve gotten more creative over time. Things like ‘I’m in the chrysalis’, or ‘I’m exploring the inner world’, or ‘I’m on an inner journey’. And depending on the person, they’ll mutter or they’ll walk away, or they’ll say ‘Oh, that sounds fascinating, tell me some more about it.’ And then of course I can talk to them about the dreamwork, writing, singing and walking. But otherwise, it gets to be a very limited conversation. But part of it is also continuing to value that process – that it is just as valuable as whatever I do in the external world. This is an approach to life that I want to integrate and operate from for the rest of my life. This is not an interlude. I had always recognised the value of things like quiet time, solitude, working in nature, but there were times when I didn’t make the time for it. This other work world had taken over, particularly in the last year that I was at work. I was bringing work home with me at night. I was doing work on the weekends. And even if I wasn’t working, I was thinking about it. So my relationship suffered. I wasn’t present. It took an enormous amount of time to let it go. It was Sunday morning before I felt like I could really do something for myself ...

“I suppose the Western world does not value this process. I’m fortunate in that I generally surrounded myself with people who did. There’s the occasional relative or whatever who thought it was absolutely bizarre and a waste of time and how could I. Hindrances? Again, myself. Listening to those inner voices

and believing them. That I should be doing something. I should be out gardening. I should polish the silver. 'Anybody else would have gone out and repaired the fence and gone to the gallery 20 times, and written 50 letters. You're not doing any of that. What are you doing?'"

While, her transition is by no means complete, this is how Amelia evaluates her process:

"I suppose I tend to use how centred I'm feeling as a criteria, and then I trust and act from that place. That's what works effectively. I suppose in terms of success, some of the ways that people in the external world would define success is about the amount of money you make or the position that you hold. My criteria would now be how balanced my life was. How strong and deep are my relationships? How well do I trust? Has there been additional growth in the areas of personal development and spiritual development? Is there a creative flow? Am I making a contribution? ... Am I leading a balanced life? Am I leading a centred, peaceful, serene life? Am I leading a soulful life?"

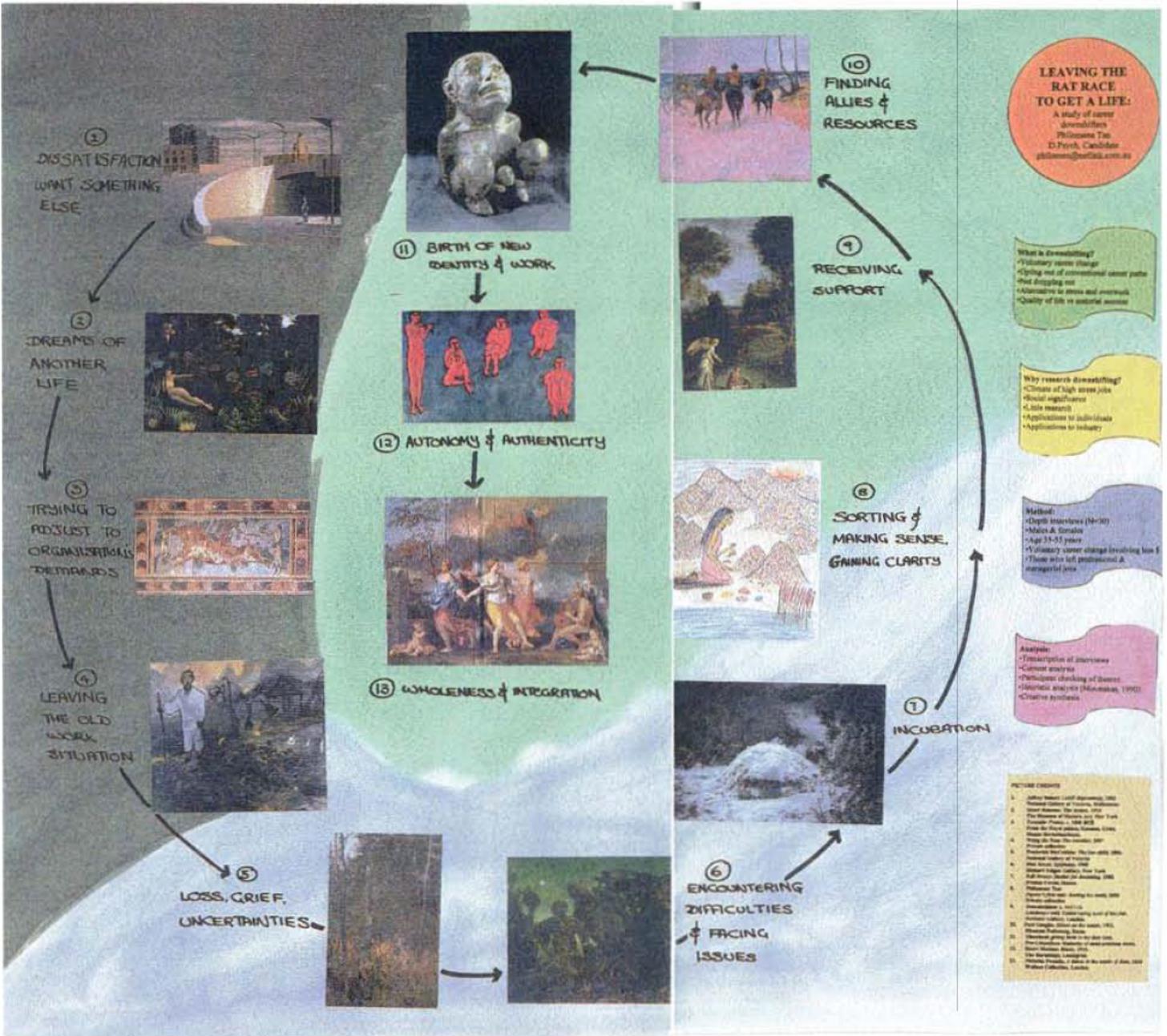
Amelia represents a woman who worked in the government sector who tried to accommodate to organisational demands, only to realise that her integrity and professionalism were continuously being challenged (Theme I). Here again, the costs were in terms of physical and psychological well-being. Amelia's exemplary portrait illustrates the struggle many career downshifters have about the need for change (Theme II). While Amelia resigned after much consideration and with a financial safety net (her inheritance from her father), she did not have alternative employment or an alternative career in mind at the time of resignation. Her portrait also provides insights regarding difficulties with finding satisfactory alternative work, and the anxieties and worries experienced during this stage (Theme III and IV). Her process of incubation (Theme V) involved an appreciation of her life history to date, and accessing support. As part of her process of "Emergence" (Theme VI), she found numerous creative ways to deal with uncertainties and being in transition. It is clear from the last quote that Amelia has defined her notions of success to incorporate an inner life and an outer life which are both meaningful and worthwhile.

8.4 Creative synthesis

Thus far, the common themes in downshifting experiences (Section 8.1), thick description of these themes (Section 8.2), and case studies by way of exemplary portraits (Section 8.3) have been presented to depict the experience of downshifting from a variety of perspectives. As part of his method of heuristic research, Moustakas (1990) suggested additional analysis in the form of a creative synthesis. The purpose of such a creative synthesis is two-fold. First, the essential purpose of heuristic research is to create “a story” that portrays the qualities, meanings and essences of universally unique experiences”. Second, creative synthesis allows a researcher to illuminate the details and meanings of the experience as a whole, after the researcher is “thoroughly familiar with all the data in its major constituents, qualities and themes” (p. 31). This creative synthesis may take the form of a lyric poem, a song, a narrative description, a story, or a metaphoric tale. I have used, instead, a collage of images as the format for creatively synthesising the essence and meaning of career downshifter’s experiences as a whole, attempting to incorporate both structure and qualitative texture of the experience as recommended by Moustakas (1994). A copy of this collage in A3 format (overleaf) was reduced from the larger original measuring 840 mm by 940 mm. The sources of art images used may be found in Appendix E.

It is my hope that this collage provides a one-page summary of universal experiences in career downshifting, which convey both structure as well as emotional tone. While there are few words used in the collage, the images were selected to convey essential elements of the downshifting experience (i.e. themes and constituent issues), without being bound by the contexts of any single participant interviewed, so that it may readily be applicable to other downshifters or would-be downshifters. As such, the collage as creative synthesis describes the experiences of each of the study participants, and hopefully provides a useful map to those considering career downshifting.

I have selected art images from around the world and from different periods in time to depict my understanding of the participants’ experiences through their process of career downshifting. I have used images because they are able to capture both essence and qualities of experiences in a succinct and symbolic way different to words which have been the main medium in previous sections. Each group of images (described



below) are used to depict the seven main themes and the majority of constituent issues previously described in Sections 8.1 and 8.2

The arrangement of the art images in a circular format is an attempt to depict movement through several themes or experiences. The counter-clockwise layout symbolises the fact that downshifting is at the moment antithetical or “counter” to the main thrust of one of western society’s values – prime importance of working towards material success. While one-way arrows have been used to depict the ideal progressive movement through each theme, the spiral layout attempts to communicate that multiple themes could be experienced at the same time, and that there is always the possibility of moving back and forth along the spiral.

The background colours have been selected to convey predominant moods while individuals experience the core themes identified: (a) grey to depict the ominous situation an individual is in before he/she leaves his/her previous career (Theme I of need for change, and Theme II of struggle with the need for change); (b) blue to depict the low mood involved with facing the realities of a career downshift (Theme III of feeling down, Theme IV of facing difficulties and confronting issues, and Theme V of incubation); (c) green to depict the more hopeful mood of moving towards a new career direction (Theme VI of emergence, and Theme VII of possible positive outcomes).

Theme I (need for change) is depicted by images 1 and 2. Image 1 (Jeffrey Smart’s “Cahill Express”) was chosen to depict the potential career downshifter’s lack of fit with his/her working environment (Issues I.A and I.C) and dissatisfaction with his/her current management or professional career (Issues I.B). The image was also chosen to convey a possible atmosphere of stagnation (Issue I.D) or the situation not being right (Issue I.B). Image 2 (Henri Rousseau’s “The dream”) was chosen to depict the desire for some other type of work or a better life (Issues I.E and I.F).

Theme II (struggle with the need for change) is depicted by images 3 and 4. Image 3 is an image from the ancient Cretan palace of Knossos circa 1500 BCE and is typically referred to as the Toreador Fresco. It depicts three bull dancers performing acrobatics around a bull. The image was chosen to convey the efforts that potential career downshifters undertake to fit into their previous careers and organisations where

the emphasis is typically on performance (Issues II.A and IIB). Image 4 (Wang Jia Nan's "The traveller") depicts a man leaving an environment he is familiar with. The image was chosen to depict how downshifters deal with fear and risk (Issues II.D and II.E), with some acceptance that they need to try other career options (Issues IIC and II.F).

Theme III (feeling down) is represented by image 5 (Frederick McCubbin's "The lost child"). This image was used to depict the negative states of feeling down or low (Issue III.A), feelings of grief or loss (Issue III.B), feelings of doubt, remorse and regret (Issue III.C). The placement of image 5 at the bottom part of the collage is consistent with some participants' usage of metaphors of descent of some kind (Issue III.D)

Theme IV (facing difficulties and confronting issues) is represented by image 6 (Max Ernst's "Epiphany"). This image was used to depict the threats and "demons" that the career downshifter faces in his search for a new career and different lifestyle which will involve less money and status (Issues IV.A, IV.B, IV.C and IV.E).

Theme V (incubation) is depicted by images 7, 8, 9 and 10. Image 7 is Neil Drury's sculpture entitled "Shelter for dreaming", and depicts Issue V.A where many downshifters take some "time out" as part of their incubation process. Image 8 is my drawing which depicts Psyche (from the Greek myth of Psyche and Eros) at the first of four challenging tasks set by the Goddess Aphrodite for Psyche to meet in order to win back the God Eros (Johnson, 1989; von Franz, 1992). Psyche's first task is to sort a pile of mixed assorted seeds before nightfall, or face the penalty of death. This image corresponds to the sorting and re-evaluation process (Issue V.B) which takes place in the context of constructing some sort of order from confusion and chaos. It also relates to Issue IV.F of whether one has enough time left. Finding resources (Issue V.C) is depicted in image 9 (Domenichino's "Landscape with Tobias laying hold of the fish") and image 10 (Paul Gauguin's "Riders on the beach"). More specifically, image 9 refers to finding physical resources as well as a mentor or professional helper; image 10 refers to finding allies, or people in a similar situation who are able to provide mutual support.

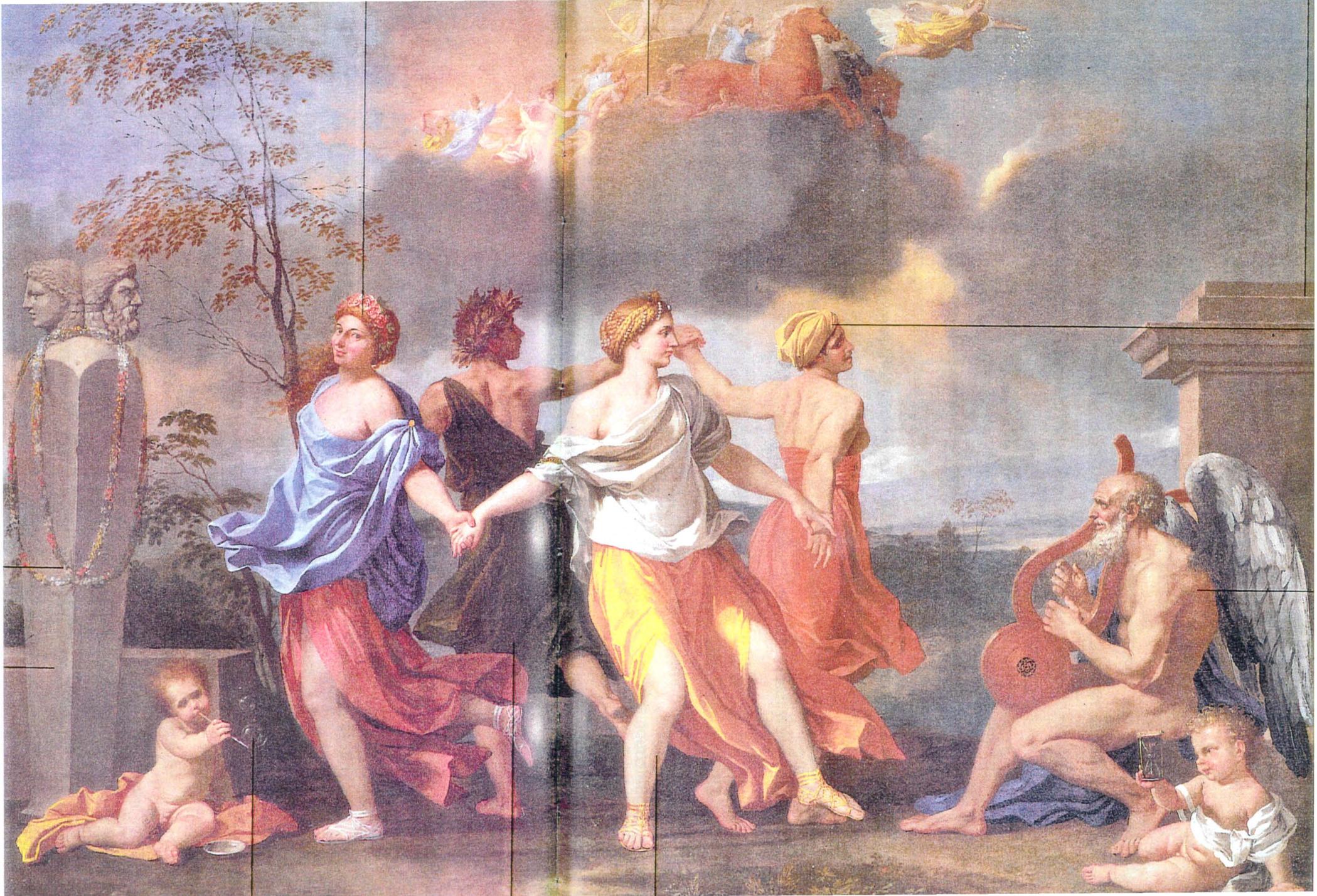
Theme VI (emergence) is summarised by image 11, a Pre-Columban sculpture of the Aztec Goddess Tlazolteotl giving birth to the Sun God. This image was chosen to

depict the pain and struggle that are inherent with emergence of a new self. Even though a new lifestyle, a revised identity and new definitions of success might eventually be born (Issues VI.G, VI.H and IV.I), they are the product of struggles and resolutions regarding financial issues, status issues, remorse or regrets, uncertainties (Issues VI.A, VI.B, VI.C and VI.D), and born of clarity and having a plan or direction and willingness to be a beginner (Issues VI.E and VI.F).

Theme VII (possible positive outcomes) is summarised by images 12 and 13. Image 12 (“Music” by Henri Matisse) is an attempt to depict career downshifters finding more suitable work (Issue VII.A) which may involve more creativity for some participants, greater autonomy (Issue VII.C) symbolised by two characters in image 12 playing their own instruments, authenticity (Issue VII.F) symbolised by three characters in image 12 using their own voices, enhancement of identity and personal growth (Issues VII.D and VII.E) symbolised by multiple characters in image 12.

Issue VII.B better quality of life, and possible positive outcomes overall are depicted by image 13 (“A dance to the music of time” by Nicholas Poussin), an enlarged copy of which is overleaf. An enlargement of this painting may be found overleaf. This image was chosen because on many levels it depicts many issues identified previously in Section 9.1 and 9.2. The four dancers in the centre of the image are allegorical figures depicting Wealth, Pleasure, Industry and Poverty (Cumming, 1995). These allegorical dancers represent some important elements which career downshifters have grappled with. That these dancers are presumably dancing to music played by “Old father time” at the bottom right of the painting is congruent with the possibility of career downshifting participants finding a “suitable rhythm” or constructing a new structure to their life, yet being aware of relative time-left-to-live (Issue IV.G).

The two-headed Janus sculpture to the left of the painting is resonant with the fact that career downshifters interviewed have had to consider both the past and the future in the restructuring of their careers (Issue V.B). They also have had to design their new careers and lifestyles within the context of time constraints (e.g., having only 24 hours to each day, and being in midlife; Issue IV.G), depicted by “Old father time” and the sand moving through the hourglass held by a cherub in the right of the painting, as well as the bubbles blown by the cherub on the bottom left side of the painting



symbolising brevity of life (Cumming, 1995). Additionally, the Greek God Apollo whose main values could be typically classified as “masculine” rather than “feminine” including achievement, rationality, order and agency (Hillman, 1975; Schapira, 1988) is portrayed riding his chariot across the skies. This is possibly consistent with the fact that in the main, most downshifters still undertake a career within the mainstream culture whose values are largely Apollonian, rather than opting for a counter-culture lifestyle.

Beyond providing a one-page summary of themes depicting career downshifters’ experiences, the reactions of others to this collage suggest that it communicates a spectrum of meaning with few words. At the voluntary meeting to meet other research participants who had downshifted (described in Section 6.5), participants who attended readily recognised their experiences in an earlier draft of this collage. Additionally an earlier draft of this collage was submitted for a poster competition of postgraduate research students at Swinburne University in September 1999. This draft was awarded first prize by judges using the criteria of engagement of and communication to “the intelligent lay person” (K. Pratt, Swinburne University, personal communication, 21 September, 1999). Thus, the collage is a story of challenge and redemption. It is also a guide for prospective travellers. Ideally this collection of images provides nourishment for the imagination and the soul as suggested by Plato and the neo-Platonists (Hillman, 1975).

8.5 Chapter summary

- (a) This chapter presents the primary findings of this study regarding the experience of career downshifting in a variety of formats, as suggested by Moustakas (1990).
- (b) In the first format (Section 8.1), the core themes in the experience of downshifting were identified. Essentially, career downshifting is not undertaken light-heartedly. Individuals who downshift begin their downshifting experience when they are conscious of the need to change (Theme I). However, there is typically a struggle with desires to change, and desires to remain in an existing occupation or role (Theme II). After leaving their previous careers, downshifters typically feel down (Theme III) and confront an array of issues and difficulties (Theme IV). Nevertheless, downshifters benefit from a number of possible outcomes (Theme

VII), but these typically result after a period of incubation (Theme V) and gradual emergence of a new career, lifestyle, and identity (Theme VI).

- (c) In the second format (Section 8.2), the core themes and their constituent issues are elaborated with thick descriptions incorporating quotes from participants to retain the context of their individual situations and personalities.
- (d) In the third format (Section 8.3), two “exemplary portraits” were provided to offer a more in-depth understanding of two case studies.
- (e) In the last format (Section 8.4), a creative synthesis in the form of a collage of art images was presented. The collage aimed to provide an overview which communicated the essence, structure, and emotional journey of the downshifting experience.

CHAPTER 9: RESULTS RELATED TO SUPPLEMENTARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary aim of the research was to investigate the downshifting experience from a phenomenological perspective, and the main findings were presented in Chapters 7 and 8. The results pertaining to the supplementary research questions previously outlined in Chapter 1 are provided in this chapter. To recapitulate, these supplementary research questions were:

1. Do some people have more easeful career downshifting transitions?
2. Are there gender differences in the phenomenon of career downshifting?
3. Do midlife issues emerge during career downshifting?
4. What advice would participants offer to potential downshifters?
5. How did participants react to the term “downshifting”?

To answer these supplementary research questions, participants’ transcribed interviews, as well as the coding of participants’ narratives were used. SPSS for Windows Version 6.0 was used in processing the quantitative data. The analyses included frequency counts, summary statistics, cross-tabulations, chi-square analyses and analysis of variance. Further details are provided below. Thus, both qualitative and quantitative data were used to answer the supplementary research questions.

9.1 Do some people have more easeful career downshifting transitions?

The results from previous chapters indicate that for most career downshifters, the transition is not easy. The universal themes experienced by participants (described previously in Section 8.1 and 8.2) include struggling with the need to change; feelings of grief, loss, or regret; and facing specific difficulties such as living on less money, decreased status, and issues of establishing themselves in a new career. Additionally, when participants rated their ease of adjustment to the career change, the average rating was 5.5 on a scale from zero (“extremely difficult”) to ten (“extremely easy”) (Figure 7.7 in Section 7.3). Given this context, it is more appropriate to consider whether the

transition can be less difficult or less stressful. In other words, can the career downshifting transition be more easeful, since it is unlikely to be easy. This issue is significant to potential downshifters and to those in the helping professions who assist those about to downshift, and to those in the midst of their downshifting transition. If we are aware of the factors that are associated with more easeful transitions, we would have more substantiated strategies regarding how to traverse this transition.

A quantitative approach was undertaken to investigate this research question. An index of easefulness was constructed as the dependant variable for analysis. Three items were used in the construction of this index: (a) Ease or difficulty of participants' adjustment after the career change; (b) Ease or difficulty of a participant's partner/family's adjustment after the participant's career change; (c) Perceptions of work life after the career change. These correspond to questions five, six and eight respectively on the self-report questionnaire (Appendix B). Factor analysis was undertaken as a data-reduction procedure (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). Principal component analysis without rotation of these three items yielded two principal factors, accounting for 53% and 36% of variance respectively. Further details of the factor analysis, including factor loadings may be found in Appendix F. While Principal Components analysis is rarely used with such small numbers of subjects, it was employed here as a data-reduction technique to provide an objective estimate of the relative contribution of each of the three indicators to the operationalised concept of downshifting "easefulness".

Factor loadings from the first factor (which accounted for more than half the variance in the inter-item correlation matrix) were used as weights to compute an index of easefulness. This index score was used as the dependant variable to investigate easefulness of the downshifting transition. Correlations between this dependant variable ("Perceived ease of transition") and all variables from the self-report questionnaire, as well as other variables computed from participants' narratives (previously detailed in Section 6.6) were computed. Since many of the variables departed from normal distributions, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was deemed to be inappropriate. Instead, a non-parametric approach was taken, using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (ρ) so as to reduce "outliers" exerting undue influence on the magnitude of the correlation coefficient.

Table 9.1 shows five variables with substantial correlations to the “perceived ease of transition” index. Three of these variables correlated significantly with the index for “perceived ease of transition” at the 0.05 level of significance, while two (“gradual onset of transition” and the SWLS measure at Time 2) approached this level of significance ($p = 0.06$). The first three variables suggest factors that may contribute to more easeful transitions. The last two variables suggest effects of easeful transitions. In considering the first three variables, it would seem that those who are married or have a partner, those who have gradual onset of a career change (i.e. taking more time in deciding to change careers), and those who are in a more advanced stage of their transition (i.e. those who are in the latter stages of Stabilisation and Adjustment in Nicholson’s work transition cycle previously detailed in Section 4.5, as opposed to those in the earlier Encounter stage) reported more favourable scores on the index of “perceived ease of transition”. In considering the last two significant variables, it appears that perceiving that the career transition is strongly associated with a perception of a high degree of autonomy and a general sense of satisfaction with life after the career change. Each of the first three variables which may influence easefulness of a career downshift are now discussed in turn.

Table 9.1 Variables which correlated appreciably with “perceived ease of transition” index

	Spearman rho (ρ)	p
Being married/having a partner	0.44	0.02
Gradual onset of transition	-0.35	0.06
Stage in Nicholson’s work transition cycle	0.53	0.00
Diener Satisfaction with Life rating after career change (T2)	0.35	0.06
Ryff Autonomy subscale after career change (T2)	0.47	0.01

Perhaps it is not surprising that those who are married or have partners have less difficulty in their career transition compared to their single or divorced counterparts. The results previously reported in Chapters 7 and 8 indicated the importance of socio-

emotional support. Virtually all participants who were married or had partners cited their spouse/partner first when they nominated their sources of support. This fact together with the nature of support provided (e.g., discussions of the impact of the career change, availability of financial resources via the spouse/partner, agreement of the spouse/partner on the appropriateness of the career change) suggests that having a supportive spouse/partner is a primary factor in having a more easeful transition.

This, however, does not imply that single or divorced individuals will have more difficult transitions necessarily. The results suggest that it is extremely important for single or divorced career downshifters to ensure that they have adequate sources of constant and appropriate social-emotional support. Back-up sources of finances (e.g., savings, parents, other family members, or friends) may also be necessary, depending on individual circumstances. For example, Yvonne who was single had to borrow money from her father for unexpected medical expenses (Section 8.2, Theme IV.A).

Interestingly, there was a low correlation between the “perceived ease of transition” index and whether a participant sought professional help from a career counsellor, psychologist or psychotherapist ($\rho = 0.30$; $p = 0.10$). However, considering participants who were single or divorced, the correlation was higher, but still non-significant, possibly due to the small sample size ($\rho = 0.38$; $p = 0.20$; $n=13$). These results suggest that professional intervention had an impact on easefulness of transition, but not as strong an impact as having a spouse/partner.

In the next series of analyses, participants were grouped on the basis of particular characteristics. These groups were then compared for possible differences in their mean values on the “perceived ease of transition” index using ANOVA procedures and the F-ratio as the statistic to identify significant group mean differences. The F-statistic was chosen, rather than some non-parametric procedures because: (a) it is more powerful than non-parametric alternatives; and (b) it has been shown to be quite robust in the face of violations of assumptions of normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). Moving to the second variable which correlated strongly with the “perceived ease of transition” index, it may be recalled that participants were classified using Nicholson’s (1984, 1990) typology of work transition cycle. Ten percent of participants were classified as being in the “Encounter” stage, 50% as being in the “Adjustment” stage, while the remaining

40% were in the “Stabilisation” stage. Table 9.2 below shows that participants who were more advanced in their transition reported greater ease in their adjustment to the transition. Thus, it seems as though, the further along in a transition, the more likely the participant is to have resolved difficulties and confronted significant issues, and the more likely he/she is to report greater ease in adjusting to the downshifting transition. However, the “ease in transition” index was not significantly correlated with elapsed time ($\rho = 0.20$; $p > 0.10$). In other words, moving along a transition takes time, but lapsed time in itself does not necessarily move one along the transition cycle.

Table 9.2 “Perceived ease of transition” index by Nicholson’s stages of the transition cycle

Nicholson’s stages of the transition	Number of Participants	“Perceived ease of transition” index	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Encounter	3	10.7	0.81
Adjustment	15	11.8	4.01
Stabilisation	12	15.7	2.51

$F(2, 26) = 5.70, p < 0.05$

As a group, those who “opted-out” did not report greater ease in adjusting to the transition compared with those who “bowed-out”. Nevertheless, further analysis indicated that participants who took six months or less in deciding to undertake the transition (i.e. undertook “sudden” rather than “gradual” transitions) experienced more difficulties in adjusting to the transition (Table 9.3).

Table 9.3 “Perceived ease of transition” index by speed of launching into career transition

Speed in launching into career transition	Number of participants	“Perceived ease of transition” index	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
“Sudden” (decided within six months)	4	9.7	1.90
“Gradual” (decided after six months)	25	13.2	3.83

$F(1, 27) = 4.11, p < 0.01$

The “perceived ease of transition” index was not significantly correlated to any of the following variables:

- a) the extent of career change (i.e. whether participants went back to an earlier occupation, or were undertaking a 45-degree change, or 90-degree change; refer Section 10.1 previous);
- b) the specificity of career change (i.e. whether participants were aware of the specific career they were moving towards).

9.2 Are there gender differences in the phenomenon of career downshifting?

In spite of small sample sizes, it was possible to investigate possible gender differences in the downshifting phenomenon. First, however, it should be noted that the sample was skewed towards single women and men with partners (Table 9.4 below). The over-representation of single women and men with partners is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 11.76$; $p < 0.01$). While this may suggest a bias in the sample, it is also a possibility that a lower proportion of women in positions of responsibility are married or living in defacto relationships compared to men in similar positions. Comparable population statistics were sought but not available from the Australian Institute of Management, or publications from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Table 9.4 Marital status by gender

	Male participants ($n=15$) %	Female participants ($n=15$) %
Single/divorced	13	73
Married	67	13
Partner/de-facto	20	13

$\chi^2 (2, N=30) = 11.76, p < 0.01$

As reported in Chapter 8 previously, the types of supports mentioned by participants in their narratives tended to be socio-emotional in nature. Quantification of narratives showed that 97% mentioned socio-emotional support, 37% mentioned information support, with only 27% mentioning instrumental support. There were no gender differences in the types of supports mentioned. However, while 40% of the sample overall had mentioned receiving professional help (e.g., vocational counsellor,

psychologist or psychotherapist) with regard to their transition, a higher proportion of women (60%) mentioned the use of professional help compared to men (20%) (see Table 9.5).

Table 9.5 Seeking professional help by gender

	Male participants (<i>n</i> =15) %	Female participants (<i>n</i> =15) %
Sought professional help	20	60
Did not seek professional help	80	40

$\chi^2 (1, N=30) = 5.00, p < 0.05$

Because of the rapport developed in the course of the interviews conducted, I believe it is unlikely that men would have under-reported their use of professional help. Thus, it seems that women more actively sought professional help. This finding is consistent with other general counselling research that women show greater usage of professional counselling/psychotherapy services (e.g., Garfield & Bergin, 1986).

The third statistically significant finding is that a higher proportion of men (73%) were self-employed or actively working towards self-employment, compared to only 27% of women (Table 9.6). As a post-hoc hypothesis, this difference may be due to a greater valuing of autonomy among men, compared to greater valuing of relationships and balance for women (e.g., Burke & Nelson, 1998).

Table 9.6 Self employment intentions by gender

	Male participants (<i>n</i> =15) %	Female participants (<i>n</i> =15) %
No intention of being self-employed	27	73
Not self-employed at the time of interview, but working towards it	20	13
Self employed at the time of interview	53	13

$\chi^2 (2, N=30) = 7.07, p < 0.05$

Further investigations of gender differences across the Ryff psychological well-being subscales (Table 9.7) showed that men reported higher levels of Autonomy before their career change ($M = 13.0$, $SD = 2.24$) compared to women ($M = 11.2$, $SD = 2.54$), ($F(1, 27) = 4.24$, $p < 0.05$). However, while men reported higher levels of Autonomy after their career change, this difference was not statistically significant ($M = 15.0$, $SD = 1.81$ for men, $M = 13.7$, $SD = 2.32$ for women). Thus, there is some limited support for a hypothesis that male career downshifters valued and achieved autonomy more so than did female career downshifters.

Table 9.7 Ryff's Psychological Well-Being subscales before and after career change by gender

Ryff subscales	Men ($n = 15$)		Women ($n = 15$)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Autonomy				
Before change	13.0	2.24	11.2	2.54
After change	15.0	1.81	13.7	2.32
Environmental mastery				
Before change	10.8	2.70	10.5	3.74
After change	14.9	1.64	14.2	2.14
Personal growth				
Before change	15.3	2.07	14.2	3.36
After change	17.1	1.16	15.9	2.07
Purpose in life				
Before change	14.1	3.35	14.6	2.22
After change	14.8	2.78	14.4	2.72
Relationships with others				
Before change	13.2	3.21	13.5	3.52
After change	15.2	1.32	14.5	3.04
Self acceptance				
Before change	11.5	2.88	11.1	3.77
After change	15.0	1.56	13.2	2.62

There were, however, no statistically significant gender differences on the Relationships With Others subscale, both before or after the career change. Thus, there was no evidence that female career downshifters perceived more progress in developing better relationships with others than did their male counterparts. Interestingly, men reported higher levels of acceptance than women after their career change ($M = 15.0$, $SD = 1.56$ for men, $M = 13.2$, $SD = 2.62$ for women) ($F(1, 27) = 5.22$, $p < 0.05$).

