

WORKPLACE DEVALUATION: LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

Clare Dvoranchik Klunk

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
Adult Learning and Human Resource Development

M. Boucouvalas, Chair
M. G. Cline
L. R. McKeen
O. F. White
H. W. Stubblefield

April 14, 1999
Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: adult learning theory, dialogic interview, grounded theory, learning from experience, organization culture; professionals' learning, reflection, transformative learning, transpersonal learning, workplace devaluation

WORKPLACE DEVALUATION: LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE:

Clare Dvoranchik Klunk

(ABSTRACT)

Many successful professionals, recognized for their experience, knowledge, competence and commitment to their field, experience a contradiction when they realize that their contributions are no longer valued by decision-makers in their organizations. Professionals, regardless of gender, position, education, race or profession, who experience workplace devaluation agree that this experience devalues their contributions and demeans their sense of self.

This study illuminates the professionals' perspective of workplace devaluation through their experience. Within the framework of grounded theory methodology, this research examined three research questions: (a) What is the experience of professionals' workplace devaluation? (b) How did professionals learn from the experience? (c) What did professionals learn from the experience? The unit of analysis is the professional within an organization. Four participants were selected who (a) had several years experience with their organization; (b) were previously valued by the organization; (c) were current in their field; (d) had experienced workplace devaluation; and (e) were able to articulate insights, thoughts, and emotions on their experience. Multiple interviews with each participant provided the data.

A comparative, iterative analysis of the data yielded: (a) a seven-phase process of the experience; (b) six constructs embedded in the process, and (c) four categories of learning. The dialogic interview method facilitated the participants' apperception, reflection, and progress through the process. Three emotions--fear, powerlessness, anger--and their interaction with the other constructs (autonomy, communication, personalization, authority, and recognition) influenced coping strategies and actions taken by each participant. The four narratives explicate the interrelationships of the findings.

Three major conclusions are: (a) A rich description of the workplace devaluation experience offers a glimpse into the complexity of this topic and into the professionals' "lived world." (b) The learning process, grounded in the data, depicts how these four professionals used the power of their emotions to create balance within themselves as they attempted to explicate their situation of workplace devaluation. (c) The results indicate that greater learning occurred in organizational knowledge and intrapersonal knowledge for these professionals. Questions for further research are noted along with practical suggestions and recommendations for the praxis of adult educators, decision-makers, and professionals.

DEDICATION

To my husband, Dan, for your love, your belief in me and your unlimited support.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The past seven years have been a meaningful journey in my quest for greater understanding of how individuals learn--their insights about themselves and the world in which they live. For me, completion of this study marks a new beginning.

I want to thank my advisory committee, the participants, my family, my friends, and professional colleagues for their confidence in me and in the importance of this topic. Dr. Marcie Boucouvalas, my committee chair, offered wisdom, insight, guidance, and encouragement on the research process that facilitated my growth. Dr. M. Gerry Cline, my research advisor, provided timely direction in qualitative research that was invaluable to the completion of this study. Dr. Harold Stubblefield, Dr. Orion White, and Dr. L. Ronald McKeen contributed relevant comments and suggestions that helped focus the scope of this inquiry. My appreciation goes to the managers of my organization for the four-month sabbatical to complete this study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures	vi
List of Tables	vi
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Problem	2
Statement of the Problem	7
Purpose of the Study	8
Research Issues	8
Research Questions	9
Significance of the Research	9
CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW	
Conceptual Framework	11
Related Research	23
Summary	29
CHAPTER III. METHODS	
Research Design	30
Participants	31
Analysis Concerns	33
Data Collection	37
Analysis and Interpretation of Data	37
Summary	38
CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS	
The Process	39
The Narratives	44
Julie: The Communicator	45
Paul: The Innovator	67
Danny: The Mentor	86
Sunny: The Free Spirit	105
Summary	127

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Conclusions and Research Recommendations	130
What Is the Experience of Professionals' Workplace Devaluation?	
Conclusions	131
Recommendations for Research: Workplace Devaluation	132
Recommendations for Research: Interaction	133
How Did Professionals Learn From the Experience?	
Conclusions	134
Recommendations for Research: Learning from Experience	136
What Did Professionals Learn from the Experience?	
Conclusions	137
Recommendations for Research:	138
Recommendations for Praxis	
For Facilitators of Adult Learning	139
For Organization Decision-Makers And Professionals	140
Summary	140
REFERENCES	144
APPENDICES	
A. Informed Consent Form	158
B. Questions To Guide The Interview Process	161
C. Codebook	164
D. Composite List Of Expressed Feelings	165
E. Composite List Of Expressed Learning	166
F. Composite List Of Recommendations	169
G. Composite List Of Questions For Research and Dialogue	170
VITA	172

FIGURES AND TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Workplace Devaluation: Learning From Experience Process Cycle	39
---	----

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Participant Profiles	33
Table 2. Julie's Expressed Insights	65
Table 3. Paul's Expressed Insights	84
Table 4. Danny's Expressed Insights	101
Table 5. Sunny's Expressed Insights	126

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Many professionals, recognized for their experience, knowledge, competence and commitment to their field, experience a contradiction when they realize that their contributions are no longer valued by decision-makers in their organizations. The incongruity of the situation is that these same professionals usually find that their contributions continue to be valued by co-workers, customers internal to the organization and by individuals, community organizations, and colleagues external to the organization. An increasing number of professionals, regardless of gender, position, education, race or profession, agree that this experience devalues their contributions and demeans their sense of self. This experience cuts to the core of an individual's identity. Rarely is the experience addressed in the public forum. While the public voice is silenced, the inner voice, searching for an explanation, rages within the individual. The term *workplace devaluation* captures the essence of the professionals' experience

The immediate result for the professional has many forms--anger, self-doubt, helplessness, grief, depression, fear, illness, blame, and desire for vindication. The outcome for the organization also has many forms--decrease of intellectual capital, loss of productivity, absenteeism, tardiness, low morale, resistance, defensiveness, conflict, formal grievances, and lawsuits. The effect on individuals, family, workplace, community, and society is debilitating.

Organizations need the expertise, specialized knowledge, and problem-solving skills of professionals more than ever in the emerging knowledge age. The workplace's transition from the industrial age to the knowledge age is well documented (Pedler et al., 1996; Watkins & Marsick, 1993; Senge, 1990; Achawls and Renesch, 1995; Garvin, 1993). Much of the focus in the workplace is learning: learning to manage discontinuous change; learning new procedures for rapidly changing technology; and learning how to learn. The leaders of today's organizations require professionals who are flexible, innovative, curious, and committed. The relative stability of the industrial age with its emphasis on production, hierarchy, and independence no longer exists. Consequently, the evolving knowledge based organization has a responsibility to develop its members and to transform its business practice. The professional's intellectual capital is a crucial resource as organizations and their staffs find themselves working beyond their experience on issues and problems never before encountered (Morris, 1995). With change of this magnitude, professionals' knowledge, experience, and problem solving abilities should be more highly valued than ever by organizations.

To further understand this experience and its consequences, four professionals employed in different organizations related their apperceptions and reflections about their experience of workplace devaluation. The unit of analysis is the professional's experience within an organization. The study intends to explain workplace devaluation from the professionals' perspective and to explicate what and how professionals learned. The results inform and support the research on adult learning from experience, transpersonal and transformative learning, and adult development.

The researcher is an educator with eighteen years of experience working with adult learners in the workplace. Her experience ranges from counseling soldiers on educational

opportunities to facilitating interpersonal skills workshops to program development and evaluation in both management and employee programs. Her interest in this topic, workplace devaluation and its consequences, developed from her experience, observations, and conversations with professionals at all levels within organizations.

Background of the Problem

This section provides an overview of four research areas that are relevant to the professionals' perspective of workplace devaluation through the lens of their experience. Two research areas, effects of societal change and the relationship of management and organization theory to organizational behavior, address the context of the workplace environment in which the professional works.¹ The professionals' role in organizations summarizes relevant research on workplace issues and expectations. The fourth research area, adult learning, presents the evolution of the concept, learning from experience, and its importance to the professionals' experience of workplace devaluation.

Effects of Societal Change

The workplace, a microcosm of society, reflects the fundamental aspect of the changes, the diffusion of changes,² and the rate of change that humankind is experiencing. Gooler (1990) observed that technological changes affect the fundamental meaning of reality, sense of geographical and personal space, and sense of time. For example, innovations³ resulting from computers, transportation, and satellite technologies have increased individuals' dependency on others and on technology in both their work and personal life.

These same innovations have influenced changes in how work gets done and in how individuals learn and think about themselves. Rogers (1995) noted that diffusion of innovations occurs over a lengthy time period, brings uncertainty of its consequences, and requires communication of information. Rogers stated that the adoption rate of innovations within social systems is variable. The variability is affected by the social structure and its norms. Other important elements of the social structure contributing to the variability are the roles of its leaders and the consequences of adopting the innovation.

¹ This overview acknowledges a very complex topic that is relevant but not the focus of the study. The purpose is to highlight the development of some organization structures and management practices still found in organizations that affect professionals' workplace devaluation experience.

² Diffusion is used in the broad sense of the term to include both planned and spontaneous dispersion of new ideas and innovations. "Diffusion is the process by which alteration occurs in the structure and function of a social system leading to certain consequences" (Rogers, 1995, pp. 6-7)

³ Innovation is an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or group. The individual or group define new. Usually modifying an innovation to fit the needs of the individual or group is an element in diffusion.

Relationship of Management and Organization Theory to Organizational Behavior

Bowditch and Buono (1994) note that the evolution of current management and organization theory is a significant factor in understanding organization behavior. Especially relevant to workplace devaluation are the concepts on managing organizations effectively and efficiently. Professionals and managers often demonstrate behaviors based on conscious and unconscious assumptions of various management and organization theories. Today's organizations are often structured and managed by eclectic principles that have evolved since the late nineteenth century. Many decision-makers manage their people, products and services on unexamined assumptions that may be inappropriate for the situation.

Bowditch and Buono (1994) presented an historical framework of management and organization theory, pre-1800s through 1990s related to organizational behavior. A brief summary of principles relevant to professionals' workplace devaluation follows. During the Industrial Age (1880 to 1970) organizations transitioned from inherited authority to a rational-legal authority based on the belief that authority is determined by the position an individual holds in the organization. An individual gains access to the position by explicit and implicit rules (rational) and policies (legal). The Post Industrial Age (1970-1990s) encompasses the transition of organizations "to a more systematic integrated analysis of behavior and structure at the individual, small group, organizational, and interorganizational levels" (p. 33). During this period, Bowditch and Buono categorized three schools of management theory: Classical School (1880-1930), Neo Classical School (1930-1960), and Modern School (1970-1990s).

The Classical Management theorists began a systematic study of organizations that espoused standardization of tasks and procedures. Administrative theory⁴ identified five basic authoritarian functions of management: planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling that are common to all organizations. Frederick Taylor's scientific management principles⁵ emphasized improving and standardizing manufacturing and work procedures. Once management defined standardized procedures, their task was to manage by exception or to focus only on those situations that were outside the defined norms. In contrast, Max Weber⁶ proposed the bureaucracy as the ideal organization. Bureaucratic management advocates a hierarchical organization with specialists and experts that follow established rules and procedures consistently across all situations.

The Neo-Classical Management theorists advocated understanding interpersonal relations and individual behavior, a dimension of organizational reality not addressed in the Classical school. The Human Relations School⁷ supported the belief that "management could not treat

⁴ Administrative Theory espouses that all organizations have basic dimensions of organizational structure and management characteristics. Theorists derived their conclusions through deductive reasoning by examining specific organizational structures such as the military and the church. (Bowditch and Buono, 1994)

⁵ Frederick Taylor, production expert and considered the "father" of Scientific Management, published *The principles of scientific management* in 1911. Other contributions of this school are Gilbreth's time and motion studies, and Gantt's chart (still used today in project management).

⁶Max Weber considered a founder of the Structuralist School. The Structuralists created an ideal conceptual model based on empirical studies of many different organizations (inductive approach) which they named *bureaucracy*.

⁷ The Human Relations School was based on the findings of the Hawthorne Experiments conducted in the mid-1920s and early 1930s.

people as if they were mere extensions of an organization's structure and machinery" (Bowditch and Buono, 1994, p. 18). The basic tenet is that social relations between employees and their supervisor and among members of a workgroup influence motivation. The Behavioral School⁸ emphasized two beliefs. One belief is that workers expect organizations to meet their basic human needs of safety, acceptance and recognition. The second belief is that workers expect to gain personal satisfaction through and meaningful work and skill development. Terkel (1970) in his classic book, Work: People talk about what they do all day and how they feel about what they do, interviewed over one hundred workers and professionals across America. The individuals Terkel interviewed eloquently delineated how organizations failed in these two areas.

Modern management and organization theory⁹ focuses on the total system--the organization's interrelationships within its environment. In contrast to the Classical and Neo-Classical Management Schools, this theory accentuates concepts, analysis, and integration. The nature of work is shifting to abstract, technology-mediated knowledge. The theorists emphasize a managerial focus toward employee development and participative management. McLagan (1999) compared the organizational changes occurring during this period to "jumping up and down on a fault line." McLagan adds:

These workplace trends are floating and being carried by a larger stream of forces. . . Because the forces are both powerful and driving us in very new directions, there is a lot of friction at the interfaces of old and new. It is like the crunching, resistance, and surprise activity and energy that occur when old and new geological plates rub on each other. As one is being born, the other is reshaped and destroyed--but not without creating rubble, spouting lava, and even causing chemical reactions that make startling new shapes and forms appear. (p. 1)

The forces of societal changes and the organization's interrelationships within its environment noted above have resulted in the emergence of research focused on the role of emotions on organizational behavior. Professionals' emotions are central to the experience of professionals' workplace devaluation. Historically, researchers trace the study of emotions to Darwin's, The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animal, (1872 cited in Rafaeli and Sutton, 1989, p. 4) that suggested some emotions or emotional behavior are a biological reflex to danger, such as the fight or flight reaction found in both animals and humans. Rafaeli and Sutton (1989) observed:

The tasks of defining, sorting, and interpreting emotions have intrigued and puzzled intellectuals for a long time. Darwin's *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals* was first published in 1872. William James posed the question "What is an emotion?" in 1884. More than 100 years later, this question remains unanswered. (p. 4)

⁸ The Behavioral School developed in the 1950s based on the works of Maslow, McGregor, Likert, Argyris, Herzberg, McClelland. The Behavioral school focused on individual behavior and psychology. Bowditch and Buono observe that the core beliefs of this school are the basis of much management and supervisory education in the 1990s.