Fifty percent of participants mentioned that they were seeking further training as part of their career downshifting, with 40% in the process of completing a course at a university, and 10% completing training outside the university system (e.g., NEIS scheme or TAFE course). Of those undertaking further education, 40% commenced this education before they left their previous occupations, while the remaining 60% commenced this education after they left. There were no gender differences in the proportions of men and women undertaking further training as part of their career downshift.

One of the most interesting findings is that as a group, males reported significantly greater ease in adjusting to the transition than females. This difference in rating is statistically significant (Table 9.8). Perhaps this finding is partly accounted for by the fact that the majority of women in this sample were not married or in partnerships, and the “perceived ease of transition” index was strongly correlated with being married/having a partner (Section 9.1).

Table 9.8 Ease of adjustment to transition by gender

Gender	Number of Participants	“Perceived ease of transition” index	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Male	15	15.0	2.78
Female	15	11.5	4.01

$F(1, 27) = 7.77, p < 0.01$

It is also noteworthy that there were no significant differences between men and women in the distribution of Myers Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI) typology on the extraversion-introversion, sensing-intuition, and judging-perceiving dimensions. However, on the thinking-feeling dimension, 67% of men were classified as thinking types compared to 33% of women. Conversely 33% of men were classified as feeling types compared to 67% of women. While these differences are consistent with the common pattern of gender differences along the thinking-feeling dimension (e.g., Hammer & Mitchell, 1996; Myers & McCaulley, 1985), the difference in this study was not statistically significant ($\chi^2(1, N=30) = 3.03, p > 0.05$). While the Feeling preference on the MBTI is not identical with Neuroticism (as measured by the NEO-PI), it may be that Feeling types are more predisposed to nuances in feeling, and more likely by MBTI definitions to evaluate situations on the basis of feelings. This rationale may partly

account for the less favourable scores on the “perceived ease of transition” index among women career downshifters in this sample. Future research with larger sample sizes would contribute to further understanding of this gender difference.

Apart from the quantitative analysis of gender differences, participants’ narratives were also analysed to provide insights as to whether men and women expressed particular experiences in reference to their gender roles, that is, the experience of downshifting in relation to how it is to be a man, or how it is to be a woman.

Since many men were in marriages or defacto relationships, they particularly experienced the impact of earning less money on their relationships and their identities as main income earners. It was not uncommon to find men in partnerships struggling, at least initially, with the fact that they had to rely on their wives’ incomes to a certain extent.

*“Money wise, we’ve dropped an awful lot in salary. I certainly would not have taken on the risk of this year, or indeed anything, without the support of my wife. She works part-time, but one income is not enough to get us by. My wife has been terrific. I guess the difficulty, and I suppose it’s a male thing, is that **you don’t like being supported by your wife to a degree. I think I had to rationalise.** We’re a partnership. We are an equal partnership. So I see myself and my wife as very much a team effort. At the same time, you’re a leader and sometimes you’re a back bencher. My wife’s been marvellous. I’ll be down sometimes and she’ll say, ‘Come on, you’ll be right’. So she’s been a great support emotionally.”*

Clayton, 53

Moreover, a change in the nature of work meant that many men had to re-evaluate their identity in such a way that their sense of self and sense of masculinity was not overly compromised. In the quote below, it is clear that for many men, identity and self worth are associated with work, activity, and productivity, and being the main income earner.

“As a man, you feel as if your sense of identity and self worth is somehow defined out there in the world, by what you do. I think that is more true of men than women. At the time that I did this, my family had grown up, I really had nobody to be responsible to. Whereas earlier when the kids were at school, I just couldn't take wild chances. Work does give you a frame, a structure, tells you what to do when. For a while I became conscious of it. 'What do I do now? What do I do today? Should I paint? Shouldn't I be mowing the lawn? Shouldn't I be doing something else more responsible, rather than amusing myself? Shouldn't I be doing something useful?' Useful would mean cleaning up the garden which this place badly needs. Or even useful in terms of community work. It's productive in some way.”

Francis, 57

“It was seriously affecting me. And of course I tend to bottle things up. It was difficult to make that change. I thought to myself, 'Am I just being a big wimp, taking the easy option and letting the family down? What would others think of me? I still see myself of the old school providing the income. People that we know said 'Good on you. That's great.' And a few of them actually say, 'You're back to your old self'. It was more really me thinking rightly or wrongly 'Here's me on a package of \$110,000 down to less than \$30,000. What a loser!' They don't really say that.”

Robert, 44

Not all men in partnerships, however, perceived the fact of not being the main income earner as constituting a difficulty. In the first quote below, the participant's wife found it more problematic since she felt increased responsibility for the financial maintenance of their household. In the second quote below, the participant and his wife had a more equal partnership, although other significant people had expectations that as a man, he was being somewhat irresponsible in his career downshift, a perception he and his wife did not agree with.

“I think my wife found it difficult. Up until then, we'd shared the financial responsibility. And all of a sudden, it wasn't being shared. So she found that difficult. I was being paid to do something I liked doing. It placed more

*responsibility on my wife because she was in fact, percentage-wise, more responsible for income than I was. **She felt burdened by it.***

Hugh, 58

*“For the first few years of our relationship, I wasn’t the breadwinner anyway because my [small] business didn’t go that well. Obviously, it is more of a concern for my wife’s parents. Some of my friends had a belief that **professional people** have incumbent upon them to make something of their lives. Stopping your professional career at some point, from outside could be viewed as being not enough, and appearing not to do anything immediately to replace it, was in actual fact sort of aggravating that responsibility to be responsible and professional and to achieve.”*

Paul, 41

For women who were not in relationship partnerships, there was typically a concern about whether they would have sufficient material resources to support themselves through their transition and beyond. Those who did not have employment immediately after they resigned felt insecure and worried about their future employment prospects. In other words, these women were concerned about the realities of not having the security of employment. While many were concerned about who they were without their professional and managerial occupations, this was more an issue about their identity as a person, rather than their identity as a woman.

“There’s only me in Australia. If I don’t work, the mortgage doesn’t get paid, and what about my superannuation for my old age?”

Zoe, 49

Nevertheless, one woman who had previously devoted herself to a linear style of career advancement (i.e. Driver’s, 1988, concept of a linear career style as previously described in Section 3.3.5) confessed that she had occasional fantasies of the traditional path of marriage for women.

*“When I first left [previous organisation], I was too scared not to have a career. I was also **torn** between earning money, being responsible and being*

*independent, and just wanting to be dependant and being looked after. I have this **fantasy** that I think I'd rather be like some of my girlfriends who **marry really rich men**, who don't have to work, and just do whatever they feel like. I don't think their lives are necessarily so wonderful. But I was allowing myself that fantasy, in a way."*

Kathy, 37

Women with partners were not entirely free of gender related issues either. In particular career women who had a history of independent incomes found it difficult to rely on their partners' incomes, albeit temporarily.

*"I also feel it's **my partner's money**. It's his super pension money we're living on, and interest from different businesses, because I don't earn much. But [partner] is not at all like that. But those old scars of **equating money with independence** is interesting. I can sit there and analyse how irrational it all is in this particular relationship, but this is what I have coped with."*

Gemma, 49

*"It was a form of guilt about having been supported, like a **kept woman**. I had never been in those circumstances ever in my entire life. I'd been independent financially, managed my own financial affairs, always had the income to do whatever I want. It is really contrary to my values to have a man support me. Also it was resentment of not having the money to buy the things I would have had if I'd been earning my \$80,000 a year. There was a sort of annoyance about having to watch the money I spent. There were a lot of equity issues that I was preoccupied with and it took a fair while for me to come to grips with the fact that my husband didn't actually care about that. If we were going to be married, we were going to pool all those resources and the whole lot was a joint asset. It took me a long time to get through my head that that was for real. It was this independent self-sufficient woman kind of overlay that I was still putting on top of marriage in the expectation that one day I had to account for all that if we had to split it up. It's completely gone now, but it was an issue at the time."*

Libby, 43

9.3 Do general midlife issues emerge during career downshifting ?

A number of participants spontaneously mentioned undergoing a “midlife crisis” around the same time that they were undertaking their career change. Indeed, one participant realised that the career change was part of a resolution of this period of general re-assessment, reconsideration of life priorities, and re-setting of life directions. Careers which may have been appropriate at an earlier age were deemed less appropriate because of organisational demands (e.g., long work hours, travel) competing priorities (e.g., parenting), or simply being less meaningful. In this section I identify the midlife issues previously described in Chapter 5 which emerged in the narratives of individuals.

9.3.1 Awareness of endings and effects of ageing

The predominant midlife issue which emerged was a changed relationship with time. Many individuals felt an urgency to resolve their career direction because their age (and midlife) signalled mortality, and that **less time was available** for establishing themselves in an alternative career. The perception that time was running out also meant that they also felt tremendous inner pressures to resolve their uncertainties and move through the career transition as quickly as possible, so that they could get on with establishing their new careers.

*I thought it was a huge midlife crisis. I mean, I hit midlife and I hit a huge crisis. I think I realised that **half my life was gone**, and here I was. I woke up, and I was really unhappy. I think that's what midlife crisis is about. Although I think perhaps, it's an unfortunate term.”*

Carolyn, 45

Death of a significant other was often a trigger in confronting mortality and a heightened awareness of endings, one of the cardinal features of midlife identified by McAdams (1993).

*“So in effect, it was like I was **over 40**. I knew I couldn't **go another 15 years** and do it well. I just knew I couldn't do it. It was a case of decide now. I'd thought*

about it three or four years. My cousin and I were very close. She died of cancer, and it was very distressing for me. She died at 30. Life's too short to be worried about anything much than making sure you do the best, or enjoy what you're doing. I was doing an OK job, but it was the same."

Lyn, 43

Other participants felt that being in midlife was a **disadvantage in securing alternative employment** since they perceived the current market favoured younger job seekers. While this reflects a bias towards youth in Australian society, some participants became aware that ageing may lead to decreased opportunities for employment.

*"I think I had this awareness that life's not a rehearsal, I know this is a cliché, but it was really starting to impact on me that you only get one chance at this. I suppose one of the jigsaw puzzle pieces was a friend I worked with kept saying "Do something else, don't just work for the government, try something out in the private sector", and I kept telling myself that I would like to try something different, **if I don't do it soon, I'll be too old**, and no one would want to employ something who is in their 50's, if I don't get off my butt and get moving. So I resigned."*

Gemma, 49

*"I applied for 20 jobs and I had interviews with maybe 10 or 12. But I quickly got the impression that age was the determining factor. I think as soon as people see grey hair, or age 45-46, you end up not getting it. **People were looking for younger people**. Young team. It had nothing to do with how that young team would stay with them, or how good they might be. People were very nice, and it wasn't said directly, but look, you're too old."*

Bruno, 48

Nevertheless, there were a few participants who did not consider age as a primary motivation for their career change, or associated age with difficulties experienced during the career transition.

*"I couldn't say the age had anything to do with it ... It was more the thought of spending the next 20 years doing something I didn't want to do. I guess I had enough time to realise that money and things don't really mean anything to me. Some people learn that at 25, but it took me a lot longer at 37. It's almost as when I migrated to Australia. It was very much the same. I was in a very comfortable position in an organisation and there just comes a time where you have to scare yourself – **'If I don't do it now, I won't ever do it'**. Just jump off. Some people buy a bigger house and a bigger mortgage and you get locked into that job even more, and you hate your job and you're looking for other things to keep yourself occupied and things just accumulate more and you need more money to maintain that sort of lifestyle.'*

Hans, 39

*"I think there's always that thing of **fear**, and fear that you can't do it, not having enough self-esteem to think you can do anything. One thing that I didn't ever feel is that **age had anything to do** with it. I must say, my age didn't ever contribute to pulling me back. I know for a lot of people, that holds a lot of people back. They think once you're over 40, you're on the downward slide. I tend to think the opposite. I think once you reach 40, it's up, up, up from there - because you're on such a great learning curve and a much different learning curve."*

Carolyn, 45

A few participants interviewed could have retired at the time they left their previous occupations, or a few years after they left their previous occupations. Instead, they had opted to downshift and continue in another career, albeit at a less hectic pace. These participants expressed their desire to remain active for many years to come and considered the career downshift to be a way in which they could still contribute to society and improve their previously stressful lifestyle.

*"I've just turned 53. I don't see retirement at 55. I believe **retirement** is where someone says 'I've stopped working'. I would hope that I would still be very active for many, many years to come, whether it be in a professional capacity, or a voluntary capacity. I believe that people who just sort of drop out of society is*

a waste. I think we all have so much to offer, call it wisdom of years, call it what you like. I just can't see myself doing that."

Clayton, 53

9.3.2 Sublimation of passion and re-evaluation of the place of work in one's life

With a greater awareness of mortality, endings and the limits of time and ageing, many participants tended to become more philosophical about the meaning of life. There was a re-evaluation of the role of work in the wider context of one's whole life, rather than an automatic dedication to a professional or managerial career. This sublimation of passion is the second cardinal feature identified by McAdams (1993), where adults "may become more choosy in how (they) plan to expend (their) psychic energy" (p. 200).

*"I wanted to be somewhere close to home. My wife and I can have a reduced heart rate, reduced work load. But not be a cop out, or a drop out, but just a different focus. We deliberately set about that. We would reduce our income, but also **reduce the stress on our lives**. The male side of my family historically don't live past 58, so I wanted to change or modify my lifestyle before then."*

Nicholas, 50

*"I think the biggest turning point now is that I am no longer looking at career, vocation and whatever, and the rest of my life. What I am looking at is **my life as a whole** ... The choices that I make about what I do is within a bigger framework of my life. ... I know I can earn an income. I'm doing that now. It's not as much income as I would like to earn, but it is satisfactory for the time being. I really have to focus on my life, rather than just my career. That's actually a big milestone, because ten years ago, it was the career [that was the most important]. So in my own psyche, that has been profound ... Given the terrible imbalance that I have before, it has been profound, so **career has to take a backseat position**. I don't know if this is going to upset your research, but career is not that important. That's the honest truth."*

Natalie, 41

*“For various reasons, I pursued a career in [profession]. I was in that field for quite a number of years, and I had quite a number of fulfilling situations in that career, but there was always **something missing**. I felt that it was the purpose that was missing. I didn’t feel that this career was going to give me the **purpose in life** that I was looking for. I was looking for something that was going to give me that **meaning in life**”*

Naomi, 50

*“I reckon I was heading for a **mid-life crisis** for about five years ... Just reviewing where you’re at and what you want, and where you want the rest of your work life to go. And not just work life but your whole life. I’ve been reviewing that for quite some time, and I think this [career change] might have been a **resolution to my mid-life crisis** in some ways. I’m much clearer now about my directions, what I’m happy with, and what I’m not happy with, since I’ve made the decision and made the shift.”*

Sam, 43

9.3.3 Confrontation of opposites and addressing previously unlived aspects

The narratives of several participants also included their struggle with incorporating opposites or unlived aspects of their lives. Since both male and female participants had primarily succeeded in their professional and managerial occupations using predominantly rational cognitive processes, the opposite way of being that often required addressing in midlife involved a greater place for feelings imagination and creativity in both personal and work life. The quotes below indicate that the incorporation of opposites is not easily achieved without some degree of struggle, and possibly relinquishing a dominant mode of being.

*“I was a scientist, a rational person. But that’s changing into something else. I have other beliefs ... It’s like **I don’t feel like I fit into any camp** ... Probably people I’ll mix with will probably change. It’s like groping in the dark ... I’m in the process, very much in a process. I’m not sure what’s going to come out at the end ... When I was at school, I had a talent for art. I was actually offered an art scholarship. Now at some stage, I just closed off that creativity bit and I think it*

is itching to get out. I'd like to go back to art, but I am not as good as I used to be. I am too impatient with it ... I have this huge fear of failure."

Jane, 50

*"My wife got her heart right first, and she is only getting her head right now. I think it got her into a lot of trouble. I'm much happier with the first part of my life, having **got my head right first** ... which means developing your intellect, thinking, logical, rational skills in place ... The world has got its logical, rational economic thinking right. Look at it, we can build buildings, we can air-condition it, we can put in lights, we can have trains, we can build MCG's without them falling down. We can do lots of stuff, but in the process, we've left something behind. Heart, spirit, call it what you like ... And I think if all human beings did it we would be all right ... But then you've got to have the courage, and the clarity to stop and say 'OK I'm not going to keep pursuing that forever. I've got to **recognise that's only half of me.**' ... Much as it is a struggle for me to find my heart, I find it easier to find my heart, than it is for my wife to find her head."*

Benjamin, 46

On a practical day-to-day level, many participants scaled down the extent of their commitment to work to incorporate other aspects which were important to them, particularly relationships with significant others (especially their children and partners) or activities which promoted less developed aspects of themselves.

*"This year has been better and **more fun** that I had hoped for. I'm loving the course (at university). I get to see my daughter; I take her to school every morning and walk her home. I've developed personal management skills which have made it easier to be a student. I don't think I could ever have been as good a student as I am now, at any other time in my life ... When I originally did my degree I just did it to get by ... I've just proven to myself that I could have do more if I'd wanted to ... I'd be interested in doing my PhD just only to prove to myself that I could do it ... There's just that little bit of wanting to **extend yourself.**"*

Lawrence, 44

The incorporation of feelings, relationship and creativity would be conceptualised by psychologists such as McAdams (1993) and post-Jungians such as O'Connor (1981) and Singer (1989) as the integration of the feminine or Eros principle by individuals who had previously operated largely from the masculine or Logos principle. These two principles, often conceptualised as Communion and Agency (following Bakan, 1966) will be further discussed in the next chapter.

9.3.4 Identity moratorium

Many participants were involved in a process that involved more than a radical change of careers. There was often a search for a form of work which provides sufficient income for living, as well as being less time consuming so as to allow sufficient time and energy for other aspects of their lives (e.g., family and non-work interests). Some participants were also in the midst of resolving opposite ways of being, and incorporating unlived aspects of their personalities. Given this context, it is not surprising that many participants experienced their lives being in flux and their identity being re-evaluated and possibly re-configured. In short, many participants experienced their identity in a state of moratorium. While this moratorium status may not be a comfortable experiences for some participants, there were others who welcomed this liminal state as an opportunity to explore alternatives, finding this moratorium time an exciting one.

*“There is a real sense of still not knowing what I want to do when I grow up ... I’m nearly 50 and I’ve done so many things ... I’ve learnt a lot about what I don’t want to do, and yet if there is such a thing as a vocation, or soul work, or life’s work, or something, I haven’t got a handle on it yet. I find it so hard to sit with and be patient with the evolving of the process. I don’t want to be in transition in a hiatus kind of hold, whatever, than any longer than necessary. I find it very, very **difficult to stay here, to be in transition.**”*

Zoe, 49

*“I might work for myself, or I’ll work for a small agency ... Or I might to freelance work, or community work ... It seems a little too early to tell just where I’m going to end up, but I feel as though there are a **lot of options** in this field to*

*consider. I'm certainly going to spend the next three-and-a-half years looking at as many of them as possible. And try and get a little bit of experience in as many as I can so I can ultimately make a choice and go towards that ... I see myself as, perhaps, even more acceptable now for having made a fairly serious choice about a lifestyle, and for having given myself just so much more interesting avenues to follow up. And the time to do them. The **time to do them**, I think, has been really, really rewarding. Really important."*

Lucia, 37

During this time of identity moratorium and general midlife re-evaluation of work and life priorities, previous unresolved issue of a personal nature may also surface. Potentially, this was a confusing and unstable time for some career downshifters. However, the quotes below shows that an individual may frame this challenging period within a context of personal development. Indeed, post-Jungians may even regard this period as contributing to an individual's process of **individuation**. Family therapists (e.g., Kerr & Bowen, 1988) would regard this period as potentially contributing to greater **differentiation** of the individual and the development of a more "solid sense of self" (p. 104)

*"Emotionally, I'm confronting stuff that I really haven't wanted to for years. A lot of it was highlighted by the death of my father. My anger with my father, personal issues. And today, my shrink brings up my mother, whom I'm still furious with, although I don't understand why. I'm still **emotional**, but at least I've got **the space and time** ... The emotional development to myself is more important than anything else. It's the best thing, having not having to report to anybody at the moment ... This has been a **long transition**. I don't feel grounded. I don't feel settled. I don't think it's the work. It think it's something to do with me not having landed anywhere myself, internally. This one's taking a long time. All my other job transitions have been fairly short ... I got a bit depressed earlier this year when I had no work and didn't know what I was going to do. I felt quite lonely, cut off. I felt I cut myself off, to a degree. By the same token, I really liked it. But it was a two-edged sword. That was a low point ... It certainly is a **slow developmental process**. But there's something about **coming into my own**.*

It's changing how I see myself. I'm certainly healthier."

Kathy, 37

*"I guess it's confronted me with my own responsibilities for my life. That I have choices; that I can make choices. I'm living my life now as a result of those choices. And that's quite scary. That is really **grown up stuff**. That is not like the organisation is going to look after you like mum and dad did. So that's been quite a tough realisation. I guess it is the hard work of **psychological development**. I really have this sense I got to the age of 18 or 20 or whatever, 21 when I finished university, and thought I'm grown up now. I've finished university and I'm in a professional job, earning more than my dad ever did, and I'm pretty hot stuff, really, and I just bought the whole box and dice, and carried on like that for 20-25 years, and never really thought very deeply about 'Am I doing what I want? Is what I'm doing worthwhile? Am I following my calling?'"*

Zoe, 49

9.3.5 Re-evaluation prompted by external events and/or internal processes

Consistent with previous literature on midlife transitions (e.g., O'Connor & Wolfe, 1991), a re-evaluation of priorities and career may be prompted by external events, such as death of a significant other, changes in significant relationships (e.g., new relationships or end of previous relationships), or workplace changes (e.g., a change in corporate culture or goals).

*"I actually had a **relationship that went very bad**, and I felt that it somehow made me think about where I was going with my whole life. My life was sort of a question. 'What am I doing with my life?' And I wanted to be able to know that when I died I could look back and say 'I am really pleased with what I have achieved in terms of what it means'. So it made my question all of that and look at [previous profession] which was not that meaningful to me. It could be **enjoyable but it was not that meaningful**."*

Lucia, 37 .

Alternatively, the process of re-evaluation could coincide with inner processes which are not associated with any external events.

*“It’s difficult for people to understand the **creative urges** stuff because up to now I haven’t shown any talent for anything. It’s not as though I’ve been taking photographs all my life, or writing articles for publication, all my life, or whatever. There is no basis for it at all. So it is difficult for people to believe in that, because I find it difficult to believe in it myself.”*

Zoe, 49

For some individuals, there was a combination of external events and inner processes which lead to a radical career change. In the quote below, the participant was involved with a national project relating to the future of workplaces in Australia (an external event). He was inspired by the vision encapsulated by the project more so than his corporate position, (an inner process) which eventuated in his subsequent career change.

*“It was not made for logical, rational reasons. Even now, three years down the track, I have great difficulty justifying it in logical rational terms. I was **infected by a virus** and it got me. And I couldn’t let it go. [Story of how he was involved with a national industry project which spawned the vision.] ... I describe myself as being infected by the power of the process of inviting people to think about what the future might be like, what they’d like to be ... By [date], I had a full blown version of the thing. I quit in a blaze of glory, and said ‘I was going to change the world’. And here I am. I haven’t changed a lot. Haven’t changed a lot of the world, but I keep plodding on.”*

Benjamin, 46

9.3.6 Evidence of generativity concerns

While researchers such as McAdams et al. (1986, 1993) have found that generative concerns are highest in midlife, only a few participants actively discussed generative concerns in their interviews beyond concern for their own children. While this could be due to the career change focus of the research, this result may be consistent

with Vaillant's (1977) notion that resolving work issues is a necessary precursor to manifesting generativity. The quote below illustrates the cultural generativity that emerged among a few participants.

*“I believe very strongly in both myself and my students. I think that I’ve discovered in myself that there is **potential in each of us**, that we don’t even know about. I encourage that in my students ... I get pleasure out of seeing people gain something that they never thought they could.”*

Clayton, 53

While generative concerns were not prominent in all participants’ narratives, it is important to note that many participants spontaneously spoke about their desire to contribute in a more meaningful way to society at large through their work. Indeed, their search for meaningful alternative forms of work was an essential part of their career change. The quote below is from a participant who had found a more meaningful work role, at least for the time being.

*“Another benefit is that the job that I’m in now has more of an impact. I think I have more of an **impact on people’s lives**, and I think I can actually change the way some service providers are working out there in the system. So by me preparing a speech and presenting it in a certain way, it does have a bigger impact, than what my last job had ... Whereas you talk to 100 people, and then you have people coming up to talk to you about something, thanking you, or congratulating you – like you make a difference to people’s lives. That’s good ... I provide parents support. I’ve had some very tragic cases, and I’ve had to learn counselling skills.”*

Lyn, 43

9.3.7 Psychological well-being

As discussed previously in the chapter on midlife (Section 5.3), Ryff (1989b) found that reported psychological well-being was higher among midlife adults compared to young adults and older adults. The results from the Ryff subscales previously reported in Section 7.4 (Table 7.6) showed that participants had significantly higher levels on all

six Ryff subscales of psychological wellbeing after their career change, but these were not significantly higher than available norms for the American population. Nevertheless, participant narratives often indicated that in the main, participants experienced high levels of psychological well-being, typically associated with the career change, rather than a function of being in midlife.

*“I feel my **self esteem is actually higher** for the fact that I’m no longer doing something that I virtually disliked ... I feel in myself, a much **more interesting interested and successful person** for having stepped out of what I feel was **mediocrity**, and stepped into a world of possibilities and new adventures, more or less. So I feel as though **my life is now full** of challenges. There are **uncertainties**, but I have the power to determine which way I go. There’s a lot of resources out there for me, and I’m finding it interesting, challenging and exciting. So I see myself as having a better self esteem than I did when I felt more stuck in a rut.”*

Lucia, 37

9.4 What advice would participants offer to potential downshiffters?

At the end of each interview, participants were asked: (a) if they would do anything differently with their career transition, given the benefit of hindsight, and (b) whether they had any advice for potential downshiffters.

With regard to the first question, 50% of participants said they would have conducted their transition in exactly the same way. Only two participants (7%) said they would have gone about the transition very differently given the benefit of hindsight, while 43% would have done it slightly differently. There were no statistically significant gender differences in response to the first question. Among those who expressed the possibility of a different approach to downshiffting, the themes which emerged were typically related to (a) choosing an alternative timing (e.g., leaving their previous occupations sooner; selling their homes at a different time for higher returns); (b) being more confident and less fearful about their career change, although they admitted that this was easier to say given the benefit of hindsight; (c) choosing specific behaviours

which would have been more supportive of their career change (e.g., being less arrogant to people who were potential supports and resources, and being more focused on life goals).

With regard to the second question of advice for potential downshiffters, participants' comments were largely related to dealing with the themes and experiences previously described in Chapter 8. The first theme in participants' advice was to be **prepared** for the transition in terms of anticipating practical difficulties as well as painful emotional experiences such as grief and loss.

“You’ve got to deal with the uncertainty. You don’t know when your money’s coming in. So you’ve got to be comfortable with that.”

Carolyn, 45

“I’d say do a lot of research. Talk to people, because it is really difficult. It’s not an easy path. There’s all the emotional stuff you work through. There’s the relief, but there’s the loss too. The grieving and the letting go of the position and the security and the status that you had.”

Yvonne, 54

The second type of advice related to being aware that career downshifting involved a **process of transition** with various experiences and challenges encountered at differing parts of the transition.

“Just recognise the stages one has to go through before you can move on. The anger, the denial, the acceptance. All those sorts of things. Don’t try and deny it. Work it through.”

Clayton, 53

“People who are too scared to make the change, I think are displaying just an early stage of the process. I think they’re probably on the road to making that change. It’s almost a process you have to go through. You just have to live through it until you’re comfortable enough to make the change. It’s as if you

knew that you had to make a change, but you hadn't reconciled it with yourself."

Lawrence, 44

Third, anxiety and fear will be experienced as part of the transition process. While this is typical, participants' advice was to **be courageous and passionate** about one's goals and dreams, and **believe in one's abilities and skills**, rather than being deterred by fears.

"It's important to understand that it's difficult to see just how good it can be on the other side. Because I think that people can become a bit fearful of what they don't know. It is a big wide world out there, when you've been used to working within the constraints of an organisation for a while. Also, to look at what's the worst that can happen."

Lucia, 37

"There has to be such a huge commitment to it. I suppose it's saying you can't do anything by halves. And have faith. Faith in themselves to make the change. I think the number one issue is you have to have a passion for what you're doing. Because if you don't have the passion, don't do it. Because it won't happen. It'll be too difficult."

Carolyn, 45

Fourth, it is important to **be clear about one's reasons for undertaking this career transition**. Because it is not an easy transition, a few participants advised against changing their careers as a reaction to organisational difficulties. It was important to consider life goals and priorities when undertaking a career transition which would involve large scale changes.

"Do it for your own reasons. People have gone in and they've said 'Oh, stick your job.' That's not your reason. That's for theirs. They've pushed you into it, or backed you into a hole. Then you're reciprocating somehow. If you do it for your own reasons, you won't have any remorse at all. People who don't plan are fools. But then again, see I'm from a technical area, and technical people tend to

plan. They tend to not just wait and see what turns up. They tend to push things along.”

Nicholas, 50

Fifth, a few participants cautioned potential downshifters to **consider all relevant issues** in making their decisions and plans to change their careers. Issues such as their motivations and what they considered meaningful work were important. A career change was an opportunity to realign work and a way of life toward what was important in an individual’s life.

“I’d encourage others to do it, to be prepared, be courageous enough to say ‘No, I’m not in the right place’ first without expecting that ‘I’m not going to say that until I know where I’m going’. Once you say that, it changes your perspective on the world. It gives you much more chance of being able to have a clearer picture of where you really want to go, as distinct to where you are going to lurch into ... Money and status are irrelevant in the process, unless they are the drivers for you. If they are the drivers for you, why give them up? If they are not the drivers for you, why even let them into the equation. So the question is, what is driving you? Why are you doing what you’re doing?”

Benjamin, 46

“I think there is a fantasy in our culture that at 18, you have to choose your university course, and your vocation, and you’ll be successful for the rest of your life. That’s all out the window.”

Neil, 37

If potential downshifters were in relationships or had dependants, the impact on others also needed to be considered in the decision to downshift.

“If they had a partner who was also in work, they would need to consider whether being out of step with that partner was an issue or not, and how they might handle that. They need to be aware of possible differences and, maybe, difficulties that that could lead to financial imbalance, how that is going to be

handled. It would depend whether they were in the latter years of their working life or whether they were mid-career or early-career.”

Hugh, 58

The sixth type of advice was by way of considering the **role of work** in the context of an individual’s whole life. Being a professional or manager can detract an individual from considering his/her identity in a larger framework. Indeed, there is danger in being seduced and consumed by a stressful but materially rewarding occupation or job.

“I would say to them, think very hard about who you think you are. Don’t put your identity in the role you’ve been playing, whether it’s Managing Director, or Finance Director, or Professor or whatever. I’d say ‘Look beyond that’. Take a very good, hard look at the fact that there’s much more for you than that role. And have a good exploration of that. That would be a very good start.”

Bernard, 57

“To look at their life in its totality, not just their job. That it’s not just about their job. They have to look at everything, and if you haven’t had a life, you start having a life.”

Natalie, 41

The seventh theme was to **find resources** and create a **workable daily structure** to sustain oneself through the transition were important.

“A key one is isolation. Ensure that you keep your networks, friendships going, keeping just enough structure. Because when there is no structure, it is easy to fall into full depression or mild depression. Also, to be very conscious about what is going on; to become aware of the inner voices, and to know that there might be some very good reasons why you don’t know what you want to do next. There is a process that you must go through first, a process of dissolution before the new can emerge, and a lot of people think it’s about taking time out and going back in again. And I think that if you’re over 40 and you pay the least bit of attention,

you're going to find you're going different places."

Amelia, 44

"Yes, networking is something that I don't find very easy to do, but it's something that is very necessary. You have to approach networking in a very positive attitude. Otherwise people are not going to be wanting to take you on, or recommend you further to someone else."

Iris, 49

"Doing things were a support. Sitting around doing anything. Occupying myself was very important."

Francis, 57

Finally, in undertaking this change, a few participants advised that each individual has to **find his/her own way** of adjusting to the transition process, such that the changes undertaken would be authentic and worthwhile for him/her.

"We're talking about something that I think is quite a sizeable fundamental change, and you have to accept it for being that. You have to find your own method of going through this. But you have to do it in a way where you don't set the agenda beforehand. You have to allow the process to occur. It's something you have to really either want or need fairly strongly. Otherwise it will be a sort of 'pretend' change. In other words, you'll go through the motions of making a career change, but in the end, you end up doing what you were doing before."

Paul, 41

9.5 How did participants react to the term "downshifting?"

There was a range of reactions to the term "downshifting" ranging from very negative to positive. One of the main reasons for extremely negative reactions to the term was because of its similarity to the word "downsizing" which refers to an activity that organisations undertake, that is, reducing the size of an organisation by reducing staff numbers thereby making many staff members redundant and therefore unemployed.

While participants were aware of the differences, a few participants felt that to be called a “downshifter” would conjure associations of being involuntarily terminated through an organisational downsizing process by others who were not fully aware of their circumstances, and therefore judge them as having failed in their careers, rather than taking active control of their career direction.

“It’s a bit reminiscent of downsizing, which is a very negative euphemism for sacking people ... To some extent, downsizing in my mind has a negative thing about it. The “shifting” part is fine. You’ve obviously made somewhat of a shift, I don’t know what you call it, it is not a sideways shift. There may be a better word for it. It has something to do with career re-assessment, but I don’t know what it is.”

Bruno, 48

“I think it’s a good enough word. But the negative part about that is that it doesn’t express clearly that someone makes a conscious decision to change. ‘Downshift’ almost feels as if a decision’s been made for you. I’m a sideways shifter. I think I’m still in a transition period.”

Lawrence, 44

The second major reason for negative reactions to the term is because of the prefix “down” which is associated with being diminished or being a failure of some sort. It should be remembered that one of the issues participants confronted was being out of step with a culture where career success is typically measured by increasing material rewards (Section 8.2, Theme IV.F). Referring to their career as “downshifting” further highlights the gap between mainstream norms and their recent career change.

“I see the change as being a growing process. That’s why I have difficulty with the word ‘downshifting’. I see it more as upshifting, maturing as a person. Becoming more self-actualised. Downshifting may mean ‘Oh, someone’s downshifted to escape’. I see it as being a change in direction.”

Clayton, 53

Only one participant was knowledgeable about the origins of the term “downshifting” and its association with gear changes, which implies an improvement in one’s way of life, rather than a diminishing of oneself. This appreciation of the term “downshifting”, however, was because this participant had worked in the motor vehicle industry.

“It’s a very interesting term. My wife doesn’t think that’s a very good term at all because she associates it with diminishing, slowing down, going slower, being less. Whereas I don’t actually view the word in that way. Downshifting, in a motoring sense, specifically downshifting a gear, will normally imply a slower speed, but it also implies, technically speaking, more available torque and power to the car. The intention of downshifting might be to provide more manoeuvrability or more leverage, if you like, more pulling power. So, to me, the term has actually got two sides to it. It actually means a change which might mean slower in some ways, but more adaptable and more powerful in other ways. And I really like that as a term because I think that’s got some good resonances.”

Paul, 41

Nevertheless, there were a few other participants who were delighted that there was a term to describe the career change that they had undertaken, suggesting that she was not alone in his/her career change.

“When my colleague showed me your letter [flier], I just had this wonderful feeling that ‘Hey there’s a name for this thing that I’ve done.’ People think that you’re a bit strange to leave a secure well paid job. I’m not pretending that I was up there with the big people, but there was a certain amount of prestige in the job I was in, a certain amount of capacity to make changes. It was nice to see someone going to look at the whole thing and come up with reasons and recognise that this is not always about prestige and money. It felt really good actually.”

Gemma, 49

Thus, it would seem that in working with a potential downshifter, a professional in the helping professions would do well to be cautious in using the term “downshifting”

because individual associations and implications may not always be positive. Perhaps the best course of action is for a helper to ask the client for his/her reactions to the term “downshifting” and to use the client’s preferred terminology.

CHAPTER 10: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarises the key findings of the research and relates them to the relevant literature previously reviewed in Chapters 1-5. Limitations of the research are also presented. Implications of the findings for theory and further research, as well as applications for potential downshifters, professional helpers, and organisations are discussed. This is followed by suggestions for future research. Finally, conclusions regarding the contribution of this research are presented.

10.1 Summary of key findings in relation to the literature reviewed previously

In this section I present the key findings from the research in a summarised format before discussing the results in relation to previous research and other relevant literature. Of necessity, there is repetition of material from Chapters 8 and 9. First, I consider the main findings related to the experience of career downshifting. Next, I consider the parameters of the career change. This is followed by a review of the three most important supplementary research questions: How can career downshifting be easier? Are there gender differences? What midlife issues are involved in career downshifting?

10.1.1 Characteristics of career downshifting

The findings from this study parallel many findings from previous research among male midlife career changers conducted by Robbins (1978), Robbins et al. (1978), and Thomas (1980). First, ascertaining the extent to which a career change is voluntary is not straightforward. While every effort was taken to select participants who had voluntarily changed their careers, about 20% of the research sample experienced both high organisation pressures to change their roles, as well as high internal pressure to change (“bow outs”). The majority (80%) were “**opt-outs**” who experienced high internal pressure to change, but low external pressure from their organisations. Robbins

in her sample of midlife men making career changes, found that 64% experienced strong personal desires to make the career change, while only 21% experienced strong external pressures from their employing organisations to leave their former jobs. Nevertheless, participants in this present study considered the career change to be highly desirable, with an average rating of 9.1 on a 0-10 **desirability** scale.

Both **organisational factors** and **personal considerations** featured in downshifter's narratives regarding their motivations to change their careers (87% and 77% respectively). Consistent with the results of Thomas (1979), radical career change is not typically motivated by wanting to leave the mainstream culture, with only 1 participant (3%) providing counterculture themes for the career change. Similarly, Robbins (1978) found that many of the male career changers she interviewed did leave big corporations, but they were not necessarily against big business. Many wanted more personal autonomy and started their own businesses or continued in their own professions. Thus, this research confirms that career downshifting is not necessarily motivated by anti-consumerist or anti-materialistic attitudes (i.e. consumer downshifting as described in Chapter 2), although a dramatic drop in income typically necessitates a move away from consumerism. Additionally, the results reflect the literature that midlife transitions may be triggered by either **external events** or **internal considerations** (e.g., Datan, 1985; O'Connor & Wolfe, 1991). This research also shows that prior to career downshifting, participants who were primarily working in professional and managerial capacities had careers where advancement, skill and security predominated (i.e. Derr's, 1986, career orientations of "getting ahead", "getting high" and "getting secure"). The career downshift was related to desires for other career orientations such as autonomy, balance and authenticity. Participants' narratives were characterised by a higher incidence of "getting free", "getting balanced" and "getting authentic", and a lower incidence of "getting ahead", "getting high" and "getting secure".

The majority of research participants considered the career change to be large in **magnitude** (average rating of 8.3 on a 0-10 scale). Half of the participants made a change where previous training or education were partly relevant, while a quarter made a career change such that previous training and work experience were not sufficient. Another quarter reverted to a previous occupation. As a result of career downshifting, participants earned 46% of their previous income, on average. Thus, one of the

difficulties faced by career downshifters is how to live with less money. Similarly, Robbins' (1978) research with midlife men who changed careers, 82% considered that they had undertaken a "high" or "moderate" level of financial risk to undertake their career change (p. 115).

The majority of career downshifters took a long time to make their decision to leave their previous organisations. Typically, the duration between initial thoughts of leaving and actually leaving their previous organisations was more than 6 months. The modal duration was between one to five years (53%). This finding corresponds to Robbins' (1978) research where 36% of midlife men who changed their careers took one to five years between initial thoughts to actually leaving their previous work roles. Indeed, Robbins estimated that it may take between 8-10 years to create a new life, a time span longer than initial estimates of about 5 years of transition to fully establish a new life structure, as suggested by Levinson et al. (1978). Kanchier and Unruh (1989a) found that the cycle of entry, mastery and disengagement was approximately 7½ years.

Since the sample was purposefully selected to include career downshifters at various points of their transition, not all participants interviewed had completed their career change. In terms of Nicholson's (1990) career transition stages, 10% were in the Encounter stage, 50% were in the Adjustment stage, and 40% were in the Stabilisation stage. As such, many participants were still coming to terms with having less money than before. In a follow-up survey conducted 11 months after completion of initial fieldwork, two men had returned to managerial positions, after a brief stint in less financially rewarding occupations in the service sector. Several participants were also encountering difficulties implementing specific occupational choices, while others were still experimenting with different occupational roles. Only about 12 participants (40%) could be said to have completed their career change, or in the Stabilisation stage at the time of the follow-up survey. These results are consistent with the findings of other researchers that change and transitions generally take a fair amount of time (e.g., Levinson, 1986).

While career downshifting is associated with less income and career uncertainties in the main, this research shows that there are many positive outcomes as well. The quantitative measures used indicate significant increases in global perceptions of

subjective well-being that could be attributed to the career change, (Diener's Satisfaction with Life Scale, SWLS), as well as five of Ryff's six subscales of Psychological Well-being measures (Environmental Mastery, Self Acceptance, Autonomy, Personal Growth, and Personal Relations with Others). While there was no significant change in Purpose in Life, the levels on this measure were high before career downshifting in any case, suggesting that career downshifters were purposeful in their decision to change their careers. These results are consistent with previous research reviewed in Section 4.4 that midlife career change often results in positive benefits.

With regard to work, most downshifters regarded their work life as better off compared to what it was before their career change (average rating of 7.9 on a 0-10 rating scale). This finding reflects the conclusions of Smart and Peterson's (1997) literature review that it is possible to maintain very high levels of job satisfaction across a voluntary career change, even when it involves reduction in income and occupational prestige.

While the purpose of the research was not to delineate the personality profile of career downshifters, an important finding is that Intuitives (as measured by the Myers Briggs Type Inventory) were over-represented among career downshifters. There were approximately twice as many Intuitives in the sample than expected in the population (73% compared to 32%; Hammer & Mitchell, 1996). This percentage of Intuitives is consistent with the proportion found by Fuller and Kendall (1992) in their study of career changers. These results also reflect previous findings of McCrae and Costa (1985) that Openness to experience, a dimension similar to Intuitiveness, was highly correlated with career change. Miller and C'deBaca (1994) found in their retrospective study of midlife adults who had sudden and profound changes in their life that 45% of their sample were Intuitive Feeling types. In this thesis, 43% were Intuitive Feeling types. Miller and C'deBaca could not determine whether the Intuitive Feeling personality preceded or resulted from quantum change, or simply predisposed these individuals to volunteer for the study. Myers et al. (1985) would argue that if accurately measured, typology indicates a tendency, and in this case Intuitive Feeling preferences would have contributed to the change. McCrae and Costa (1985) would also argue that Openness to experience (which correlates with Intuitiveness) would facilitate consideration of alternatives, which in turn contributes to identity flexibility.

Gardner and Martinko (1996) found that the proportion of Intuitive managers increased higher up organisational hierarchies. Furthermore, they hypothesised that Intuitives are well suited for non-routine tasks and creative problem solving, making them more effective at higher levels of management. This contrasts with Sensors who are more suited for routine and detailed activities, typically found in lower positions in organisational hierarchies. It may be that recent changes in organisational structures resulting in fewer managerial positions and more streamlining of organisational procedures have further limited organisational possibilities for Intuitive professionals and managers. This may have contributed to individuals deciding to change their career paths or become self employed so that their intuitive tendencies have more opportunities to be expressed. Based on their observations of people seeking career counselling, Fuller and Kendall (1992) suggested that Intuitives may have used maladaptive coping mechanisms within organisations, leading to a sense of disconnection from their true vocational path. The danger, however, is that Intuitives also have a tendency to go outside established systems and methods, including redefining problems (Jeffries, 1991). This tendency for generative creativity, rather than adaptive creativity means that when Intuitives are successful, the payoffs can be very high. The bad news is that this mode of creativity tends to be successful at a much lower frequency than adaptive creativity typically shown by Sensors.

10.1.2 Phenomenological experience of career downshifting

Given that the primary aim of this research was to understand the experience of career downshifting from a phenomenological perspective, the most important findings are the themes identified and described in Sections 8.1 and 8.2 previously . To recapitulate, these core themes are:

- Theme I: Awareness of the need for change
- Theme II: Struggle with the need for change
- Theme III: Feeling down and/or disoriented
- Theme IV: Facing difficulties and confronting issues
- Theme V: Incubation
- Theme VI: Emergence
- Theme VII: Possible positive outcomes

Importantly, these themes do not strictly represent sequential stages through the downshifting experience. Instead, they represent some approximate order of progression through the career downshifting transition. While virtually every downshifter experienced each of the core themes, the order of the themes for any given individual was not necessarily the one presented above. Some participants experienced elements of a few themes at the same time (e.g., feeling down and disoriented (Theme III), while struggling with the need to change (Theme II). Additionally, the specific manifestations of each theme varied for each individual. In other words, not every career downshifter experienced each of the 44 constituent issues outlined in Section 8.1 previously. For instance, a particular individual may have experienced three of the four constituent issues of Theme III such as feeling down, experiencing grief/loss, and speak about the experience using metaphors of a descent such as “fallen” or “jumped”, but experience no doubt, remorse, or regret about his/her decision to leave the previous work role/occupation.

Secondly, an individual may have experienced each of the themes more than once. It is possible for some individuals to cycle back and forth between the themes. Career downshifting may be a temporary move for some individuals as a reprieve from organisational pressures. For example two participants in this study returned to a similar occupation or role prior to their career downshifting. Others may not easily resolve difficulties and issues that arise from career downshifting such as living on substantially less income, the loss of status, dealing with uncertainties such as the lack of organisational structure and conventional measures of success. As a result, they may recycle through Themes II (Struggle with the need for change), Theme III (feeling down and disoriented), Theme IV (facing difficulties and confronting issues) several times, and even Theme V (Incubation) before a substantial experience of Theme VI (Emergence). These findings are consistent with ideas that midlife and transitional periods do not guarantee positive outcomes (e.g., Jung, 1921/1971; Bolen, 1990; Borgen, 1997).

DiClemente (1994) who is most well known for his model of readiness to break addictions, suggested that successful change is typically cyclical or spiral in nature. Relapse and recycling through the stages of change is the rule, rather than the exception. Cessation of addictive behaviour was conceptualised by DiClemente as a series of events

that culminates in sustained, long term change, rather than a single event. The notion of recycling through the themes identified in this study is consistent with these propositions by DiClemente.

The identified themes in career downshifting experienced correspond on several points with several models of career transitions and general transitions previously reviewed in Chapter 4. Table 10.1 summarises the correspondence between the identified themes from this study and other transition models. Comparisons with less relevant models have been omitted from this table (i.e. McClelland's model of personal development, and Weiss's phases of recovery from loss). In the ensuing discussion, publication dates for these models have been omitted in the interests of readability. The first identified theme in this study, **Awareness of the need to change** is equivalent to Albert's stage of "Doubting", O'Connor and Wolfe's stage of "Rising discontent", Kanchier's "Uneasy feelings, and Schlossberg et al.'s "Preoccupation", although it is more about preoccupation with a possible event, rather than an actual event. This initial experience of the need to change was implied but not explicitly included in Nicholson's model of career transitions. This first theme was also missing in the tripartite models of Glassner, van Genneep and Bridges.

The second theme identified, **Struggle with the need to change** appears to capture processes described in Albert's two stages of "Reflecting on self" and "Weighing options", Kanchier's steps of "The problem takes shape" and "High anxiety", and Smart and Peterson's stages of "Contemplating" and "Choosing". The main point of difference is that the narratives from participants in this study emphasised the tension between the desire to change and the desire for stability, rather than the rational weighing of options (which of course did occur to a greater or lesser extent for the majority of participants).

Table 10.1: Comparisons of identified themes in career downshifting experience and models of career/general transitions

Themes identified in this study of career downshifting	Albert, 1994	O'Connor & Wolfe, 1987	Nicholson, 1990	Kanchier, 1992	Smart & Peterson, 1997
	Women's experience of downshifting	Midlife career and family transitions	Career transitions	Steps in making a career change	Stages of career change
I Awareness of the need to change	1. Doubting	1. Stability 2. Rising discontent		1. Uneasy feelings	
II Struggle with need to change	2. Reflecting on self 3. Weighing options		1. Preparation	2. Problem takes shape 3. High anxiety 4. Revving up 5. Narrowing options	1. Contemplating 2. Choosing
III Feeling down	4. Career crisis	3. Crisis			
IV Facing difficulties and confronting issues	5. The black hole	4. Re-direction and adaptation	2. Encounter 3. Adjustment	6. Go for it	3. Implementing
V Incubation					
VI Emergence VII Possible positive outcomes	6. Work of her own	5. Re-stabilising	4. Stabilisation	7. View from the other side	4. Stabilisation

Table 10.1: Comparisons of identified themes in career downshifting experience and models of career/general transitions (continued)

Themes identified in this study of career downshifting	Glassner, 1994	van Gennep, 1960/1977	Bridges, 1993, 1996	Hopson & Adams, 1977	Schlossberg et al., 1995
	Sociological perspective	Anthropology Perspective	Consulting perspective	Psychology	Psychology
I Awareness of the need to change				1. Shock and immobilisation 2. Denial and minimisation	1. Preoccupation with event
II Struggle with need to change					
III Feeling down	1. Cutting loose	1. Separation	1. Endings	3. Depression	
IV Facing difficulties and confronting issues	2. Hanging out	2. Liminality	2. Neutral zone	4. Accepting reality 5. Testing	2. Establishing new norms
V Incubation				6. Seeking meaning	
VI Emergence VII Possible positive outcomes	3. Moving on	3. Re-incorporation	3. Beginnings	7. Integration	3. Integration

For many participants in the study, the third theme identified, **Feeling down/disoriented** tends to occur after leaving the previous occupation. Previous empirical research on voluntary career change have also found similar experiences of loss (e.g., Osherson, 1980; Perosa & Perosa, 1984). This experience was identified across many models depicted in Table 10.1: Albert's "Career crisis", O'Connor and Wolfe's "Crisis", Nicholson's "Encounter", van Gennepe's "Separation", Bridges' "Endings" and Hopson and Adams' "Depression". However, the models from Nicholson, Kanchier, Smart and Peterson, and Schlossberg et al., did not explicitly include any implications of feeling down, grief or loss. Indeed, the career specific models from Nicholson, Kanchier, and Smart and Peterson move directly from a preparation stage to action-oriented stages called "Encounter", "Go for it" or "Implementing" respectively. These imply active and rational processes, leaving out emotions and adjustments to significant changes in career downshifting such as loss, not just of income and status, but possibly friendship/colleague networks and familiar work structures. Without any acknowledgement of loss and disorientation in career downshifting, individuals undertaking this type of radical career change may compound the sense of loss and disorientation with the notion that the change should be easy and systematic once the decision has been made to change occupations.

The fourth identified theme of **Facing difficulties and confronting issues** corresponds best to Albert's description of "The black hole", O'Connor and Wolfe's stage of "Redirection and adaptation", Nicholson's stages of "Encounter" and "Adjustment", Schlossberg et al.'s "Establishing new norms", and Hopson and Adam's stages of "Accepting reality" and "Testing". The second stage of tripartite models: "Hanging out" (Glassner), "Liminality" (van Gennepe) and "The neutral zone" (Bridges), emphasised the element of dealing with uncertainties with this fourth theme (e.g., uncertainties about work, new life directions, future contribution, and being out of step with the career culture), with less emphasis on accommodation to practical issues such as living on less income and adjusting to less status.

The fifth identified theme of **Incubation** appears to be absent in most of the models summarised in Table 10.1. Only Hopson and Adams' stage called "Seeking meaning" has any substantial correspondence to this theme. It is noteworthy that the

fifth theme of Incubation has a relatively passive component (Issue V.A: Taking some “time out”) as well as active components (Issue V.B: “Re-evaluation” and Issue V.C: “Finding resources”). This passive component of Incubation which incorporates “time out” may be regarded as corresponding to the liminality described by van Gennepe – a time of separation from one group before being part of another group in society.

The last two identified themes of “**Emergence**” and “**Possible positive outcomes**” correspond to the last stages of all the models summarised in Table 10.1. While the psychological models of O’Connor and Wolfe, Nicholson, Smart and Peterson, Hopson and Adams, and Schlossberg et al. emphasised stabilisation and integration, the career change models of Albert, Kanchier and Glassner, and the transition model of Bridges emphasised a new or different way of working or living. In comparison, the issues associated with these two themes from this study (as detailed in Section 8.2) emphasised a new beginning with the possibility of stabilisation in the future. This emphasis in the study findings may be related to the fact that many participants in the study had not yet achieved relative stability in their process of career change at the time of interview.

During the initial literature review, the models of Ebaugh (1988) and Campbell (1949/1988a) which influenced the books by Albert and Cotton respectively were considered interesting but peripheral. However, in the light of the themes that emerged from participants’ narratives, they were examined more closely. The purpose of these comparisons was to triangulate the findings of this study with these two models which were derived from research and scholarship from other disciplines. Comparisons of the themes identified in this study to the models of Ebaugh and Campbell are summarised in Table 10.2

Each of Ebaugh’s four major stages correspond to the themes experienced by career downshifters in this study, who exited their previous roles as managers or professionals. Ebaugh’s initial stage of **first doubts** bears strong resemblance to the first theme identified in this study (Theme I: Awareness of the need to change). There is similarity between the two studies regarding feelings of dissatisfaction, antecedent circumstances, and variable duration between initial conception and career change.

Table 10.2: Comparison of identified themes with Ebaugh's "Role exit" model and Campbell's "Hero's Journey"

Themes identified in this study of career downshifting	Ebaugh (1988) Role exit model	Campbell (1949/1988a) "Hero's journey" model
I Awareness of the need to change	Stage 1: First doubts	(1a) Call to adventure
II Struggle with need to change	Stage 2: Seeking and weight alternatives	(1b) Refusal of the call
III Feeling down		(1e) Passage into the realm of night
	Stage 3: Turning points	(1d) Crossing the first threshold
IV Facing difficulties and confronting issues		(2a) Road of trials
V Incubation	Stage 4: Establishing an ex-role identity	* Approaching the inmost cave
VI Emergence		(2f) The ultimate boon
VII Possible positive outcomes		(3f) Freedom to live

* Vogler's refinement (1996)

Her next stage of **seeking and weighing alternatives** approximates my second theme of Struggling with the need to change, although Ebaugh's emphasis is on the rational process of evaluating alternatives (specifically corresponding to Theme II.C: "I'll see what's possible"). On the other hand, the second theme from this study incorporates the anxiety about making a radical change, and tension experienced with wanting to stay and wanting to leave. In other words, the second theme in this study provides further amplification of the inner struggles experienced during the decision making process, in contrast to Ebaugh's rational decision making process.

In Ebaugh's sample of 173 role exiters, 12 (7%) exited without a lot of forethought and deliberation. They had found their situation unbearable, and wanted to get out of it without much thought of weighing alternatives. This compares to three participants (10%) from this study who had left within one month or less of contemplating a radical career change. While this study did not specifically delineate a specific theme equivalent to Ebaugh's third stage of turning points, various turning points were previously described in Theme I (Awareness of the need for change) that correspond to the types of turning points described by Ebaugh.

Across Ebaugh's sample, there were mixed feelings after the final decision (e.g., positive feelings such as relief, excitement, and freedom, and negative feelings such as anxiety about the future, feeling lost and useless, and anger). These feelings correspond to Theme III identified in this study (a combination of feeling down, grief, loss, doubt, remorse, regret were possible). Additionally, about three quarters of Ebaugh's sample experienced what she calls "a vacuum" (p. 143). These feelings of uncertainty and metaphors of being betwixt and between are descriptions of being in a liminal space between a role that is well known, and a future that is not yet fully formed. Tolerating and living through this liminal state encompasses some of the difficulties identified in this study (Theme IV.C: How do I deal with fear and uncertainty?; Theme IV.D: Who am I now that I don't have my previous job?; and Theme IV.F: How do I deal with being out of step with the "career culture"?). Ebaugh found that a quarter of occupational exiters had begun retraining while still in their current jobs. In this study, 20% of participants had commenced retraining before leaving their previous jobs, while a further 30% commenced retraining after leaving their previous jobs.

In the last stage of **establishing an-ex role identity**, Ebaugh identified six issues of struggle, five of which were directly relevant to occupational exiters: (a) Role exiters expected to be treated differently than in the past, yet had to learn to emit the right social cues to other people; (b) Social reactions were problematic in that other people reacted to role exiters based on their previous roles; (c) Exiters would encounter shifting friendship networks due their leaving a role behind; (d) The more central to identity the occupational role was, the more aspects of the previous role there were to integrate into the new identity; (e) Role exiters also had issues with how they would relate to other exes; and (f) Intimacy had to be re-negotiated for those making relationship role exits.

Ebaugh's second and third issues were echoed in this study by Theme IV.D: "Who am I now that I don't have my previous job?", and Theme IV.F: "How do I deal with being out of step with the career culture?". Ebaugh's fourth issue bears resemblance to experiences of participants in this study missing the recognition and respect they previously had (Theme IV.B), and finding it difficult to adjust to new directions (Theme IV.E), or being a beginner (Theme VI.F), having previously functioned at a high level of competence as a professional or manager. With regard to Ebaugh's fifth issue, while there was some mention of a few participants from this present study finding support with similar people undertaking career or life transitions (Theme V.C: Finding resources), career downshifting is a relatively new phenomenon, where it could be difficult to find people undergoing similar transitions, at least initially.

While there are many points of correspondence between the findings from this study and Ebaugh's, the main point of difference from Ebaugh is that participants in her study did not necessarily experience sequential movement from one identified theme to another. There could be recycling of experiences as previously documented in Section 8.1. Thus Ebaugh's model identified qualitatively different **stages**, whereas my study has delineated core **experiences** in career downshifting. Ebaugh's study did not clearly enunciate the process by which people develop a new identity and leave their previous roles and occupations (with the exception of role rehearsal and anticipatory socialisation), whereas this study proposed a process that incorporated themes of Incubation (Theme V), and gradual emergence (Theme VI). Besides the issues that need to be resolved in the development of a new identity, Ebaugh only makes mention of

inner change processes by cursory reference to “emergent passages” initially discussed by Glaser and Strauss (1971, p. 156). In emergent passages, there are few guidelines, precedents or modes to facilitate transfer between roles, and identity is consequently created, discovered and shaped as an individual goes along. This description parallels the organic process of gradual emergence experienced by career downshifters in this study (Theme VI).

Table 10.2 also shows the points of correspondence between Campbell’s “hero’s journey” framework (previously summarised in Section 4.9) to the themes identified in this study. In the first phase of Campbell’s framework, “Call to adventure” (1a) corresponds to career downshifters’ awareness of a need to change (Theme I). “Refusal of the call” (1b) corresponds to downshifters’ struggles with the need to change (Theme II). “Supernatural aid” (1c) is equivalent to people as resources (Theme V.C), especially by way of mentors and allies. “Crossing the first threshold” (1d) is equivalent to career downshifters making the decision to leave their previous occupation. “The belly of the whale” or “the passage into the realm of night” (1e) corresponds to the despondency and low mood encountered by career downshifters (Theme III).

In the second phase of Campbell’s framework, “the road of trials” (2a) and the agony of the hero (2c) equates with the difficulties and issues confronted by career downshifters (Theme IV). “The meeting with the Goddess” or “the bliss of infancy regained” (2b) bears some resemblance to better quality of life, which may be experienced by a career downshifter (Theme VII.B). “The ultimate boon” (2f) can be approximated by potential positive outcomes for career downshifters (Theme VII). However, “Atonement with the father” (2d) and “Apotheosis” or glorification of the individual do not have any corresponding themes from this study. Indeed, it can be argued that career downshifters are in conflict with the predominant masculine orientation of the culture, or what could be termed “the patriarchs” which emphasise values of competition, power and material success. Moreover, career downshifting goes against a “career culture” which values career and financial advancement, which means that many people find it difficult to socialise with career downshifters, who are not glorified in any way.

With the third stage, there are no points of overlap between Campbell's "Refusal of the return" or the world denied (3a), "The magic flight" or the escape of the hero (3b), and "Rescue from without" (3c), and the themes identified in this study. However, the emergence of a new identity and way of being (Theme VI) can be said to correspond to Campbell's "The crossing of the return of the threshold" or the return to the original world of the hero (3d), and "Master of the two worlds" or the hero incorporates the rewards from the journey into his/her original world (3e). "Freedom to live" (3f) corresponds to the themes of autonomy and authenticity in this study (Themes VII.C and Theme VII.F respectively).

Thus, several themes identified in this study are verified by a meta-model of the archetypal hero's journey that Campbell distilled across myths and stories from around the world. Career downshifters' experiences reflect Campbell's notions that often heroes leave their old communities, possibly because they have outgrown them, or are expelled. In other words, exile (albeit voluntary in the case of career downshifters in this study) is often the first step. Often the new career is only a seed that has yet to find receptive ground, let alone bear fruit. According to Campbell (1988b, p. 136), "In order to found [sic] something new, one has to leave the old and go in quest of the seed idea that will have the potentiality of bringing forth that new thing". The return is also seldom back into the same physical or psychological territory. According to Hollis (1995), a hero's return involves a circling back, with the quest movement akin to a spiral. These ideas reflect the collage of images depicted in Section 8.4. Moreover, Hollis reflected that "This voyage necessarily differentiates a person, develops a new being who may no longer be recognizable by the old tribes, or the old values. The hero must bear the burden of loneliness and guilt [of not conforming to collective values]" (p. 74). As such, Hollis echoes Jung's ideas that there is a psychological price to individuation (Jung, 1954).

Campbell (1949/1988a), however had the view that women do not need to make a hero's journey, that they already have the ground that the typical hero seeks. The findings from this thesis indicates that there are women, (or at least some women for whom work has been salient), who are on a quest for a life different to that of the mainstream culture. One of the issues which women (and men) in this study confronted, was that of balancing personal desires (e.g., better relationships and more time for personal interests). Psychologists may view this issue as a need to incorporate

communion/relationship with agency. Jungians could conceptualise this issue as reconnecting with the feminine principle or Eros, having spent much of earlier life identified with the masculine principle or Logos. These views are echoed by Murdock (1990) who proposed an alternative framework of “The heroine’s journey” as applied to women.

The major distinction in this study, however, is that some of Campbell’s stages were not represented in the themes identified in this study, reinforcing the fact that this study has developed a framework based on empirical data, unlike Cotton (1996) who a priori adopted Campbell’s model in her analysis of radical life and career change. Additionally, Theme V (Incubation) was markedly absent in Campbell’s model. Vogler (1996) refined Campbell’s model and had an additional stage of “Approaching the inmost cave” where a hero pauses to prepare and plan his approach before entering a dangerous cave to perform his heroic acts. This may be regarded as equivalent to Theme V (Incubation) identified in this study where career downshifters take “time out”, regroup to access resources, and re-evaluate their current situation.

Thus, the theme of Incubation (Theme V), appears to be a phenomenon which is not usually recognised by models of career transition, general transition, role exit or even Campbell’s “hero’s journey” model. The majority of models compared with in this section have assumed or emphasised a rational, purposeful, and linear approach to the process of change. Weick (1979) argued that rational causality about decisions often occurs after action has occurred, rather than in a linear, rational fashion that is commonly assumed in academic literature. Instead, Weick advocates the value of ambivalence as “the optimal compromise to deal with the demands of flexibility and stability” (p. 229). Here ambivalent thinking is defined as actively conceiving two or more opposite or antithetical ideas, concepts, or images simultaneously” (p. 229), which is a process which may assist in the process of incubation. Similarly, Catsouphes (1998) argues that the neutral zone or liminal states require “messy, ambiguous integration and experimentation of personal factors” (p. 20). Indeed, he argued that change processes typically use phrases such as “finding oneself”, “goal clarification” or “self discovery”, which assume searching for and discovering what is already there, rather than allowing something new to form or emerge in the course of career renewal. These norms of rational decision making are often at odds with an individual’s actual experience of transitions, a view

echoed by the themes of incubation and emergence identified in this study (Themes V and VI respectively).

Saint Armand's (1988) doctoral dissertation on career change among those aged 25-45 years was also cited by Catsouphe (1998) as depicting a tripartite process which echoed Bridges' (1996) general model of transitions. The three major stages of career change were conceptualised in a nautical metaphor: the open boat, the self at sea, and the distant beacon. In the first stage of "The open boat", the individual feels both the vulnerability and the opportunity offered by the career change. "Casting off", the individual feels displaced since previous values, needs and motives are threatened. In "charting one's course", an individual has to decide on a direction to travel. An individual also has to rely on his/her "inner compass", a sense of direction based on purpose and values. Individuals at the second stage of "The self at sea" are characterised by confusion. There is "Rocking of the boat" or struggles with identity, fears, loss, and seeking validation. There is a need for a "Personal buoy system" or the emergence of an inner trusting of external and internal supports, as well as coping strategies. In the final stage of "The distant beacon", the career change is seen as part of a larger process of differentiation, and the quest for autonomy. This nautical metaphor reflects the themes identified in this present study in terms of uncertainties, the need to believe that something worthwhile will emerge organically as the transition proceeds, and the overall view of the transition process as a journey whose destination cannot be fully known before commencement.

10.1.3 How can career downshifting be more easeful?

Three variables were significantly correlated with the index constructed to measure perceived ease of adjusting to the career transition: having a partner/spouse; longer time span between contemplating a career change and actually leaving the previous organisation; and being more advanced in the transition cycle.

Perhaps the first variable of having a spouse/partner is strongly associated with perceptions of more easeful career transition is not that surprising. There is much research to indicate that those who are married/partnered, especially men, are more satisfied with life than those without partners (e.g., Headey & Wearing, 1992). By way

of explanation, it may be that partners/spouses constitute accessible and immediate support, primarily instrumental and social-emotional, but possibly informational as well, to use the typology suggested by Bailey et al. (1994). Among those with partners/spouses, many specifically mentioned that their partners'/spouses' income made a career change feasible, or less risky. While there was a drop in income or a loss of income temporarily for the downshifter, there was still an income for the household. This was not the case for those who were single, separated or divorced. Additionally, partners/spouses were more likely to be accessible for emotional support through the transition process, compared to friends or professional helpers whom downshifters without partners/spouses tended to rely on. While parents were one form of support available to virtually all downshifters, midlife adults tended to rely on help from either a person within their generation or professional helpers. This is not surprising given that parents of this cohort of career downshifters belonged to a generation where a single vocation or occupation was the norm. Moreover, in some cases, parents came from less privileged economic positions and had made substantial efforts and sacrifices to advance the careers of these participants. While a few participants mentioned financial assistance from their parents, a greater number found that their parents failed to appreciate their motivations and transition issues.