⁹ Modern Management Science consists of three categories: systems thinking, contingency theory, and organizational behavior. Bowditch and Buono (1994) note important societal shifts that have implications for management and organizations: emerging technologies, quality movement, increasing socio-demographic diversity, and growing cynicism and discontent in the workplace.

Several areas of research on emotions' role in organizational behavior are pertinent to professional's experience of workplace devaluation (Goffman, 1959/1973; Hochschild, 1979 and 1983; and Van Maanen and Kunda, 1989). Impression management (Goffman, 1959/1973), the conscious social demeanor governed by emotion rules and norms that individuals follow, affects the organizational culture and the individuals' behavior in the workplace. Emotion work (Hochschild, 1979 and 1983), the management of one's emotions by inducing or inhibiting feelings to render emotions appropriate for the situation, suggests that organizations expect and monitor a standard display of certain feelings. For example, bill collectors are expected to display anger when confronting individuals about late payments. Conversely, airline stewardesses are expected to smile and to be pleasant no matter how rudely passengers respond. The centrality of emotions to the realities of organization life (Van Maanen and Kunda, 1989) emerged from their qualitative study of organization rules that govern emotional expression and the employee's understanding of the organization culture to appropriate and inappropriate behavior in the workplace. They suggested that explicit organizational rules on emotional expression are a form of organization control. This research on emotional expression in organization is another aspect of evolving management practices that influence the professionals' perspective of workplace devaluation.

Professionals in the Workplace

Professionals, in this study, refer to individuals recognized for skill, experience, knowledge, competence, and currency in a particular field or occupation.

Research on professionals in the workplace (Etzioni, 1964; Miller, 1986; Raelin, 1986; Benveniste, 1987) offers several perspectives on the quintessential conflict between professionals and managers within organizations based on the following beliefs: (a) professionals' expectation of autonomy on the job often conflicts with the management style; (b) professionals' skills transfer to other organizations; (c) professionals identify more with their professions, such as lawyer, accountant, engineer, or educator, rather than with the organization; (d) professionals appear to respond more to intrinsic motivation--solutions to challenging problems or a professional goal to better society or humankind; and (e) professionals appear to be unconcerned with extrinsic motivation such as monetary awards. Guy (1985) suggests that the above beliefs are myths and that professionals experience the same conflicts as non-professional staff. She found that organizational structure, location of the professionals' workgroup in the structure, and organization work experience to be a greater influence on the conflict. She suggested that the organizational practices that allow professionals a greater voice in decision-making often camouflage the main issue of the conflict.

Nowlen (1990) emphasizes that a greater understanding of professionals can be accomplished only through examining the complex, interdependent environment in which professionals practice. Raelin (1986) notes the significance of societal influences and cohort effect on professionals and managers as a contributing factor to the clash of cultures, especially the effect of the 1960s cohort. Professionals who have the values of the intellectual counter-culture associated with Civil Rights and the Vietnam War clashed with the traditional values of managers. Currently, Generation X values clash with established organizational cultures in

similar ways. The Civil Rights Movement and feminist conscious raising of the 1960s and 1970s have contributed to significant changes in workplace culture. Racist, ethnic, and sexist comments or jokes, once acceptable in the workplace, are no longer tolerated. Young (1992) suggests that oppression often exists in the absence of overt discrimination. The everyday processes of organizational life (unconscious assumptions and reactions of people, the bureaucracy) contribute to systemic oppression in a "politically correct" environment. Rowe (1990) has named this phenomenon "micro-inequities."

The Experience of Learning

A common theme of adult learning is that learning results from the interactions of life experiences and reflection through which the individual constructs meaning. The role of the adult educator is to facilitate this learning process. Learning from experience is a fundamental concept for adults and for educators. Eduard C. Lindeman (1926) in The Meaning of Adult Education stated that "Experience is the adult learner's living textbook" (p. 10). John Dewey (1938/1991) in Experience and Education summarized and enhanced his emphasis on the importance of experience in learning. Dewey emphasized that "All genuine education comes about through experience" (p. 11). He also stressed that learning results only when the learner interacts or interprets the experience through an internal process. Malcolm Knowles (1990) in The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species underscored the importance of experience in his theory of andragogy. He viewed adult's life experience as the "richest resource" for their learning with the caveat that the quality and quantity of adult experiences can have several outcomes for learning:

But the fact of greater experience also has some potentially negative effects. As we accumulate experience, we tend to develop mental habits, biases, and presuppositions that tend to cause us to close our minds to new ideas, fresh perceptions, and alternative ways of thinking (p. 59).

There is another more subtle reason for emphasizing the utilization of the experience of the learners; it has to do with the learners' self identity. . . To children experience is something that happens to them; to adults their experience is *who they are*. . . The implication for adult education is that in any situation in which adults' experience is ignored or devalued, they perceive this as not rejecting just their experience but rejecting them as persons. (p. 60)

Boud and Walker (1990) developed a model depicting the learning experience as the interaction of the learner and the milieu.¹⁰ They propose that learning evolves after the experience when the learner has time to reflect. They applied the model to participants in different learning situations, such as staff development, adult education courses, conferences and retreats. The adult educators facilitate the learning situations and participants came to the situations expecting to learn.

¹⁰ *Milieu* includes all the entities that provide the context and events, history, values, and ideologies of the culture, gender, race, and class. (Boud and Walker, 1990)

Adult learning literature also focuses on professionals' learning, specifically reflection, dialogue, implicit knowledge and methods in their practice. Schon (1983) in his study of architects' practice found that architects habitually reflected during the creation of their product. Schon proposed that professionals, in general, need to develop their reflective abilities. Mezirow (1991) advocates that individuals construct meaning of their experience through a critical self-reflective process that challenges the individual's basic assumptions, beliefs and values. Fenwick (1994) suggests that dialogue is a venue that can both hinder or encourage professional learning. Fenwick observes that "social interactions are made more complex by power relations, differing goals and needs, intelligence and communication skill, the structure and norms of discourse, conflicting communication and cognitive styles, and our sense of identity relative to our ideas and our relationships with others in the group" (p. 22). Her focus is to encourage professionals to dialogue as a way to interrupt their ordinary thinking patterns and confront their defensive techniques protecting them. Baskett and Marsick (1992), editors of Confronting new understandings about professional learning, highlight new areas of research to address an identified gap between practice and theory: self-assessment of professional competence; integration of technology and peer mentoring for problem solving; alignment of professional competencies with organization's goals; cycle of professional learning in the context of practice; implicit knowledge implications for professional practice; applications of women's learning models.

Statement of the Problem

A thorough search revealed not one study in the scholarly research that specifically described the experience of professionals' workplace devaluation or the professionals' learning that occurred. The literature includes volumes about discrimination, sexism, racism, harassment, the glass ceiling, derailment, work alienation, job burnout, diversity issues, anger in the workplace, and conflict management. Some aspects of these topics do overlap with this devaluation experience, yet their theoretical premises do not *fit* with the observed phenomenon. Brief sketches of three successful professionals highlight the experience of workplace devaluation. The examples are based on informal conversations between professionals in different organizations and fields:

1. One morning during a mandated appointment with the organization's vice-president, Dr. E is told that the specialized, revenue-generating program under Dr. E's management will be abolished in six weeks. Dr. E., who had been promoted and had received several cash awards in the past 5 years with the organization, will keep her pay and benefits but must now compete for positions outside her specialty area. The fact that Dr. E.'s program made a profit for the organization and continued to be in high demand was not considered.
2. Lee B. just completed a Master's degree in Business and Finance, the organization's primary business area. The organization funded the tuition while Lee worked days and attended school evenings. Lee meets the professional profile of the person the company is recruiting. Yet, management ignores Lee's suggestions for improving business practices. At the last minute without explanation, senior management

excludes Lee from a critical decision-making meeting for a project on which Lee has been a key contributor.

3. After 30 years of loyal, productive service to the organization and a near Nobel prize, Dr. H. walks into work one morning and learns that his entire department has been targeted for elimination despite its fine reputation. Dr. H. was not involved in the decision-making process. He feels that his input was discounted or perhaps even purposely ignored. He is unable to get a straight answer, other than a needed reduction-in-force. He will not lose his job, but his position will shift to teaching undergraduate science.

In each example, the professionals saw themselves as contributing to the organization's purpose and being recognized for their proficiency. Yet, the professionals felt devalued. Many reasons (personal, organizational, societal) suggest why the professionals above might feel devalued. Some professionals might describe the experience as discrimination, glass ceiling, derailment, alienation, or losing their power base. Other professionals might say this is life in the organization, "shape up or ship out." The decision-makers might explain their decision in rational, logical arguments based on numbers and data showing the need to downsize to stay competitive in an environment with increasing costs. A variety of external contextual and individual factors may be involved, which, while acknowledged, are outside the scope of this study.

This research inquiry explored how professionals experience workplace devaluation, how professionals facilitate their learning from experience, and what learning occurs. The study collected data through a series of in-depth dialogic interviews¹¹ with four self-identified professionals from diverse professions currently employed in different organizations. An iterative grounded theory analysis of the four case studies identified a process, themes, and constructs of their workplace devaluation experience.

Purpose of the Study

The study had five purposes. The first was to understand how professionals experience workplace devaluation. The second was to discover if a common process existed in how each professional managed the situation. The third was to identify what professionals learn from the experience. The fourth was to ascertain how learning occurred during the experience. The fifth was to give others an opportunity to glimpse this lived world by providing a rich description of the experience.

Research Issues

The research issues examined the experience itself, professionals' management of the emotions inherent in the experience, and the professionals' insights. The analysis of the

¹¹ Dialogic interviews, a method developed by the researcher, are similar to phenomenological interviews described by Pollio et al., (1997). Dialogic interviews are unstructured interviews built on the principles of dialogue--open communication, empathetic listening, respect for the other's perspective, and trust.

experience identified a core process and its interrelationships with common constructs and themes. Explicating the effects of the emotions highlighted the process of learning. Four categories of learning describe what the professionals learned. The professionals' understanding and interaction with the organizational culture clarified the context in which the devaluation experience occurred. The research issues were:

1. How do professionals recognize workplace devaluation?
2. How do professionals experience workplace devaluation?
3. What is the meaning of the workplace devaluation experience?
4. What emotions did the professionals feel?
5. What is the role of emotions?
6. What other constructs exist in the experience of workplace devaluation?
7. Do the experiences have a common process?
8. What do professionals learn from the experience?
9. What effect does the experience have on professional development?
10. Does dialogic interviewing alter the professionals' interpretation of workplace devaluation?
11. How do professionals facilitate their learning from the devaluation experience?

Using a case study approach that emphasized apperception and reflection of the participants through dialogic interviews, this inquiry provides a description of workplace devaluation, an explanation of a process that participants applied to navigate the emotional aftermath. Also, reflection and its relevance to learning are examined.

Research Questions

This dissertation focuses on the experience--professionals' workplace devaluation by decision-makers. Three research questions guide the inquiry: (a) What is the experience of professionals' workplace devaluation? (b) How did professionals learn from the workplace devaluation experience? (c) What did professionals learn from the workplace devaluation experience?

Significance of the Research

The results of the study illuminate an unrecognized dimension of the professionals' world. The experience of professionals' workplace devaluation is an unexamined area in the literature that has implications for adult learning theory and for the workplace.

Learning from experience is a fundamental principle of adult learning and education. The literature focuses on facilitated learning in academia or the workplace. Studies on transformative learning and the learning experience do not address this situation. This study addresses an existing gap in understanding the learning process of workplace devaluation from the learners' perspective. The results of this inquiry may facilitate professional practice of adult educators in the workplace.

Organizations are experiencing tremendous change requiring innovation, expertise, competence, problem solving skills, flexibility. Managers, the organization decision-makers, seek professionals who have the ability to work in an increasingly complex interdependent environment. Increasing numbers of professionals within organizations identify with the experience of workplace devaluation. Greater understanding of the process that professionals employ to transform the emotional affects and effects of workplace devaluation to effective professional praxis can prompt different strategies by both decision-makers and professionals. The results may provide insights on transforming the emotions, especially anger, that professionals can effect to be an innovative, problem-solver valued for their contributions. The results of this study are a starting place for public and scholarly dialogue.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a conceptual framework introducing a scholarly study of key theories and studies pertaining to the professionals' experience of workplace devaluation and to their perceptions of their "lived world." as they experienced it. The selected research addresses issues that are relevant to successful professionals¹² working within organizations and that are also relevant to on-going research in adult development and adult learning. The primary workplace issues are societal changes reflected in the workplace; interpersonal relationships among professionals, decision-makers, and co-workers; and the dynamics inherent in the explicit and implicit organizational culture. These interconnected issues manifest four recurring themes in adult learning literature: change; reflection; socio-cultural milieu; and emotions. Kegan (1994) observed: "It remains for us to look at the curriculum of modern life in relation to the capacities of the adult mind" (p. 5). This literature review attempts to identify a program of study for this curriculum.

The three research questions guiding this study are also those questions that direct the research review: (a) What is the experience of professionals' workplace devaluation? (b) How did professionals learn from the experience? (c) What did the professionals learn from the experience? Embedded in these questions are issues concerning the meaning of the experience and the roles emotions and previous life experience play in constructing the meaning. These embedded issues are the nexus to adult development, adult learning and the professionals' experience of workplace devaluation.

Although the literature does not specifically address professionals' workplace devaluation, related concepts and studies provide an overarching structure to explore the experience. This literature review is organized in two sections: conceptual framework and related research. The conceptual framework examines the relevant literature on the concept of adult learning, adult development, emotion, and adult learning theories to provide a framework for understanding how professionals construct meaning from the experience. Related research highlights studies on professionals' organizational experiences that address some issues of workplace devaluation.

Section One: Conceptual Framework

Learning from life experience is a fundamental theme throughout the literature base of adult learning and adult development. Multiple theories and concepts explicate the complexity of adult learning and its interrelationship with adult development and emotions. A selective review of the concept of adult learning highlights those perspectives that influence the professionals' experience of workplace devaluation. Next, an analysis of pertinent theories regarding adult development and learning provides theoretical perspectives on the meaning of the professionals' experience. Learning is used, in the broadest sense, to include new and

¹² Success is operationally defined by the professional. One criterion in participant selection was that the professional at one time felt valued and successful in their organizations, but that these same professionals, now felt their contributions were discounted or that they were no longer valued by organization decision-makers.

expanded insights and the knowledge individuals acquire from life experiences. Adult development adds an important piece to the conceptual framework for the research issue.