In terms of the second variable, those who changed their careers without contemplation were unlikely to have thoroughly considered realistic career alternatives and ramifications of their decision to downshift. Also, those who left within a short time of contemplation were less likely to have a large fund of savings that provided a financial cushion or safety net should the career change present more difficulties than expected. It was also less likely that these individuals would have realised the time frame that is required to undertake career transitions, especially if an occupational change is involved. In Ebaugh's (1988) framework, those who made sudden radical career changes had less opportunity to build bridges or links to an alternative life (e.g., alternative occupations, career retraining, or a network of supportive people) which would facilitate a far easier adjustment. "Exiters who created bridges between the old role and the new tended to have greater coping resources than individuals who burned bridges before they moved on to creating a new social identity as an ex" (p. 147). However, Ebaugh acknowledged that in some cases there was difficulty establishing bridges while still within a given role.

Four of five main conclusions from Robbins' (1978) research on men who changed careers relate to this second variable. First, most men took a long time to change careers, especially if they went back to university as part of their career change. Second, many of those who took longer to plan their moves ended up happier with the outcome. Third, the hardest part of the transition was deciding to do it. Fourth, the availability of a financial cushion is almost essential during the transition. While the majority of Robbins' sample ended up with a reduced income, some returned to previous income levels, or even higher. Ackerman (1990) found that women in midlife who wanted and planned for new careers while still in their initial field of employment lost less job satisfaction through a career change compared to those who made unplanned changes after being forced out of their original occupations.

Interestingly, all three downshifters who left their previous organisations abruptly within one month or less, were Feeling types as measured by the MBTI. Fuller and Kendall (1992) warned that Feeling Perceiving types, especially those with less developed thinking functions, could be impulsive, resulting in changes that are akin to "jumping from the frying pan into the fire" (p. 132). Moreover, Fuller and Kendall recommended that the most comfortable time for vocational change was around 18-30 months after the initial career counselling consultation. In other words, career downshifting should not be taken impulsively. Not only are an individual's source of income and professional track record at stake, lack of realistic consideration, planning and resourcing may compound the difficulties encountered in the transition period.

In terms of the third variable, which correlated with the index of perceived ease in making the career transition, it seems as though progression through the transition affects how an individual perceived the ease or difficulty of the transition. Perhaps this is not surprising in the context of models of transition previously reviewed in Chapter 4. For example, in Hopson and Adams' (1976) model, self-esteem rises as an individual progresses through the seven stages proposed. Applying their model to career downshifting, self-esteem is expected to initially decrease as a person enters a downshifting transition and experiences losses and possibly depression. It starts to increase with the acceptance of current realities and letting go of previous structures that are not supportive of the current situation, and peaks at the last stages where the

individual searches for meaning and internalises these meanings and incorporate them with behaviour.

This finding also reflects tripartite phase models of transition based on van Genep's work (e.g., Bridges, 1996; V. Turner, 1977a; Stein, 1983). In the early phase of "endings" or separation, there is a sense of loss and separation from structures that provide security and predictability to one's daily life and overall identity. In the second phase, the "neutral zone" or "liminal phase" typically involves confusion and distress. It is an unfrozen state where there are many uncertainties, and no firm ground, in contrast to a previously solid life structure. Only, in the last phase, "new beginnings" or "reintegration" is there greater clarity of future direction, and the creation of new life structures that are more realistic and meaningful.

Similarly, Baumeister (1994) indicated that on leaving a group, role, relationship or other commitment, there is a loss of meaning, and until it is replaced, the person may experience uncertainty, lack of direction, valuelessness, confusion and/or vacillation. This meaning-vacuum is only filled gradually. In summary, individuals who are in a later phase of their transition, are more likely to rate their transitions as easier because their difficulties and issues are on their way towards resolution. They are more certain about their career direction, and more likely to have developed new structures to support them in establishing a new way of life. Those who are in the early stages of their of career transition are less aware of the whole change process, and are likely to have rated their ease/difficulty of their transition based on their current situation. Moreover, since the majority (97%) had not accessed the existing literature on downshifting (or were even unaware of the term), and since career downshifting is a relatively new phenomenon in Australia, it is probably that participants were not aware of the experiences which they would encounter prior to their career change. This means that they were less prepared for their transition experiences.

Ebaugh (1988) identified 11 factors that affected the role exit process based on her qualitative research on role exits which involved 173 people, including 40 occupational exits. Of these 11 factors, three were specifically related to easefulness of the exit. First, those who were more active in re-establishing a new identity by way of building bridges to new life structures, undertaking more role rehearsal and anticipatory

socialisation (i.e. adoption of values of a group to which one aspires to belong to), expressed fewer regrets and doubts after exit. Second, role exits which were socially undesirable or had a social stigma were more difficult. In Ebaugh's sample, medical doctors who changed their occupations (i.e. downshifted) were in this category. Third, Ebaugh concluded that the hardest exits were those which were viewed as single role exits in the deliberation process, but turned out to be multiple role exits after the fact. This was because several exits required more issues to be considered, and lack of awareness of multiple exits would have prevented earlier preparation for all the exits involved. Ebaugh also found that longer role exits were associated with irreversible role exits, individuals who were more aware and conscious of alternatives and consequences, individuals who weighed alternatives carefully, and those who experienced multiple exits simultaneously rather than a single exit (e.g., those who divorced and changed careers at the same time).

10.1.4 Are there gender differences?

Within the constraint of small sample sizes, it was possible to discern some interesting trends for gender differences in transition behaviour and experiences. Before summarising these, it is important to note that a higher proportion of women in the research sample were without partners (73%), while a higher proportion of men were married or had partners (87%). Similarly, 86% of men in Robbins' (1978) study were married. As previously shown in Section 10.1.3, having a spouse/partner is a key factor in an individual experiencing an easier career transition. Consistent with these findings, women as a group experienced more difficulty with the career transition than men.

Nevertheless, there are other inter-correlations that need to be accounted for. First, more women are Feeling types, as expected in the population. It may be that Feeling types, who are more attuned to nuances of their emotional life in assessing situations, are more likely to consider their transition as difficult. Second, a higher proportion of women changed their careers with little time between initial contemplation and actually leaving their previous organisations. Third, compared to men, a higher proportion of women were in earlier phases of their transition. Even though sampling attempted to obtain approximately equal numbers of men and women early and late into their transition (Section 6.3), time lapsed from leaving a previous organisation was not a

strong correlate of transition phase. In summary, this discussion shows that several factors may contribute to women as a group expressing greater difficulty with the transition. In other words, it may not be that women as a group will inevitably experience more difficult career downshifting transitions than men. Since the aim and design of this research with a modest sample size does not permit extensive multivariate analysis, further research is necessary to ascertain whether this gender difference is a significant effect, or whether mediating variables such as the presence of spouse/partner, personality correlates such as a preference for Feeling, lapsed time between initial contemplation and actually leaving, and phase of transition are more important factors.

Interestingly, more women (60%) **sought professional help** than men (20%). This significant difference may be related to a higher proportion of women not being married or having a partner. In any case, these results are consistent counselling literature that show greater usage of professional counselling and psychotherapy among women. Robbins (1978) also found that most of the midlife men who changed careers in her study did not discuss their intended change outside their immediate families. Most relied on their wives, and only a few consulted their business associates or friends. Robbins concluded that successful men are less likely to ask for help since their self-image is one of competence and independence.

Another gender difference is that the majority of men (73%) were **self-employed or moving towards self-employment**, compared to only 26% of women. This result is consistent with the finding that autonomy appears to be higher among male participants than female participants (Section 9.2). In their decision to change careers, men and women were equally motivated by organisational and personal factors. However, men and women faced slightly different issues due to internalised gender roles which relate to work. Analyses of narratives indicated that a number of men confronted issues of whether they had done the right thing in changing their careers when faced with the consequences of having less money, or having to rely more on their wife/partner's income. Their notion that being a man involved providing well for their families was challenged. Interestingly, the two men who returned to managerial roles at the time of the follow-up survey had expressed these views of masculinity. Men who had more egalitarian relationships with their wife/partner before their career change suffered less impact on their identity as men, as a consequence of their reduced income.

These results are consistent with Burke and Nelson's (1998) recent review on the discontents of organisational men. Across several studies reviewed, one of the hallmarks of masculinity or the gender ideal for men was the emphasis on being self-reliant, working to achieve status, or being "a big wheel" (p. 229). This is further compounded by society's narrow definition of success, which is typically viewed as career advancement and occupational achievement. Steinberg (1993) observed that men considered external achievement to be one of the significant characteristics of the male gender role. Men who value internal achievements, devotion to family and community which do not lead to external recognition, wealth or power face the danger of being denigrated by mainstream society. As such, Maier (1991) suggested that men tend to evaluate themselves as "success objects" whose masculinity is measured by the size of their paychecks (p. 50). McGowen and Hart (1992) concluded from their research contrasting male and female clinical psychologists that male psychologists tended to hold a competitive orientation around their sense of self, resulting in salary and prestige being a priority.

Burke and Nelson (1998) forwarded the case that current definitions of masculinity contribute to pain and difficulties for men. Many men are driven by the fear of not measuring up. Moreover, since the standards of masculinity are almost impossible to reach, many men fail when measured against these standards. Kofodimos (1993) suggested that the costs of redefining masculinity include potential loss of income and possibly a sense of loss of manhood. However, the benefits could include a more meaningful life, developing a self-concept that incorporates non-work activities, and pursuing a career that offers greater intrinsic satisfaction. Kofodimos envisaged change on three levels: (a) balancing time, energy and commitment; (b) integrating mastery and intimacy; and (c) developing their real self, values and aspirations. These ideas are compatible with the experiences and issues encountered by men in this study on career downshifting.

In this study, women who were not in partnerships, especially those without immediate employment after leaving their previous organisations, were typically concerned about their financial resources. This concern, however, was related to uncertainties about their future, and their identity as a person, rather than their identity as

women. Only one single woman expressed the fantasy of being married to a rich man and not having to worry about money. A few married women expressed their initial discomfort at relying on their partner's income, since they had typically earned a substantial amount of income for their households. Income was equated with independence and self-sufficiency. Similarly, research on involuntary job transitions by Eby and Buch (1995) found that women's responses were different to men's. Women were more concerned about financial resources and sought out more social support networks. On the other hand, men tended to rely on family and spouse support. Women also experienced a diminished sense of power in their relationships during an involuntary career transition.

Interestingly, none of the women in this study expressed concerns about betraying feminist gains made in the work arena, an issue raised by McKenna (1997) and by Ghazi and Jones (1997). Indeed, some women had raised their concerns that their identities as women had been previously subverted into organisations where masculine values predominated. In these organisations, success required long hours and single minded focus on organisational goals, leading to sacrifice of other areas which were now more difficult to repress (e.g., relationships and non-work interests). This notion of sacrificing relationships for mastery in the work domain reflects the proposals of Albert (1994) and McKenna (1997) that many women had to give up much of their feminine values (e.g., the importance of family and relationships) to succeed in predominantly masculine organisations. This notion is also consistent with the psychological literature that professional women are more at risk to suffer role conflicts as a result of commitment and participation in the dual roles of worker and homemaker (e.g., Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Hackett, 1997; Niles & Goodnough, 1996). The findings of this research lend some support to Wheatley's (1999) argument that women leave their corporate jobs not because they can't stand the heat, but they are tired of corporate culture and inflexible working arrangements.

10.1.5 What midlife issues are present in career downshifting?

Several midlife issues are present in the narratives of the career downshifters interviewed. All four midlife themes identified by McAdams (1993) were present, although not in identical form. With McAdams' first theme of **sublimation of passion**,

many participants re-evaluated their work and life priorities. As part of this re-evaluation, they had to resolve issues of how to live with less money and lower occupational status. These results are consistent with the finding that there is shift of orientation towards “getting free”, “getting balanced” and “getting authentic”, away from orientations of “getting ahead”, “getting high” and “getting secure”. With McAdams’ second theme of a move to **postformal modes of thinking**, contextualisation of thought was not obvious among the majority of participants. However, subjectivity was obvious among all participants in that they redefined success for themselves (Theme VI.I). The majority expressed their move towards subjective internal criteria for success (e.g., autonomy, enjoyment of life and fulfilment), that were typically unrelated to conventional definitions of wealth and prestige. The third of McAdams’ themes, the **apprehension of a sense of ending** was expressed in two ways: many participants spoke of the sense of limited time left to start a new career; some participants over 40 years spoke about the disadvantages they experienced finding alternative employment because of their age.

There was also evidence for McAdams’ fourth theme of **confrontation of opposites**. Several participants were explicit about aspects of their lives which had previously been put aside, and were now requiring incorporation. With some single women who had previously focused on their careers, there were direct and indirect mentions of wanting a relationship. With some men, there were spontaneous mentions of wanting to spend more time with their children. Creativity was also another un-lived aspect mentioned by participants, especially those who had chosen technical or professional career routes in preference of liberal arts courses which may or may not have led to literary and artistic careers earlier in their lives.

It is arguable that for both men and women whose careers dominated their earlier lives, the opposite dimension that was being incorporated or attempted to be incorporated through the career downshift was largely feminine ways of being. In other words, the earlier lives of many men and women interviewed in this study were characterised by a masculine mode of functioning emphasising achievement, mastery and agency, and corresponding to Derr’s career anchors of “getting ahead”, “getting high” and “getting secure”. The search for a viable form of work that allows more room for non-work aspects, especially relationships, creativity and subjectivity can be characterised as a

move towards incorporating feminine modes of being with an orientation towards feeling, relatedness, imagination and creativity, broadly corresponding to Derr's career orientations of "getting free", "getting balanced" and "getting authentic". Masculine and feminine modes of being correspond to Bakan's (1966) terms of "agency" and "communion" which are more common place in the psychological literature.

In a Jungian framework, this could be regarded as encountering the contrasexual complex, the anima in a man (O'Connor, 1981). The challenge for a man is likely to take the form of making more time and energy available for relationship and a subjective inner life. In a woman who was previously dominated by masculine values of achievement and mastery in her career, the challenge could be viewed as reclaiming her own feminine ground (Woodman, 1982; 1993). Here, the confrontation with the contrasexual complex, (the animus), may take the form of conscious re-negotiation of its role in the psyche, or a disidentification of ego from the animus. In other words, irrespective of whether the downshifter is a man or woman, the challenge may be best conceptualised as the incorporation of the less well developed feminine modes of being with masculine modes of being which previously dominated earlier life. This latter interpretation as it applies to women, is at odds with Jung's original conceptualisations of midlife encounter of the animus for women. Nevertheless, it is consistent with post-Jungian conceptualisations of the balance of masculine and feminine modes of being as it applies to women who have adopted careers post the feminist movement (e.g., Mattoon & Jones, 1989; Singer, 1989; Woodman, 1993). The reclaiming of feminine ways of being among women whose lives were formally focused on careers also reflects the research findings and conclusions of Albert (1992, 1994) and McKenna (1997).

Apart from McAdams' themes, there was also evidence of other midlife themes previously discussed in the literature review (Section 5.3). There is strong evidence for **greater introspection or reflectiveness** among most participants. Several participants took some "time out" (Theme V.A) with holidays or extended time without work, away from the constraints of pursuing a career. A few participants started psychotherapy or engaged in introspective activities such as meditation or journal writing. There was also evidence that **growth and development were not guaranteed** during this career transition. As stated previously, at the time of the follow-up survey, two men returned to their managerial careers. There were also other participants who were still on their road

of trials, working towards resolving work and personal issues and difficulties. In comparison, Robbins (1978) found that 10-15% of her sample of midlife men who changed their careers had made unsatisfactory adjustments to their career changes.

Obviously, all participants selected for this study had engaged in **re-evaluation of work**, its role and importance in their lives, and the form it would take. Some of the re-evaluations made about the form of work included whether an individual would work full-time or part-time; become self-employed or work for an organisation; and what activities would be undertaken (occupational and role choice). According to Meijers (1998), people need to answer two fundamental questions related to work: “What does work mean in and for my life?”, and “What do I want to mean to others through my work?” (p. 193). Most specifically, Hollis (1993) argued that one’s career, like one’s marriage/partnership, may carry projection of identity and nurturance, that is one’s identity can be confirmed through mastery at work, and one “will be fed by being productive” (p. 30). At midlife, these projections dissolve and an individual may experience acute dissatisfaction with how he/she is using his/her life energy. Hollis suggested that the withdrawal of identity projection may occur when an individual becomes aware of a disparity between his/her work persona and his/her inner sense of self. The literature review on the contemporary work environment (e.g., fewer permanent jobs, psychological contracts which disadvantage individual employees or contract workers) may hasten the withdrawal of nurturance projections, or the revision of assumptions that one will be looked after by benevolent organisations. However, Hollis warned that it is all too easy for one set of projections to be traded for another.

In contrast to research by McAdams and his colleagues (e.g., McAdams et al., 1986; McAdams et al., 1993), and Stewart and Vandewater (1998), participants in this study did not mention many **generativity** themes in their narratives, apart from immediate concerns about individuals’ own children. This may be due to the career change focus of the research. On the other hand, this finding may be due to the need to resolve career issues as a necessary foundation for generative intentions and behaviour. This latter hypothesis is consistent with Vaillant’s (1977) contention that there is an additional stage of career consolidation in between Erikson’s stages of intimacy and generativity. Indeed, many participants in this study were actively working on the issue of what contribution they wanted to make to society. It is possible that resolution of this

issue could lead to generative intentions and activities being incorporated in a future work direction.

The final important midlife theme found in this research is that career downshifters undergo a **revision of identity** to a greater or lesser extent. One of the central issues that downshifters faced was the ambiguity of identity generated by leaving a well established occupation or job, especially if they were not clear about their future career direction, or had not secured full time employment in a clearly defined occupational role. McAullife (1993) using Kegan's Constructive Development Theory suggested that the individual in a career transition moves from "I am my occupation" to "Who am I becoming and how shall I express this emerging self?". In Kegan's framework, this constitutes a development from an interpersonal balance ("I am my relationships) and an institutional balance ("I am my occupation") to an inter-individual balance which is characterised by openness to new information. Ideally, dialectical thinking at this point allows an individual to entertain contradiction and negotiate life choices and transitions with the greatest number of options. This corresponds to McAdams' theme of postformal thinking that becomes more accessible at midlife.

Interestingly, Josselson (1996) defined identity as "what integrates our own diversity, gives meaning to the disparate parts of ourselves, and relates them to one another. Identity is how we interpret our own existence and understand who we are in our world" (p. 28). Josselson's definition of identity and McAuliffe's notions of identity changes during a career transition were reflected in the findings that career downshifters were attempting to incorporate un-lived aspects of themselves within a viable career structure. The findings were also consistent with the notion of career downshifters exploring possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and incorporating other sub-identities (Hoskins & Leseho, 1996; Meijers, 1998).

The search for a new and viable career direction and identity suggests a **Moratorium** identity status while an individual is in the transition process, before stabilisation and reintegration. Indeed, Waterman and Archer (1990) suggested that we go through various MAMA (Moratorium-Achievement) cycles through our lifecycle whereby a person will deal with identity issues throughout his/her life by constantly re-examining and re-organising his/her identity. A shift from Achievement to Moratorium

occurs when the need to question the current sense of identity arises, with a return to an Achievement status when the current crisis or period of questioning is resolved. Stephen, Fraser and Marcia (1992) described MAMA cycles as representing a dialectical alternation between exploration and commitment processes, reflecting Levinson's (1986) proposal of alternate periods of structure-changing and structure-building. Social pressures for stability and commitment, however, make extended exploration of identity difficult. This may also be compounded by any given individual's preference for a quick resolution, rather than an extended exploration of alternatives. If this happens, the individual "settles down" or "settles for" a career direction or career identity which suffices (Josselson, 1996, p. 40). Such a choice would then correspond to what Osherson (1980) would term a "premature or foreclosed resolution", rather than a "sculpted resolution" (p. 105).

While the difficulties with resolving issues of career direction and identity are numerous, research by Heatherton and Nichols (1994b) suggest that radical change in any domain of life is more likely to be long term if it is also accompanied by the establishment of a new identity. This new identity incorporates the changed behaviour so that the previous behaviour or role is not longer part of the self. Heatherton and Nichols' research findings suggested that those whose identity did not change were less committed to the change process, were more ambivalent about the desirability of change, and were more likely to be clinging to their initial role and identity. Thus, those who reported making such personality changes felt that they had changed to the core, and had become different people. Baumeister (1994) argued that this new identity is formed after the re-evaluation of life goals and meanings. On leaving a group, role, relationship or other commitment, some meaning is lost, creating a meaning vacuum. This may take the form of uncertainty, lack of direction, valuelessness, confusion and vacillation, a description which mirrors the liminal state that downshifters encounter in their career transition that was also described by Ebaugh (1988).

Whether we approach these experiences as a liminal state, neutral zone or Moratorium in identity, this research and other literature indicates that the inability to tolerate uncertainty and exploration contribute to foreclosed solutions or "pretend changes" mentioned by one of the participants, Paul (Section 10.6). But, if one has the capacity to tolerate uncertainty and exploration, the question then becomes how does a

person know when he/she arrives at a worthwhile identity? In his model of eudamonism as a more evolved form of happiness compared to hedonic enjoyment, Waterman (1993) discussed Aristotle's notions of the daimon, the potentialities in each person, the realisation of which represents the greatest fulfilment in living. The daimon represents the "true self" and ideal to which one strives that can give meaning and direction to one's life. It may be that a career downshifter may be on the way to resolving the Moratorium state when he finds what Telfer would call "what is worth desiring and worth having in a life" (p. 679).

Hillman (1996) similarly argued that the essential task for later life is the "growing down" to one's daimon (p. 243), a process that demands differentiating one's identity from collective mores. Hillman proposed in his "acorn theory" that one is born with the seed of an acorn that calls for unfolding into an oak, that each person bears a uniqueness that asks to be lived. Thus within this context, career downshifting may be a bid by the individual to find a more solid sense of self, self-actualise, individuate or become a fully functioning person to use the terminology of Kerr and Bowen (1988), Maslow (1954), Jung (1939/1968), and Rogers (1961) respectively.

In the same vein, Moore (1992) suggested that climbing the ladder of success can easily lead to a loss of soul (or daimon). In the context of this study, a radical career change at its deepest level may represent an individual's search for his/her daimon, and "when the soul is involved, the work is not carried out by the ego alone; it arises from a deeper place and therefore is not deprived of passion, spontaneity and grace ... Signs of this [self] love and therefore of soul are feelings of attraction, desire, curiosity, involvement, passion, and loyalty in relation to work" (Moore, 1992, pp. 187, 188) – a view reflected by participants' trust in their subjective states in evaluating the progress and outcomes of their own career transitions (Theme VI.J).

10.2 Limitations of the study

One of the obvious limitations of this study is that it has focused on white collar occupations, although a cross-section of different occupations, roles and industries were included. Nevertheless, one of the interesting features of the original study design was to

explore the motivations and experience of those who downshifted from careers that represented career investment and materialistic success. From the perspective of the mainstream culture, the shift to a less rewarding new career appears irrational and even foolhardy. This study has shown how those with previously high incomes struggled with issues of constructing a new way of life with less money.

With regard to external validity or the extent to which study results can be generalised, the study sample was limited to Caucasian Australians. It is therefore unwise to generalise the results to other Australians without considering cultural issues which are salient (e.g., among some ethnic groups such as Asian Australians, achievement and family pride may serve as strong social pressures against downshifting). Caution should also be taken in translating the results to other western countries where local issues may impact on individuals' experiences. Nevertheless, Caucasian Australians comprise the majority of Australian residents. Additionally, similarities between this study and available American and British literature on downshifting suggest that the findings are likely to be applicable in these countries.

Another limitation to generalisability is related to the cohort effect. The participants in this sample were mainly individuals born between 1945-1960, largely covering the Baby Boomer generation. Caution should therefore be taken when extending the results of this study to the generation typically referred to as Generation X, (those born after 1960) since the economic climate and organisational cultures that they have been exposed to are different. For example, many Generation X workers are unlikely to have assumptions of a lifetime career within one organisation, and more likely to be flexible with portfolio careers. Some Generation X people may be more materialistic than the cohort studied, while others may be even less so given a growing disenchantment with a mainstream culture where relatively high levels of unemployment are a norm.

In terms of internal validity and the meaning given to the qualitative data, I was part of the cohort group of career downshifters. While my background as both downshifter and professional researcher provided credibility with participants, this background was a potential bias in interviews and the interpretation process. The quality control procedures previously detailed in Section 6.7 hopefully indicate that bias was

minimal. First, the interviews emphasised narratives and experiences of participants, rather than justifications of their behaviour. Selected interview transcripts were progressively provided to my first and second supervisors as a check for potential interview bias, and potential rectification before all interviewing was completed. Second, member checking (i.e. input from participants) was utilised at two stages of data analysis – initial summary of individual themes, and summary of results across all participants. Third, the themes identified from the qualitative data had many points of similarity to other models of career change and general life transition, as well as Ebaugh's "role exit" model, and Campbell's "Hero's Journey", indicating concurrent validity for the results.

However, the most significant limitation of this study is inherent in the cross-sectional design of the research methodology. In an ideal longitudinal design, individuals would be interviewed at each of Nicholson's (1990) career transition stages of Preparation, Encounter, Adjustment and Stabilisation, so that each individual's progression (and possible backtracking) could be followed in its entirety, at the time that individuals experienced each stage. If this had been possible, the study would not have had the bias of using recollected experience as the primary data. However, the ideal design would have been difficult to implement in a three year research time frame for a doctorate dissertation, given that the process of career change typically takes more than three years (Robbins, 1978). Additionally, many people would have to be initially interviewed at the Preparation stage so that sufficient numbers could be followed through to their Stabilisation stages, since some individuals would not have proceeded through all the transition stages, and would therefore not be interviewed at all stages. Nevertheless, a short follow-up survey was included in this study 11 months after the completion of the initial round of interviews to provide some feedback on participant's career direction (Section 6.5).

Additionally, since the main aim of this research was to understand the experience of downshifting from a phenomenological perspective, the number of participants studied was necessarily small. This meant that quantitative analysis of available quantified data was limited due to modest sample size. Therefore, investigation of supplementary issues such as factors mediating the difficulty of downshifting was confined to simple bivariate correlations, with little scope for

investigating inter-correlated factors such as gender, personality and career change parameters such as extent of financial support and time taken to make a change.

10.3 Implications of the research

This section discusses the implication of the research findings for career theory, as well as various groups of stakeholders in career change – individuals intending to downshift, professional helpers who may be consulted for support by individuals, employing organisations, and society at large.

10.3.1 Implications for career theory

This research did not intend to construct a theory of career downshifting or radical career change. Even though it is possible to use the data to construct a theory of career transition using the grounded theory approach, I felt that it was more important to integrate the findings to existing career theories, rather than constructing yet another theory which was not connected to the existing body of research and theory.

In terms of Super's (1990) **life-span development theory**, the phenomenon of career downshifting clearly indicates that some people do not have a long period of maintenance before decline. Instead, career downshifter create new cycles of exploration, establishment and maintenance, through their decision to undertake career renewal. This new cycle is consistent with Super's later ideas about recycling and career decision-making being a lifelong process where people strive to match their changing career goals to the realities of the environment. The findings are also consistent with Hall's (1992) ideas that undertaking a new career in midlife can be an adaptive response to needs and goals that arise after initial career choices are made, and is therefore psychologically advantageous.

In terms of **social learning and cognitive theories**, this research lends support to the notion that strong self-efficacy expectations are crucial to the initiation and persistence of behaviour especially in career entry and career adjustment (Hackett & Lent, 1992). Because of the losses that are incurred in leaving a previously established

career, it is advantageous to an individual to have strong self-efficacy beliefs to withstand their difficulties and “road of trials” in downshifting (Theme IV) and sustain a relatively long period of exploration and establishment.

With regard to Bordin’s (1990) **psychodynamic theory** of career development, some participants’ narratives reflected Bordin’s suggestions that earlier career choices may have represented foreclosure due to the influence of family dynamics. As with Super, Bordin regarded a person’s life as a string of career decisions reflecting an individual’s search for an ideal fit between self and work. Career downshifting then may be an opportunity for a better resolution of the self, as suggested by Osherson (1980) in his research on midlife men who undertook radical career changes. Referring to Bowlby’s work on attachment, Blustein et al. (1995) suggested that people with secure attachments or relationships are more likely to progress effectively through career decision making and demonstrate greater levels of mastery at work. This research indicates that those who are married or in partnerships have less difficulty traversing the career downshifting transition than those who are single, divorced or separated.

However, this research was unable to further the debate on congruence and whether **person-environment fit models** such as Holland’s (1985) or Theory of Work Adjustment (Lofquist & Dawis, 1991) are relevant to radical career change since the study was not designed to capture relevant measures of congruence. Nevertheless, the study indicated that some downshifters made large changes in their Holland codes, while others made fewer changes (Section 7.1). Research on congruence would need to consider individuals’ personalities, their previous work role and work environment, as well as their new work role and work environment. Numerous congruence indices are also possible. This research would constitute a stand-alone study in itself. Moreover, Hesketh and Myers (1997) warned that congruence research is not as deceptively simple as it initially appears. Robbins et al. (1978) cautioned that the largest error involved in congruence research is related to inadequacies of coding work environments.

Furthermore, the findings from this study are not consistent with Gottfredson’s (1981) notions that people will sacrifice interests for the sake of prestige. Downshifters have done the precise opposite in sacrificing monetary rewards and status for interests and work that is more meaningful to them. One possibility is that earlier in life, where

there are any conflicts between interest and prestige, interests are sacrificed. But in later life, especially where there already is a sufficient level of material comfort, the individual is no longer willing to make this trade-off, and prestige is sacrificed for interest and meaningful work.

While findings from this research can be related to established career theories, I am cognisant of views of other writers such as Arnold and Jackson (1997) and Kidd (1998) that instead of seeking convergence among the more established career theories, it may be more worthwhile to explore new approaches to careers in order to enhance our understanding of individuals' experiences and needs in a work environment that has radically changed. Within this context, many of the new constructs in the career literature previously discussed in Section 3.4 are reflected in this research on career downshifting. Many of the career downshifters undertook **occupational changes** as a result of their downshift (e.g., Neil, Section 8.3.1). Others were involved in **portfolio careers**, providing consulting services to large organisations (e.g., Amelia, Section 8.3.2). With boundaryless careers and portfolio careers, individuals were involved in **psychological contracts** with employing organisations which offered various degrees of loyalty and benefits for individuals. Whichever route taken by career downshifters, it is apparent that many have realised the importance of **psychological success** which is more subjective in nature than conventionally defined notions of success as measured by monetary rewards and social status (Theme VI.I). Not all participants interviewed, however, had made sense of their **subjective career**; some were distressed because objectively, their career history lacked coherence and continuity. Nevertheless, career downshifting for all participants was regarded as an opportunity for **career renewal** at midlife.

10.3.2 Implications for individuals intending to downshift

The first important implication for individuals intending to downshift is to **allow time** for this radical career change. This view reflects the conclusions of Robbins (1978) from her research with midlife male career changers. This present study shows that many individuals found the decision to downshift to be difficult, since as professionals or managers, they had invested many years of work and education to attain their positions. The majority took more than a year to decide on the career change. It would be typical

to experience tension between dissatisfaction with one's current work, and fear or anxiety about an uncertain future. The research also suggests that a much longer time needs to elapse before downshiffters are able to stabilise in their new careers, especially if occupational change, retraining or an extended period of exploration were involved.

The second important implication is that downshifting inevitably involves a **process of transition** which will require various adjustments depending on factors such as personal characteristics, the nature of resources available, and the nature of change attempted. For example, occupational change which requires further education may require more time, effort and adjustment than using the same occupational skills in a self-employed format. As part of this transition, **losses** and consequently some degree of feeling down, or even doubt, remorse or regret will be typical. There will be difficulties and issues that need to be confronted. Even with a well-planned career change, there will be issues related to beginning in a new venture, a new organisation, or a new occupation. Since downshifting involves by definition, a change to work that involves less money, a critical issue will be how to change one's lifestyle to live on less money. Similarly, downshifting may also involve coming to terms with less status. For those who do not have clear directions for their career change, the process of transition will involve dealing with fear and uncertainty, since a great deal of one's identity may be wrapped up in one's work role and organisation. For most downshiffters, the process will involve a **Moratorium identity status** where who one is, what one wants to do, and what one wants to commit to, are being re-evaluated and revised. Tolerance for a **liminal state** where previous structures no longer exist or are no longer viable, and new structures are yet to be substantially established, may not come easily for some potential downshiffters who are used to working within specific professions and organisations.

The third important implication for those contemplating downshifting is to ensure that they have or can access **resources** to sustain them through a period of transition. Relevant resources may include sufficient financial cushioning (e.g., savings or a partner's income) or viable means of generating income (e.g., part-time work) to see one through to the final stage of stability, whether that might mean a new occupation, or a new role using one's previous skills, or a period of protracted exploration of alternative work roles. External resources by way of significant others (e.g., spouse, partner, friends, family, psychotherapist or counsellor) are also important for the provision of

informational and instrumental support. But more importantly, significant others will be crucial in providing a stable and supportive platform from which individuals can safely explore alternative work. This is especially important given the context that downshifting implies being out of step with the career culture which promotes and values upward mobility and objective career progression up a hierarchy. Since identity is often associated with social position, Schor (1998) suggested that consumer downshifting (which may be necessary after career downshifting) may be easier to sustain if individuals find a reference group for whom a low-cost lifestyle is socially acceptable.

In terms of internal resources, individuals will need to be clear about their motivations for downshifting. A reactive move away from current organisational difficulties may lead to an experience of jumping from the frying pan and into the fire. Since downshifting is a radical career change that is unlikely to be understood, let alone supported by many people in a potential downshifter's social network, a potential downshifter needs to be aware of (and ideally committed) to his/her own dreams and aspirations for an alternative way of life. Participants in this study have suggested that courage, passion and belief in one's abilities and skills are key ingredients in traversing a transition without guaranteed outcomes.