Concept of Adult Learning

Definitions Many concepts of adult learning are encountered in the literature, but no consensus exists on what constitutes a concise, universal definition. For example, Jarvis (1987a) observed, "Learning is not just a psychological process that happens in splendid isolation from the world in which the learner lives, but is intimately related to that world and affected by it" (p. 11). He adds; "Experience involves relationships between people and the socio-cultural milieu in which they live" (Jarvis, 1987b, p. 164). Marsick (1987) states that, "Learning is primary to the way in which people construct meaning in their personal and shared organizational lives" (p. 4). Boucouvalas and Krupp (1989) augment the concept:

“The concept of change also seems integral to conceptualizations of adult learning that range (depending upon one’s philosophical orientation) from changes in behavior to changes in internal consciousness. Whether one deliberately or incidentally changes awareness, perception, behavior, or ways of knowing, learning entails both acquiring the new and letting go of the old” (p. 184).

Mezirow (1991) supplements the image of adult learning with another perspective, "Learning is the process of making a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience which guides subsequent understanding, appreciation, and actions" (p. 1).

Six additional concepts relevant to adult learning are important to understanding the experience of workplace devaluation. Included in this selection are meaningless and meaningful learning (Jarvis, 1987b); mindful and mindless learning (Langer and Browne, 1992, Langer, 1997); tacit learning (Polanyi, 1976); consciousness (Boucouvalas, 1993, 1995, and 1997); communicative learning (Mezirow, 1991); and the relationship of psychology and culture (Kegan, 1994). The following discussion accents their relevance to the professionals’ perspective of workplace devaluation.

Meaningful and Meaningless Learning Jarvis (1987b) points out that everyday experiences are often taken for granted and do not often result in new learning. He provides a framework for understanding meaningful and meaningless experience. A learning experience occurs only with a "disjunction between individuals’ own biographies and the socio-cultural, temporal world of experience" (p. 168). For learning to occur, Jarvis suggests that the individuals need an awareness that their experience is separate from their everyday world. Through reflection, individuals explain the experience to themselves whereby the experience becomes meaningful. If professionals expects their contributions to be ignored or discounted, new learning may not occur. On the other hand, decision-makers may also take for granted the professionals’ contributions as part of their everyday world, resulting in no awareness and no learning connection of the professionals’ issues.

Mindful and Mindless Learning Langer and Browne (1992) offer a slightly different view when no new learning occurs from the experience. They suggest the need for individuals to

know if their everyday decisions or actions result from unquestioned stereotypes or assumptions. Langer and Browne (1992) posit that individuals can prevent much of the disjunction by greater awareness of the small changes in our everyday lives. They suggest that premature cognitive commitments (rigid categories, biases, or assumptions) acted upon without awareness cause individuals to ignore the smaller changes. By being mindful in the present, or by being aware of small changes in the everyday world, one is more open to learning from experience. Langer (1997) identifies seven myths¹³ or mindsets that inhibit learning in a variety of environments. She proposes that these myths “stifle our creativity, silence our questions, and diminish our self esteem” (p. 2). Both professionals and decision-makers may view the organizational culture from a “mindless’ perspective over time, unaware of the culture’s contribution to workplace devaluation.

Tacit Learning A strong influence on the adult’s construction of meaning from experience is tacit learning that leads to tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1976; Sternberg and Caruso, 1985; Boucouvalas and Krupp, 1989; Fenwick, 1994; Durrance, 1998). Polanyi (1976) suggests that much of what we know is acquired tacitly or unconsciously without awareness. Tacit knowledge is acquired without conscious awareness through experience, practice, or socialization. Polanyi proposes that tacit knowledge places new experience in a context that influences every level of judgment. He describes tacit learning as recognition of the human capacity for acquiring empirical knowledge often through doing and observing without conscious thought. He explains the process as follows: “intuition senses hidden resources for solving a problem, which launches the imagination in its pursuit of the solution” (p. 343). Boucouvalas and Krupp (1989) describe the process of tacit learning as “unspoken and untaught” (p. 193). In other words, how we actually acquire tacit knowledge cannot be ascertained. Fenwick (1994) suggests:

Our tacit knowing is the knowledge and skills we possess as a consequence of the action of releasing past experiences as we attempt to work through our innate intention to comprehend the world, leading us to discover and act. . . . When the vast range of our past life experiences forming our knowledge remains tacit, it colours our interpretation of what is currently in focus. (p. 19)

Tacit knowledge derived from tacit learning is a factor in both the individuals’ learning from experience and the individuals’ socialization to the organizations’ culture. Recently, Durrance (1998) reported on research being conducted at the Society for Organizational Learning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in making tacit knowledge explicit. The research suggests that new knowledge is created when converting tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge. The process is described as a spiral: “Within an individual, explicit becomes tacit, then, as you reflect and express, that tacit knowledge is translated and creates new knowledge--either tacit or explicit--that others can share” (p. 26). Their studies indicate that translating tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge can facilitate others’ learning and is more effective when demonstrated by doing than when explained by words alone.

¹³ The myths include learning basics that are second nature; paying attention to one thing at a time; delaying gratification; memorizing information without meaning attached; forgetting past learning is a problem; knowing only “what’s out there;” and assuming that answers are either right or wrong (Langer, 1997, p.2).

Consciousness Human consciousness--its levels, its states, and its structures--adds another dimension to adult learning (Boucouvalas, 1993, 1995, 1997; Roberts, 1988; Tart, 1986) in relation to professionals' workplace devaluation. Tart (1986) emphasizes that knowledge is state-specific, "What you can know depends on the state of consciousness you are in" (p. 169). To know all that an individual knows, some things must be studied in an altered state of consciousness. Roberts (1988) predicts that a truly educated person will be able to select the appropriate consciousness state and develop its potential for knowledge. Boucouvalas (1993, 1995, 1997) provides a framework that encourages applications from consciousness studies on the levels, states and structures of consciousness to complement the analytic-rational learning in knowledge creation, and the process of learning. Boucouvalas (1997) observes that individuals who "sleep on it" when contemplating a concern, an interest, or idea, continue to process at a level different from conscious awareness and often have a better understanding or new insight into the issue. She notes that consciousness studies complement and contribute to the broad context of learning, not only in the academic discourse of transformative learning. An awareness and application of consciousness research may provide pathways to unravel the complexity of the workplace devaluation experience.

Communicative Learning Communicative learning addresses fundamental adult needs to socially interact at the interpersonal and intergroup level and to construct the meaning from experience. Communicative learning employs an inductive reflective approach to learning through which individuals intuitively search for meaning to achieve congruity with their environment. The interaction and interpretation of language, symbols, and actions with self and others facilitates the construction of meaning through experience. Awareness of the socio-cultural context and its influence on the construction of meaning is essential to this area of learning.

Some researchers perceive communicative learning as central to adult learning theory (Mezirow, 1991, 1995; Boyd and Myers, 1988; Hart, 1990; Fenwick, 1994; Boyd and Fales, 1983; Clark, 1993). Mezirow (1991) states:

The most significant learning of adulthood falls into this category because it involves understanding, describing, and explaining intentions; values; ideals; moral issues; social, political, philosophical, psychological, or educational concepts; feelings and reasons. All of these things are shaped decisively by cultural and linguistic codes and social norms and expectations. (p. 75)

Power and organizational norms for effective communication may influence the professionals' and decision-makers interpretations of the workplace devaluation experience. Gallois (1993) proposes that power differentials affect interpersonal and intergroup interpretations of communicative learning. A person or group communicating with a person or group who is perceived as having more power or more status in the interaction puts more constraints on the interaction. As a result of the power differential, the professional communicating with the supervisor on organizational issues will feel more constraints in what and how he or she communicates than will the supervisor. Conversely, the supervisor might feel more constraints when communicating with the professional about the professional's area of expertise. Dialogue and communication among professionals and decision-makers within

acceptable organizational norms will be affected by the power differential and may increase the feelings of frustration and powerlessness that are often a result of devaluation.

Emotions are an important influence in communicative learning. Our ability to learn and to interpret the meaning of our experience are influenced by the strength of our emotions usually expressed as feelings (De Rivera, 1984, Fishback, 1998-1999). The professionals' powerful feelings experienced with workplace devaluation are usually expressed within the boundaries of the organizational norms. The frustration of feeling powerless to change the situation can develop into anger (De Rivera, 1984).

Kegan (1994) adds the sixth dimension to the conceptualization of adult learning with the relationship of psychology and culture:

The psychological phenomenon is the evolution of consciousness, the personal unfolding of ways of organizing experience that are not simply replaced as we grow but subsumed into more complex systems of mind. . . . The cultural phenomenon is the "hidden curriculum," the idea that to the list of artifacts and arrangements a culture creates and the social sciences study we should add the claims or demands the culture makes on the minds of its constituents. (p. 9)

Summary The concept of adult learning resulting from life's experience is fundamental to this research inquiry. These adult learning concepts implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, identify four themes inherent to adult learning from life experience. The adult experiences an intentional or involuntary change as a result of the interrelationship of learning and experience. The process of adult learning involves reflection on the experience and its interaction with the individual's life experience to include the socio-cultural environment. With learning, as with change, emotions factor into the process, especially when learning requires letting go of old ways of thinking to make way for an alternative perspective. The individuals' interaction with the organizational milieu and their personal socio-cultural beliefs, values, and knowledge determine how they interpret the experience; how they may or may not learn from the experience, or when they may or may not become aware of workplace devaluation.

Adult Development

Adult development theory offers an important perspective as well as connecting links to learning from the experience of workplace devaluation. Some researchers (Merriam and Cafferella, 1991; Tennant, 1990; Boucouvalas and Krupp, 1989) have developed slightly different organizing categories for the large literature base of adult development and its relationship to adult learning. However, all agree that adult development is closely related to learning from experience and is best understood from a multi-disciplinary approach. Boucouvalas and Krupp, (1989) conceptualize adult development and learning as circular. They believe that adult development refers to growth or change in the nature, modes, and content of learning, which in turn, leads to further development and that forms a continues cycle of development and learning. Tennant (1990) observes that growth in adult development "is predicated on life's experiences and adaptation to what may be termed the pragmatics of life" (p. 226). Several significant theories from the psychological and cognitive adult development

literature enhance the conceptual framework for the professionals' experience of workplace devaluation.

Psychological Development Literature most pertinent to this inquiry stresses the role of life events in precipitating development that may result in learning. Aslanian and Brickell (1980) observed that trigger events often result in learning when adults cope with change in their lives. Merriam and Clark, (1991) specifically define trigger events as a personal crisis, critical incident, significant event or life event related to work life or personal (love) life¹⁴. The results of their study on the work-and-love-interaction and the place of significant learning experiences indicated significantly more learning events located in the work than in the love arena. Merriam and Clark also found that ten times more learning occurs when work and love are both rated good. However, they found a greater likelihood for adults to restructure meaning from the experience when the learning events were rated as bad. In addition, they observed a link in the work domain between learning and identity and, also, between learning and job satisfaction.

Neugarten (1969, 1976) posits that the timing of the life event or task determines the effect on adult learning and development. When events, such as marriage or the birth of a child, occur "on-time" or at expected times in adults' lives, individuals are allowed time for rehearsal and anticipation of the change. Thus, on-time events are not necessarily trigger events. Off-time events are unexpected events, given one's age or position in life, that precipitate crises and perhaps learning. Professionals' experience of workplace devaluation, though not named above, usually occurs as an off-time event in the professionals' career and may "trigger" learning or development.

Literature reviews on adult development related to adult learning (Merriam and Cafferella, 1991, Tennant, 1990, Boucouvalas and Krupp, 1989) identify several theories of psychological growth that provide multiple developmental perspectives to professionals' experience of workplace devaluation (Perry, 1970; Loevinger, 1976; Erikson, 1978; Fowler, 1981; Gilligan, 1982; Roodin, Rybash, and Hoyer, 1984; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, Tarule, 1986; Cook-Greuter, 1994; Kegan, 1994). In some of these theories (Perry, 1968, Erikson, 1982, Gilligan, 1982; Belenky et al., 1986), growth is generally characterized as movement through phases at different times across the life span. Psychological, social, and cultural factors encourage or inhibit movement through the stages. Transitions between the phases are usually described as disorienting and distressful. Bridges (1980) views transitions as a natural process of growth that requires letting go of the past. Daloz (1986) based on his longitudinal study of non-traditional students suggested that a mentor facilitates the transition. He also observed that some students do not demonstrate developmental growth from their education experiences because of factors in their personal lives that discourage change of this nature.

Some researchers (Kegan, 1994; Fowler, 1981; Loevinger, 1976) emphasize that higher level development occurs through a self-reflective process of change from ego-centered independence toward an integrated balance of independence and interdependence. Relevant to professionals' experience of workplace devaluation are Fowler's (1981) stages of faith, wherein he integrates the construction of meaning with life experiences of self, others, and the world.

¹⁴Merriam and Clark(1991) define work as relationships and issues centered around an individual's career. They define love as relationships and issues centered around family and friends or the personal life.

Roodin, Rybash and Hoyer (1984) proposed a framework across the adult life span that includes the affect and effect of emotions and incorporates an active, dialectical, constructivist approach to moral thought and action. They suggested that individuals' significant life events influence the development of abstract moral principles grounded in reality. Their framework may inform how professionals construct meaning of workplace devaluation.

Cognitive Development Another conceptual consideration in understanding professionals' workplace devaluation are adult cognitive development models (Kegan, 1994; Riegel, 1973; Basseches, 1989; Roodin et al., 1984). These models emphasize the role of dialectical thought as they describe how thinking patterns change over time within the context of maturation, culture, environment, and moral development. Riegel and Basseches, among others, have proposed that development is an ongoing dialectical process between the changing and developing person together with the changing and evolving society. Roodin, Rybash and Hoyer (1984) note the dialectic dimensions between cognition and emotion in adult moral development, such as justice and care or right and wrong. They suggest that adult moral development is an essential consideration when navigating the conflicts of significant life events. Tennant (1990) also suggests that a study of developmental change requires an analysis of common everyday interactions and the dialogues contained within them. For example, how the professional manages the dialectical tension between work and family, profession and organization, work group and rest of the organization might be related to the professional's experience of not being valued by decision-makers.

Kegan (1994) emphasizes that adult development includes how adults make meaning of the expectations of self and others--family, friends, professional colleagues, supervisors, and managers-- experienced in their everyday worlds. He suggests that the frustrations of modern life result from an intrapersonal conflict between how we know the world and how we are expected to understand it. Kegan describes this experience as the feeling that we are "in over our heads." In the five stage adult development theory outlined in his book, In Over Our Heads, he provides a synthesis of the psychological and cognitive development process together with the dynamic interaction of cultural demands. Of special interest to this conceptual framework, Kegan (1994) illustrates his theory of adult development with relevant "real" workplace issues and anecdotes that offer another perspective applicable to workplace devaluation.

Transpersonal Orientation The origins of transpersonal learning are in the field of transpersonal psychology. Boucouvalas (1983) described transpersonal psychology as the fourth force of psychology that unifies and extends beyond the three forces of analytic, behavioral, and humanistic psychology. Transpersonal psychology integrates the multi-layered unconscious strata that go beyond individual personalities and highlights a synergistic visionary mode of seeing the world. Boucouvalas (1984) observed that "a transpersonal perspective offers an image and view that respects and celebrates autonomy, individuality, cultural differences while at the same time leads us beyond to the commonalties and potential global identity that all humanity shares" (p. 25). Lajoie and Shapiro (1992) define transpersonal psychology as "concerned with the study of humanity's highest potential, and with the recognition, understanding, and realization of unitive, spiritual, and transcendent states of consciousness" (p. 91).

A transpersonal orientation focuses on the balanced development of the whole person, an integration of physiological, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects. The motivating factor is service to humanity that overcomes the dichotomy between selfishness and unselfishness. Transpersonal learning is difficult to articulate and comprehend without experiencing it. Central to transpersonal learning is acknowledgment of the interdependence and connectedness of each individual to the universe and acknowledgment of knowing beyond the experience of conscious learning through the physical senses and rational thought (Diekman, 1982; Tart, 1986; Wilber, 1990; Roberts, 1988; Boucouvalas, 1995).

Boucouvalas (1988) suggests that complementary dimensions of the autonomous (independent) and homonomous (connected) self are central themes of transpersonal adult development. Transpersonal learning is knowledge and insight gained through the integration of the individual autonomous self and an interdependent societal self, composed of one's connections with family, work, community, state, nation, and the world with which one identifies. Transpersonal learning requires a level of self-knowledge and openness to life experiences that result in a change of world view or being changed so that it appears you are living in a different world. Inherent in this learning is a letting go of the past, and experiencing a grief process as new or different values, beliefs and ideologies emerge (Rogers, 1961/1989; Boyd and Myers, 1988; Boucouvalas and Krupp, 1989; Scott, 1997). Maslow (1968) describes "peak experiences" as resulting in a cognition of being--being changed, seeing things differently, living in a different world. He also notes that the peak experience often has its consequences of pain as the insight breaks through the individual's defenses. Peak experiences are another perspective on transpersonal learning.

In this study, the researcher defines transpersonal learning as the process of becoming aware of other ways of knowing through intuition and consciousness. This process can lead to the development of the observing self, the ability to look at the situation from many perspectives (Diekman, 1982). Transpersonal learning leads to the discovery that reality is something more than or greater than the individual (Boucouvalas, 1984; Tart, 1986).

Cook-Greuter (1990) adds another perspective to the transpersonal orientation with her post formal ego development theory. She defines ego development theory as an explanation of "the dynamic interconnection between one's conception of self and one's conception of reality" (p. 120). The results of her analysis of unusual responses to the Washington University Sentence Completion Test (SCT) added two ego stages beyond Loevinger's (1976) autonomous stage. Cook-Greuter concluded that these additional two stages based on data from adults who were not intentionally developing their spirituality suggests that transcendent awareness with its attendant cognitive, emotional, and behavioral transformation is a non-meditative, legitimate path to a transpersonal world view.

Summary Adult development is integral to the conceptual framework of this research issue, professionals' experience of workplace devaluation and learning from experience. The role of life events (Neugarten, 1969, 1976; Aslanian and Brickell, 1980; and Merriam and Clark, 1991) in beginning a transition phase within the adult development theories is critical to the professionals' perspective of workplace devaluation. Adult cognitive development emphasizing

dialectical development (Riegel, 1973; Basseches, 1989; Roodin et al., 1984 and Tennant, 1990) along with the psychological approach of phase theorists to include Loevinger (1976) and Fowler (1981), and the transpersonal orientation (Boucouvalas, 1983, 1985, 1995, Cook-Greuter, 1990) offer several related perspectives. Kegan (1994) provides a cogent approach to how the experience of workplace devaluation impacts professionals.

Adult Learning Theories

The adult learning literature incorporates many theories to explain the complexity of adult learning. Merriam (1993b) observed that: “It is doubtful that a phenomenon as complex as adult learning will ever be explained by a single theory, model, or set of principles” (p. 12). With that in mind, several theories were selected that addressed the themes of change, reflection, socio-cultural milieu, and emotion. These relevant theories have been described as transformation theory (Boucouvalas, 1997), transformative learning (Cranton, 1997), or transformational learning (Clark 1993), or transformative education (Boyd and Myers, 1988). The most pertinent theories to this study are Mezirow’s (1981, 1991) theory of perspective transformation and Boyd and Myer’s (1988) transformative education. In addition, research on learning from life experiences highlights other relevant findings based on methodology similar to this study (Merriam and Clark, 1991; Boyd and Fales, 1983; Boud and Griffin; 1987; Boud and Walker, 1990).

Perspective Transformation An ongoing debate in the literature is whether reflection on the experience in relation to learning must be intentional as in perspective transformation. Perspective transformation is intentional critical self-reflection on strongly held assumptions that constrain or limit the individual’s perception of a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow (1981, 1991).

In his writings of transformative learning theory Mezirow (1981, 1991) delineates a perspective transformation process as essential to transformative change at the individual level. The central premise of perspective transformation is the individuals’ construction of meaning from experience through critical self-reflection and rational discourse. His theory of perspective transformation initially evolved from a study he did in 1975 on women returning to school or the workforce. He suggests that perspective transformation is a linear, ten step, rational process with emotional components that is initiated by a “disorienting dilemma.” Taylor’s (1997) analysis of thirty-nine empirical studies on Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning discerned that transformative learning is not a rational, conscious process and concluded that transformative learning incorporates a variety of nonrational and unconscious modalities for revising or constructing new meaning. Taylor (1997) noted that most studies concur on the important role of critical reflection. He also observed that some researchers¹⁵ found little support for critical self-reflection as being required in perspective transformation. Thus, Taylor asserted that perspective transformation is not necessarily self-initiated and may at times just happen. This finding contradicted Mezirow’s definition of perspective transformation and supported Roger’s explanation of significant learning or Maslow’s peak learning.

¹⁵ The following dissertations are cited by Taylor (1997) to support his finding: Scott, 1991; Hunter, 1980; Taylor, 1993, Elias, 1993

Transformative Education Boyd and Myers (1988) define transformative education as an expansion of consciousness that results in significant changes in psycho-social development. They note that not all transformations lead to an expansion of consciousness and integration of personality. Boyd and Myers define the experience of positive transformation:

. . . as a clearly demarcated event which moves the person to psychic integration and active realization of their true being. In such transformations the individual reveals critical insights, develops fundamental understandings and acts with integrity (p. 262)

Their theory based on analytic depth psychology and the work of Carl Jung also considers the collective unconscious while Mezirow's theory of perspective transformation is based on psycho-analytic theory. Transformative education identifies grieving as a critical condition for discernment and meaningful re-integration of socio-cultural symbols in their life, such as authority figures. Once individuals have the capabilities to access different levels of knowing through the processes of recognition, discernment, and re-integration, an integrated and different world view is formed.

The professionals may experience workplace devaluation in a way that affects the central core of their identity. Some professionals relate that they often go through periods of denial, anger, bargaining, acceptance--the stages of the grief process. Transformative education adds a relevant perspective to this inquiry.

Taylor's analysis (1997)¹⁶ of perspective transformation studies notes references to the grief cycle. Dirx (1997), Scott, (1997) and Grabov (1997) highlight how they have incorporated transformative education in their praxis. Scott (1997) summarized:

The goal of personal transformation from this orientation is to expand consciousness itself or actually change personality through conscious awareness of the individuating process. Jung postulated an expanded notion of the unconscious to include not only the personal unconscious recognized by Freud but also the collective unconscious of objective psyche. (p. 43)

The concepts of "nurturing the soul" and the "grieving soul" are metaphors that imply the effect of the collective unconscious as a source of creativity, self-knowledge and wisdom (Scott, 1997; Dirx, (1997). The role of consciousness and learning in constructing meaning of life experiences is acknowledged in the literature.

Summary Grabov's (1997) description of the transformative learning experience captured a synthesis of the learning occurrence. She visualized a tension between the cognitive and intuitive, the rational and the imaginative, the subjective and objective, personal and social. The person is at the center moving between, in and out of the seeming opposite dimensions of learning. Grabov concluded:

¹⁶ The following dissertations are cited by Taylor (1997) to support his finding Brookfield, (1989); Clark 1991a; Scott, (1991a); Vogelsang (1993); Nostrand (1992); Hunter (1980); The Group for Collaborative Learning (1994).

“In seeming paradox, the value of the imagination and the power of emotion exist within the rational notion of transformation, and learners rely on analysis to make sense of their feelings, images, and intuitive descriptions” (p. 95).

In total the adult learning theory addressed above provides direction in understanding how professionals may construct meaning from their experience of workplace devaluation.

Emotion Development

The purpose of this section is to illuminate the effect of emotions on learning, not to explain the neurobiology of emotions¹⁷. Emotions play a vital role in the experience of professionals’ workplace devaluation, especially the first physiological response when the awareness of devaluation emerges and is perceived as a threat. The influences of the emotions continue as a primary motivator for the professional to continue to work through the issues or become stuck in avoidance or denial of the experience.

Fishback (1998-1999) reports that research on the neurobiology of emotions states that it is impossible to separate thought and emotion. As a result, emotion exerts a strong influence on learning. For example, fear can inhibit the brain’s ability to function at a higher cognitive level or it can imprint a memory forever as a result of a strong emotion. She also notes that if individuals are fearful or angry, little or no learning can take place. These results from neurobiology reinforces the complex interrelationships of the professionals experience of workplace devaluation to how professionals learn from the experience.

Malatesta and Izard (1984) in their classic book, Emotion and Adult Development, explore theory and research from the ways the motivational system of emotion informs and is informed by the cognitive and motor skill domains. Especially relevant to this study are the chapters on developing the full range of emotional experience (De Rivera, 1984), on the influence of cohort variation (Felton and Shaver, 1984), and on the development of the adult self through processing affective responses to life experiences (Stewart and Healy, 1984).

Hochschild (1983) illuminates the commercialization of emotion in the workplace that requires employees and some professionals to do emotion work and to present a mandated response to customers usually in service oriented organizations or positions. Much of her theory is applicable to the emotion work that professionals may do when experiencing workplace devaluation.

Goleman (1995/1997) developed the concept of emotional intelligence and presents a strong argument that it is a strong indicator of human success. He defines emotional intelligence as self-awareness, altruism, personal motivation, empathy and the ability to love and be loved. Goleman advocates that by learning to recognize emotions and control our reactions, to combine thinking with feeling and by following the flow of feelings, become more creative. Goleman does provide a readable text that provides a blend of neuroscience and social science in

¹⁷ Reardon (1998-1999) provides a short summary of development of knowledge on the functioning of the brain. For more detailed information the reader is referred to the internet, library, or bookstore. All have many books available on the subject.

understanding emotions. Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence can provide an alternative view for understanding the other's (colleagues, supervisor, manager, decision-makers) and the professional's understanding of self when experiencing workplace devaluation.

Summary Recognition of the influence of emotions to learning and to life experiences in the workplace is emerging. Research in the neurosciences, adult learning, and adult development looks promising in its application to understanding the influence of emotion to the experience of workplace devaluation and the learning from it. This area of research and practice is critical to the many issues in the workplace.

Related Studies

Learning from Life's Experience One area of literature in adult learning, relevant to this study, highlights the interaction of life experiences with the learning process resulting in the interpretation and construction of knowledge. This body of literature, taken as a whole, articulates the holistic process of learning, the role of reflection, and the emotional aspect of learning (Boyd and Fales, 1983; Boud and Griffin, 1987; Boyd and Myers, 1988; Cranton, 1997; Scott, 1997).

Keane (1987) described the process of learning from experience as two major patterns. One pattern consisted of moments of insight and peace-- a pause on the journey for meaning-- followed by the second pattern--described as a spiral back to disorientation and distress. The recurring patterns eventually lead to integration of new learning and insights. Boyd and Fales (1983) depicted the process of learning as a spiral that is comparable to an alternating current flowing back and forth between an internal and outer form of experience. They also found that not all participants experienced each step of the process. Weiser (1989) described the process as an expansion of consciousness on a vertical and horizontal dimension. The vertical dimension resulted in a new world view or framework, often with a minimum of content. The horizontal dimension is experienced as filling in the new insights with concrete experiences of specific events. Griffin (1987) recommended learners name their process, that only learners know what they are experiencing. She identified six categories of learning processes: (a) rational mind; (b) metamorphic mind (intuition or the subconscious); (c) relational mind,¹⁸ (d) emotional mind (when emotions generate learning); (e) physical mind,¹⁹ and (f) spiritual mind. Griffin also suggests that, in naming the process, the learner feels valued because the experience matters; it has a name. The uniqueness of the learning process to each individual's experience may be why talk about the learning process outside the information and skills area (instrumental) is so difficult.

Many researchers, noted above, agree that reflection is crucial to making meaning of experience. Reflection, in this sense, is defined as a process of creating and clarifying the meaning of past or present experience in terms of self in relation to self and self in relation to the world. The outcome of this process is a changed perspective. Boyd and Fales (1983) concluded that reflection is a natural process used by many people. Once individuals become aware of their own process of reflection, they are able to exercise greater control. Thus, awareness and practice of reflective skills can facilitate learning from experience.

Many of the above studies also give voice to the feelings experienced throughout the learning process. One commonality of the feelings experienced is the strong emotional tone of the words and the range of emotions selected to illustrate the experience. Examples are discomfort, grief, rage, loneliness, devastation, anger, betrayal, being stuck, feeling helpless, letting go, awakened, hopeful, peaceful, passionate, energized, renewed, self-confident. Reflection and learning do not begin until the emotions have been validated and worked through

¹⁸ Griffin (1987) defines relational mind to include group relationships and collaborative learning

¹⁹ Griffin (1987) defines physical mind as using bodily energy and tension to develop awareness of learning

(Taylor, 1997).²⁰ Carl Rogers (1961/1989) framed the experience as the pain of learning--the pain connected with learning itself, or the pain of letting go or giving up previous learnings. Rogers (1961) labeled this type of experience, "significant learning." Significant learning occurs when individuals are cognizant of what hurts and what they experience in their lived world through the discovery of knowing, not transmitting stored knowledge.