Furthermore, given the high proportion of Intuitives in this study (as measured by the MBTI), it is likely that many prospective career downshifters will have Intuition as their dominant or auxiliary psychological function, using MBTI and Jungian psychology terminology (e.g., Quenk, 1996; von Franz, 1993). As such, Sensing will be their tertiary or inferior (less developed) function. The implications are that Intuitives as prospective downshifters may fail "to recognise physical stress symptoms until they seem to suddenly reach crisis proportions" (Corlett & Milner, 1993, p. 100). Before deciding to career downshift, Intuitives may have their inferior function triggered by physical exhaustion or violation of their values and principles, leading to symptoms such as overindulgence in sensual pleasure which may escalate into substance abuse, adversarial attitudes towards the external world, withdrawal, and even depression (Quenk, 1993; 1996). Potential obstacles in developing a new career direction include being overwhelmed by possibilities and overlooking important realistic aspects of the desired career direction (Hammer, 1993).

Nevertheless, potential downshifters should also bear in mind that in spite of fear, difficulties and losses, there are many **potential benefits** to be gained from a career downshift. These include better quality of life, more autonomy, more scope to balance work and non-work activities, more meaningful and invigorating work, personal growth, and the sense that one is moving towards work and identity that realises one's true potential in life.

10.3.3 Implications for professional helpers

A key implication for professional helpers is that the **work domain should not be artificially divorced from the personal domain**. With a radical career change such as downshifting, even the obvious change in less income will affect a family unit's lifestyle. This research has shown that career downshifting is likely to affect many assumptions an individual holds about work and personal identity. Blustein and Spengler (1995) in their review of the literature concluded that career interventions can have positive impact on non-work domains and vice versa. While there have been many articles arguing for the integration of career counselling and psychotherapy, (e.g., Betz & Corning, 1993; Krumboltz, 1993) there have been few conceptual frameworks to guide integrative treatment (Blustein & Spengler, 1995).

Second, professional helpers working with potential downshifters need to consider **the type of support** that is most beneficial to this group of individuals. Glassner (1994) warned that career counselling is dominated by an approach that assumes that clients have "flat tires that need fixing" (p. 152). Instead, he suggests that an alternative approach is one that assumes that clients now "face a fork in the road", and need support through the process of deciding which fork to take (p. 152). This research suggests that career downshifters may also need support in their journey along a road less travelled (e.g., when difficulties are encountered after they leave their occupations or employing organisations), in that the path chosen by downshifters is not condoned by the career culture. Constructivist approaches to career would suggest that professionals could also help people to give meaning to their careers by helping them to construct a coherent story to their subjective careers by identifying themes and patterns in their objective careers (Ochberg, 1988; Collin & Watts, 1996).

Helping professionals who intend to support individuals contemplating downshifting or facing consequences of downshifting, may also do well to **examine their own values and assumptions** about work and career. In a work environment that has radically changed, a professional helper's values of career stability and career progress at all costs, and assumptions that downshifters are either undergoing a midlife crisis, or are simply neurotic, may interfere with providing a downshifter with the support needed since these values and preconceptions reinforce the career culture that the downshifter is struggling to move away from. According to Smart and Peterson (1997), individuals should not be dissuaded from changing their careers by the belief that midlife uncertainty and career instability are abnormal. The losses and difficulties encountered in the early part of a career downshifting transition can diminish confidence in the process of exploring and establishing a new career. Ideally, helping professionals will function as a help, rather than a hindrance to potential downshifters.

A professional helper's own intolerance for liminal states could also steer a client towards **foreclosed solutions**. McAullife (1993) noted Piaget's notion that disequilibrium is central to developmental change. Additionally, a professional helper's assumptions that an individual should only make rational decisions may harm a client by this judgmental attitude. Salomone (1993) proposed a five stage framework with working on client's career issues: (a) understanding the client, especially in terms of self-concept and identity; (b) understanding the work environment; (c) understanding the decision-making process; (d) implementing the decisions; and (e) making the necessary adjustments. Salomone cautioned counsellors against assuming that good decisions are logical, planful and rational. In his view, most of life's decisions are probably some combination of rational and intuitive processes dependent on interpersonal and environmental contexts. His recommendations for career-related counselling include: (a) enhancing a client's sense of control; (b) enhancing a client's competence in self-exploration and environmental exploration; (c) helping clients to experience an adaptive level of immanence, or the amount of time before a decision must be implemented; (d) teaching clients to be objective in processing information; (e) modelling effective exploratory attitudes and behaviour; and (f) helping clients avoid premature closure.

Professional helpers could also support their clients by uncovering relevant issues that are related to the presenting career predicament. Indeed, taking a broader

perspective of midlife career renewal and an appropriate time perspective can be used to induce foster optimism for the future, and link present behaviour to future outcomes (Beijan & Salomone, 1995). The Careers Transition Inventory (CTI) designed by Heppner et al. (1994) may also provide structured assistance to both helpers and clients. The CTI researched with good internal consistency, and has five distinct dimensions relevant to assessing a client's resources in relation to career transitions: (a) readiness; (b) confidence; (c) control; (d) perceived support; and (e) decision independence. As a tool, the CTI could assist professional helpers in their choice of counselling interventions, after thorough assessment of a client's current predisposition to undertake a career change.

Within a broader context, Harris-Bowlsbey (1996) suggested that current economic changes imply that professional helpers should be aware of a client's environmental context and new concepts in the career literature. Blustein and Noumair (1996) suggested that clients' presenting difficulties may not be due to intra-psychic structure alone, but affected by intrapersonal experiences in relationships and the wider culture. It may be also useful to reflect on Brandt's (1995) contention that western cultures have the predominant assumption that a fulltime paying job is a central obligation of one's adult life, and that an individual's work and value come from having a full-time job, and only a full-time job is real work. Much depends on a professional's view of the role of counselling or psychotherapy. In the words of Zweig and Wolf (1997): "If therapy remains a place in which to reduce all issues to personal psychology, if therapists fail to see the political and economic contexts in which personal issues emerge, then therapy becomes a conservative force rather than a force for change at large" (p. 239).

10.3.4 Implications for employing organisations and society

There is currently no literature to suggest that employing organisations are concerned about valued managers and professionals downshifting, since the phenomenon is not yet widespread. However, organisations could consider the finding that external factors including organisational changes such as restructuring and new values such as economic rationalism were cited by 87% of downshifter as factors that contributed to a decision to change their careers. While it would be easy to dismiss these people as not

being able to stand the heat, only 21% of participants reported high pressure from their organisations to leave, suggesting that their performance was satisfactory and valued by their employing organisations.

Career downshifting is not an inevitable decision for some individuals. It is to be recalled that many participants in this study made many efforts to change themselves and/or their work roles, in an effort to adjust to difficult organisational circumstances before making the radical decision to downshift. Perhaps organisations which view career downshifting as a loss of important members of staff could avoid this situation by creating cultures of mutual benefit to organisation and employees, rather than having psychological contracts which are disadvantageous to employees, or making superficial changes that do not address fundamental work concerns.

While career downshifting has attracted some media interest, consumer downshifting (which may be a choice that is related to career downshifting) has attracted concern in the United States with numerous reports in the *Wall Street Journal* (Etzioni, 1998). Schor (1998) stated that there was some fear that downshifting and anti-consumerism would wreck the American economy. From an economic standpoint, she argued that about one of five Americans had already downshifted, but the American economy was still thriving. Moreover, change in spending habits were more likely to occur gradually rather than suddenly, giving the economy some time to adjust. Furthermore, Schor argued that this gradual reduction in consumer spending was unlikely to cause much unemployment because the trend towards buying less is likely to be associated with a trend towards working less. The most significant concern then would be that if production fell, efficiency and international competitiveness would fall. Schor suggested that it was possible to create a post-materialistic culture (such as in Denmark and Netherlands), where industries are internationally competitive, although not as efficient.

From a social perspective however, there may be concerns from some quarters that downshifting could erode a culture where the work ethic is predominant. Moore (1997) and Baumeister (1993), however, suggested that the majority of people need to work to gain benefits that come from work. Fox (1994) proposed that radical career change is not necessarily a revolt against work, but a search for work that is large enough

for an individual's personal spirit. It may be recalled that many participants in this study actively sought to make meaningful contributions through their work. In other words, career downshifting is not necessarily a rejection of the work ethic, but a realignment to work that is more meaningful, rather than work that continuously advances an individual's material standing. An African story was cited by Handy (1997) as saying that there are essentially two hungers, the lesser hunger and the greater hunger. The lesser hunger is for things such as goods and services that sustain life. The greater hunger is for some understanding of what life is for. Handy observed that in capitalist societies, the assumption to date has been that we can best satisfy the greater hunger by appeasing the lesser hunger, the consequence of which is that money becomes the measure of all things. Optimistically, Handy suggested that it is possible for a better more equitable form of capitalism. One important step towards this is for sufficient numbers of people to decide how much money and materialistic goods are enough. Perhaps career downshifting is part of this step.

10.4 Suggestions for further research

While this research has provided both qualitative and quantitative data towards a more comprehensive of career downshifting which to date has been under-researched, there are still many areas of enquiry which can be pursued. First, given the cross-sectional design of this research which utilised retrospective recall of experiences, it would be worthwhile undertaking longitudinal studies which track several career downshifters over a course of five or more years. While longitudinal research would involve the challenge of retaining participation of a number of individuals over a relatively long period, these studies would allow participants to describe their experiences in greater detail around the time of the actual experience. Such research would be able to provide a validity check on the themes in the downshifting experienced identified in this research (Sections 8.1 and 8.2). Additionally, it would be possible to ascertain in finer detail which internal and external factors influence downshifters' progression through the themes towards greater stability.

With multiple contacts over a longer period of time, it would also be worthwhile to investigate historical antecedents of career downshifting. Without necessarily

duplicating the research of Osherson (1980), it would be interesting to investigate in further detail, the effects of personality and family-of-origin issues on the decision to career downshift. Precedents for such research on the role of family-of-origin in career decisions and career development include Chusid and Cochran (1989) and Ochberg (1988). It would be interesting to ascertain whether career downshifting primarily occurs among those who had previously foreclosed their career identity search, or whether career downshifting primarily occurs among those who have outgrown their previous identity (i.e. downshifting as a response to the desire to develop further).

Another area of investigation using either longitudinal or cross-sectional research designs would be in the area of identity change. Potential research questions would include: (a) To what extent were career downshifters aware that downshifting would involve a change in identity? (b) What aspects of identity did they change? (c) How did they approach their change of identity? (For example in Ebaugh's study of ex-nuns, many changed their appearances and approaching social contacts); (d) Was identity change actively sought, or was it a consequence of other changes? (e) How did career downshifters view their changed identities? Answers to these research questions would also provide insights to identity change in general life transitions.

Vondracek and Kawasaki (1995) previously distinguished between incremental change and transformative change. McClelland (1998) also distinguished between change by growth and change by metamorphosis (previously reviewed in Chapter 4). Future research could investigate to what extent career downshifting involves incremental change, and to what extent it involves transformational change (e.g., of occupational role, and of identity). Moreover, the hypothesis that incremental change involves step-by-step processes, while transformative change involves change by metamorphosis where processes of incubation and emergence are more prolonged could be tested.

Additionally, I would be particularly interested in further investigating career downshifters' perceptions of liminal states. Ebaugh (1988) described this state as a vacuum, while Bridges (1996) described the neutral zone as a desert to be crossed. Potential research questions are: (a) What metaphors do they use to describe these liminal states? (b) How do career downshifters approach this liminal state? (c) In

hindsight, what internal and external resources were supportive during such a liminal state? (d) What internal and external factors were difficulties or hindrances in traversing the liminal state?

Since I have also trained in psychotherapy, I would also be interested in investigating the relevance of myths and fairy tales in helping career downshifters make sense of their experience. There is already a practice of using myths in various forms of psychotherapy and within popular culture since myths are able to communicate dilemmas and conflicts in a condensed form, but also offer examples of how these dilemmas can be approached (e.g., Campbell, 1988b; Greene & Sharman-Burke, 1999; Hollis, 1995). There is also a tradition of using fairy tales in Jungian psychotherapy since fairy tales represent archetypal or universal energies in concise form and provide us with clues to the understanding of various human processes such as individuation and redemption (e.g., von Franz, 1970/1996; 1977; 1980).

The two myths that are likely to be applicable to career downshifters are: (a) The ancient Sumerian myth of the descent of the goddess Inanna into the underworld (Perera, 1981; Wolkstein & Kramer, 1983); and (b) The Sufi myth of the wayward princess (Perera, 1986). In the first myth, the goddess Inanna descends to the underworld as a way of becoming whole since she already knows about the upper world where she rules as Queen. In her descent, she is stripped of all the symbols of sovereignty, and is hung on a meat hook to die by the Queen of the underworld, Ereshkigal. She is later revived by being fed the water of life and the bread of life by two small creatures who have come to her rescue. A condition of her return to her own world is that she send a substitute to the underworld, which turns out to be Dumuzi her husband who has betrayed her while she has been in the underworld. This myth has many parallels in the experience of career downshifting – loss of respected occupation and status, feeling down and even bereft, the need for life-sustaining resources, and the sacrifice of some previously valued attribute in return for a new life. In the second myth, the wayward princess is exiled by her father king to the wilderness, since she refused to agree to his absolute rules. In the wilderness, she fashions a new life for herself, and is later joined by others in a similar predicament. Here they create a new city which is later reputed for its justice and prosperity. In this second myth, the parallels with career downshifting are by way of career downshifters leaving their previously respectable career paths, and being confronted with eking a

living, and surviving a liminal state which has been equated with a wilderness or desert (e.g., Bridges, 1996). The challenge for career downshifters is how to survive, and later create a worthwhile life for themselves. There are also numerous fairy tales which offer parallels to the experience of midlife (e.g., Chinen, 1987; 1992; 1993; Datan, 1980). The key question in future research would be the efficacy of using the above mentioned myths and fairy tales as a therapeutic intervention among career downshifters.

Furthermore, with regard to research on therapeutic interventions, psychotherapists using the scientist-practitioner model could investigate the effectiveness of various interventions at various stages of career downshifters' process. This research would parallel previous investigations from Ebaugh's study on role exits regarding the role of significant others at various stages of an individual's role exit. For example, in the initial stages of first doubts and weighing of alternatives, significant others could facilitate reality testing, suggest alternatives and help an individual make the problem public so that they could no longer avoid facing the unsatisfactory situation. After the role exit, significant others assist in establishing new roles and providing emotional buttressing.

It would also be worthwhile to conduct research employing a quantitative design involving larger sample sizes of career downshifters whereby mediating factors of the downshifting experience could be investigated. Relevant research questions would include: (a) What individual characteristics make career changes easier to traverse? (b) What internal and external resources alleviate strain more? (c) What supports and experiences are helpful within each career transition phase, and for whom? (d) What are the essential tasks to be achieved at each career transition phase? (e) What are the consequences of not achieving these essential tasks?

Another useful line of enquiry for research would also be investigating whether the themes in the downshifting experience are also applicable to less radical career changes in midlife, or radical career changes earlier in the lifecycle, prior to midlife. Additionally, the research on midlife career downshifting could be extended to other life transitions in midlife, such as relationship changes. This latter investigation would be similar in approach to Ebaugh (1988) whose initial doctorate investigations on ex-nuns'

role exit was extended to investigate other role exits, resulting in her more encompassing role-exit theory.

10.5 By way of conclusion

In my view, the main contribution of this research has been the systematic investigation of a phenomenon which breaks with social convention and has no folk-wisdom guidelines. The primary output of the research has been delineating themes that are likely to be present in the experience of career downshifting. Some of these themes and their constituent issues were not previously accounted for by other models of career transitions and models of general transitions (e.g., less active and gradual processes such as Incubation and Emergence). The benefit of delineating these themes is by way of providing a map for the potential career downshifter and his/her significant others and professional helpers. As such, potential career downshifters can be better prepared for their transition period (e.g., allowing more time for their transition, and ensuring adequate resources before they undertake their transition). Career downshifters in the midst of their transitions may find comfort and encouragement from the experiences of others. Ideally, the themes identified in this study will serve as useful signposts in the uncharted terrain that is the typical experience of career downshifters. Furthermore, significant others who wish to be supportive of career downshifters can be more sensitive to the experiences of career downshifters and provide emotional support and encouragement for the radical change they are undertaking, since they have some understanding of the process and the potential benefits of downshifting. Professional helpers will also be more knowledgeable about career downshifting transitions, allowing them to be more effective in their responses and interventions.

Answers to the supplementary research questions posed have also provided quantitative and qualitative data missing from previous journalistic accounts of downshifting. This research also provides an Australian psychological perspective on a phenomenon which may be on the increase, judging from social surveys, enabling professional helpers to be better prepared when assisting clients presenting with similar issues.

I hope that this research will be used by both individuals and professional helpers. For individuals in the midst of radical career change, or contemplating career change, I hope that knowledge of others' experiences will serve as a provisional map for their own individual journeys, so that they can approach the experience better prepared and with less anxiety. My wish for the helping professions is that they have a broader appreciation of the issues that individuals confront in radical midlife career transitions, so that they are better able to support those in their care, rather than being a factor in premature closure during extended liminal periods of exploration.

Personally, this research has been a bridge between my work as a professional researcher and a new career as a psychotherapist working with people in an assortment of transitions. Both research and psychotherapy practice have allowed me to appreciate in a deeper way the nature of transitions and liminal states. During the research process, I was simultaneously undertaking my own journey of coming to terms with vocation, calling and identity. Within this context, then I conclude with a quote from James Hillman that summarises my career transition to date: "For that is what is lost in so many lives, and what must be recovered: a sense of personal calling, that there is a reason I am alive ... Calling becomes a calling to life ... Calling to honesty, rather than to success, to caring and mating, to service and struggle for the sake of living" (Hillman, 1996, pp. 4, 255). And so it is then, that leaving the rat race can be the start of reclaiming one's own daimon, and one's own life.

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APPENDIX A: PERSONAL STATEMENT

The journey of career downshifting for me did not start when I decided to change my career as a marketing research consultant to become a psychotherapist. The makings of this decision and my own “night sea journey” can be traced through a number of historical events. When I was 7 years old, my second grade class was asked to write a short essay on what we wanted to be when we grew up. Since I had no clear idea of calling, I consulted my grandmother whom I lived with. She suggested that when I grew up I would want to be a doctor or a teacher, as they were honourable professions. Perhaps this was not surprising, given that her husband, my formidable grandfather, was a doctor, my father was a doctor, and many of my aunts were in related occupations – dentist, radiographer, teacher. Of equal significance when I was 7 years old, was watching a film reel with a third of the school which was crowded in the convent’s massive hall. I don’t remember what the documentary was about, but my memory was of a lot of blood and guts in vivid shades of red, and images of a woman painfully giving birth. There were also ink blotters around the house I grew up in, imprinted in technicolour with images of diseased organs and skin, presumably provided by pharmaceutical companies in those days, in lieu of the pens and post-it notes in vogue today. The collective impact of these shocking images was that I recoiled from the possibility of working with the human body, blood and disease, and being a doctor.

There was, however, family pressure to carry on the “family profession” since I am the eldest child and the eldest grandchild. My grandfather who came from a poor family had won a scholarship to study medicine. He became the Chief medical officer in one of the states in British Malaya, and later decorated by the Agung (king of the country) for his efforts in eradicating malaria from the country. My father being the eldest son, also became a doctor, receiving a post-graduate scholarship to study in London. Later he became a professor at the University of Malaysia. When I was 18, I was in two minds about which course I would undertake at university. I had done the traditional combination of science and maths subjects at high school, even though I had enjoyed art and literature in earlier years. I had the acceptable HSC marks to qualify for medicine, but I could not bring myself to enrol in the 6-year course. I knew that it was wrong for me. I had the vague notion that perhaps I could still appease family pressure and avoid being a doctor by being a clinical psychologist. When I graduated 4 years later, my father had already focused his encouragement on my two brothers who eventually became doctors. My mother focused her encouragement on my sister who became a music teacher. At my graduation, my grandfather insisted that I should have been a doctor, irrespective of the fact that I had topped the Science faculty.

To make matters worse, I did not apply for the clinical masters degree, once again disappointing my father and grandfather. In the honours year of my undergraduate degree, I undertook a research thesis on attempted suicide (parasuicide). For a period of time, I would accompany a psychiatric registrar on the morning rounds of the casualty department at a major teaching hospital, and later interviewed people who had overdosed, slit their wrists, or injured themselves from having jumped from high buildings the night before. I realised that at 21, I was not emotionally prepared for the work of a clinical psychologist. I did not have sufficient life experience. Deciding to find life and work experience, I became a trainee consultant in the growing field of personnel recruitment. During this period in this “Big Six” chartered accounting

organisation, other management consultants seconded me to their research projects. Later, one of my professors from undergraduate days informed me about a position for a research associate with a market research company specialising in quantitative analysis. After several interviews and extensive psychological testing, the position was mine. That was the start of my career in market research.

In the early 1980's, the Australian market research industry was developing and there was a shortage of graduates who were trained in research and multivariate analysis. My skills were in demand and one position led to another. I was either head hunted or recommended for subsequent positions in other companies. In the main, I worked on a variety of customised marketing research projects, largely for the corporate sector including multinationals and Australia's largest companies. In 1987, I joined one of Australia's largest market research companies. This company was subsequently acquired by the largest marketing communications group in the world, which owned several international advertising agencies, public relations companies, and marketing research companies world-wide. Fortunately, the buy-out process was not traumatic compared to another merger I had previously worked through.

Initially I enjoyed working in a busy and successful international consultancy. I had developed a portfolio of clients whom I liked working with. I had my own team of project analysts whom I worked well with. I was supported in client service by professional fieldwork and data processing departments. I was part of the management team at our Melbourne office. I had been promoted to the position of Research Director, received an award for client service, and undertook several international projects. I had a comfortable remuneration package, a niche in the company and market research industry, and a stable home life. But I was unhappy.

At 33 years of age, I realised that I had gained the life and work experience I had initially sought, but I was entrenched in a way of life that bound me to my work. The rational reasons for being satisfied with life were there, but my inner life was in turmoil. I had previously extended my responsibilities to incorporate more psychological roles such as co-ordinating the training of new graduates recruited. I had completed a Masters degree in Applied Psychology. But there was a nagging feeling of dissatisfaction. The culture of the company was also changing slowly. From an informal culture which openly valued people, the organisation was now becoming part of an international group of companies with its formal procedures and quarterly budget reports to London. While I did not undertake market research for clients whose products and services I did not support (e.g. cigarette manufacturers), I was also beginning to question the personal value and relevance of market research. I wondered if the sum total of my work life would be dedicated to investigating markets for multi-national organisations and recommending ways in which they could improve their marketing and communication strategies, and thus enhance their profitability. I found a quote attributed to both the comedian Lily Tomlin, and the singer Cher: "The trouble with the rat race is, even if you win, you are still a rat" (Bull, 1998, p. ix). But how does one leave the rat race to get a life?

My psychotherapist was supportive and encouraging of my explorations, but she also pointed out that I was at a choice point in my life. Would I respond to the small voice within or would I continue to respond to the demands of the external world? Whom was I serving in my career? My dreams were also urging me to make a career change. For example, in the midst of undertaking a large on-site research project for

Melbourne International Airport, I had a dream that I was at the airport with a ticket in my hand. *I am unsure of the destination, but when I check my flight number against the large overhead boards, I find that my destination is "Seoul"*. After my rational mind had come to terms with the fact that the parent company of my employer did not have a sister office in Korea, I realised that perhaps my destination was "Soul", otherwise referred to in the Jungian literature as "Psyche". The following year, I enrolled in a part-time course in Soul-centred psychotherapy at the Kairos Centre.

I was invigorated and challenged by the course and started to entertain the possibility that I might be able to revisit my teenage notions of being a clinical psychologist, now revised to being a psychotherapist. I was worried about income and status. I did not know whether I would do good work as a psychotherapist. I was unsure whether I was now emotionally prepared for client crises which would involve life and death. Once again Psyche sent me a dream. *I am in peasant clothes in the land of my ancestors, running down a winding hill to open waters, possibly a lake or the sea. As I approach the jetty, I am fearful. I cannot swim in waters out of my depth, but I am compelled to jump in the water. I jump and fear that I will drown. Before I hit the water, a boat comes up from within the waters and contains me. The little chopsticks in my hands turn into oars.* I woke up with my heart beating furiously, knowing that I was asked to make this leap of faith. In the next new year, I resigned, after agonising over a possible change for a period of about 3 years.

The original partners who had hired me hoped that I would return to the company after a period away. About three years prior to my career change, I had a brief period with a competitor agency and had come back to work with them. One partner thought that I was going through "a midlife crisis". The other partner thought I wanted extensive time to travel with my husband, but reassured me that I would be welcome to seek re-employment with the organisation. They were concerned about my career change and the drop in income. Meanwhile I was at great pains to ensure that others did not perceive I left because of failure. I made it publicly known that I was leaving to make a career change, and that my consulting revenue for the company was overachieved by 30% in my last year. In other words, I was already aware that I did not want anyone misconstruing the circumstances of my leaving the company.

My first year away from the market research industry meant that I had to renegotiate the rhythm of my days, the structure to my year, and my spending patterns. My husband and I took the opportunity to travel overseas for a few months. I continued my psychotherapy training. I tested my counselling ability and capacity to hold to client processes through voluntary work with one of the local telephone crisis counselling services in Melbourne. Yet, I also missed the old life, including the income, the status, the structure, and the people I had worked with. When one of the partners offered me a subcontract position for a research project, I accepted it. However, this was followed by other subcontract offers for other research projects. I had to bite the bullet and decide whether I was going to go back to research, or whether I would continue my training towards being a psychotherapist. While I had saved up some money for my career change, and paid off substantial loans before I resigned from market research, I was only theoretically prepared for how long it would take to develop expertise as a counselling psychologist and develop a private practice. A longer period of immersion and apprenticeship was going to be necessary. The following year, I successfully applied for a postgraduate research scholarship at Swinburne and began the D.Psych. course.

The early years of my career transition were more challenging than what it is now. Living on less money did not come easily. Neither did coming to terms with my own drivenness with regard to work, and honouring deeper desires which came at a price. There were several blows to personal identity. For example, while I was a volunteer telephone counsellor, I was reprimanded by a crisis centre supervisor who had not yet graduated from his undergraduate degree, and was younger than the graduates that I used to supervise as a market research consultant. I was advised not to be creative in my telephone counselling approach, as a representative of the crisis centre, irrespective of the fact that I was a registered psychologist. As another example, I approached a previous market research client, an organisation specialising in executive outplacement, regarding the possibility of undertaking my doctorate thesis on involuntary career change. They would have the benefit of free research, while I would have the benefit of easier access to participants. Instead of liaising with a partner of that company, I was asked to liaise with other managers who proceeded to treat me as a student, rather than a research consultant who had knowledge of their business and their industry. Six months into numerous revisions to the research design, I changed my research topic from involuntary to voluntary career change, ending my association with this organisation.

Several things sustained me in my career transition. My husband, Ron, was a stalwart supporter. My psychotherapist contained me, but also held me to my process. Various family members, friends or ex-colleagues might not have understood why I was making this change, but encouraged me all the same; others found the change beyond comprehension; others were indifferent. My friends in psychotherapy supervision continue to provide companionship as we deepen our practice of psychotherapy. Practices which honoured the inner life were also important. I have kept a journal for over 20 years now. I was also in a dream group for a period of time. The responses from the external world were also encouraging – receiving my full certificate in soul-centred psychotherapy from the Kairos Centre, receiving a scholarship to undertake the D. Psych. course at Swinburne, the enthusiasm of my primary supervisor regarding my research project, being able to teach journal writing at various institutions, and growing interest in labyrinth workshops I conduct from time to time.

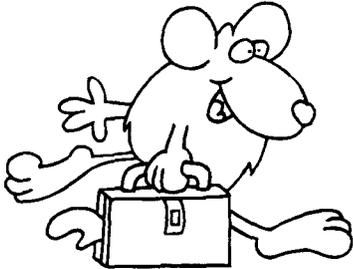
In my fifth year of the career change, I am relieved and delighted that my new career is taking a more substantial form. The last company I previously worked for, has changed its name to its international parent market research company. It is about to relocate from its National Trust classified building to an office block in the advertising/marketing precinct of the Melbourne business district. One of the original partners undertook voluntary early retirement. These objective indicators, as well as other changes confirmed for me that the culture of the organisation had inevitably changed. At the time I resigned from market research, it could have seemed to others that I had jumped from the frying pan into the fire. In hindsight, it seems that I plunged into that large mass of water that I dreamt of many moons ago. And instead of drowning in the great unknown, the boat, the craft of psychotherapy did emerge. And instead of having no rice bowl, the oars (ores) are also emerging by way of referrals from other psychotherapists, previous psychotherapy clients and existing psychotherapy clients. I was also recommended for sessional teaching at one of Melbourne's universities. A few months ago, a former market research client asked if I could work on a market research project for his organisation. I did not have to think twice before declining with thanks. I enjoy my work as a psychotherapist. Even though the territory is not always easy, being able to accompany individuals on their quest for wholeness and healing is meaningful and offers rewards beyond material gains. I have come full circle from not knowing

what I wanted to be when I grew up when I was in second grade, to now knowing in a deep way that I am working on my right livelihood. In my present modular career, I realise that I have taken my own long rocky road to find my own calling in life as a psychotherapist, an attendant to Psyche.

APPENDIX B: FIELD MATERIALS

Appendix B: General recruitment flier

Philomena Tan
9592 2459
philomen@netlink.com.au



Downshiffters wanted "Leaving the rat race to get a life"

Dear

I am conducting research for my doctorate in psychology at Swinburne University on midlife career downshiffters (i.e. people who voluntarily change their occupations to those that involve less income and status). The reasons for doing so and the approaches to the career transition are varied. There is very little research on downshiffting and my research will ultimately support those who are considering downshiffting as a possible alternative in the current workplace environment.

I would appreciate your help in arranging interviews with people who have already downshiffted their careers. Quite possibly, you will know of someone (friend, colleague or acquaintance) who matches the following profile:

1. Aged between 35-55 years at the time of leaving their previous occupation to downshift
2. Currently working, or in the process of career change
3. Voluntary career change (i.e. they were not retrenched/dismissed, and they did not take a redundancy package)
4. The change must involve a drop in income or perceived status
5. Left previous occupation within 1-5 years (12-60 months)
6. Previously in professional or managerial occupations

Even if you're not sure they match all of the above, I would still appreciate having a chat with them. I will call you in the next few days to see if you know of any midlife downshiffters and get their contact details from you. (By the way, the research provides for anonymity of participants.) Many thanks for your help.

Appendix B: Recruitment letter to career psychologist's clients



Research participants wanted "Leaving the rat race to get a life"

Hello

Could you share your career transition experience with me as part of a larger study on midlife career change? In return, I will provide you with: (a) a reference list of books/resources that you may find useful in your career transition process; (b) a summary of your interview, as a record of your transition; (c) a summary or results in 1999 after all interviews and analyses have been completed, as a way of sharing experiences and strategies of others.

For your information, I am conducting research for my doctorate in psychology at Swinburne University. The main aim of the study is to understand the experience of people who have voluntarily made a career change from professional and managerial careers to a different career, involving a loss of earnings, or perceived status, or both – profile in the box below. I hope to hear your story about what led to your career change, what was involved and how you managed the transition from both an external and internal perspective. There is little research done in this area so your participation will allow a better appreciation of career transitions and allow psychologists and counsellors to assist others, especially during this current period of rapid work place changes.

1. Aged between 35-55 years at the time of leaving their previous occupation to downshift
2. Currently working, or in the process of career change
3. Voluntary career change (i.e. they were not retrenched/dismissed, and they did not take a redundancy package)
4. The change must involve a drop in income or perceived status
5. Left previous occupation within 1-5 years (12-60 months)
6. Previously in professional or managerial occupations

Meredith Fuller was a guest lecturer at Swinburne and agreed to mail out this letter to people she knew who might be interested in participating in this study. I do not have any of your personal details from Meredith. If you would like to participate, have any queries, or know of someone else who would like to participate, please contact me. I am interviewing all through 1998, so anytime this year would be OK, but the earlier the better. In the meantime, please feel free to call either of my supervisors at Swinburne, Assoc Prof Jim McLennan (9214 8105) or Dr Glen Bates (9214 8100).

I look forward to meeting you.

Philomena Tan
9592 2459
philomen@netlink.com.au

**Appendix B: Recruitment advertising placed in
“Psychotherapy in Australia” (Vol. 4, No. 4: August 1998)**

DOWNSHIFTERS WANTED
Leaving The Rat Race to Get a Life?

Are you a downshifter or do you know a downshifter? Do you want to contribute to understanding an emerging alternative lifestyle? **Philomena Tan** is undertaking research as part of her Professional Doctorate in Psychology at Swinburne University. She is looking to interview downshifters who are; aged between 35-55 years at the time of leaving their previous occupation, currently working or in the process of career change, voluntary career change (not retrenched, dismissed, redundancy). The change must involve a drop in income or perceived status. Left previous occupation within 6 months – 5 years from professional or managerial occupations. **Philomena Tan** is a psychologist who has downshifted after working 15 years in the corporate sector. Phone: 03 9592 2459 Email: philomen@netlink.com.au

Appendix B: Screening & recruitment script

Hello, my name is Philomena Tan, could I please speak to

(To the correct person)

Hello, my name is Philomena Tan from Swinburne University, (... person referring) may have told you that I was going to call you about my research study.

Is now a good time to talk to you, or should I call you back?