How does this learning occur? Can the learner facilitate this type of learning? How does the learner facilitate this type of learning? The literature has differing views on these questions. One view is that learning occurs when individuals become aware of their reactions, their intuition, and their bodies' response. Maslow (1968) emphasized that this type of learning experience is intrinsic to the individual--a discovery of one's commonness and one's uniqueness. The peak experience results in a cognition of being, being changed so that it appears you are living in a different world, similar to what is known as a "change in world view".

Workplace Issues Three seminal studies, Working (Terkel, 1970), Men and women of the organization (Kanter, 1977) and Breaking the glass ceiling (Morrison, White, Van Velsor, and the Center for Creative Leadership, 1987) added strong voices to concerns about workplace life. Terkel (1970) interviewed 133 individuals about their work and their "search for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor; in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying (p. xi). The "ordinary" men and women in his study shared their thoughts and feelings and questioned their place in society and the world of work. Terkel observed that their many questions and reflections on the "flaws" of society was in marked contrast to the few workers who questioned the "hard times" of the 1930s.²¹

Public discourse centered on the issue that women and minorities in organizations are not valued and that different expectations do exist in the evaluation of their work (Kanter, 1977 and Morrison et al., 1987). The workplace discussion related to these published studies helped men and women address workplace issues of representation, power, and opportunity-- issues not previously addressed in the public forum. Kanter (1977) found that an individual's role and position in the organization was a greater contributor to lack of upward mobility than the individual's sex:

My examination of how forms of work organization, and the conceptions of roles and distributions of people within them, shape behavioral outcomes, leaves very few verifiable "sex differences" in behavior that are not better explained by roles and situations--and thus able to account for men's behavior, too. There is a system of relations in place in modern organizations in which many features are interlocked and mutually reinforcing. The only effective long-term changes will be those that address the nature of such systems, that break into a number of vicious cycles (managers, secretaries,

²⁰ Taylor (1997) analyzed 39 dissertations on perspective transformation. He cites this finding based on the following dissertations: Morgan, 1980; Coffman, 1989; Sveinunggaard, 1994.

²¹ Terkel (interviewed and wrote the remembrances of workers from the "Great Depression" of the 1930s in his book Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression.

opportunity, power, numbers of socially different people, added for clarification) which I describe in detail in . . . (p. xiii)

Contrary to Kanter's finding that different treatment within organizations was more a factor of position and role in the organization, Morrison et al. (1987) found that women were treated differently from men. Their finding on different treatment of women and struck a common chord among most women and individuals who identified themselves as a minority within organizations. The number of organizations that reacted to the open discussion gave additional credence to "impression management" (Goffman, 1959/1973) and may contribute to the phenomenon of this study. Goffman's explanation of impression management and its relevance to the workplace is stated below:

A social establishment is any place surrounded by fixed barriers to perception in which a particular kind of activity regularly takes place. I have suggested that any social establishment may be studied profitably from the point of view of impression management. Within the walls of a social establishment we find a team of performers who cooperate to present to an audience a given definition of the situation. This will include the concept of own team and of audience; and assumptions concerning the ethos that is to be maintained by the rules of politeness and decorum. We often find a division into back region, where the performance of a routine is prepared and front region, where the performance is presented. . . Among members of the team we find that familiarity prevails, solidarity is likely to develop, and that secrets that could give the show away are shared and kept. A tacit agreement is maintained between performers and audience to act as if a given degree of opposition and of accord existed between them. Typically, but not always, agreement is stressed and opposition is underplayed. (p. 238)

Others (Eagley and Johnson, 1990; Eagley, Makhijani, and Klonsky, 1992; Gilbert, 1994; Ely, 1995) built a case that women being devalued in the workplace is based on the social construction of gender-- not male or female biological sex differences. Gender is an ongoing social construction for individuals built on interactions with their biological being and their socio-cultural environment. This perspective is a different way to think about male-female relations and requires a different world view of female-male differences. Ely (1995) found that law firms with greater representation of women in senior positions had less stereotypical sex role behavior than in organizations with little or no representation of women at the senior management level. As a result, individuals in these law firms were more effective in working together, experienced higher job satisfaction, and had less turnover of women lawyers.

Another research perspective (Fletcher, 1994) suggests that the relational or interpersonal aspect of work is marginalized through the organizational discourse of work. The relational experience of work is seen to be an important element of the work experience for some (primarily women). Fletcher (1994) found that through an unobtrusive use of power, these activities are not considered "real" work in contributing to the organization's product. Thus, these activities are discounted and devalued and their effectiveness is invisible.

Emotions in the Workplace The strong emotions and feelings resulting from workplace devaluation are central to understanding the experience. Emotions are usually described as

strong forces within the individual that are often ignored in the workplace. The following books and studies address emotions and issues found in the workplace that may be part of workplace devaluation or contribute to the experience.

The research on anger in the workplace may provide insights to the workplace devaluation. Allcorn (1994), in Anger in the Workplace: Understanding the Causes of Aggression, notes that people often confuse anger with other aspects of emotional life such as fear, guilt, shame, or sorrow. He views anger as a product of thinking. An individual must first perceive and interpret an experience to be hurtful, frustrating, or humiliating before consciously selecting anger. Anger can be directed toward someone else for inflicting an unexpected humiliation on us or it can be directed inward at ourselves when acknowledging a deeply felt source of pain. Although some researchers (Bry, 1976; Carter, 1991) describe anger as a form of psychic energy that increases in strength until it is expressed in a cathartic release such as blowing up at others, Allcorn (1994) views anger as an ongoing threat, humiliation, or frustration that creates a chronic state of anxiety²² that can lead to psychosomatic symptoms. Aggression²³ often accompanies anger. Allcorn developed models of anger and aggression that explain the processes within the individual from the perceived threat, humiliation, injustice or frustration through taking aggressive action. Allcorn (1994) states:

Understanding anger and aggression in the workplace is a critically important aspect of improving human performance and productivity. At the same time, dealing with anger effectively at work is one of the truly unexplained frontiers left for the twenty-first century (p. 25).

His research suggests that understanding the process of anger and aggression development will led to effective ways of dealing with the anger. One factor he has not considered in his models is the interaction of the strength of anger and aggression. His recommendations throughout the book stress the management and control of anger, something that is easier said than done.

Boucouvalas (1996) suggests that the anger literature has limitations and that the transpersonal orientation provides a framework to better understand and transform anger rather than manage anger through suppression and control that often results in psychological or psychosomatic illness. She suggests that anger can be viewed as a source of energy for the individual to grow or transform the negative aspects of anger if the individual can “sustain the pain of transforming to a higher level of consciousness” (p. 12). Boucouvalas recommends that the theory and practice of a transpersonal orientation in understanding anger provides a way to consciously transform or harness the energy in ways different than aggressive behavior.

Recently, other studies have explored the emotions of fear (Ryan and Ostereich, 1998), rejection (Savage, 1997) and failure (Hyatt and Gottlieb, 1987/1993). These studies employed a common methodology, similar to that of this study, of interviewing people who were willing to

²² Allcorn (1994) defines anxiety as a diffuse, unpleasant feeling that alerts us to threat and automatically mobilizes our attention and bodies to attack or escape (p. 9).

²³ Allcorn defines aggression as socially disapproved overt or covert behavior that promises to reduce anxiety and restore safety, control, and self-esteem. Aggression is viewed as socially destructive and often self-defeating behavior (p. 15).

talk about their experiences and the consequences. These books describe the emotions experienced by the participants, provide suggestions for individuals on the process of managing their emotions, and explore the process of grieving as part of the healing from their experience. Ryan and Ostereich, (1998) also include suggestions for managers and decision-makers to facilitate creating a high trust and high performing organization. Mention of these books are included in this review as they illuminate how difficult it is to recognize and name the experience as workplace devaluation. These emotions--rejection, fear, and failure--may be experienced by professionals in this study. However, these emotions are not likely to be experienced in isolation as outlined in the books. The professionals' experience of workplace devaluation appears to include clusters of emotions.

Rafaeli and Sutton (1989) developed a model that depicts how emotional processes evolve during interpersonal interaction within organizations and effect both preferred outcomes and unwanted outcomes for the individuals involved. They also propose that a reciprocal relationship exists in which the expressed emotions influence felt emotions of each individual. The model explicates their findings from their research on expressed emotions in organizations and highlights the effect of expressed emotion on the behavior of others.

Van Maanen and Kunda (1989) analyzed the roles that an organization's culture plays in encouraging and constraining emotional expression. They studied the nexus of rules that govern emotional expression and the employee's understanding of the organization's culture to appropriate and inappropriate behavior in the workplace. Van Maanen and Kunda studied two very different yet strong organizational cultures represented by High Technology, Incorporated (a pseudonym) and Disneyland. In both organizations, decision-makers consciously built and sustained elaborate cultures. Van Maanen and Kunda examined the organizational and psychological consequences of this decision. They identified this practice, actively creating an organizational culture as a subtle and powerful form of organizational control. Organizational control is subtle because employees view organizational culture as something that they can do little to change. Organizational control is powerful because it aims at emotional compliance, a deeper level of employee compliance than other organizational controls--market control of labor, technical control of the product or service process, and bureaucratic control. Van Maanen and Kunda conclude that these ethnographic studies suggest that forms of control all have their benefits and costs to the organization and to its employees. They observed that "all of us experience uncertainty, conflict, doubt, and fluctuation when it comes to deciding how much to invest of ourselves in our work roles and organizations" (p. 91). Members of these organizations experience real feelings not only of pride, enthusiasm, and loyalty (valued by both organizations) but also of cynicism and disbelief (not tolerated by both organizations). Van Maanen and Kunda recommend that organization leaders consider the ethical aspects of culture control--the bright side and the dark side.

Organization Issues A segment of organizational theory literature (Ferguson, 1984; Aktouf, 1992; Easterby-Smith, 1997) identified the need for management to rethink management's role in organizations beyond meeting the bottom line. Ferguson (1984) presented a strong argument that bureaucratic power structures are the primary source of oppression of individuals in organizations. She advocated that the organizations value the instrumental (masculine) and expressive (feminine) traits of all individuals. According to Ferguson, the

strains of impression management are immense and require a fundamental dis-identification between the individual self and the manipulative role played. Aktouf (1992) argued that much of the literature on “new ideas of management” does not emphasize the needed philosophical shift to make the individual an explicit focus, as indicated in the radical humanistic and neo-Marxist philosophy. He highlighted the trend to focus current concerns on the development of staff while still maintaining the status quo in power, control of profits, and division of labor. Everyday reality for the staff does not change. He advocated the necessity to change the rules and very nature of power and control that are perpetuated in organizations.

Easterby-Smith (1997) complements this argument in his literature review of organizational learning and learning organizations. Learning organizations are action oriented and geared toward creating an ideal organization that maximizes learning. Organizational learning, in contrast, focuses on understanding the organization’s learning processes through analysis without trying to change the processes. Using a multi-disciplinary perspective, he recognized similar differences in the focus on the individual by some, and on the organization by others. Important to this research are the resistance to learning and letting go of past learning on both the individual and organization level. Easterby-Smith noted that the sociological perspective is invisible on one hand and all pervasive on the other. He observed that organization research does not recognize sociology as a legitimate discipline, yet the issues (construction of knowledge, politics, power, and conflict as normal organization realities) are recognized as key barriers to implementing a learning organization.

Boydell’s (Pedler et al., 1996) Modes of Being, a model that illustrates an organization’s development in broadening its perspective, relates to the professionals’ experience of workplace devaluation by decision-makers and organizational learning. The seven Modes of Being are (a) adhering to set standards; (b) adapting set standards; (c) relating to situations; (d) experiencing working things out independently; (e) experimenting to discover new ways of doing things; (f) connecting to an interdependent approach; and (g) dedicating to synthesis and meaning. For instance, if the decision maker’s organization expects professionals to follow its rules-- written or unwritten (adhering), and the professionals are experimenting, applying their knowledge to be innovative for themselves and for others in the organization, the professionals may not feel valued and their ideas will be discounted. The decision makers of the organization may perceive the professionals as not fitting into the organization and not recognize their value.

Another research perspective (Fletcher, 1994) suggests that the relational or interpersonal aspect of work is marginalized through the organizational discourse of work. The relational experience of work is seen to be an important element of the work experience for some (primarily women). Fletcher (1994) found that through an unobtrusive use of power, these activities are not considered “real” work in contributing to the organization’s product. Thus, these activities are discounted and devalued and their effectiveness is invisible.

Work Alienation Some of the issues identified in organizational theory have been described as work alienation of professionals within organizations (Witt, 1993; Agarwal, 1995; Bryant, 1992; Tucker, 1986; Daniel, 1985). Work alienation is a lack of interest in the work process or product due to lack of control or influence over the work process or product (Crank et al. 1995). Witt (1993) found that scientists who perceived an unfavorable organizational work

climate experienced alienation. Agarwal (1995) also found that formalization of organization structure had a negative influence on experienced U.S. salespersons resulting in work alienation, organizational commitment, and role stress. Tucker (1986) and Daniel (1985) found that work alienation did appear to be a factor of job satisfaction. Daniel also found that increased participation in decision-making was not a factor of work alienation. Bryant (1992) found that women counselors experienced alienation within an authoritarian organizational structure requiring an overly structured treatment model that was in conflict with their altruism, devotion, family backgrounds, disillusionment, and career choice. She also found that the counselors who participated in conscious raising activities and talking with other people to label their abusive experience were able to reverse their perceptions of alienation. Work alienation may be a factor within the context of the increasing rate of change in organizations. This might be valid if professionals perceive the work climate as unfavorable or are managed by decision-makers who react to the change by implementing more formal controls within the organization.

Summary

This literature review indicated that research has been conducted on issues related to workplace devaluation from the individual, occasionally from the professionals' perspective, and mostly from the organizational perspective. The focus of the research has not been workplace devaluation. Usually the research focused on an issue within an organizational context that blocked upward mobility. Some of these issues examined include: barriers: opportunity, power, women and minorities, expectations, impression management. Some researchers (Eagley and Johnson, 1990; Eagley et al., 1992; Gilbert, 1994; Ely, 1995) argued that the construction of gender and social identity in the workplace is a major element of devaluation for both men and women. Others (Ferguson, 1984; Aktouf, 1992; Easterby-Smith, 1997) called for a radical change in the underlying philosophical values of senior leaders. These values maintain the status quo of a dominant functionalist bureaucracy that ignores the human potential. Still, others (Witt, 1993; Agarwal, 1993; Bryant, 1992; Tucker, 1986; Daniel, 1985) noted the contribution of work alienation as a factor to this phenomenon. The literature does note the importance of social identity theory, the socio-cultural environment of the individual and the organization. The research questions of this study are not addressed, although possible names for the phenomenon are indicated. Also missing is the critical connection with adult development and learning theories.

A conceptual framework of adult learning concepts, adult development, adult learning theory, and emotion development provided a foundation for the critical connection with the professionals' experience of workplace devaluation.

CHAPTER III: METHOD

Chapter III describes the qualitative research design to include philosophical assumptions, procedures for participant selection, data collection, and data analysis. This study employs grounded theory methodology (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990/1998). The research questions guided the design of the study.

Research Design

Glaser and Strauss (1967) in their seminal work described grounded theory as a “general methodology” (p. vii) for theory development that is grounded in data that is systematically gathered and analyzed. Theory emerges as a result of the continuous interaction between data collection and analysis. This constant comparative method incorporates verification of the theory’s relationships between concepts throughout the process. Inherent in this general methodology is the resulting theory reflects the interpretation of the participants and the researcher. The collaboration of Strauss and Corbin (1990/1998) provided techniques and guidelines for the beginning researcher on the iterative comparative analysis of data and data collection.²⁴ The grounded theory methods used in this study follow the guidelines outlined by Strauss and Corbin.

The dissertation focuses on workplace devaluation, the professionals’ perspective of how they experience the discounting of their value to the workplace by decision-makers. Three research questions provide the focus.

- What is the experience of professionals’ workplace devaluation?
- How did professionals learn from the experience of workplace devaluation?
- What did the professionals learn from the experience of workplace devaluation?

The scholarly literature does not address the professionals’ perspective of workplace devaluation. A thorough search revealed not one study in the scholarly research that specifically described the experience of professionals’ workplace devaluation; thus, the researcher undertook a grounded theory approach--a systematic beginning of theory development. Strauss and Corbin (1990/1998) defined grounded theory as attempting to derive theory using multiple stages of data collection and an iterative, comparative data analysis. The constant comparison of data with emerging categories clarified the interrelationships of information to the categories. The design integrated sensitivity to human risks with a goal of constructing knowledge that respects the participants’ reality of their lived experience (Stake, 1995; Creswell, 1994). The grounded theory systematically integrated concepts found in the data.

Four philosophical assumptions of qualitative research (Creswell, 1994) aptly frame this research design. The reality experienced in the professionals’ everyday world is subjective with

²⁴ Strauss and Glaser diverged on recommended techniques for grounded theory analysis in the 1980s. Glaser (1992 and 1994) published two books emphasizing his approach to analysis and data collection that differs from Strauss and Corbin.

multiple interpretations (*ontological assumption*). Participants interacted as co-researchers in data interpretation (*epistemological assumption*). The interpretations and constructed meaning of the experience, based on the participants' life histories, are value-laden and biased (*axiological assumption*). An inductive process illuminated patterns that will increase cognition of the professionals' experience (*methodological assumption*).

The research design also established *internal validity* strategies. Internal validity assesses the research findings in relation to reality. In other words, are the research findings consistent with the reality of workplace devaluation experienced by the participants. Several strategies suggested by Merriam and Simpson (1995) were incorporated in this design: (a) have participants verify if the researcher's interpretations reflect their experience; (b) ensure duration of data collection supports in-depth understanding of the phenomenon; and (c) have peers review data and remark on credibility of findings. The strategies are explained below.

The research design provided an opportunity for professionals to share their experience. The researcher interviewed the participants three times over a four-month period. The second and third interviews built upon the previous interviews. Participants verified the transcription of each interview for accuracy. Typed transcripts were the raw data for analysis. The study participants also formed a focus group to validate the grounded theory, its constructs and relationships that emerged from their narratives relative to their experience. The participants' focus group met after the data analysis was completed. The participants verified that the seven-phase process and the categories of learning reflected their experience. In addition, peers, participants of a qualitative research study group and professional colleagues, commented on the data and plausibility of the findings.

Participants

This section outlines the rationale for participant selection, the criteria and the methods employed. Participant selection was critical because participants' experiences and their ability to talk about the experience served as the primary data source. Explanations of the responsibilities and expectations of participants as co-researchers are also provided.

Sampling Rationale

The raw data, participants' transcripts, highlighted the importance of *purposive sampling* in selecting participants. Strauss and Corbin (1990/1998) emphasize the logic of the analytic process and theoretical sensitivity direct the sampling procedures. For example, the first participant selected was a professional that met the participant selection criteria. Besides meeting the selection criteria, the remaining participants were systematically selected to maximize differences along the categories' dimensions, to demonstrate effects of changes, and to verify relationships between categories.

This experience of professionals' devaluation by organization decision-makers appears to be a common occurrence although little discussion is heard in public. For two years, the researcher spoke about her topic informally to professionals, colleagues and acquaintances, that

she met at social events, at conferences, at libraries, on trips, and in university classes. Many people identified with the topic. Some individuals even began to provide details of their experience. These interactions were encouraging, but the eager responses raised questions on who should be in the study and how to select participants to meet the standards of academic scholarship. Also, the researcher realized the critical importance of willingness, anonymity and confidentiality if professionals were to share details of this personal experience.

With the above considerations in mind and with an awareness of the assumptions governing theoretical sampling and theoretical sensitivity, some guidelines on participant selection evolved. The identified guidelines ensure anonymity and confidentiality of the participants; fit the researcher's travel and budget limitations, and maximize participants' differences to better understand the experience of workplace devaluation. Listed below are the theoretical sampling guidelines used in this study:

- Participants would self-identify and not be asked directly to participate.
- Participants would reside on the East coast of the United States.
- Participants would not work in researcher's organization.
- Participants would not work in the same organization.
- Participants would be employed by large organizations.
- Participants would represent both sexes.
- Participants would range in age from late 20's to 60's.
- Participants would represent different professions.

Selection

The focus of this study is the individual professional within the context of everyday organizational life. The four participants self-identified and volunteered to participate in the study after learning of the topic. After a preliminary interview with the volunteers, the researcher selected four professionals who met the criteria:

- Had several years (working knowledge) experience with the organization.
- Had a minimum of three years' professional experience.
- Were current in their field.
- Were valued (operationally defined by the professional) by the organization.
- Had experienced not being valued or even devalued (operationally defined by the professional).
- Were willing and able to articulate thoughts, insights, emotions, feelings on this experience.

Role of Participants

Participants as co-researchers are integral to this research. The terms participants and co-researcher are used interchangeably throughout this paper. The participants signed a professional agreement to tell their stories and to "communicate new understandings or perhaps better to reveal hidden meanings" (Barritt et al., 1983, p. 120) of their experience. This study

clearly and accurately reflects the participants' understandings of the experience--workplace devaluation.

The participants' role has five elements. First, participants will tell their narrative framed by the research questions (Appendix A). Second, they will review and verify that the transcripts of the interviews accurately reflect what they meant. Third, the co-researchers will write a journal or make notes as other details of their experience emerge through the process. Fourth, they will verify that the written narrative of their experience accurately reflects their experience. Fifth, the co-researchers will meet as a group to review the researcher's findings and to construct a group response to the research questions. The commitment of trust, collaboration, and search for meaning integral to this study requires an active co-researcher role by the participants.

As part of the screening, each participant agreed to follow the study protocols explained in the consent form (Appendix A). The researcher discussed confidentiality and anonymity with the participants before the participants signed a consent form. Each participant selected a code name to ensure anonymity. Table 1 profiles the participants.

Table 1: Participant Profiles

Name	Age	Profession	Mgr.	Org. Size	Org. Type	Yrs. in. Org.	Yrs. in. Profession
Julie	Mid 40s	Marketing/ Health Svcs.	yes	500	Non-profit	7	12
Danny	Mid 50s	Information Technology	yes	800	Government	20	30
Paul	Early 30s	Attorney	no	10,000+	Government	5	5
Sunny	Late 40s	Educator	no	2,000+	Government	19	25

Analysis Concerns

This section addresses three issues central to data collection and analysis on this topic. The sub-section on the interviewing method outlines the rationale for using *dialogic interviewing*, an unstructured interview format. The second sub-section, *trust development*, delineates the process of trust development that emerged. The third sub-section, *theoretical sensitivity*, defines this term and explains its application to the data.

Interviewing Method.

Interviewing is an effective tool for data collection. This section summarizes the research trends in unstructured interviewing techniques; the major challenges in acquiring accurate data; a definition of the term *dialogic interview*; and the rationale for conducting dialogic interviews. Fontana and Frey (1994), in their literature review, observe that interviewing is one of the most

common and most powerful tools we use to better understand others--individuals, groups, society.

Forms of interviewing include face-to-face interviews, group interviews, mailed questionnaires, and telephone surveys. The most common form is individual, face-to-face interviews. Traditionally, the researcher conducted individual interviews in a structured, or semi-structured manner, with set questions. The interviewer usually acknowledged the interviewee's response either with no confirmation or with a neutral comment. This structured interview protocol provided an objective standardized method for data collection. Over time, limitations of the structured interview in providing a holistic understanding of the phenomenon became apparent (Fontana and Frey, 1994).

Fontana and Frey (1994) highlight postmodern trends that have evolved from researchers' commitment to maintain the integrity of the phenomenon and to preserve the viewpoint of the participants in their everyday language. These trends include: (a) a heightened moral concern for participants; (b) an attempt to address the power structure inherent within interviews; and (c) a research approach with unstructured interviews.

The researcher coined the term *dialogic interview*²⁵ to describe the interviewing technique used in this study. Dialogic interviews integrate the methodology of co-operative inquiry (Reason, 1988; Reason and Rowan, 1981), reflective learning (Boud and Griffin, 1987) and unstructured interviews with a post-modern, feminist perspective (Fontana and Frey, 1994). Dialogic interviewing engages participants through reflection and dialogue about their experience and integrates practices that encourage participants to articulate their assumptions on which they base their actions. This approach encourages reflection and apperception for both the interviewer and the participants.

A central premise of the dialogic interview is *listening with understanding* so that the researcher could "see the expressed ideas and attitudes from the other person's point of view, to sense how it feels to him, to achieve his frame of reference in regards to the things he is talking about" (Rogers, 1961/1989, pp. 331 and 332). In other words, the researcher's goal is to listen without evaluating the participants' actions and reactions. The participants are encouraged to use open-ended questions and summarizing techniques to understand differing perspectives. Identified topics and probes, framed by the research questions, and the experience are the basis of the first interview ([Appendix B](#)). A desired outcome of dialogic interviewing is expression of the experience and its learning. In other words, professionals who begin a public dialogue will be able to express what they apperceived and learned.

This method's interaction during the interview of researcher with co-researcher was appropriate for the research topic and research questions. Use of this method not only yielded a depth and richness of data but also facilitated the development of mutual respect and trust. .

²⁵ A database search indicated two other uses of the term. Pollio et al. (1997) explain dialogue as essential to the phenomenological interview. Van Buskirk (1997) conducted a dialogic interview with himself. The researcher created the term *dialogic interview* for this study early in 1997 without knowledge of the impending publication of these two sources.

Trust Development.

Before the interviews began, ethical considerations of informed consent, right to privacy, and protection from physical or emotional harm were addressed. The literature offers practical suggestions and excellent background reading to deepen understanding of issues that might arise with this type of research (Douglas, 1976; Boud and Griffin, 1987; Reason, 1988, 1994; Traylen, 1994; Fontana and Frey, 1994). Traylen (1994) notes that this research method--collaboration with participants on issues with intra-conflict and emotion--is one that "ordinary people like me could use" (p. 61). Douglas states that the worst problems are trying to get beyond the public persona, especially regarding taken-for-granted feelings and meanings, problematic feelings and meanings, and self-deceptions. He notes that "most of the self-deceptions that interest social researchers are found in situations where there are clearly emotional conflicts" (p. 97). As emotional conflicts and cultural disjunction are probably part of this phenomenon for professionals, establishing trust with the participants was essential.

This type of research requires a sensitivity to the feelings, emotions, and concerns that the co-researchers might experience. Establishing trust is an on-going, reciprocal process that evolved with the participants as co-researchers. Trust development is often easier to say than to do. To develop trust, respect for the participants and active use of effective listening skills are essential. Examples of these listening skills are paraphrasing questions and responses, asking open-ended questions, summarizing dialogue, accepting participant's reality, demonstrating attentive, and open body-language in all interactions. The praxis of these listening skills is based on "listening with understanding" (Rogers, 1961/1989). The researcher demonstrated and expected participants to use these skills during the interviews. The co-researchers had proficiency in these listening skills which facilitated trust development. A tacit understanding of mutual respect and effective listening became the norm for the interviews.

A second aspect of trust building is comfort of the participants with the location of the interviews. A third factor in trust development is consistent adherence to the agreed upon protocol for anonymity and confidentiality ([Appendix A.](#)). Interviews with three of the participants took place in study rooms at libraries. One participant preferred to be interviewed at home. Unplanned interruptions were not a problem at any of the interview locations.

Trust between the researcher and each co-researcher did evolve over the three-month period during which the series of interviews took place. Three patterns emerged during the data collection phase that support this statement. First, all participants demonstrated a commitment to the data collection process in that they kept all interview appointments, responded promptly to reviewing their transcripts, and all showed for the focus group. Second, participants openly shared their emotions, perceptions of decision-makers, co-workers and sensitive issues occurring in the workplace with minimum probes by the researcher. Third, the interviews were reciprocal as dialogue evolved and participants were able to reflect and question the issues that emerged.

Participants' comfort with taping the interviews illustrates the trust development. During the first interview, two of the participants requested that the tape be stopped as they thought about whether they should discuss the issue during a recorded interview. Once the tape recorder was promptly turned off, the participants usually asked if the topic was appropriate for the

dialogue. When the researcher agreed, emphasizing the confidentiality and anonymity of the interview, the participants were comfortable with the continuation of the taping. All participants received a transcript of the first interview before the second interview was held. The researcher assumed that receiving the transcript as promised and the participants' perusal of the transcript for accuracy increased the comfort of the participants with the use of the tape recorder. After the first interview, participants often checked if the tape recorder was on, to make certain that the dialogue was recorded. One participant even requested that the tape recorder be turned on during informal conversation at the end of the third interview because she had an insight that was important to the experience.