I thought I'd start out by telling you about my research study. I'm a psychologist and I previously worked in market research consulting. I'm currently working on my doctoral thesis on downshifting which involves interviewing people who've changed their careers away from conventional career paths. There's very little research in this area and people such as yourself would help us understand the downshifting experience much more clearly.

I'm interested in people's stories about their downshifting experience, what led to the career change, and how people manage the transition, -- in summary what their experiences have been like. The interviews will be completed by the end of this year. All participants who are interviewed will get a summary of results and the study is likely to be published after that. Your name will not be used in any of the results.

Do you have any questions about my background or the study?

Could we meet in the next week, so that I can hear about your experiences? It will probably take about an hour to an hour and a half. If we need more time, I'm happy to spend a longer time with you, or we can meet at another time that's convenient to you.

Before we make a time to meet, could I ask you a few quick background questions to check the cross-section of the people I interview

1. Are you between 35-55 years of age? _____
2. How old were you when you left your previous occupation or career? _____
3. Was your career change voluntary or involuntary? _____
4. What was your previous occupation/career? _____
 Title _____
 Industry _____
5. How long were you a ...? (>5 years) _____
6. What is your current occupation/career? _____
 Title _____
 Industry _____
 Self employed _____
7. How long has it been since you leaving your previous occupation or career?
 (1-5 years; 12-60 months) _____
8. Did your career change from ... to ... involve a drop in income or a drop in status, or both?
9. I would appreciate your participation in my research. Would you like me to meet you at your home, or at Swinburne University?

Name: _____ Phone: _____
 Date: _____ Time: _____
 Location: _____

10. Do you know of anyone else in circumstances such as yours who might have downshifted and would be happy to talk about their experience?
 Perhaps you know of a family member, friend, colleague or acquaintance?

IF POTENTIAL PARTICIPANT:

What would be the best way of contacting them?

Will you call them to check with them, or shall I call them?

Appendix B: Initial letter to participants

Monday, 30 March 1998

Mr J Smith
123 Brown St
Melbourne 3000

Dear John

Research study on career downshifting

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study. This letter is to confirm details of our meeting:

Date: _____	Time: _____
Location: _____	

If there is an emergency and you need to reschedule the meeting, please contact me on 9592 2459 or email philomen@netlink.com.au.

The research study is being conducted as part of a Doctorate in Psychology at Swinburne University. The main aim of the study is to understand the experiences of people who have voluntarily downshifted from professional or managerial careers, (i.e. made a career change to a different career, involving a loss of earnings or status, or both. During our time together, I hope to hear your story about **what led to your career change, what was involved and how you managed the transition from both an external and internal perspective.**

While research is not a substitute for counselling or therapy, some people gain clarity from having another person listen to their experiences. Also, there is little research done in this area so your participation will allow a better appreciation of career transitions, and allow psychologists and counsellors to assist others, especially during the current period of work place changes. I will send you: (a) a summary of your interview within about 3-4 weeks of our interview; (b) a summary of results in 1999 after all interviews and analyses are completed. Any information you provide will not be linked to your name (see confidentiality provisions in the attached Informed Consent Form).

Typically the interview will be about **1 hour to 1 hour 30 minutes**. However, if we need more time, I am happy to spend more time with you, or arrange another time which is more convenient for you. In the first part of the interview, I would like to hear about **your career change from your perspective**. In the second part of the interview, you will be asked to complete a **short questionnaire with 13 questions** to quantify some aspects of your experience. Please find attached, an informed consent form which is part of standard practice with psychological research. If it is of interest to you, I would be happy to share with you my own career change experience (I am a psychologist who has worked in market and social research for 15 years, and making a transition to counselling and psychotherapy.) However, it would be better to do this after I hear about your experience, so as not to bias or slant your own account.

In the meantime, if you have any queries, please feel free to call me (9592 2459) or either of my supervisors at Swinburne, Assoc Prof Jim McLennan (9214 8105) or Dr Glen Bates (9214 8100). I look forward to meeting with you.

Yours sincerely

Appendix B: Informed consent form Study on career downshifting

I am conducting research to understand people’s experiences of career downshifting (i.e. voluntarily changing careers and involving a loss of income and/or status). As a participant, you will be asked to:

- a) Tell me about your experiences of your own career downshifting.
- b) Complete a short questionnaire about how you experienced the career downshifting transition period

The first part of the interview will be largely unstructured. I am interested in your experience, your story, in your own words. I may ask a few questions to clarify or request for elaboration. This will probably take 60-90 minutes. Since I’d like an accurate account of your experience, and I won’t be able to take notes verbatim, I’d like to audio tape the interview for transcription later. While the tape may also be used by my supervisors (for quality control purposes) or a typist (for transcription), the tape will be identified by a code number, rather than your name. The recording will be destroyed once the research is completed. In the second part of the interview, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire with 13 questions to quantify some aspects of your experience.

I will provide you with a summary of your interview for comments within 3-4 weeks (allowing for transcription). Your story and questionnaire data will be used with those from other participants to complete a research thesis for a Doctorate degree in Psychology at Swinburne University. All of the information that you provide will be confidential in that it will not be linked to you by name. While quotes from interviews will be used in the thesis (and possibly subsequent publications such as professional journals), quotes will be typically attributed to participants by age, gender, family situation (e.g. single) general occupation codes (e.g. teacher, business manager, etc) and industry codes (e.g. government, manufacturing, media, etc). Quantitative data will be reported on a group basis only (e.g. by age group, gender).

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. This research conforms to the principles set out in the Psychology Discipline Statement on Research Ethics and has been approved by the Psychology Research Ethics Committee, Swinburne University of Technology.

Please consider the purposes and time commitment of this study before you decide whether or not to participate. If you agree to take part in the study, please sign the signature slip below. Tear off the slip and return it to me during your interview. Please retain the upper section of this sheet for your own records. If you have any further questions or concerns, feel free to contact me (the primary researcher) in the first instance. Thank you for your consideration.

Primary researcher: Philomena Tan	9592 2459
First supervisor: Assoc Prof Jim McLennan	9214 8105
Second supervisor: Dr Glen Bates	9214 8100

I voluntarily choose to participate in the study on career downshifting. I have been informed of the purposes and procedures involved in this research and I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time. I understand that the research data gathered from this project will be reported as part of a doctoral thesis, and may be published in a form (e.g. professional journal article) that does not identify me by name.

.....
Name of participant	Signature of participant	Date

Appendix B: Interview protocol

Hello, I'm Philomena Tan

Before we start, have you read and signed your informed consent form?

As I explained in our phone conversation and the letter, the aim of this project is to understand people's experiences of career downshifting. While this research is not counselling or therapy, some people gain clarity from talking about their experiences. Also, there's little research done in this area, so your participation will allow psychologists and counsellors to help others in the future.

There will be 2 parts to this study. The first part is really for me to hear about your experience in your own words, that is to hear your story. This will probably take about 60-90 minutes. The second part is a questionnaire with 13 questions which will probably take about 10 minutes to complete.

I'd like to tape record what you have to say, so I don't miss any of it. So if you don't mind, I'll put the tape on when we start the interview. While my supervisors may listen to the tapes for quality control purposes, the tape will be identified by a code number, rather than your name. The recording will be destroyed once the research is completed

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Overview:

Perhaps we could begin by you describing your career change.
What were you doing before and what are you doing now?

Looking back on your experiences from now, how has it been for you?

Prompts:

1. Situation; push/pull factors; external/internal

Tell me what led to your **decision** to change your career?

What were your main **hopes and expectations** from this career change?

What were the **external and internal circumstances** that led you to change?

What were the **key factors or events that led** to you changing your career?

What were the **factors** that made the decision to change **difficult**?

2. Sequence of events

What was the **sequence of events** during your career change?

Did you **time** the change in any particular way, or did it just happen?

How did you time it?

How **long** did it take you to **decide** to actually make the change?

How long did it take you to **make** the change?

How much **planning** was undertaken?

3. Issues/Outcomes

What were the **issues** or **stressors** you experienced as a result of your career change?

What were the **consequences** of your career change?

What sorts of things did you **gain**?

What did you have to **give up**, or have to **live with**?

(Self vs others; personal vs career; long term vs short term)

4. Key events/turning points

What was the **most difficult aspect** of the whole experience? (**low points**)

What was the **most exciting aspect** of the whole experience? (**high points**)

What were some of the key **turning points** for you during the whole experience?

5. Self-image/identity

How did your career change affect **how you see or regard yourself**?

6. Supports/difficulties

What were the important factors (external or internal) that **helped you** in your career change?

To what extent did you **seek them** out? How did they **help** you?

What were the key **difficulties** in your career change?

How did you find them difficult?

7. Strategies/approach to change

What were the most **important changes** you made, that helped you through your career transition? (e.g. external behaviour, internal paradigm change)

How did you **approach** the process of career change?

How did you **come to terms** with the **consequences of the change**?

8. The view now/overview

How do you make sense of whether your career change has worked out?

(Notions of success, satisfaction, a good life, etc)

What lets you know that you've made a move that was right for you (or maybe a move that was not quite right)?

(What do you pay most attention to, when making that statement?)

Looking back, if you could go back in time to when you first started to think about changing, would you **do anything differently**? What? How come?

If you met someone who was intending to downshift, what are the key issues you would **highlight to them**?

Appendix B: First self-report questionnaire
(administered after the narrative part of interview)

This short questionnaire provides me with quantitative information about your career change experiences. Please consider your overall position at this time, not just your current mood. Please answer the questions by circling a number (Q1-Q8)

Q1) How would you rate the **magnitude** of your career change?

0 1 2 3 4 5..... 6 7 8 9 10
 Little or no change A great deal of change

Q2) How would you rate the **desirability** of your career change?

0 1 2 3 4 5..... 6 7 8 9 10
 Not at all desirable Extremely desirable

Q3) At the time **when you resigned** from your previous career, how much of the time were your work goals or plans clearly defined?

0 1 2 3 4 5..... 6 7 8 9 10
 Rarely/never All the time

Q4) At **this current stage** of your life, how much of the time are your work goals or plans clearly defined?

0 1 2 3 4 5..... 6 7 8 9 10
 Rarely/never All the time

Q5) How easy or difficult was it for **you** to **adjust** after your career change?

0 1 2 3 4 5..... 6 7 8 9 10
 Extremely difficult Extremely easy

Q6) How difficult was it for your **partner/family** to **adjust** after your career change?

0 1 2 3 4 5..... 6 7 8 9 10
 Extremely difficult Extremely easy

Q10) The following statements related to descriptions of personal views of life. Each statement has six possible answers, with the numbers 1 and 6 being extreme ends of a continuum. If you completely disagree with the statement, you would use 1. If you completely agree with the statement, you would use 6. If you think differently, you would use another number (e.g. 2, 3, 4 or 5) which best expresses your response. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement for two separate points in time -- a month before you changed your career (i.e. before you resigned from your previous occupation) and the present time (overall, not just your mood today). Please write in your answer in the appropriate column.

1 2 3 4 5 6
 Completely disagree Completely agree

	A month before change (overall) 199	Present time (overall) 1998
a) I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions.		
b) In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live		
c) I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world		
d) Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me.		
e) I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future		
f) When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out.		
g) I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are contrary to the general consensus		
h) The demands of everyday life often get me down.		
I) For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing and growth		
j) People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others		
k) Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.		
l) I like most aspects of my personality.		
m) I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important.		
n) I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life		
o) I gave up trying to make changes or big improvements in my life a long time ago.		
p) I have not experienced any warm or trusting relationships with others		
q) I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life.		
r) In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in life.		

Q11) Were there any other intervening events (either positive or negative) which have impacted greatly on your life since your career change? (e.g. other gains/losses, significant changes in your family, etc), which may have influenced your ratings in Q9 or Q10 and not discussed previously in the interview previously?

Please list them briefly (e.g. birth of first grandchild)

Q12) Finally, some quick questions about you to allow me to group participants accurately. (Please circle or write in.)

a) Gender Male Female

b) Age now _____ years

c) Age when you made your career change _____ years

d) How would you describe your “status” (in conventional Australian socio-economic terms) before your career change?

0 1 2 3 4 5..... 6 7 8 9 10
 Extremely low Middle Extremely high

e) How would you describe your “status” (in conventional Australian socio-economic terms) now, after your career change?

0 1 2 3 4 5..... 6 7 8 9 10
 Extremely low Middle Extremely high

f) What is the ratio between your current income and your previous income before your career change?

_____ %

E.g. If you are now on \$25,000 and previously on \$100,000, the ratio is 0.25 or 25%

(Please use net income, after-tax figures, including all income sources for yourself, excluding your partner/spouse if you have one)

Q13) Do you have any other comments to make about downshifting or the research?

**Appendix B: Counselling referral sheet
(provided to participants at the end of the interview)**

Just in case you have issues from your career change, or have issues arise as a result of this research, this list provides you with possible useful sources of assistance.

1. Crisis support:

Lifeline	131 114
Crisis line	9329 0300

2. Counselling:

Relationships Australia	
Kew	9261 8700
Narre Warren	9704 7788
Sunshine	9364 9033
Croydon	9725 9964
Swinburne Centre for Psychological Services(Hawthorn)	9214 8653
Australian Psychological Society	9663 6166
for referrals to registered psychologists who are able to provide health insurance rebates	

Appendix B: References

(provided to participants at the end of the interview)

Just in case, you are interested in some of the literature which I have used in my thesis, I have provided you with a cross-section of books/articles which may be available through libraries, bookshops or the internet.

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Appendix B: Letter of thanks
(sent to participants after the interview)

Monday, 02 November 1998

Mr J Smith
123 Brown St
Melbourne 3000

Dear John

Thank you for our recent interview about your career change. In particular, thank you for your openness, and sharing with me both the ups and downs of the change and the consequences of the change.

As promised, I have enclosed a point-form summary of the interview. If there are any inaccuracies in my summary, or you wish to add more points, I would appreciate you calling me or writing to me. You may wish to write on the summary itself (and I will send you an amended version), or you can write on a separate sheet of paper, or send me an e-mail. If there are no changes or extra points you wish to add, please feel free to use the envelope and stamp for other purposes. The summary is an abbreviated form which is easier for you to check for accuracy, and easier for me to identify themes across many people. I will of course be using quotes from the richness of interviews in my thesis, without using your name.

Since the interviews take a long time to organise, conduct, transcribe and summarise, I hope to complete the interviews by the end of this year. When the results are available in 1999, I will send you a summary, as promised. In the meantime, if you come across anyone else who could be a potential participant in my study (i.e. midlife voluntary downshifting) please let me know.

Once again, many thanks for sharing your experiences with me. I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Philomena Tan
9592 2459
philomen@netlink.com.au

Appendix B: Follow up letter to participants

Friday, 1 October 1999

«Participant»

«Address1»

«Address2» «PostalCode»

Dear «FirstName»

Research on downshifting

Thank you for participating in the research which is part of my Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology. Following our interview last year, I have completed the field work and most of the analysis for the research. As promised, please find enclosed:

- a) A summary of results from interviews and the short questionnaire; and
- b) An article I wrote which provides some background on the downshifting phenomenon.

Where to from here?

- a) I am currently undertaking more detailed analysis and writing my thesis. I anticipate submitting my thesis in the first half of 2000. When accepted by the examiners, the thesis should be available at Swinburne University library (Hawthorn campus). Anonymity of all participants will be honoured within the thesis write-up and subsequent publications (e.g. leaving out names of people involved and names of organisations mentioned).
- b) There are a couple of **extra questions** that I would appreciate you answering. These issues surfaced recently when I consulted some “old” research. I would appreciate if you could please complete the form overleaf, and return it in the stamped self-addressed envelope. Thank you.
- c) Some participants wished to meet other career downshifters. One possibility is for those who are interested in meeting and networking is to meet for drinks at the Research Club at Swinburne University of Technology, Hawthorn (map to be provided to those attending). Those who wish to have further conversations can then adjourn to dinner at the many cafes and restaurants nearby on Burwood Road or Glenferrie Road. Please fill in the attached RSVP form and mail back to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope. Of course, meeting other career downshifters is not part of the research; I am organising this as a way of showing appreciation to those who have participated in my research. If you would like to attend, you need to be aware that others will then know of your participation in my research.

Please complete the questionnaire and RSVP, and mail by Sunday 17 October 1999. If you have any comments regarding the summary of results, please write on the back of the blue questionnaire/RSVP form. If you have any questions or queries about downshifting, my research, or the possible meeting, you can contact me on 9592 2459 or philomena@netlink.com.au. Once again, many thanks for your participation in my research project.

Yours sincerely

Philomena Tan

Appendix B: Second self-completion questionnaire

Participant #

FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS

Q1. Thinking about the time (..... 199), when you left your previous career (which we discussed at the interview last year):

a) How would you rate you **personal desire** to make the career change?

0 1 2 3 4 5..... 6 7 8 9 10		
Strong desire to stay the same	Neutral: Desire to change balanced by desire to stay	Strong desire to make a change

b) How would you rate the **pressure from the organisation** to leave your former job?

0 1 2 3 4 5..... 6 7 8 9 10		
Strong encouragement from organisation to stay	Neutral: Not encouraged or discouraged to leave	Strong pressure from organisation to leave

Q2. Since our interview of 1998, what career activities have you undertaken?

No job change since interview	1
Undertaken new job (Please specify)	2
.....	
.....	
.....	
Other changes	3
(Please specify)	
.....	

RSVP: Meeting other research participants/downshiffters

Some participants have suggested meeting other people who have changed careers in midlife and downshiffted, as means of forming support groups, or networking. If you are interested in doing this, I can organise for those interested to meet over drinks at the Research Club at Swinburne University (Hawthorn campus), on **Thursday 28 October, 1999, between 5.30 – 6.30 p.m.** Those who wish to have further conversations can then adjourn to dinner at the many cafes and restaurants on Burwood Road or Glenferrie Road. If you would like to participate in this activity, you need to be aware that others will then know of your participation in my research.

Yes, I would like to come, please send me more details	1
No, I cannot attend/prefer not to participate	2

<p>Thank you for participating. Please mail this form in the self-addressed/stamped envelope provided by Sunday 17 October, so that I have time to contact those who are interested in meeting with further details. If you have any queries, please email me at philomen@netlink.com.au, or call me on 9592 2459.</p>
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Appendix B: Letter inviting participants to meet other participants (sent only to those who wished to participate)

Friday, 22 October 1999

«Participant»
«Address1»
«Address2» «PostalCode»

Dear «FirstName»

Meeting other research participants

In reply to your RSVP, here are the details for meeting other participants from my research project.

Drinks at the Research Club,
Swinburne University of Technology,
Burwood Road,
Hawthorn.
Thursday, 28 October 1999
5.30 – 6.30 p.m.

Please find attached a map of Swinburne Hawthorn campus. I have indicated where you can easily get car parking for the evening (green X's), and the easiest walking path (pink highlight) to the Research Club which is on the ground floor of the AR building. The entrance to the Research Club is in the middle of the AR building. In appreciation of your participation in my study, drinks from 5.30 – 6.30 p.m. are on me. Those who wish to have further conversations after drinks may want to adjourn to the many cafes and restaurants on Burwood Road or Glenferrie Road. One suggestion is Satay Corner on 639 Glenferrie Road, serving Malaysian cuisine. Main courses are around \$8, or a banquet for \$15.

Just as a reminder, participation in this activity is not compulsory and not part of the research. I am organising this meeting as a way of showing appreciation to those who have participated in my research. While anonymity is preserved in my thesis (pseudonyms have been used for quotes in my thesis), participation in this activity means that others (mainly other participants) will know of your participation in my research. I will have name tags with first names at drinks to make it easier for you to meet others, but I will leave it up to you what you wish to disclose to other participants. About 15 participants have expressed interest in attending.

If you have any queries, please email me at philomen@netlink.com.au, or call me on 9592 2459. I look forward to seeing you on Thursday.

Yours sincerely

APPENDIX C: ADDITIONAL TABLES AND ANALYSES

Table C.1: Participants' occupations before and after career downshifting: Holland three-letter occupational codes

Occupation before career downshifting	Occupation after career downshifting
EIS	SEI
RCS	SIA
AIR	RCS
EAI	ASI
ESC	AES
ASE	IRS
RIS	ESC
ESR	ESC
SIA	SIA
ERI	ERI
ESA	IER
ERI	AES
SEI	IER
ESR	IEA
ESC	ESC
ERI	SAI
ESC	RES
ESR	AES
IRE	RSE
IRS	RES
SER	AES
EIS	ESR
ESI	ESR
ISC	SIA
ESA	SEC
ASE	SEC
AES	ISC
ESC	ESC
ESC	SAE
ESA	SEC

Table C.2: Mean ratings for Ryff's psychological well-being subscales

	Before change (T1)	After change (T2)	Difference (T2-T1)	Ryff & Keyes (1995)
b) In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.	2.97	5.07	2.10**	n/a
h) The demands of everyday life often get me down.	3.47	4.43	0.96*	n/a
n) I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life.	4.23	5.03	0.80**	n/a
Environmental mastery subscale	10.67	14.53	3.87**	14.9
f) When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out.	3.13	4.70	1.57**	n/a
l) I like most aspects of my personality.	4.20	4.70	0.50*	n/a
r) In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in life.	3.93	4.70	0.77*	n/a
Self acceptance	11.27	14.10	2.83**	14.6
a) I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions®	3.67	4.30	0.63**	n/a
g) I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are contrary to the general consensus.	4.07	4.83	0.76**	n/a
m) I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important.	4.37	5.20	0.83**	n/a
Autonomy subscale	12.10	14.33	2.23**	15.2
c) I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world.	4.93	5.50	0.57**	n/a
i) For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing and growth	4.63	5.53	0.90**	n/a
o) I gave up trying to make changes or big improvements in my life a long time ago ®	5.30	5.43	0.13ns	n/a
Personal growth subscale	14.87	16.47	1.60**	15.7
d) Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me ®	3.73	4.47	0.74*	n/a
j) People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others.	4.43	4.87	0.44*	n/a
p) I have not experienced any warm or trusting relationships with others ®	5.17	5.53	0.36*	n/a
Positive relations with others subscale	13.33	14.87	1.53**	14.8
e) I live one day at a time and don't really think about the future ®	4.67	4.63	-0.04ns	n/a
k) Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.	4.23	4.63	0.40*	n/a
q) I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life®	5.43	5.33	-0.10ns	n/a
Purpose in life subscale	14.33	14.60	0.27ns	14.4

® Items reversed when calculating subscale totals

n/a = not available; ns = not significant

* Significant at 0.05 level; ** Significant at 0.01 level

Appendix D: References to books cited by participants

Grahn, J. (1993). *Blood, bread, and roses: How menstruation created the world*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Sher, B. (1994). *I could do anything if only I knew what it was*. Adelaide, Australia: Hodder & Stoughton.

Wilber, K. (1996). *A brief history of everything*. Boston: Shambhala.

Appendix E: Source material for images used in creative synthesis collage (Section 8.4)

1. Jeffrey Smart: *Cahill Expressway*, 1962
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
In L. Thomas, (1974)
200 years of Australian Painting.
Sydney, Australia: Bay Books.

2. Henri Rosseau: *The dream*, 1910
The Museum of Modern Art: New York
In R. Hughes, (1991).
The shock of the new: Art and the century of change.
London: Thames Hudson.

3. ***Toreodor Fresco***.
From the Royal palace, Knossos, Crete.
Museo Herkalion/Scala.
c. 1500 BCE
In W. Beckett, (1995)
The story of painting.
Washington, DC: Dorling Kindersley.

4. Wang Jia Nan: *The traveller*.
In J. N. Wang & X. L. Cai, (1997),
The complete oriental painting course.
London: New Burlington Books.

5. Frederick McCubbin: *The lost child*, 1886.
National Gallery of Victoria
In W. Splatt, & S. Bruce, (1981).
*Australian impressionist painters:
A pictorial history of the Heidelberg School*.
Windsor, Victoria: Currey O'Neil.

6. Max Ernst: *Epiphany*, 1940
Richard Feigen Gallery, New York
In E. Boix, (1995).
Reason & Dream: From cubism to surrealism.
Barcelona, Spain: Ediciones Poligrafa

7. Neil Drury: *Shelter for dreaming*, 1985.
Friston Forest, Sussex.
In N. Drury (1998)
Sacred Spaces.
London: Thames & Hudson.

8. Philomena Tan: *Psyche sorting the seeds*, 2000.
Author's personal collection.
9. Domenichino: *Landscape with Tobias laying hold of the fish*, c. 1617-18.
National Gallery, London.
In W. Beckett, (1995).
The story of painting.
Washington, DC: Dorling Kindersley.
10. Paul Gauguin: *Riders on the beach*, 1902.
Museum Folkwang, Essen.
In W. Beckett, (1995).
The story of painting.
Washington, DC: Dorling Kindersley.
11. *Aztec Goddess Tlazolteotl giving birth to the Sun God*, Pre-Columban.
Statuette of semi-precious stone.
American Museum of Natural History, New York.
In J. Campbell, (1949/1988)
The hero with a thousand faces.
London: Paladin.
12. Henri Matisse: *Music*, 1910.
The Hermitage, Leningrad.
In R. Hughes, (1991).
The shock of the new: Art and the century of change
London: Thames Hudson.
13. Nicholas Poussin, *A dance to the music of time*, 1660
Wallace Collection, London.
In R. Cumming, (1995).
Annotated art: The world's greatest paintings explored and explained.
New York: Dorling Kindersley.

Appendix F: SPSS data file and SPSS analyses outputs

Contents of data file

Variable name	Variable label/Question	Value label
id	Identifying number	-
gender	Gender	1 = Male 2 = Female
q1magnit	Q1 How would you rate the magnitude of your career change?	0 = Little or no change 10 = A great deal of change
q2desire	Q2 How would you rate the desirability of your career change?	0 = Not at all desirable 10 = Extremely desirable
q3wkgoal1	Q3 At the time you resigned from your previous career, how much of the time were your work goals or plans clearly defined?	0 = Rarely/never 10 = All the time
q4wkgoal2	Q4 At this current stage of your life, how much of the time are your work goals or plans clearly defined?	0 = Rarely/never 10 = All the time
q5adjust	Q5 How easy or difficult was it for you to adjust after the change?	0 = Extremely difficult 10 = Extremely easy
qflyadj	Q6 How difficult was it for your partner/family to adjust after your career change?	0 = Extremely difficult 10 = Extremely easy
q7lifeov	Q7 Looking at the effects of your career change, how much to you regard your personal life overall?	0 = Extremely worse off than before the change 10 = Extremely better off than before the change
q8wkov	Q8 Looking at the effects of your career change, how much do you regard your work life overall?	0 = Extremely worse off than before the change 10 = Extremely better off than before the change
q9da1	Q9a In most ways my life is close to my ideal Time 1 (SWLS item)	1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree;

		3 = Slightly disagree; 4 = Neither agree not disagree 5 = Slightly agree; 6 = Agree; 7 = Strongly agree
q9db1	Q9b The conditions of my life are excellent Time 1 (SWLS item)	As above
qdc1	Q9c I am satisfied with my life Time 1 (SWLS item)	As above
q9dd1	Q9d So far I have gotten the important things I want in my life Time 1 (SWLS)	As above
q9de1	Q9e If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing Time 1 (SWLS)	As above
q9da2	Q9a In most ways my life is close to my ideal Time 2 (SWLS item)	As above
q9dd2	Q9b The conditions of my life are excellent Time 2 (SWLS item)	As above
q9dc2	Q9c I am satisfied with my life Time 2 (SWLS item)	As above
q9dd2	Q9d So far I have gotten the important things I want in my life Time 2 (SWLS)	As above
q9de2	Q9e If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing Time 2 (SWLS)	As above
q10ra1	Q10a I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions. Time 1	1 = Completely disagree 6 = Completely agree
q10rb1	Q10b In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live. Time 1	As above
q10rc1	Q10c I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world. Time 1	As above
q10rd1	Q10d Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me. Time 1	As above
q10re1	Q10e I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future. Time 1	As above
q10rf1	Q10f When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out. Time 1	As above
q10rg1	Q10g I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are contrary to the	As above

	general consensus. Time 1	
q10rh1	Q10h The demands of everyday life often get me down. Time 1	As above
q10ri1	Q10i I For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing and growing. Time 1	As above
q10rj1	Q10j People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others. Time 1	As above
q10rk1	Q10k Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them. Time 1	As above
q10rl1	Q10l I like most aspects of my personality. Time 1	As above
q10rm1	Q10m I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important. Time 1	As above
q10rn1	Q10n I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life. Time 1	As above
q10ro1	Q10o I gave up trying to make changes or big improvements in my life a long time ago. Time 1	As above
q10rp1	Q10p I have not experienced any warm or trusting relationships with others. Time 1	As above
q10rq1	Q10q I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life. Time 1	As above
q10rr1	Q10r In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in life. Time 1	As above
q10ra2	Q10a I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions. Time 2	1 = Completely disagree 6 = Completely agree
q10rb2	Q10b In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live. Time 2	As above
q10rc2	Q10c I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world. Time 2	As above
q10rd2	Q10d Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me. Time 2	As above
q10re2	Q10e I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future. Time 2	As above

q10rf2	Q10f When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out. Time 2	As above
q10rg2	Q10g I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are contrary to the general consensus. Time 2	As above
q10rh2	Q10h The demands of everyday life often get me down. Time 2	As above
q10ri2	Q10i I For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing and growing. Time 2	As above
q10rj2	Q10j People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others. Time 2	As above
q10rk2	Q10k Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them. Time 2	As above
q10rl2	Q10l I like most aspects of my personality. Time 2	As above
q10rm2	Q10m I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important. Time 2	As above
q10rn2	Q10n I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life. Time 2	As above
q10ro2	Q10o I gave up trying to make changes or big improvements in my life a long time ago. Time 2	As above
q10rp2	Q10p I have not experienced any warm or trusting relationships with others. Time 2	As above
q10rq2	Q10q I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life. Time 2	As above
q10rr2	Q10r In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in life. Time 2	As above
agenow	Q12b Age now	-
agechange	A12c Age when you made your career change	-
q12dstbf	Q12d How would you describe your status before your career change?	0 = Extremely low; 5 = Middle; 10 = Extremely high
q12estaf	Q12e How would you describe your status (now) after your career change?	As above
q12fincr	Q12f What is the ratio between your current income and your previous	%

	income before your career change	
marital	Marital status	1 = Singled/divorced; 2 = Married 3 = Partner/defacto
depend	Number of dependants living at home?	-
uni	Tertiary education -- number of full-time equivalent years	-
mbtiei	MBTI Extravert/Introvert	1 = Extravert; 2 = Introvert
mbtism	MBTI Sensing/Intuition	1 = Sensing; 2 = Intuition
mbtitf	MBTI Thinking/Feeling	1 = Thinking; 2 = Feeling
mbtijp	MBTI Judging/Perceiving	1 = Judging; 2 = Perceiving
q11event	Were there any other intervening events which have impacted greatly on your life since your career change?	
transit	Quota control for sample	1 = Early transition (2 years or less since leaving); 2 = Late transition (2 years + since leaving)
package	Termination package when leaving?	0 = No; 1 = Yes
raut1	Ryff subscale: Autonomy Time 1	-
raut2	Ryff subscale: Autonomy Time 2	-
renv1	Ryff subscale: Environmental Mastery Time 1	-
renv2	Ryff subscale: Environmental Mastery Time 2	-
rpgrw1	Ryff subscale: Personal Growth Time 1	-
rpgrw2	Ryff subscale: Personal Growth Time 2	-
rplife1	Ryff subscale: Purpose in Life Time 1	-
rplife2	Ryff subscale: Purpose in Life Time 2	-
rrel1	Ryff subscale: Relations with Others Time 1	-
rrel2	Ryff subscale: Relations with Others Time 2	-
rselfa1	Ryff subscale: Self acceptance Time 1	-
rselfa2	Ryff subscale: Self acceptance Time 2	-
dsat1	Diener SWLS Time 1	-
dsat2	Diener SWLS Time 2	-
eq1	Time taken to decide to change careers	1 = Less than 1 month

		<p>2 = 1-6 months 3 = 7-12 months 4 = 1-2 years 5 = 2-5 years 6 = 5+ years</p>
eq2	Onset of transition	1 = Gradual; 2 = Sudden
eq3	Duration of transition	1 = Roughly known; 2 = Unknown
eq4	Extent of change	<p>0 = Gone back to an old occupation 1 = 45-degree change 2 = 90-degree change</p>
eq5	Specificity of career change when quitting	<p>1 = Diffuse idea – no specific direction 2 = General direction of change, but no specific occupation 3 = Specific occupation in mind</p>
eq6	Self employed?	<p>1 = Employed, no specified intentions of being self employed 2 = Not self employed now, but working towards it 3 = Self employed</p>
eq7	Predominant work activities during transition process	<p>1 = Taking on consulting work based on expertise from old job 2 = Taking on casual/temporary/part-time work unrelated to last job 3 = Taking on casual/temporary/part-time work unrelated to any previous job 4 = Taken on new career 5 = Full-time work related to previous other job 6 = Take on part-time work which would assist in new career</p>
eq8	Nicholson's work transition cycle -- stage	1 = Preparation; 2 = Encounter;