Theoretical Sensitivity

Theoretical sensitivity is a necessary component for qualitative research. Glaser and Strauss (1967) identify two important components of theoretical sensitivity. One component is the researcher's ability to recognize what is important in the data. The second component is the researcher's ability to construct authentic meaning related to the reality of the phenomena. Theoretical sensitivity develops primarily through four sources:

- knowledge of the literature related to the phenomena;
- experience with the phenomena or similar phenomenon;
- assumptions that everyone's experience is different; and
- interactions with the data on a continual bases during the research process.

Theoretical sensitivity maintains a balance between creativity and science or the researcher's imagination and the phenomenon's reality. Strauss and Corbin (1990/1998) offer three guidelines to help maintain this balance:

- ask what is really happening (does reality fit the data);
- maintain an attitude of skepticism toward theoretical explanations, categories, hypotheses (check out with data); and
- follow data collection and analytic procedures of their method.

The researcher supplemented these guidelines with analytic and creative thinking techniques. These techniques helped to focus on the data's meaning beyond the obvious, to see the data in new ways; and to become aware of her cultural assumptions, beliefs and biases.

Data Collection

This section reports the methods used in the data collection phase: pilot interview, face-to-face dialogic interviews, and group interview.

Pilot Interview

The researcher taped a pilot interview with another volunteer who met the study criteria. The purpose of the pilot was two-fold: (a) to assess if the developed questions and probes

yielded relevant data; and (b) to assess if the lead researcher demonstrated effective interviewing and listening skills. The research professor on the dissertation committee reviewed the transcript and provided comments to the lead researcher. The volunteer also reviewed the transcript and gave comments to the researcher. The volunteer found the pilot session helpful to her understanding of her experience. In reviewing the transcription of the interview, the research professor of the dissertation committee and the researcher determined that the questions, probes and interviewing techniques yielded rich data and proceeded with the data collection.

Dialogic Interviews

Taped face-to-face dialogic interviews guided by identified questions and probes are the primary data collection method ([Appendix B](#)). After the initial interview, the researcher prepared the transcript. The participant reviewed the transcript for accuracy. The researcher also did a preliminary analysis to formulate questions and probes for the second interview. In addition to sending the second transcript to the participant for verification, both the first and second transcripts were reviewed to develop topics and probes for the third interview. This protocol was followed with all four co-researchers.

Group Interview

Once the analysis was completed, the co-researchers validated the findings in a group interview, which was taped, transcribed, and analyzed. The co-researchers confirmed the workplace devaluation process ([Figure 1](#)) depicted their experience; the composite listings of expressed feelings ([Appendix D](#)) and expressed learnings ([Appendix E](#)) represented their total experience of workplace devaluation; and integrated all the themes from the individual cases.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

A systematic approach outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990/1998) to the analysis and interpretation of the data provided a framework for the researcher to break through some of her biases and assumptions and organize data that support theory based on the lived world of the professional. *Coding* refers to a process of analysis and interpretation of the data resulting in an integration or explanation of the case study focused on a core category. An important aspect of this process is alternating between collecting and coding data to verify emerging ideas and to test developing hypotheses. Strauss and Corbin (1990/1998) differentiate three types of coding:

- *Open coding* is the process of naming or labeling ideas and categories with properties and dimensions.
- *Axial coding* is the process of relating sub-categories to a category and discovering connections presented as a paradigm model. Paradigm development identifies the sub-category relationships existing within the category to include: causal conditions, phenomena, context, intervening conditions, action and interaction strategies, consequences.

- *Selective coding* is the process of selecting the core category through systematically relating it to other categories and validating the relationships against the data. This process leads to the integration of the data, a process that weaves together the details, procedures, and operational logic of the phenomenon.

The data are usually coded one of two ways: micro level (word-by word or line-by-line analysis) or macro level (paragraph or document analysis). The researcher did line-by-line analysis, the most productive, for all 16,757 lines of interview data collected. [Appendix C](#) is the codebook developed from open coding. The researcher documented the analytic process through research notes or memos. The notes form a record of the phenomenon's emerging categories, relationships, further questions, consequences, actions and interactions. An iterative comparison method, combined with analytic inquiry, uncovered and explored multiple facets and dimensions of the experience.

The researcher used Ethnograph, a computer software program, to code the data and maintain a database of the codes, memo of insights and questions that emerged during the analysis. Doing complete codes, notes, and memos on the data are essential to present a convincing process of the validity of this research. Upon finishing the coding, a narrative of the experienced phenomenon for each participant was written emphasizing the significant themes and learning process that emerged. Again, the co-researchers verified the accuracy of their narratives.

The interpretation of the research data includes a summary of the themes and variations about the professionals' experience within the context of their lived world and society, integrated with a review of relevant scholarly literature. During the analysis and interpretation phase, the researcher worked closely with the co-researchers, a study group of doctoral students, and the research advisor and the chair of dissertation committee. This collaboration ensures the analysis meets the research criteria of precision, rigor, and verification (Merriam & Simpson, 1995; Garrison, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1990/1998; Barritt et al., 1983).

Summary

The methods outlined above are the appropriate starting place to learn more about this experience. Collaboration, trust development, and dialogic interviewing methods yielded substantial and appropriate data. The analytic methods for interpreting qualitative research developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990/1998) provided tools and structure to organize and interpret the data.

Two reasons determined the choice for case study research. First, little is known in the public forum about this phenomenon, in general, and particularly from the professional's own perspective of the experience. This method should elicit a broader knowledge base of the lived world of the professional in the organization. Second, by developing an awareness of core themes or elements of this phenomenon, professionals and decision-makers may begin to challenge their basic beliefs and attitudes. The research design outlined in this chapter leads to a consolidated theory grounded in the data.

CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS

This chapter presents the analyses of four professionals' descriptions of their workplace devaluation experience by decision-makers. The study sought to illuminate and better understand their experience and to discern the knowledge was derived from the professionals' experience. Grounded theory analysis of the interview transcripts produced a process cycle experienced by all participants.

This chapter presents the findings in three sections: (a) The Process; (b) The Narratives and (c) The Summary. Section One presents the core finding of the study--a graphic representation of a process that integrates the phases and the interrelationships of themes and constructs. In addition, this section describes the phases of the model, the commonalties, the major themes, and the constructs that emerged from the data. Sections two presents the four narratives of Julie, Paul, Danny, and Sunny. The process cycle provides a map to better understand "the lived world" of each professional as they struggled with workplace devaluation by decision-makers. Section three summarizes how these professionals learned from the experience and what they learned.

The Process Cycle

This section describes the process and provides definitions for the model's phases. The process provides a guide to understanding the professionals' experience of workplace devaluation. This section describes the phases, the commonalties, the major themes and the constructs of the experience. The process model (Figure 1) depicts the complex process that emerged from the data.

Individuals usually progress through the process cycle in a non-linear progression, although some individuals do follow a linear fashion. As the participants cycled through the process, they recycled through the different phases in various combinations depending on subsequent interactions, intra-actions, and assessments of their actions. The frequency of recycling relates to the professional's life experience, the other individuals, and the context of the situation.

Insert process model

Figure 1: Workplace Devaluation: Learning From Experience Process Cycle

The process is iterative²⁶ and functions at two levels: (a) external behaviors observable to others and (b) internal conscious and unconscious intra-actions among the individual's emotions, beliefs, values, knowledge, and assumptions. Note that the process bridges observable behaviors and intra-actions. The hourglass in the model represents the variable time between Place holder for process model each phase at both levels. The observable behaviors are usually public behaviors adopted by the individual. The public behaviors may resemble the behaviors of "impression management" (Goffman, 1959/1973) or "emotion work" (Hochschild, 1983).

²⁶ Iterative connotes frequent repetition of the process or individual phases. The four narratives will illustrate the meaning of this term.

Interaction

An *interaction* is any comment, behavior, incident, or event involving the professional and another person in the organization. Three constructs, *autonomy*, *communication*, and *personalization*, acting together within the context of an interaction, spark the awareness of workplace devaluation (Figure 1). The scholarly literature documents the importance of autonomy or personal freedom in professional practice. Traditionally, management grants professionals a great deal of autonomy in their work. Autonomy requirements depend on the professional and the organization. Professionals and managers frequently negotiate these requirements, either explicitly or implicitly. All participants experienced a decrease in autonomy.

Communication, essential in the workplace, includes interpersonal skills, body language, and oral and written information. Professionals recognize the value of effective communication to their practice. Participants found organizational barriers around the issues that they saw as critical to their experience. As a result, the inability to communicate with the decision-makers contributed to the workplace devaluation.

Personalization is the professionals' interpretation that the interaction is purposely directed at them and it causes an interpersonal or intrapersonal conflict. Organizational life, with its inherent bureaucracy focuses on accomplishing the mission without regard to the human cost. Professionals understand this lack of compassion. Nonetheless, an interaction may occur that an individual interprets as a personal attack on their personal and professional identity. When a personal attack occurs, professionals personalize the interaction.

The intriguing elements of this confluence are tendency to flee or fight closely allied with the constructs of emotions, authority, and recognition. The interrelationships of these six constructs play out differently in each narrative. The arrows in Figure 1 represent the interrelationships of these constructs.

Intra-actions

Intra-actions are conscious and unconscious interactions among the individual's emotions, beliefs, values, knowledge, and assumptions. In the awareness phase, intra-actions are usually physiological, reactive, or habitual. *Creating Balance*, a self-reflective process, describes the intra-action (the primary internal behavior) of the *Coping*, *Action*, and *Consequences* phases of the process. Individuals usually only admit the aware and the acknowledge components to themselves and to a few trusted others.²⁷

²⁷ Others is defined here as spouse, friend, sister, brother, mother, father or trusted professional colleague.

Awareness

Awareness is that phase wherein the professional becomes aware that the interaction identified something that caused an emotional reaction which created a felt physical or biological response (Figure 1). Managing the emotions at this time become a priority. The strategy of choice is usually reactive or habitual. The participants often described this as wanting to confront the situation in some way (fight) or to leave (flee). At this point, the individual cannot name the something. The participants had not previously experienced this type of interaction and at first, were unable to name the experience. The interaction does not fit into the professional's life experience. Some are so uncomfortable with the reaction that they avoid similar interactions, without acknowledging their meaning. Other professionals react to the discomfort or emotional pain through avoidance or attributions. The significant point to remember is the awareness of one's emotions, usually an uncomfortable, embarrassing or painful reaction without being able to name the interaction.

Acknowledgment

Acknowledgment is that phase of the process when one is able to name the interaction at least to one's self (Figure 1). This moment might occur almost immediately after the interaction. At other times, the moment of acknowledgment occurs weeks, months, or years later. Awareness and Acknowledge appear to be closely related and movement from awareness to this phase can be short, especially in naming the emotion. At other times, one may avoid or be unable to name the experience or the emotion. When this happens, the individual will skip this phase and move to the coping phase, eventually returning to this phase.

Coping

Coping represents the thoughts, actions, and strategies that an individual implements to protect self in the situation (Figure 1). The management of the emotions usually corresponds to one of these four strategies: (a) repress the emotion, (b) direct the emotion inward, (c) direct the emotion at another individual or the organization, or (d) channel the energy toward self-growth. The intra-actions are important to this phase. The term, *creating balance*, describes this intra-action, a self-reflective process that individuals employ to feel that they are in control or that they are safe. *Creating Balance* occurs when individuals explore and examine the options they have available for self-protection. Coping options take many forms, including prayer, self-affirmations, avoidance, volunteering, exercising, complaints, jokes, or sarcasm. Other options might be confiding in a spouse or a friend, proving oneself, or journaling one's feelings and thoughts. For example, an individual might find a person or group who is willing to listen to his concerns or he might decide to avoid the person. Sometimes, the individual might change her work habits by either working longer hours to produce a better quality product or by just doing the minimal amount of work to meet job responsibilities or taking sick leave. At other times, the individual might do volunteer work in the community or take a class.

Coping is the *holding pattern* that one adopts until the emotional pain is great enough to act. The duration of this phase varies from days to years. When moving through the process,

individuals often re-examine their coping strategies after taking action or during the consequences phase.

Action

Action represents the action one undertakes to change the situation. This phase has both a creating balance and a decision process. Creating balance is usually the exploration and reflection on available options to change the situation. Generally methods for this consist of examining the pros and cons of the work situation or in defining the problem. In other words, the individual explains or gives meaning to the situation. Some individuals may begin a critical-self reflection by looking deep within themselves and beginning to challenge their basic beliefs, values, assumptions. The participants did not recall doing a critical self-reflection at this time. Emotions and recognition are powerful motivators in creating balance. Individual factors external to the organization are powerful constraints in creating balance. Options are both short-term and long-term. For example, an individual might decide to stay with the organization for three more years, at which time, the individual can retire and become an entrepreneur (long-term option). On the other hand, an individual may decide to leave the organization and to take another position as soon as possible (short term option).

The actions also take many forms: changing behavior, seeing the interaction differently; changing thought patterns; discussing the issue with the decision-maker; leaving the organization; or filing a formal grievance. Before taking action, and even while taking action, one's emotions continue to surge. One knows the current situation, but one does not know the situation that might result from the intended action. Fear of the unknown can be a powerful contributor to this phase.

Consequences

Consequences are the outcomes, aftermath, effects, or results of taking action. The consequences are both conscious and unconscious. Tacit learning is an example of unconscious consequences. Individuals actively assess the results of the action phase as one becomes consciously aware of the outcomes. This assessment either initiates the closure process or refocuses it on a process phase. The power of emotions energizes the individual to assess the situation again and to recycle through the coping or action phases. The data reflected little on the long-term consequences.

Themes (Intervening Conditions)

Three dominant themes, *emotions*, *authority*, and *recognition*, influence the duration of each cycle. *Emotion* appears to be the core influence in the process. Managing emotions are often overwhelming for the professional throughout the experience and the learning process. The participants consistently describe the experience with language associated with anger and fear. The Composite List of Professionals' Expressed Feelings ([Appendix D](#)) extracted from the participants' transcripts illustrate the range of feelings. The strengths of these emotions affect the components' consequences.

Authority represents the power of the decision-makers to evaluate or judge the individual on performance and determine career-defining actions such as reward, fire, promote, or re-assign. The supervisor or manager represents the organization's authority and facilitates making the organization culture explicit. All participants recognized these aspects, whether they perceived the supervisor as a positive influence or a negative influence.

Recognition, the third theme, is organization's acknowledgment of the professionals' contributions to the mission and demonstration of respect for the professional as a person. The source of recognition has more influence on the process than the type of recognition. When the organization or decision makers provide little or no recognition, professionals seek it from other sources. The participants mentioned the following sources: self, supervisor, customers or clients, co-workers, family, friends, and community groups. The participants noted that positive or negative recognition from their supervisor played a central role. The interactions of these themes, the constructs, and the intra-actions provide the energy that helps to move the professional through the process or to recycle him or her through the phases.