		3 = Adjustment; 4= Stabilisation
eq9a	Derr's career orientation: Getting ahead Time 1	1 = Yes
eq9b	Derr's career orientation: Getting high Time 1	1 = Yes
eq9c	Derr's career orientation: Getting secure Time 1	1 = Yes
eq10a	Derr's career orientation: Getting ahead Time 2	1 = Yes
eq10b	Derr's career orientation: Getting high Time 2	1 = Yes
eq10c	Derr's career orientation: Getting secure Time 2	1 = Yes
eq10d	Derr's career orientation: Getting free Time 2	1 = Yes
eq10e	Derr's career orientation: Getting balanced Time 2	1 = Yes
eq10f	Derr's career orientation: Getting authentic Time 2	1 = Yes
eq11	Driver's career style	1 = Transitory; 2 = Steady state; 3 = Linear; 4 = Spiral
eq12	Emotional tone	-2 = Predominantly negative affect and tone; 0 = Neutral, expressing both negative and positive emotions equally 2 = Positive, optimistic, zestful
eq13a	Reasons for changing career: Counterculture themes	1 = Yes
eq13b	Reasons for changing career: Macrosocial themes	1 = Yes
eq13c	Reasons for changing career: Developmental themes	1 = Yes
eq14	Professional help seeking?	1 = Yes; 2 = No
eq15a	Types of support mentioned in narrative: Socioemotional support	1 = Yes
eq15b	Types of support mentioned in narrative: Informational support	1 = Yes
eq15c	Types of support mentioned in narrative: Instrumental support	1 = Yes
eq16	Further education undertaken as part of career change?	0 = No; 1 = University; 2 = Other
eq17	When was further education undertaken?	0 = No training; 1 = While in the previous occupation/job; 2 = After quitting the old occupation/job
eq18	Any post-career change regrets?	1 = Done the same thing 2 = Done it somewhat differently 3 = Done it very differently

months	Number of months between leaving previous occupation/job and interview	-
eq19	Personal desire to make the career change	0 = Strong desire to stay the same 5 = Neutral 10 = Strong desire to make the change
eq20	Pressure from the organisation to change	As above
eq21	Career activities since the first interview	1 = No career change; 2 = New career; 3 = Other changes
thomas	Thomas categories	1 = Opt out; 2 = Bow out; 3 = Forced out 4 = Drift out
income	Income before career change	-

Q1MAGNIT Q1. Magnitude of career change

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	5.00	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
	6.00	2	6.7	6.7	13.3
	7.00	2	6.7	6.7	20.0
	8.00	10	33.3	33.3	53.3
	9.00	7	23.3	23.3	76.7
A great deal of chan	10.00	7	23.3	23.3	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 8.300 Std dev 1.442

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

Q2DESIRE Q2. Desirability of career change

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	6.00	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
	8.00	6	20.0	20.0	23.3
	9.00	11	36.7	36.7	60.0
Extremely desirable	10.00	12	40.0	40.0	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 9.100 Std dev .960

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

Q3WKGOL1 Q3. Clarity of work goals before resigni

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	1.00	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
	2.00	5	16.7	16.7	20.0
	3.00	1	3.3	3.3	23.3
	4.00	3	10.0	10.0	33.3
	6.00	2	6.7	6.7	40.0
	7.00	6	20.0	20.0	60.0
	8.00	5	16.7	16.7	76.7
	9.00	5	16.7	16.7	93.3
All the time	10.00	2	6.7	6.7	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 6.167 Std dev 2.805

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

Q4WKGOL2 Q4. Clarity of work goals now

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	2.00	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
	3.00	4	13.3	13.3	20.0
	4.00	4	13.3	13.3	33.3
	6.00	2	6.7	6.7	40.0
	7.00	5	16.7	16.7	56.7
	8.00	10	33.3	33.3	90.0
	9.00	2	6.7	6.7	96.7
All the time	10.00	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 6.233 Std dev 2.359

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

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Q5ADJUST Q5. Own ease in adjustment after change

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	2.00	3	10.0	10.0	10.0
	3.00	4	13.3	13.3	23.3
	4.00	4	13.3	13.3	36.7
	5.00	3	10.0	10.0	46.7
	6.00	1	3.3	3.3	50.0
	7.00	7	23.3	23.3	73.3
	8.00	3	10.0	10.0	83.3
	9.00	1	3.3	3.3	86.7
Extremely easy	10.00	4	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 5.900 Std dev 2.591

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

Q6FLYADJ Q6. Partner/family adjustment

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	2.00	3	10.0	10.7	10.7
	3.00	2	6.7	7.1	17.9

	4.00	4	13.3	14.3	32.1
	5.00	2	6.7	7.1	39.3
	6.00	1	3.3	3.6	42.9
	7.00	4	13.3	14.3	57.1
	8.00	8	26.7	28.6	85.7
	9.00	3	10.0	10.7	96.4
Extremely easy	10.00	1	3.3	3.6	100.0
	11.00	2	6.7	Missing	
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 6.179 Std dev 2.450

Valid cases 28 Missing cases 2

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Q7LIFE0V Q7. Personal life after change

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	3.00	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
The same	5.00	1	3.3	3.3	6.7
	7.00	6	20.0	20.0	26.7
	8.00	2	6.7	6.7	33.3
	9.00	16	53.3	53.3	86.7
Extremely better off	10.00	4	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 8.333 Std dev 1.539

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

Q8WK0V Q8. Work life after change

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	3.00	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
	6.00	3	10.0	10.0	13.3
	7.00	6	20.0	20.0	33.3
	8.00	9	30.0	30.0	63.3
	9.00	8	26.7	26.7	90.0
Extremely better off	10.00	3	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 7.900 Std dev 1.470

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

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Q12DSTBF Q12d: Status before career change

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Middle	5.00	6	20.0	20.0	20.0
	6.00	8	26.7	26.7	46.7
	7.00	9	30.0	30.0	76.7
	8.00	5	16.7	16.7	93.3
	9.00	2	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Mean	6.633	Std dev	1.189		
Valid cases	30	Missing cases	0		

Q12ESTAF Q12e: Status after career change

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Middle	2.00	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
	3.00	4	13.3	13.3	16.7
	4.00	9	30.0	30.0	46.7
	5.00	5	16.7	16.7	63.3
	6.00	6	20.0	20.0	83.3
	7.00	3	10.0	10.0	93.3
	8.00	2	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Mean	4.933	Std dev	1.552		
Valid cases	30	Missing cases	0		

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Q12FINCR Q12f: Ratio of current/previous income

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	4.00	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
	5.00	1	3.3	3.3	6.7
	10.00	1	3.3	3.3	10.0
	20.00	3	10.0	10.0	20.0
	25.00	3	10.0	10.0	30.0
	30.00	1	3.3	3.3	33.3
	33.00	2	6.7	6.7	40.0
	39.00	1	3.3	3.3	43.3
	40.00	1	3.3	3.3	46.7
	45.00	1	3.3	3.3	50.0
	50.00	4	13.3	13.3	63.3
	60.00	3	10.0	10.0	73.3
	65.00	1	3.3	3.3	76.7
	70.00	1	3.3	3.3	80.0
	72.00	1	3.3	3.3	83.3

75.00	1	3.3	3.3	86.7
80.00	1	3.3	3.3	90.0
81.00	1	3.3	3.3	93.3
87.00	1	3.3	3.3	96.7
90.00	1	3.3	3.3	100.0

Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 45.800 Std dev 24.827

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

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Number of valid observations (listwise) = 30.00

Variable	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum	Valid N	Label
Q9DA1	2.03	1.13	1.00	5.00	30	Q9DA1: In most ways my
life is close to						
Q9DA2	5.47	1.25	2.00	7.00	30	Q9DA2: In most ways my
life is close to						
Q9DB1	2.50	1.59	1.00	6.00	30	Q9DB1: The conditions in
my life are exc						
Q9DB2	5.60	1.13	2.00	7.00	30	Q9DB2: The conditions of
my life are exc						
Q9DC1	2.23	1.33	1.00	5.00	30	Q9DC1: I am satisfied
with my life						
Q9DC2	5.57	1.17	3.00	7.00	30	Q9DC2: I am satisfied
with my life						
Q9DD1	3.07	1.48	1.00	6.00	30	Q9DD1: So far I have
gotten the importan						
Q9DD2	5.50	1.14	3.00	7.00	30	Q9DD2: So far I have
gotten the importan						
Q9DE1	3.17	2.00	1.00	7.00	30	Q9DE1: If I could live my
life over, I w						
Q9DE2	4.07	1.91	1.00	7.00	30	Q9DE2: If I could live my
life over, I w						
Q10FG1	4.07	1.08	2.00	6.00	30	Q10RG1: I have confidence
in my opnions,						
Q10RA1	3.33	1.24	1.00	5.00	30	Q10RA1: I tend to be
influenced by peopl						
Q10RA1RV	3.67	1.24	2.00	6.00	30	
Q10RA2	2.70	1.09	1.00	5.00	30	Q10RA2: I tend to be
influenced by peopl						
Q10RA2RV	4.30	1.09	2.00	6.00	30	
Q10RB1	2.97	1.35	1.00	6.00	30	Q10RB1: In general I feel
I'm in charge						
Q10RB2	5.07	1.05	1.00	7.00	30	Q10RB2: In general I feel
I am in charge						
Q10RC1	4.93	1.23	2.00	6.00	30	Q10RC1: I think it is
important to have						
Q10RC2	5.50	.90	2.00	6.00	30	Q10RC2: I think it is
important to have						
Q10RD1	3.27	1.72	1.00	6.00	30	Q10RD1: Maintaining close
relationships						
Q10RD1RV	3.73	1.72	1.00	6.00	30	
Q10RD2	2.53	1.43	1.00	6.00	30	Q10RD2: Maintaining close
relationships						
Q10RD2RV	4.47	1.43	1.00	6.00	30	
Q10RE1	2.33	1.40	1.00	5.00	30	Q10RE1: I live lifeone
day at a time and						

Q10RE1RV	4.67	1.40	2.00	6.00	30	
Q10RE2	2.37	1.45	1.00	6.00	30	Q10RE2: I live ilfe one day at a time an
Q10RE2RV	4.63	1.45	1.00	6.00	30	
Q10RF1	3.13	1.41	1.00	6.00	30	Q10RF1: When I look at the story of my l
Q10RF2	4.70	1.02	2.00	6.00	30	Q10RF2: When I look at the story of my l
Q10RG2	4.83	1.05	2.00	6.00	30	Q10RG2: I have confidence in my opinions
Q10RH1	3.53	1.70	1.00	6.00	30	Q10RH1: The demands of everyday life oft
Q10RH1RV	3.47	1.70	1.00	6.00	30	
Q10RH2	2.57	1.17	1.00	6.00	30	Q10RH2: The demands of everyday life oft
Q10RH2RV	4.43	1.17	1.00	6.00	30	
Q10RI1	4.63	1.43	1.00	6.00	30	Q10RI1: For me, life has been a continuo
Q10RI2	5.53	.73	3.00	7.00	30	Q10rI2: For me, life has been a continuo
Q10RJ1	4.43	1.22	1.00	6.00	30	Q10RJ1: People would describe me as giv
Q10RJ2	4.87	.78	3.00	6.00	30	Q10RJ2: People would describe me as a gi
Q10RK1	4.23	1.41	2.00	6.00	30	Q10RK1: Some people wander aimlessly thr
Q10RK2	4.63	1.19	2.00	6.00	30	Q10RK2: Some people wander aimlessly thr
Q10RL1	4.20	1.35	1.00	6.00	30	Q10RL1: I like most aspects of my person
Q10RL2	4.70	1.06	2.00	6.00	30	Q10RL2: I like most aspects of my person
Q10RM1	4.37	1.07	2.00	6.00	30	Q10RM1: I judge myself by what I think i
Q10RM2	5.20	.71	4.00	7.00	30	Q10RM2: I judge myself by what I think i
Q10RN1	4.23	1.38	1.00	6.00	30	Q10RN1: I am quite good at managing the
Q10RN2	5.03	.67	4.00	6.00	30	Q10RN2: I am quite good at managing the

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Number of valid observations (listwise) = 30.00

Variable	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum	Valid N	Label
Q10RO1	1.70	.99	1.00	5.00	30	Q10RO1: I gave up trying to make changes
Q10RO1RV	5.30	.99	2.00	6.00	30	
Q10RO2	1.57	.94	1.00	5.00	30	Q10RO2: I gave up trying to make changes
Q10RO2RV	5.43	.94	2.00	6.00	30	
Q10RP1	1.83	1.37	1.00	5.00	30	Q10RP1: I have not experienced any warm
Q10RP1RV	5.17	1.37	2.00	6.00	30	
Q10RP2	1.47	.97	1.00	5.00	30	Q10RP2: I have not experienced any warm
Q10RP2RV	5.53	.97	2.00	6.00	30	
Q10RQ1	1.57	1.04	1.00	6.00	30	Q10RQ1: I sometimes feel as if I've done
Q10RQ1RV	5.43	1.04	1.00	6.00	30	
Q10RQ2	1.67	1.12	1.00	5.00	30	Q10RQ2: I sometimes feel as if I've done
Q10RQ2RV	5.33	1.12	2.00	6.00	30	

Q10RR1	3.07	1.60	1.00	6.00	30	Q10RR1: In many ways, I
feel disappointe						
Q10RR1RV	3.93	1.60	1.00	6.00	30	
Q10RR2	2.30	1.15	1.00	5.00	30	Q10RR2: In many ways, I
feel disappointe						
Q10RR2RV	4.70	1.15	2.00	6.00	30	
AGENOW	46.67	5.79	37.0	58.0	30	Q12b: Age now
AGECHANG	44.13	5.18	35.0	53.0	30	Q12c: Age at career
transition						

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MARITAL Marital status

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Single/divorced	1	13	43.3	43.3	43.3
Married	2	12	40.0	40.0	83.3
Partner	3	5	16.7	16.7	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Mean	1.733	Std dev	.740		
Valid cases	30	Missing cases	0		

DEPEND Number of dependents

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	.00	20	66.7	66.7	66.7
	1.00	6	20.0	20.0	86.7
	2.00	3	10.0	10.0	96.7
	3.00	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Mean	.500	Std dev	.820		
Valid cases	30	Missing cases	0		

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INCOME Income

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	38.00	2	6.7	16.7	16.7
	40.00	1	3.3	8.3	25.0
	41.00	1	3.3	8.3	33.3

45.00	1	3.3	8.3	41.7
80.00	2	6.7	16.7	58.3
100.00	2	6.7	16.7	75.0
170.00	1	3.3	8.3	83.3
180.00	1	3.3	8.3	91.7
250.00	1	3.3	8.3	100.0
1.00	18	60.0	Missing	

Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 96.833 Std dev 68.936

Valid cases 12 Missing cases 18

MBTIEI MBTI/E-I

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Extraversion	1	12	40.0	40.0	40.0
Introversion	2	18	60.0	60.0	100.0

Total		30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 1.600 Std dev .498

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

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MBTIJP MBTI/J-P

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Judging	1	15	50.0	50.0	50.0
Perceiving	2	15	50.0	50.0	100.0

Total		30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 1.500 Std dev .509

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

MBTISN MBTI/S-N

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Sensing	1	8	26.7	26.7	26.7
Intuition	2	22	73.3	73.3	100.0

Total		30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 1.733 Std dev .450

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

 MBTITF MBTI/T-F

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Thinking	1	15	50.0	50.0	50.0
Feeling	2	15	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 1.500 Std dev .509

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

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MONTHS Months between leaving + interview

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	6.00	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
	9.00	1	3.3	3.3	6.7
	10.00	1	3.3	3.3	10.0
	12.00	1	3.3	3.3	13.3
	13.00	1	3.3	3.3	16.7
	16.00	1	3.3	3.3	20.0
	17.00	2	6.7	6.7	26.7
	19.00	1	3.3	3.3	30.0
	20.00	2	6.7	6.7	36.7
	23.00	1	3.3	3.3	40.0
	24.00	1	3.3	3.3	43.3
	25.00	2	6.7	6.7	50.0
	27.00	2	6.7	6.7	56.7
	31.00	3	10.0	10.0	66.7
	35.00	1	3.3	3.3	70.0
	37.00	1	3.3	3.3	73.3
	42.00	1	3.3	3.3	76.7
	48.00	1	3.3	3.3	80.0
	50.00	1	3.3	3.3	83.3
	56.00	1	3.3	3.3	86.7
	59.00	1	3.3	3.3	90.0
	62.00	1	3.3	3.3	93.3
	78.00	1	3.3	3.3	96.7
	92.00	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 32.067 Std dev 20.798

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

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PACKAGE Termination package negotiated?

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
No	0	24	80.0	80.0	80.0
Yes	1	6	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Mean	.200	Std dev	.407		
Valid cases	30	Missing cases	0		

TRANSIT Transition

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Early	1	15	50.0	50.0	50.0
Late	2	15	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Mean	1.500	Std dev	.509		
Valid cases	30	Missing cases	0		

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UNI Number of full-time years at university

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	.00	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
	1.00	1	3.3	3.3	6.7
	2.00	1	3.3	3.3	10.0
	3.00	4	13.3	13.3	23.3
	4.00	6	20.0	20.0	43.3
	5.00	4	13.3	13.3	56.7
	6.00	5	16.7	16.7	73.3
	7.00	1	3.3	3.3	76.7
	8.00	2	6.7	6.7	83.3
	9.00	2	6.7	6.7	90.0
	11.00	1	3.3	3.3	93.3
	13.00	1	3.3	3.3	96.7
	14.00	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Mean	5.600	Std dev	3.223		

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

EQ1 Time taken to change

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
< 1 month	1.00	3	10.0	10.0	10.0
1-6 months	2.00	1	3.3	3.3	13.3
7-12 months	3.00	4	13.3	13.3	26.7
1-2 years	4.00	11	36.7	36.7	63.3
2-5 years	5.00	5	16.7	16.7	80.0
5+ years	6.00	6	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 4.067 Std dev 1.484

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

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EQ2 Onset of transition

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Gradual	1.00	25	83.3	86.2	86.2
Sudden	2.00	4	13.3	13.8	100.0
	.00	1	3.3	Missing	
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 1.138 Std dev .351

Valid cases 29 Missing cases 1

EQ3 Duration of transition

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Roughly known	1.00	13	43.3	43.3	43.3
Uncertain	2.00	17	56.7	56.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 1.567 Std dev .504

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

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EQ4 Extent of change

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Gone back to previous	.00	7	23.3	23.3	23.3
45 degree change	1.00	15	50.0	50.0	73.3
90 degree change	2.00	8	26.7	26.7	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Mean	1.033	Std dev	.718		
Valid cases	30	Missing cases	0		

EQ5 Specificity of career change

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Diffuse area, no specific	1.00	9	30.0	30.0	30.0
General direction, no specific	2.00	10	33.3	33.3	63.3
Specific occupation	3.00	11	36.7	36.7	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Mean	2.067	Std dev	.828		
Valid cases	30	Missing cases	0		

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EQ6 Self employed?

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
No intention of becoming	1.00	15	50.0	50.0	50.0
Not at the moment, but	2.00	5	16.7	16.7	66.7
Self employed	3.00	10	33.3	33.3	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Mean	1.833	Std dev	.913		
Valid cases	30	Missing cases	0		

EQ7 Predominant work activities during transition

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
-------------	-------	-----------	---------	---------------	-------------

Consutling based on	1.00	10	33.3	33.3	33.3
Casual work unrelate	2.00	1	3.3	3.3	36.7
Casual work unrelate	3.00	5	16.7	16.7	53.3
Taken on new career	4.00	8	26.7	26.7	80.0
Full time work relat	5.00	5	16.7	16.7	96.7
Part time work which	6.00	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
Total		30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 3.000 Std dev 1.640

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

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EQ8 Nicholson Transition cycle

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Encounter	2.00	3	10.0	10.0	10.0
Adjustment	3.00	15	50.0	50.0	60.0
Stabilisation	4.00	12	40.0	40.0	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
Total		30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 3.300 Std dev .651

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

EQ9A Derr from (getting ahead)

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	.00	7	23.3	23.3	23.3
	1.00	23	76.7	76.7	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
Total		30	100.0	100.0	

Mean .767 Std dev .430

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

EQ9B Derr from (getting high/skilled)

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	.00	5	16.7	16.7	16.7
	1.00	25	83.3	83.3	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
Total		30	100.0	100.0	

Mean .833 Std dev .379

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

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EQ9C Derr from (getting secure)

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	.00	14	46.7	46.7	46.7
	1.00	16	53.3	53.3	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean .533 Std dev .507

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

EQ10A Derr to (getting ahead)

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	.00	25	83.3	83.3	83.3
	1.00	5	16.7	16.7	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean .167 Std dev .379

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

EQ10B Derr to (getting high)

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	.00	19	63.3	63.3	63.3
	1.00	11	36.7	36.7	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean .367 Std dev .490

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

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EQ10C Derr to (getting secure)

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	.00	26	86.7	86.7	86.7
	1.00	4	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Mean	.133	Std dev	.346		
Valid cases	30	Missing cases	0		

EQ10D Derr to (getting balanced)

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	.00	12	40.0	40.0	40.0
	1.00	18	60.0	60.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Mean	.600	Std dev	.498		
Valid cases	30	Missing cases	0		

EQ10E Derr to (getting balanced)

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	.00	7	23.3	23.3	23.3
	1.00	23	76.7	76.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Mean	.767	Std dev	.430		
Valid cases	30	Missing cases	0		

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EQ10F Derr to (getting authentic)

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	.00	13	43.3	43.3	43.3
	1.00	17	56.7	56.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

		Total	30	100.0	100.0
Mean	.567	Std dev	.504		
Valid cases	30	Missing cases	0		

EQ11 Driver's career style

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Steady state style	2.00	8	26.7	26.7	26.7
Linear style	3.00	14	46.7	46.7	73.3
Spiral style	4.00	8	26.7	26.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Mean	3.000	Std dev	.743		
Valid cases	30	Missing cases	0		

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EQ12 Emotional tone

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Predominantly negati	-2.00	7	23.3	23.3	23.3
	-1.00	6	20.0	20.0	43.3
Neutral, both positi	.00	7	23.3	23.3	66.7
	1.00	4	13.3	13.3	80.0
Predominanlty positi	2.00	6	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Mean	-.133	Std dev	1.456		
Valid cases	30	Missing cases	0		

EQ13B Macrosocial reasons for leaving

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	.00	4	13.3	13.3	13.3
	1.00	26	86.7	86.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Mean	.867	Std dev	.346		
Valid cases	30	Missing cases	0		

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EQ13C Developmental reasons for leaving

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	.00	7	23.3	23.3	23.3
	1.00	23	76.7	76.7	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean .767 Std dev .430

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

EQ14 Professional help sought?

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
No	.00	18	60.0	60.0	60.0
Yes	1.00	12	40.0	40.0	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean .400 Std dev .498

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

EQ15A Socioemotional support

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	.00	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
	1.00	29	96.7	96.7	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean .967 Std dev .183

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

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EQ15B Information support

Valid Cum

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Percent
	.00	19	63.3	63.3	63.3
	1.00	11	36.7	36.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean .367 Std dev .490

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

EQ15C Instrumental support

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	.00	22	73.3	73.3	73.3
	1.00	8	26.7	26.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean .267 Std dev .450

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

EQ16 Higher education as part of career chang

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
No	.00	15	50.0	50.0	50.0
Yes, university cour	1.00	12	40.0	40.0	90.0
Yes, other course ou	2.00	3	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean .600 Std dev .675

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

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EQ17 When was course started?

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
No course undertaken	.00	15	50.0	50.0	50.0
Whil in the previous	1.00	6	20.0	20.0	70.0
After quitting previ	2.00	9	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean .800 Std dev .887

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

EQ18 Would you have done the transition in th

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Done the same thing	1.00	15	50.0	50.0	50.0
Done it somewhat dif	2.00	13	43.3	43.3	93.3
Done it very differe	3.00	2	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Mean	1.567	Std dev	.626		

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 0

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EQ20 Pressure from organisation to leave

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Strong encouragement	.00	2	6.7	6.9	6.9
	1.00	2	6.7	6.9	13.8
	2.00	3	10.0	10.3	24.1
	4.00	4	13.3	13.8	37.9
Neutral	5.00	7	23.3	24.1	62.1
	6.00	4	13.3	13.8	75.9
	7.00	2	6.7	6.9	82.8
	8.00	4	13.3	13.8	96.6
Strong pressure to l	10.00	1	3.3	3.4	100.0
	11.00	1	3.3	Missing	
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Mean	4.793	Std dev	2.569		

Valid cases 29 Missing cases 1

EQ21 Career activities since interview

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
No career change sin	1.00	10	33.3	35.7	35.7
Undertaken new job	2.00	12	40.0	42.9	78.6
Other changes	3.00	6	20.0	21.4	100.0
	.00	2	6.7	Missing	
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Mean 1.857 Std dev .756

Valid cases 28 Missing cases 2

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MARITAL Marital status by GENDER Gender

Page 1 of 1

MARITAL	GENDER		Row Total
	Male	Female	
1 Single/divorced	2	11	13
2 Married	10	2	12
3 Partner	3	2	5
Column Total	15	15	30
Total	50.0	50.0	100.0

Chi-Square	Value	DF	Significance
Pearson	11.76410	2	.00279
Likelihood Ratio	12.88285	2	.00159
Mantel-Haenszel test for linear association	6.09244	1	.01358
Minimum Expected Frequency -	2.500		
Cells with Expected Frequency < 5 -	2 OF	6 (33.3%)	

Number of Missing Observations: 0

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EQ14 Professional help sought? by GENDER Gender

Page 1 of 1

EQ14	GENDER		Row Total
	Male	Female	
No	12	6	18
Yes	3	9	12
Column Total	15	15	30
Total	50.0	50.0	100.0

Chi-Square	Value	DF	Significance
------------	-------	----	--------------

- - Description of Subpopulations - -

Summaries of RAUT1
By levels of GENDER Gender

Variable	Value	Label	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population			12.1000	2.5237	30
GENDER	1	Male	13.0000	2.2361	15
GENDER	2	Female	11.2000	2.5411	15

Total Cases = 30

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- - Analysis of Variance - -

Dependent Variable RAUT1
By levels of GENDER Gender

Value	Label	Sum	Mean	Std Dev	Sum of Sq
15	1 Male	195.00	13.0000	2.2361	70.0000
15	2 Female	168.00	11.2000	2.5411	90.4000

30	Within Groups Total	363.00	12.1000	2.3934	160.4000

Source	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	24.3000	1	24.3000	4.2419	.0488
Within Groups	160.4000	28	5.7286		

Eta = .3627 Eta Squared = .1316

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- - Description of Subpopulations - -

Summaries of RAUT2
By levels of GENDER Gender

Variable	Value	Label	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population			14.3333	2.1549	30
GENDER	1	Male	15.0000	1.8127	15
GENDER	2	Female	13.6667	2.3197	15

Total Cases = 30

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- - Analysis of Variance - -

Dependent Variable		RAUT2				
By levels of		GENDER	Gender			
Value	Label		Sum	Mean	Std Dev	Sum of Sq
Cases						
15	1 Male		225.00	15.0000	1.8127	46.0000
15	2 Female		205.00	13.6667	2.3197	75.3333

--						
30	Within Groups Total		430.00	14.3333	2.0817	121.3333

Source	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	13.3333	1	13.3333	3.0769	.0904
Within Groups	121.3333	28	4.3333		
Eta = .3147		Eta Squared = .0990			

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- - Description of Subpopulations - -

Summaries of		RENVM1			
By levels of		GENDER	Gender		
Variable	Value	Label	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population			10.6667	3.2092	30
GENDER	1	Male	10.8000	2.7045	15
GENDER	2	Female	10.5333	3.7391	15

Total Cases = 30

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- - Analysis of Variance - -

Dependent Variable		RENVM1		
By levels of		GENDER	Gender	

Value	Label	Sum	Mean	Std Dev	Sum of Sq
Cases					
15	1 Male	162.00	10.8000	2.7045	102.4000
15	2 Female	158.00	10.5333	3.7391	195.7333

--	Within Groups Total	320.00	10.6667	3.2631	298.1333
30					

Source	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.5333	1	.5333	.0501	.8245
Within Groups	298.1333	28	10.6476		
Eta = .0423		Eta Squared = .0018			

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- - Description of Subpopulations - -

Summaries of RENVM2
By levels of GENDER Gender

Variable	Value	Label	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population					
			14.5333	1.9070	30
GENDER	1	Male	14.8667	1.6417	15
GENDER	2	Female	14.2000	2.1448	15

Total Cases = 30

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- - Analysis of Variance - -

Dependent Variable RENVM2
By levels of GENDER Gender

Value	Label	Sum	Mean	Std Dev	Sum of Sq
Cases					
15	1 Male	223.00	14.8667	1.6417	37.7333
15	2 Female	213.00	14.2000	2.1448	64.4000

--	Within Groups Total	436.00	14.5333	1.9099	102.1333
30					

Source	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.3333	1	3.3333	.9138	.3473
Within Groups	102.1333	28	3.6476		
Eta = .1778		Eta Squared = .0316			

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- - Description of Subpopulations - -

Summaries of RPGROW1
By levels of GENDER Gender

Variable	Value	Label	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population					
			14.8667	2.8252	30
GENDER	1	Male	15.5333	2.0656	15
GENDER	2	Female	14.2000	3.3637	15

Total Cases = 30

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- - Analysis of Variance - -

Dependent Variable RPGROW1
By levels of GENDER Gender

Value	Label	Sum	Mean	Std Dev	Sum of Sq
Cases					
15	1 Male	233.00	15.5333	2.0656	59.7333
15	2 Female	213.00	14.2000	3.3637	158.4000

--	Within Groups Total	446.00	14.8667	2.7911	218.1333
30					

Source	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	13.3333	1	13.3333	1.7115	.2014
Within Groups	218.1333	28	7.7905		
Eta = .2400		Eta Squared = .0576			

- - Description of Subpopulations - -

Summaries of RPGROW2
By levels of GENDER Gender

Variable	Value	Label	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population			16.4667	1.7564	30
GENDER	1	Male	17.0667	1.1629	15
GENDER	2	Female	15.8667	2.0656	15

Total Cases = 30

- - Analysis of Variance - -

Dependent Variable RPGROW2
By levels of GENDER Gender

Value	Label	Sum	Mean	Std Dev	Sum of Sq
Cases					
15	1 Male	256.00	17.0667	1.1629	18.9333
15	2 Female	238.00	15.8667	2.0656	59.7333

--	Within Groups Total	494.00	16.4667	1.6762	78.6667
30					

Source	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.8000	1	10.8000	3.8441	.0599
Within Groups	78.6667	28	2.8095		

Eta = .3474 Eta Squared = .1207

- - Description of Subpopulations - -

Summaries of RPLIFE1
By levels of GENDER Gender

Variable	Value	Label	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population			14.3333	2.8080	30

GENDER	1	Male	14.0667	3.3481	15
GENDER	2	Female	14.6000	2.2297	15

Total Cases = 30

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- - Analysis of Variance - -

Dependent Variable	RPLIFE1					
By levels of	GENDER	Gender				
Value	Label	Sum	Mean	Std Dev	Sum of Sq	
15	1 Male	211.00	14.0667	3.3481	156.9333	
15	2 Female	219.00	14.6000	2.2297	69.6000	

--	Within Groups Total	430.00	14.3333	2.8444	226.5333	
30						

Source	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.1333	1	2.1333	.2637	.6116
Within Groups	226.5333	28	8.0905		
Eta = .0966		Eta Squared = .0093			

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- - Description of Subpopulations - -

Summaries of	RPLIFE2					
By levels of	GENDER	Gender				
Variable	Value	Label	Mean	Std Dev	Cases	
For Entire Population			14.6000	2.7114	30	
GENDER	1	Male	14.8000	2.7826	15	
GENDER	2	Female	14.4000	2.7203	15	

Total Cases = 30

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- - Analysis of Variance - -

Dependent Variable		RPLIFE2				
By levels of		GENDER	Gender			
Value	Label		Sum	Mean	Std Dev	Sum of Sq
Cases						
15	1 Male		222.00	14.8000	2.7826	108.4000
15	2 Female		216.00	14.4000	2.7203	103.6000

--	Within Groups Total		438.00	14.6000	2.7516	212.0000
30						

Source	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.2000	1	1.2000	.1585	.6936
Within Groups	212.0000	28	7.5714		
Eta = .0750 Eta Squared = .0056					

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- - Description of Subpopulations - -

Summaries of RREL1
By levels of GENDER Gender

Variable	Value	Label	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population			13.3333	3.3149	30
GENDER	1	Male	13.2000	3.2116	15
GENDER	2	Female	13.4667	3.5227	15

Total Cases = 30

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- - Analysis of Variance - -

Dependent Variable RREL1
By levels of GENDER Gender

Value	Label		Sum	Mean	Std Dev	Sum of Sq
Cases						
15	1 Male		198.00	13.2000	3.2116	144.4000
15	2 Female		202.00	13.4667	3.5227	173.7333

--						

Eta = .1455 Eta Squared = .0212

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- - Description of Subpopulations - -

Summaries of RSELF1
By levels of GENDER Gender

Variable	Value	Label	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population			11.2667	3.3003	30
GENDER	1	Male	11.4667	2.8752	15
GENDER	2	Female	11.0667	3.7696	15

Total Cases = 30

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- - Analysis of Variance - -

Dependent Variable RSELF1
By levels of GENDER Gender

Value	Label	Sum	Mean	Std Dev	Sum of Sq
15	1 Male	172.00	11.4667	2.8752	115.7333
15	2 Female	166.00	11.0667	3.7696	198.9333

--	Within Groups Total	338.00	11.2667	3.3523	314.6667
30					

Source	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.2000	1	1.2000	.1068	.7463
Within Groups	314.6667	28	11.2381		

Eta = .0616 Eta Squared = .0038

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- - Description of Subpopulations - -

Summaries of RSELF2
By levels of GENDER Gender

Variable	Value	Label	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
For Entire Population			14.1000	2.3096	30
GENDER	1	Male	15.0000	1.5584	15
GENDER	2	Female	13.2000	2.6241	15

Total Cases = 30

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- - Analysis of Variance - -

Dependent Variable	RSELF2					
By levels of	GENDER		Gender			
Value	Label		Sum	Mean	Std Dev	Sum of Sq
Cases						
15	1	Male	225.00	15.0000	1.5584	34.0000
15	2	Female	198.00	13.2000	2.6241	96.4000

--	Within Groups Total		423.00	14.1000	2.1580	130.4000
30						

Source	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	24.3000	1	24.3000	5.2178	.0301
Within Groups	130.4000	28	4.6571		
Eta = .3963		Eta Squared = .1571			

- - - t-tests for paired samples - - -

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
DSAT1	30	.423	.020	13.0000	5.439	.993
DSAT2				26.2000	5.275	.963

Paired Differences		"	"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"			
-13.2000	5.756	1.051	"	-12.56	29	.000
95% CI (-15.350, -11.050)			"			

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q10RA1RV	30	.434	.016	3.6667	1.241	.227
Q10RA2RV				4.3000	1.088	.199

Paired Differences		"	"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"			
-.6333	1.245	.227	"	-2.79	29	.009
95% CI (-1.098, -.168)			"			

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q10RB1	30	-.144	.446	2.9667	1.351	.247
Q10RB2				5.0667	1.048	.191

Paired Differences		"	"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"			
-2.1000	1.826	.333	"	-6.30	29	.000
95% CI (-2.782, -1.418)			"			

- - - t-tests for paired samples - - -

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q10RC1	Q10RC1: I think it is importan			4.9333	1.230	.225
	30	.623	.000			
Q10RC2	Q10RC2: I think it is importan			5.5000	.900	.164

Paired Differences			"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"			
-.5667	.971	.177	"	-3.20	29	.003
95% CI (-.929, -.204)			"			

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q10RD1RV				3.7333	1.721	.314
	30	.542	.002			
Q10RD2RV				4.4667	1.432	.261

Paired Differences			"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"			
-.7333	1.530	.279	"	-2.63	29	.014
95% CI (-1.305, -.162)			"			

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q10RE1RV				4.6667	1.398	.255
	30	.601	.000			
Q10RE2RV				4.6333	1.450	.265

Paired Differences			"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"			
.0333	1.273	.232	"	.14	29	.887
95% CI (-.442, .509)			"			

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- - - t-tests for paired samples - - -

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q10RF1	Q10RF1: When I look at the sto			3.1333	1.408	.257
	30	.412	.024			
Q10RF2	Q10RF2: When I look at the sto			4.7000	1.022	.187

Paired Differences			"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"			
-1.5667	1.357	.248	"	-6.33	29	.000
95% CI (-2.073, -1.060)			"			

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q10FG1	Q10RG1: I have confidence in my			4.0667	1.081	.197
	30	.677	.000			
Q10RG2	Q10RG2: I have confidence in m			4.8333	1.053	.192

Paired Differences			"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"			
-.7667	.858	.157	"	-4.89	29	.000
95% CI (-1.087, -.446)			"			

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q10RH1RV				3.4667	1.697	.310
	30	.121	.524			
Q10RH2RV				4.4333	1.165	.213

Paired Differences			"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"			
-.9667	1.938	.354	"	-2.73	29	.011
95% CI (-1.691, -.243)			"			

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- - - t-tests for paired samples - - -

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q10RI1	Q10RI1: For me, life has been			4.6333	1.426	.260
	30	.559	.001			
Q10RI2	Q10rI2: For me, life has been			5.5333	.730	.133

Paired Differences			"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"			
-.9000	1.185	.216	"	-4.16	29	.000
95% CI (-1.342, -.458)			"			

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q10RJ1	Q10RJ1: People would describe			4.4333	1.223	.223
	30	.644	.000			
Q10RJ2	Q10RJ2: People would describe			4.8667	.776	.142

Paired Differences			"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"			
-.4333	.935	.171	"	-2.54	29	.017
95% CI (-.783, -.084)			"			

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q10RK1	Q10RK1: Some people wander aim 30	.713	.000	4.2333	1.406	.257
Q10RK2	Q10RK2: Some people wander aim			4.6333	1.189	.217

Paired Differences		"	"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"			
-.4000	1.003	.183	"	-2.18	29	.037
95% CI (-.775, -.025)			"			

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Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q10RL1	Q10RL1: I like most aspects of 30	.552	.002	4.2000	1.349	.246
Q10RL2	Q10RL2: I like most aspects of			4.7000	1.055	.193

Paired Differences		"	"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"			
-.5000	1.167	.213	"	-2.35	29	.026
95% CI (-.936, -.064)			"			

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q10RM1	Q10RM1: I judge myself by what 30	.489	.006	4.3667	1.066	.195
Q10RM2	Q10RM2: I judge myself by what			5.2000	.714	.130

Paired Differences		"	"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"			
-.8333	.950	.173	"	-4.81	29	.000
95% CI (-1.188, -.479)			"			

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q10RN1	Q10RN1: I am quite good at man 30	.290	.120	4.2333	1.382	.252
Q10RN2	Q10RN2: I am quite good at man			5.0333	.669	.122

Paired Differences		"	"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"			
-.8000	1.349	.246	"	-3.25	29	.003

95% CI (-1.304, -.296) "

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Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q10RO1RV				5.3000	.988	.180
	30	.414	.023			
Q10RO2RV				5.4333	.935	.171

Paired Differences			"			
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
-.1333	1.042	.190	"	-.70	29	.489
95% CI (-.522, .256)			"			

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q10RP1RV				5.1667	1.367	.250
	30	.786	.000			
Q10RP2RV				5.5333	.973	.178

Paired Differences			"			
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
-.3667	.850	.155	"	-2.36	29	.025
95% CI (-.684, -.049)			"			

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q10RQ1RV				5.4333	1.040	.190
	30	.668	.000			
Q10RQ2RV				5.3333	1.124	.205

Paired Differences			"			
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
.1000	.885	.162	"	.62	29	.541
95% CI (-.230, .430)			"			

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Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q10RR1RV				3.9333	1.596	.291
	30	.553	.002			
Q10RR2RV				4.7000	1.149	.210

```

*****
          Paired Differences          "
Mean          SD          SE of Mean  "          t-value    df  2-tail Sig
*****
  -.7667      1.357      .248      "          -3.10     29    .004
95% CI (-1.273, -.260)              "

```

```

          Number of          2-tail
Variable          pairs    Corr    Sig          Mean          SD          SE of Mean
*****
RAUT1
          30          .533    .002          12.1000         2.524         .461
RAUT2
          30          .533    .002          14.3333         2.155         .393
*****

```

```

          Paired Differences          "
Mean          SD          SE of Mean  "          t-value    df  2-tail Sig
*****
 -2.2333      2.285      .417      "          -5.35     29    .000
95% CI (-3.087, -1.380)              "

```

```

          Number of          2-tail
Variable          pairs    Corr    Sig          Mean          SD          SE of Mean
*****
RENV1
          30          -.133   .482          10.6667         3.209         .586
RENV2
          30          -.133   .482          14.5333         1.907         .348
*****

```

```

          Paired Differences          "
Mean          SD          SE of Mean  "          t-value    df  2-tail Sig
*****
 -3.8667      3.946      .720      "          -5.37     29    .000
95% CI (-5.340, -2.393)              "

```

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```

          Number of          2-tail
Variable          pairs    Corr    Sig          Mean          SD          SE of Mean
*****
RPGROW1
          30          .604    .000          14.8667         2.825         .516
RPGROW2
          30          .604    .000          16.4667         1.756         .321
*****

```

```

          Paired Differences          "
Mean          SD          SE of Mean  "          t-value    df  2-tail Sig
*****
 -1.6000      2.253      .411      "          -3.89     29    .001
95% CI (-2.441, -.759)              "

```

```

          Number of          2-tail
Variable          pairs    Corr    Sig          Mean          SD          SE of Mean
*****
RPLIFE1
          30          .657    .000          14.3333         2.808         .513
*****

```

RPLIFE2 14.6000 2.711 .495

Paired Differences						
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
-.2667	2.288	.418	"	-.64	29	.528
95% CI (-1.121, .588)			"			

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
RREL1	30	.635	.000	13.3333	3.315	.605
RREL2				14.8667	2.330	.425

Paired Differences						
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
-1.5333	2.569	.469	"	-3.27	29	.003
95% CI (-2.493, -.574)			"			

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Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
RSELF1	30	.521	.003	11.2667	3.300	.603
RSELF2				14.1000	2.310	.422

Paired Differences						
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
-2.8333	2.878	.525	"	-5.39	29	.000
95% CI (-3.908, -1.759)			"			

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- - - t-tests for paired samples - - -

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q9DA1 Q9DA1: In most ways my life is	30	.257	.170	2.0333	1.129	.206
Q9DA2 Q9DA2: In most ways my life is				5.4667	1.252	.229

Paired Differences						
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
-3.4333	1.455	.266	"	-12.93	29	.000

95% CI (-3.977, -2.890) "

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q9DB1	Q9DB1: The conditions in my lif			2.5000	1.592	.291
	30	.210	.265			
Q9DB2	Q9DB2: The conditions of my lif			5.6000	1.133	.207

Paired Differences			"			
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
-3.1000	1.749	.319	"	-9.71	29	.000
95% CI (-3.753, -2.447)			"			

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q9DC1	Q9DC1: I am satisfied with my l			2.2333	1.331	.243
	30	.468	.009			
Q9DC2	Q9DC2: I am satisfied with my l			5.5667	1.165	.213

Paired Differences			"			
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
-3.3333	1.295	.237	"	-14.09	29	.000
95% CI (-3.817, -2.849)			"			

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Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q9DD1	Q9DD1: So far I have gotten the			3.0667	1.484	.271
	30	.245	.192			
Q9DD2	Q9DD2: So far I have gotten the			5.5000	1.137	.208

Paired Differences			"			
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
-2.4333	1.633	.298	"	-8.16	29	.000
95% CI (-3.043, -1.823)			"			

Variable	Number of pairs	Corr	2-tail Sig	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Q9DE1	Q9DE1: If I could live my life			3.1667	2.001	.365
	30	.791	.000			
Q9DE2	Q9DE2: If I could live my life			4.0667	1.911	.349

Paired Differences			"			
Mean	SD	SE of Mean	"	t-value	df	2-tail Sig
			"			

-.9000 1.269 .232 " -3.88 29 .001
 95% CI (-1.374, -.426) "

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R E L I A B I L I T Y A N A L Y S I S - S C A L E (A L P H A)

Correlation Matrix

	Q10RA1RV	Q10FG1	Q10RM1
Q10RA1RV	1.0000		
Q10FG1	.1714	1.0000	
Q10RM1	.3301	.5168	1.0000

N of Cases = 30.0

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of
Scale	12.1000	6.3690	2.5237	Variables 3

Item-total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Q10RA1RV	8.4333	3.4954	.2873	.1090	.6814
Q10FG1	8.0333	3.5506	.4053	.2670	.4921
Q10RM1	7.7333	3.1678	.5439	.3271	.2903

Reliability Coefficients 3 items

Alpha = .5945 Standardized item alpha = .6065

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***** Method 2 (covariance matrix) will be used for this analysis *****

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R E L I A B I L I T Y A N A L Y S I S - S C A L E
 (A L P H A)

Correlation Matrix

	Q10RA2RV	Q10RG2	Q10RM2
Q10RA2RV	1.0000		
Q10RG2	.2559	1.0000	
Q10RM2	.1864	.6416	1.0000

N of Cases = 30.0

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of
Scale	14.3333	4.6437	2.1549	Variables 3

Item-total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Q10RA2RV	10.0333	2.5851	.2505	.0663	.7470
Q10RG2	9.5000	1.9828	.5232	.4310	.2922
Q10RM2	9.1333	2.8782	.5178	.4122	.4073

Reliability Coefficients 3 items

Alpha = .5948 Standardized item alpha = .6292

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***** Method 2 (covariance matrix) will be used for this analysis *****

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RELIABILITY ANALYSIS - SCALE

(ALPHA)

Correlation Matrix

	Q10RB1	Q10RH1RV	Q10RN1
Q10RB1	1.0000		
Q10RH1RV	.0371	1.0000	
Q10RN1	.1520	.6286	1.0000

N of Cases = 30.0

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of
Scale				Variables
	10.6667	10.2989	3.2092	3

Item-total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Q10RB1	7.7000	7.7345	.0982	.0288	.7621
Q10RH1RV	7.2000	4.3034	.4429	.3987	.2639
Q10RN1	6.4333	4.8747	.5761	.4118	.0698

Reliability Coefficients 3 items

Alpha = .5367 Standardized item alpha = .5292

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***** Method 2 (covariance matrix) will be used for this analysis *****

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R E L I A B I L I T Y A N A L Y S I S - S C A L E

(A L P H A)

Correlation Matrix

	Q10RB2	Q10RH2RV	Q10RN2
Q10RB2	1.0000		
Q10RH2RV	.0320	1.0000	
Q10RN2	.1935	.2464	1.0000

N of Cases = 30.0

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of
Scale				Variables
	14.5333	3.6368	1.9070	3

Item-total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
--	-------------------------------------	---	--	------------------------------------	-----------------------------

Q10RB2	9.4667	2.1885	.1127	.0377	.3508
Q10RH2RV	10.1000	1.8172	.1471	.0610	.2985
Q10RN2	9.5000	2.5345	.3077	.0952	.0617

Reliability Coefficients 3 items

Alpha = .3025 Standardized item alpha = .3590

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***** Method 2 (covariance matrix) will be used for this analysis *****

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R E L I A B I L I T Y A N A L Y S I S - S C A L E

(A L P H A)

Correlation Matrix

	Q10RC1	Q10RI1	Q10RO1RV
Q10RC1	1.0000		
Q10RI1	.5951	1.0000	
Q10RO1RV	.1873	.3256	1.0000

N of Cases = 30.0

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of
Scale	14.8667	7.9816	2.8252	Variables 3

Item-total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Q10RC1	9.9333	3.9264	.5216	.3542	.4672
Q10RI1	10.2333	2.9437	.6141	.4017	.3093
Q10RO1RV	9.5667	5.6333	.2927	.1061	.7411

Reliability Coefficients 3 items

Alpha = .6502 Standardized item alpha = .6373

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***** Method 2 (covariance matrix) will be used for this analysis *****

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(A L P H A) R E L I A B I L I T Y A N A L Y S I S - S C A L E

Correlation Matrix

	Q10RC2	Q10RI2	Q10RO2RV
Q10RC2	1.0000		
Q10RI2	.0000	1.0000	
Q10RO2RV	.0614	.5587	1.0000

N of Cases = 30.0

Statistics for Scale	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of Variables
	16.4667	3.0851	1.7564	3

Item-total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Q10RC2	10.9667	2.1713	.0390	.0055	.7030
Q10RI2	10.9333	1.7885	.3907	.3133	.1157
Q10RO2RV	11.0333	1.3437	.3997	.3159	.0000

Reliability Coefficients 3 items

Alpha = .4214 Standardized item alpha = .4388

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***** Method 2 (covariance matrix) will be used for this analysis *****

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R E L I A B I L I T Y A N A L Y S I S - S C A L E

(A L P H A)

Correlation Matrix

	Q10RD1RV	Q10RJ1	Q10RP1RV
Q10RD1RV	1.0000		
Q10RJ1	.3190	1.0000	
Q10RP1RV	.4155	.4092	1.0000

N of Cases = 30.0

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of
Scale	13.3333	10.9885	3.3149	Variables 3

Item-total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Q10RD1RV	9.6000	4.7310	.4404	.1993	.5782
Q10RJ1	8.9000	6.7828	.4255	.1943	.5762
Q10RP1RV	8.1667	5.7989	.5047	.2578	.4630

Reliability Coefficients 3 items

Alpha = .6367 Standardized item alpha = .6489

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***** Method 2 (covariance matrix) will be used for this analysis *****

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R E L I A B I L I T Y A N A L Y S I S - S C A L E

(A L P H A)

Correlation Matrix

	Q10RD2RV	Q10RJ2	Q10RP2RV

Q10RD2RV	1.0000		
Q10RJ2	.2751	1.0000	
Q10RP2RV	.4091	.0517	1.0000

N of Cases = 30.0

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of
Scale	14.8667	5.4299	2.3302	Variables
				3

Item-total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Q10RD2RV	10.4000	1.6276	.4794	.2320	.0960
Q10RJ2	10.0000	4.1379	.2184	.0801	.5511
Q10RP2RV	9.3333	3.2644	.3465	.1714	.3746

Reliability Coefficients 3 items

Alpha = .5055 Standardized item alpha = .4937

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***** Method 2 (covariance matrix) will be used for this analysis *****

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(ALPHA) RELIABILITY ANALYSIS - SCALE

Correlation Matrix

	Q10RE1RV	Q10RK1	Q10RQ1RV
Q10RE1RV	1.0000		
Q10RK1	.4443	1.0000	
Q10RQ1RV	.2688	.1171	1.0000

N of Cases = 30.0

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of
Scale	14.3333	7.8851	2.8080	Variables
				3

Item-total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Q10RE1RV	9.6667	3.4023	.4904	.2451	.2014
Q10RK1	10.1000	3.8172	.3802	.1974	.4095
Q10RQ1RV	8.9000	5.6793	.2268	.0723	.6153

Reliability Coefficients 3 items

Alpha = .5462 Standardized item alpha = .5344

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***** Method 2 (covariance matrix) will be used for this analysis *****

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R E L I A B I L I T Y A N A L Y S I S - S C A L E

(A L P H A)

Correlation Matrix

	Q10RE2RV	Q10RK2	Q10RQ2RV
Q10RE2RV	1.0000		
Q10RK2	.6797	1.0000	
Q10RQ2RV	.0353	.0430	1.0000

N of Cases = 30.0

Statistics for Scale	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of Variables
	14.6000	7.3517	2.7114	3

Item-total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Q10RE2RV	9.9667	2.7920	.5072	.4620	.0823
Q10RK2	9.9667	3.4816	.5541	.4623	.0660
Q10RQ2RV	9.2667	5.8575	.0422	.0019	.7998

Reliability Coefficients 3 items

Alpha = .5249 Standardized item alpha = .5035

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***** Method 2 (covariance matrix) will be used for this analysis *****

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R E L I A B I L I T Y A N A L Y S I S - S C A L E

(A L P H A)

Correlation Matrix

	Q10RF1	Q10RL1	Q10RR1RV
Q10RF1	1.0000		
Q10RL1	.4756	1.0000	
Q10RR1RV	.4645	.1505	1.0000

N of Cases = 30.0

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of
Scale	11.2667	10.8920	3.3003	Variables 3

Item-total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Q10RF1	8.1333	5.0161	.6176	.3842	.2585
Q10RL1	7.0667	6.6161	.3537	.2326	.6310
Q10RR1RV	7.3333	5.6092	.3619	.2222	.6443

Reliability Coefficients 3 items

Alpha = .6256 Standardized item alpha = .6315

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***** Method 2 (covariance matrix) will be used for this analysis *****

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R E L I A B I L I T Y A N A L Y S I S - S C A L E

(A L P H A)

Correlation Matrix

	Q10RF2	Q10RL2	Q10RR2RV
Q10RF2	1.0000		
Q10RL2	.0416	1.0000	
Q10RR2RV	.4198	.3213	1.0000

N of Cases = 30.0

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of
Scale	14.1000	5.3345	2.3096	Variables 3

Item-total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Q10RF2	9.4000	3.2138	.2936	.1859	.4850
Q10RL2	9.4000	3.3517	.2249	.1138	.5885
Q10RR2RV	9.4000	2.2483	.5123	.2687	.0798

Reliability Coefficients 3 items

Alpha = .5217 Standardized item alpha = .5143

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***** Method 2 (covariance matrix) will be used for this analysis *****

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R E L I A B I L I T Y A N A L Y S I S - S C A L E

(A L P H A)

Correlation Matrix

	Q9DA1	Q9DB1	Q9DC1	Q9DD1	Q9DE1
Q9DA1	1.0000				
Q9DB1	.6811	1.0000			
Q9DC1	.7060	.6266	1.0000		
Q9DD1	.5131	.5546	.4283	1.0000	
Q9DE1	.1806	.1786	.1791	.2748	1.0000

N of Cases = 30.0

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of
Scale	13.0000	29.5862	5.4393	Variables 5

Item-total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Q9DA1	10.9667	21.2057	.6834	.6065	.6723
Q9DB1	10.5000	18.1897	.6526	.5537	.6550
Q9DC1	10.7667	20.3920	.6176	.5395	.6784
Q9DD1	9.9333	19.7195	.5815	.3687	.6852
Q9DE1	9.8333	21.0402	.2473	.0802	.8401

Reliability Coefficients 5 items

Alpha = .7519 Standardized item alpha = .7920

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***** Method 2 (covariance matrix) will be used for this analysis *****

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R E L I A B I L I T Y A N A L Y S I S - S C A L E

(A L P H A)

Correlation Matrix

	Q9DA2	Q9DB2	Q9DC2	Q9DD2	Q9DE2
Q9DA2	1.0000				
Q9DB2	.8656	1.0000			
Q9DC2	.7343	.6481	1.0000		
Q9DD2	.6054	.5890	.5335	1.0000	
Q9DE2	.4478	.3793	.4936	.3968	1.0000

N of Cases = 30.0

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of
Scale	26.2000	27.8207	5.2745	Variables 5

Item-total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Q9DA2	20.7333	17.7885	.8014	.8071	.7649
Q9DB2	20.6000	19.2138	.7376	.7567	.7873
Q9DC2	20.6333	18.9989	.7349	.5799	.7863
Q9DD2	20.7000	20.1483	.6249	.4121	.8133
Q9DE2	22.1333	16.4644	.4970	.2758	.8878

Reliability Coefficients 5 items

Alpha = .8388 Standardized item alpha = .8686
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----- F A C T O R A N A L Y S I S -----

Analysis number 1 Replacement of missing values with the mean

	Mean	Std Dev	Cases	Label
Q5ADJUST	5.90000	2.59110	30	Q5. Own ease in adjustment after change
Q6FLYADJ	6.17857	2.36430	28	Q6. Partner/family adjustment
Q8WKOV	7.90000	1.47040	30	Q8. Work life after change

Correlation Matrix:

	Q5ADJUST	Q6FLYADJ	Q8WKOV
Q5ADJUST	1.00000		
Q6FLYADJ	.52750	1.00000	
Q8WKOV	.32311	-.08396	1.00000

1-tailed Significance of Correlation Matrix:

' . ' is printed for diagonal elements.

	Q5ADJUST	Q6FLYADJ	Q8WKOV
Q5ADJUST	.		
Q6FLYADJ	.00137	.	
Q8WKOV	.04079	.33551	.

Extraction 1 for analysis 1, Principal Components Analysis (PC)

PC extracted 2 factors.

Factor Matrix:

	Factor 1	Factor 2
Q5ADJUST	.91410	.06570
Q6FLYADJ	.76926	-.53359
Q8WKOV	.39538	.88627

Final Statistics:

Variable	Communality	* Factor	Eigenvalue	Pct of Var	Cum Pct
		*			
Q5ADJUST	.83990	* 1	1.58367	52.8	52.8
Q6FLYADJ	.87648	* 2	1.07450	35.8	88.6
Q8WKOV	.94179	*			

Skipping rotation 1 for extraction 1 in analysis 1

Factor Score Coefficient Matrix:

	Factor 1	Factor 2
Q5ADJUST	.57721	.06114
Q6FLYADJ	.48574	-.49659
Q8WKOV	.24966	.82482

Covariance Matrix for Estimated Regression Factor Scores:

	Factor 1	Factor 2
Factor 1	1.00000	
Factor 2	.00000	1.00000

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----- S P E A R M A N C O R R E L A T I O N C O E F F I C I E N T S -----

Q1MAGNIT	-.2692								
	N(30)								
	Sig .150								
Q2DESIRE	.0542	.3614							
	N(30)	N(30)							
	Sig .776	Sig .050							
Q3WKGOL1	.1976	.1747	.0513						
	N(30)	N(30)	N(30)						
	Sig .295	Sig .356	Sig .788						
Q4WKGOL2	.2235	-.1546	-.2244	.0909					
	N(30)	N(30)	N(30)	N(30)					
	Sig .235	Sig .415	Sig .233	Sig .633					
Q5ADJUST	.9228	-.1492	.1450	.3474	.1868				
	N(30)								
	Sig .000	Sig .431	Sig .445	Sig .060	Sig .323				
Q6FLYADJ	.8012	-.3019	-.0519	-.1260	.0825	.5708			
	N(28)								
	Sig .000	Sig .118	Sig .793	Sig .523	Sig .676	Sig .002			
Q7LIFEOV	.2568	-.0074	.1034	.2309	.1537	.2384	.1500		
	N(30)	N(28)							
	Sig .171	Sig .969	Sig .587	Sig .220	Sig .417	Sig .205	Sig .446		
Q8WKOV	.3147	.0306	.1847	.4108	.3810	.3021	-.0226	.3912	
	N(30)	N(28)	N(30)						
	Sig .090	Sig .872	Sig .328	Sig .024	Sig .038	Sig .105	Sig .909	Sig .033	
DSAT2	.3487	.0354	.0596	.2788	.3179	.4296	.0709	.5770	.4518
	N(30)	N(28)	N(30)	N(30)					

	Sig .059	Sig .853	Sig .755	Sig .136	Sig .087	Sig .018	Sig .720	Sig .001	Sig .012	
RAUT2	.4761	-.0576	-.0873	.2874	.2596	.4427	.4126	.1837	.2424	.3364
	N(30)	N(28)	N(30)	N(30)	N(30)					
	Sig .008	Sig .762	Sig .647	Sig .124	Sig .166	Sig .014	Sig .029	Sig .331	Sig .197	Sig .069
	EASEINDX	Q1MAGNIT	Q2DESIRE	Q3WKGOL1	Q4WKGOL2	Q5ADJUST	Q6FLYADJ	Q7LIFE0V	Q8WKOV	DSAT2

(Coefficient / (Cases) / 2-tailed Significance) " . " is printed if a coefficient cannot be computed

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- - - - - S P E A R M A N C O R R E L A T I O N C O E F F I C I E N T S - - - - -

RENV2	.2668	-.0179	-.0365	.2070	.5728	.2226	.1160	.0734	.4095	.4292
	N(30)	N(28)	N(30)	N(30)	N(30)					
	Sig .154	Sig .925	Sig .848	Sig .272	Sig .001	Sig .237	Sig .557	Sig .700	Sig .025	Sig .018
RPGROW2	.0523	-.1704	-.0608	.3059	.1604	.0531	-.0489	.4049	.0606	.0667
	N(30)	N(28)	N(30)	N(30)	N(30)					
	Sig .784	Sig .368	Sig .750	Sig .100	Sig .397	Sig .780	Sig .805	Sig .026	Sig .751	Sig .726
RPLIFE2	.0190	.1568	-.1193	.1110	.3433	-.0405	.0278	.1743	-.0365	-.0104
	N(30)	N(28)	N(30)	N(30)	N(30)					
	Sig .921	Sig .408	Sig .530	Sig .559	Sig .063	Sig .832	Sig .888	Sig .357	Sig .848	Sig .957
RREL2	-.1375	-.0577	-.2019	-.2705	.4705	-.1617	-.1512	.3084	.1620	.4330
	N(30)	N(28)	N(30)	N(30)	N(30)					
	Sig .469	Sig .762	Sig .285	Sig .148	Sig .009	Sig .393	Sig .443	Sig .097	Sig .392	Sig .017
RSELFA2	.2166	.3215	.0683	.3654	.3109	.3482	-.1899	.3397	.4507	.6364
	N(30)	N(28)	N(30)	N(30)	N(30)					
	Sig .250	Sig .083	Sig .720	Sig .047	Sig .094	Sig .059	Sig .333	Sig .066	Sig .012	Sig .000
MARITAL	.4396	-.3463	-.3108	-.0739	.2808	.3721	.2509	.0353	.2171	.1976
	N(30)	N(28)	N(30)	N(30)	N(30)					
	Sig .015	Sig .061	Sig .095	Sig .698	Sig .133	Sig .043	Sig .198	Sig .853	Sig .249	Sig .295

MBTIEI	-.0354 N(30) Sig .853	-.1908 N(30) Sig .313	-.1132 N(30) Sig .552	-.0318 N(30) Sig .867	-.2898 N(30) Sig .120	-.0994 N(30) Sig .601	.0635 N(28) Sig .748	-.0773 N(30) Sig .685	.0526 N(30) Sig .783	-.1539 N(30) Sig .417
MBTIJP	-.2311 N(30) Sig .219	-.1432 N(30) Sig .450	.1437 N(30) Sig .449	-.0623 N(30) Sig .744	-.1617 N(30) Sig .393	-.2336 N(30) Sig .214	-.1303 N(28) Sig .509	.1893 N(30) Sig .317	-.0990 N(30) Sig .603	-.2127 N(30) Sig .259
MBTISN	-.3048 N(30) Sig .101	.2383 N(30) Sig .205	.2136 N(30) Sig .257	.0925 N(30) Sig .627	-.0223 N(30) Sig .907	-.3170 N(30) Sig .088	-.1608 N(28) Sig .414	.1331 N(30) Sig .483	-.0941 N(30) Sig .621	-.0262 N(30) Sig .891
MBTITF	-.2195 N(30) Sig .244	.0477 N(30) Sig .802	.0205 N(30) Sig .914	-.5843 N(30) Sig .001	.0513 N(30) Sig .788	-.3582 N(30) Sig .052	.0584 N(28) Sig .768	-.0799 N(30) Sig .675	-.2417 N(30) Sig .198	-.1779 N(30) Sig .347
	EASEINDX	Q1MAGNIT	Q2DESIRE	Q3WKGOL1	Q4WKGOL2	Q5ADJUST	Q6FLYADJ	Q7LIFEOV	Q8WKOV	DSAT2

(Coefficient / (Cases) / 2-tailed Significance)

" . " is printed if a coefficient cannot be computed

- - - - - S P E A R M A N C O R R E L A T I O N C O E F F I C I E N T S - - - - -

MONTHS	.2133 N(30) Sig .258	.2535 N(30) Sig .176	-.0088 N(30) Sig .963	.2271 N(30) Sig .227	.1610 N(30) Sig .395	.1549 N(30) Sig .414	.1353 N(28) Sig .492	.1282 N(30) Sig .500	-.0314 N(30) Sig .869	.2229 N(30) Sig .236
THOMAS	-.1832 N(28) Sig .351	.0999 N(28) Sig .613	.0866 N(28) Sig .661	-.0817 N(28) Sig .680	-.1598 N(28) Sig .417	-.1469 N(28) Sig .456	-.2651 N(26) Sig .191	-.2378 N(28) Sig .223	.1163 N(28) Sig .556	.1784 N(28) Sig .364
TRANSIT	.2581 N(30) Sig .169	.3977 N(30) Sig .030	.0205 N(30) Sig .914	.3467 N(30) Sig .061	.1420 N(30) Sig .454	.2181 N(30) Sig .247	.1666 N(28) Sig .397	.1136 N(30) Sig .550	.0673 N(30) Sig .724	.3017 N(30) Sig .105
UNI	-.1270 N(30)	-.0352 N(30)	-.0042 N(30)	.0925 N(30)	-.1034 N(30)	-.1080 N(30)	-.1342 N(28)	-.0403 N(30)	-.0728 N(30)	-.1765 N(30)

	Sig .504	Sig .853	Sig .982	Sig .627	Sig .587	Sig .570	Sig .496	Sig .832	Sig .702	Sig .351
EQ1	-.0243	-.0448	-.1248	.2751	.1638	.0591	-.0478	.1725	.0709	.1253
	N(30)	N(28)	N(30)	N(30)	N(30)					
	Sig .899	Sig .814	Sig .511	Sig .141	Sig .387	Sig .757	Sig .809	Sig .362	Sig .710	Sig .509
EQ2	-.3466	-.0679	-.0827	-.4231	-.1716	-.4525	-.1634	-.0264	-.3376	-.2642
	N(29)	N(27)	N(29)	N(29)	N(29)					
	Sig .065	Sig .726	Sig .670	Sig .022	Sig .374	Sig .014	Sig .415	Sig .892	Sig .073	Sig .166
EQ14	-.3105	-.0041	.1593	-.3538	-.2495	-.4133	-.1748	.0386	.0081	-.0355
	N(30)	N(28)	N(30)	N(30)	N(30)					
	Sig .095	Sig .983	Sig .401	Sig .055	Sig .184	Sig .023	Sig .374	Sig .839	Sig .966	Sig .852
EQ19	.0474	-.0027	.1275	-.0843	.1083	.0822	-.0497	-.2010	.0375	.0086
	N(29)	N(27)	N(29)	N(29)	N(29)					
	Sig .807	Sig .989	Sig .510	Sig .664	Sig .576	Sig .672	Sig .806	Sig .296	Sig .847	Sig .965
EQ20	-.1698	.0702	.2490	-.0901	-.1094	-.1058	-.3025	-.1502	.0966	.1530
	N(29)	N(27)	N(29)	N(29)	N(29)					
	Sig .378	Sig .718	Sig .193	Sig .642	Sig .572	Sig .585	Sig .125	Sig .437	Sig .618	Sig .428
	EASEINDX	Q1MAGNIT	Q2DESIRE	Q3WKGOL1	Q4WKGOL2	Q5ADJUST	Q6FLYADJ	Q7LIFE0V	Q8WKOV	DSAT2
RENV2	.4229									
	N(30)									
	Sig .020									

RAUT2

(Coefficient / (Cases) / 2-tailed Significance)

" . " is printed if a coefficient cannot be computed