Duration

The duration of the process and the time between each phase varied depending on the professional. Personal factors, external to the organization, had the greatest influence on the duration. A composite list of these personal factors includes age, career and job opportunities, coping techniques, family, flexibility to relocate, income, professional's personality, short- and long-term goals, world view.²⁸ The findings on the duration of the experience are inconclusive. The duration of workplace devaluation and the experience of learning process ranged from approximately six months through three years excluding the consequence phase. The data do not indicate the duration of the experience's consequences or aftermath as the participants are still experiencing this phase of the process.

Summary

This section explained the process cycle of professionals' workplace devaluation by decision-makers and defined the phases of the model. Losses of autonomy, lack of communication, and personalization of the interaction are key constructs that together create a devaluing experience. The interrelationships of the themes--emotions, authority, and recognition--interrelationships with all facets of the model create energy or direct movement through the process and influence the duration. The narratives describe the dynamics of the process in each participant's experience.

²⁸ The personal factors are listed alphabetically and are not in priority order.

The Narratives

The purpose of the narratives are two-fold: (a) to describe the experience, professionals workplace devaluation, and (b) to identify what the professionals' learned from the experience. To ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, the researcher fictionalized the names of the participants and omitted specific organization locations, names, and exact number of employees.

After learning of the study's purpose, four professionals volunteered to participate. The participants, Julie, Paul, Danny, and Sunny represent respectively the professions of health services and marketing, law, information technology, and education. The four organizations range in size from approximately 500 to more than 10,000 employees. In addition, the researcher highlights key information on each type of organization (government or private sector), the organization's structure, and the organizational culture in respect to management practices and rewards. Unless the professionals share their feelings, co-workers, customers, friends, colleagues are usually unaware of the situation. All professionals felt valued in some way within the organization for their contributions until they became consciously aware that they felt devalued. Conscious awareness occurred either as a single event or as a build-up of many incidents over a number of years. All participants moved through the process phases, yet their experiences were unique with different consequences. The next four sections describe how the participants became aware that decision makers devalued their contributions and how they experienced workplace devaluation within the context of its process cycle (Figure 1).

A learning²⁹ process emerged in the data analysis that is used as a map to interpret how the participants constructed meaning from workplace devaluation. Analysis of participants expressed insights resulted in four categories of learning: professional knowledge, organizational knowledge, interpersonal learning and intrapersonal learning.

Throughout the narratives, italics denote the participants' words in relating their experiences. The researcher clarifies participants' phrases, words, or pronouns with the use of brackets [].

²⁹ Learning is used in the broadest sense of the term and refers to the learning or insights one gains from life experiences.

Julie: The Communicator

The term, “*Communicator*” is the essence of what Julie represents. Throughout the three interviews, Julie emphasized that communications and miscommunications between individuals are the fundamental problem in the workplace. Julie appears to demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills in the workplace with professional responsibilities that have included ombudsman, conflict mediation, problem-solving complaints, and management of volunteers.

Background

Julie is a professional in her mid-forties who takes pride in her ability to work successfully with the elderly and to provide effective customer service to the residents and their families. Married and a mother of two children, her previous work experience includes manager of a nursing home for the elderly, and acting as ombudsman for young families and the elderly. Julie earned a B.S. degree with an allied health services major and a minor in marketing. She is currently enrolled in a master's program.

The Organization.

Julie is employed with an assisted living facility that is part of a larger non-profit organization employing more than 500 professionals and staff. The assisted-living facility employs more than 40 staff. Julie is a member of the four-person management staff.

A hospital and a nursing home facilities are at the same location. A fifteen-person Board of Directors manages all three organization facilities. Julie describes the Board as being indecisive and having minimum interaction with the facilities. A manager heads each of the three facilities--hospital, nursing home, and assisted living facility--that comprise the organization. Managers have maximum authority in their facility with only minimum oversight exercised by the Board of Directors. The organization has no formal awards or grievance program. The organization awards the staff an annual monetary bonus determined by their position in the organization; however, the bonus is not affected by performance appraisal.

When it first opened about 15 years ago, this organization was the first in the community to offer separate assisted living apartments. Like many health-care institutions, this one is experiencing dramatic changes in the workplace. These changes are driven by societal and economic factors such as increasing customer expectations, increasing costs, decreasing resources, and increasing competition. Julie describes the organization's staff morale as low with many employees leaving for other jobs.

Three years ago, the organization began a reengineering program in all facilities. Julie stated that reengineering resulted in an exodus of talented people; some minor improvements for customers, such as valet parking, and a Board of Directors that was unable to make timely decisions. The Board had discussed selling the organization for two-and-a-half years before taking action. The main change in the assisted living facility resulting from reengineering was having the Administrator report to the Administrator of the nursing home rather than directly to

the Board of Directors. During the time of the interviews, the Board of Directors publicly announced their decision to pursue a merger with a for-profit organization.

Responsibilities

Julie is responsible for ensuring that the facility is operating at capacity with paying patients. She also develops and implements marketing strategies to encourage prospective customers--defined as the patients, their families, and the community--to recognize the name and services of the facility and to use the facility's services when needed. Julie supervises the Activities Director, who is also a member of the management staff. Additionally, the Administrator often asks Julie to mediate conflicts among staff and patients.

The Professional

Julie is the Director of Admissions and Marketing for the assisted living facility. She has more than twelve years of experience in the field and has been in this position for seven years. The Administrator of the assisted-living facility hired Julie for this position based on her marketing background and her working experience with the elderly. Julie's predecessors were social workers who had been unable to maintain a high occupancy rate. Few assisted-living facilities combine these two functions. The organization viewed the Administrator's strategy in restructuring this position as a successful, albeit, radical change.

Julie thought she had found the ideal position for her skills and expertise. Most important aspects of this job to her were the following: (a) she enjoys people, especially the elderly; (b) the limitations of the job would be set by her knowledge of the organization and the professional field; (c) she saw an opportunity to be appreciated for how well she did her job; (d) the location was in her community; and (e) she could use both her education and her experience with the elderly in this position.

For the past three years, the organization recognized Julie for quality customer service. The Chamber of Commerce recognized Julie and others on her committee for their work in community relations. She also volunteers with the community's public school foundation and was the co-chair of the fund raiser the previous year. Julie sees this community work as an extension of marketing the name and services of the facility. Julie describes how she views her most significant achievement in this position:

I have helped build their reputation. I have been very professional and people who have come to us, have said they have heard good comments about us. I think I have helped there. When people see me, they think ABC Facility.

Julie's Experience

Julie values her position because she is able to help the elderly find the right housing and resolve their problems. The residents, their families and the hands-on staff appreciate Julie's management style. Julie established a good professional working relationship with the

Administrator that enabled them to resolve the many issues involved in managing this type of facility. Julie described the Administrator as follows:

She was very good. Everything was done. She had her temperaments, but things were done just right.

In retrospect, Julie realized her experience of professional workplace devaluation evolved slowly during her first five years. For Julie, the first complete cycle through the process (The Model, [Figure 1](#)) took approximately nine months from being aware until she created the balance needed for her to act. Julie stated

I know it was a very gradual process, then all of a sudden I realized that this was very bad. It was a big change, a big turn around. I couldn't see myself doing it, but I kept visualizing that this is what will happen (leave the organization) because I was not happy. I felt that I didn't get any respect. I wasn't being thanked for what I did and I was doing a good job. I was making it my choice to leave the organization. I didn't want to be told that my position was being dissolved for whatever reason.

Interactions. (Refer to The Model, [Figure 1](#)). The professional's experience of devaluation begins with an interaction that involves lack of autonomy, inability to communicate, and personalization. For the first five years, although Julie noticed inconsistencies in the Administrator's behavior,³⁰ she did not feel personally threatened. Julie effectively accomplished her responsibilities while demonstrating professional competence and feeling in control of decisions relating to marketing and admissions. Julie recognized that she had decreased the vacancy rate and positively increased the visibility of the facility in the community. Julie and the Administrator had tacitly negotiated a professional relationship different from the casual, personal relationship the Administrator cultivated with the management team. Julie usually retreated to her office when the Administrator was moody.

The interaction phase culminated in a change in the Administrator's behavior toward Julie as a result of a problem in the last stages of a new marketing brochure. Julie's narrative continues:

The Administrator got very angry because there was a glitch. Instead of saying, let's take care of the problem and make sure you order the envelopes, she just flew off the handle and got very mad. At that point I thought she might just get mad enough to fire me³¹ because I didn't do it right. The Administrator would just fly off the handle and say do it this way, not thinking that it might put you on a spot.

³⁰ Julie noted that the Administrator's behavior from the beginning of Julie's employment was difficult and inconsistent. Julie mentioned the contradictions of the Administrator's many mood swings, her lack of concern about her behavior's effect on the staff dynamics, her critical demeanor toward the staff, her inability to delegate supervisory responsibilities, and her lack of communication with the management staff; contrasted sharply with her ability to make solid management decisions and to be accessible for consulting on marketing and admission issues.

³¹ Being fired is a real fear for Julie. The Administrator had fired the Nurse about one year earlier. The Nurse was helpful to Julie in understanding how to approach and to communicate with the Administrator.

Intra-actions are the conscious and unconscious interactions among the individual's emotions, beliefs, values, knowledge, and assumptions. The Administrator had fired the Nurse about a year before this interaction, but Julie did not know why. The Nurse had been helpful to Julie in understanding how to approach and to communicate with the Administrator. After this interaction, which brought with it the fear of being fired, Julie remembered all the little things including some of her other feelings:

I felt that everything I did was not good in my Administrator's view. She wasn't communicating. I felt she wasn't doing her job.

I was afraid to go to her and tell her what I thought because I felt that was the way she was. I also did not think she liked me after seeing the way she responded to me. And it was her moods. Behavior that sometimes you pick up and you think that person does not like me. I guess it was just her behavior. Her ways did not project the kind of body language that encouraged talking to her.

I felt so alone; I thought that everything was working against me. With anything that took place, I felt she was trying to get rid of me, that she didn't want me, or that she was just trying to make it unbearable.

Different issues that had bothered Julie intermittently over the five years began to surface again in Julie's thoughts. The Administrator had not thanked Julie for all her hard work and had not given timely information about changes in the organization that affected Julie's marketing strategies. She had invaded Julie's professional privacy to include reading Julie's faxes and mail. Julie became aware of the inadequate resources she had to do her job such as an old computer system with no e-mail capability. She had been removed from some of the organization's committees with no explanation. The Administrator had sometimes reversed operating procedures without communicating her change and then had told Julie she was wrong. The Administrator had not supported her pursuing a masters degree. Julie also perceived changes in the Administrator's behavior because of a divorce that conveyed an unprofessional impression to the hands-on staff.³² All in all, Julie felt excluded from the management team.

Julie suffered a decrease in autonomy, inability to communicate, and personalization of Administrator's behavior. She described her reaction as similar to a form of panic, "an awful, fearful feeling," she could not remember ever feeling this way before.

Awareness. Julie became aware that she had a real problem at work that she could not explain to herself as she had done in the past, nor could she name the problem. She avoided the Administrator as she did not know how to approach her. Julie remarked, *It's hard to tell your boss, she should . . . I did not say anything.* At this time, Julie just wanted to flee--find another job and leave.

I was unhappy. I would go to work and not look forward to it. I felt negative about everything. I felt bad about feeling that way because I am not a negative person. I

³² The hands-on staff are practical nurses, aides, and maintenance staff who often commented on the Administrator's moods and behavior such as coming in late and frequent absences.

viewed everything that happened from a negative perspective. I kept thinking that I need to get out of this place. I need to find another position because I can't take being here. I felt really bad and I felt guilty. I had never had to do something I dreaded doing, but I dreaded going to work. Everything had come together and to make me feel that way.

The strong emotions, especially fear and frustration, interacting with the Administrator's power to fire an employee, and the Administrator's lack of recognition for Julie's contributions propelled Julie to focus on what was happening to her ideal job. Julie could best be described as mystified during this phase of the process. She was very confused as to why the Administrator continually criticized her job performance.

I felt like the boss was always checking on me and controlling me, without giving me the leeway to do what I needed to do for my job. I couldn't understand it. Here I am doing a good job, yet I was feeling this way.

I thought I was doing a good job, but sometimes I was not quite sure. It [my competence] was validated by the employee surveys where I was rated the highest in the facility for three years in a row. It also made me question why I wasn't getting the support, the positive strokes, or at least a decent computer system.

Remember, the customer service survey results rated Julie as the top performer and Julie continued to communicate a professional demeanor in her organization. When the researcher asked if there were anything Julie had experienced with which she could compare this experience or her related feelings, after a long pause, Julie responded:

No, not really, I can't. (pause) Maybe later. I can't think of anything to compare it with. (pause) Maybe for a while there, I thought it was a panic. It was like I was suffocating for a while there.

Acknowledgment This phase of the process occurs when one is able to name the interaction--at least to one's self. A couple of weeks later, Julie was able to name the experience and begin to define her problem.

The Administrator doesn't show her appreciation. That might be the problem. I think she does appreciate people, but she doesn't show it and that could be the problem. She doesn't say 'thank you' enough. And that's why I almost left this job.

Julie shared the observable behaviors--being aware of her feelings, frustration and panic, and acknowledging the problem--primarily with her husband. The three interrelated themes, emotions, authority, and recognition, along with Julie's need to perform her job with minimal supervision propelled her to the next phase of the cycle, coping.

Coping This phase represents the thoughts, actions, and strategies that individuals implement to protect self from the perceived threats of the situation. How the individual manages her emotions usually falls into one of four strategies: (a) repress the emotion, (b) direct the emotion inward, (c) direct the emotion at another individual or the organization, or (d)

channel the energy toward self growth. The intra-actions are important to this phase of the process. *Creating balance* occurs when an individual explores options in coping with the emotions and protecting self during the experience.

Julie continued to work although her reaction to the experience was to quit and find another job. Instead of quitting, Julie began to seek out job vacancies with health care agencies that focused on the elderly. Vacancies similar to Julie's present position are difficult to find but Julie planned to continue working with the elderly in admissions and marketing. She described this time as preparing for a funeral.

I felt like I was preparing for a funeral, which sounds funny, but I was preparing to leave. I would do things, thinking I will not be here much longer, so I better get this ready. I better get this paper work in order for the next person. With everything I did, I was thinking that I don't want to look bad when I leave here. I need to leave a nice neat office with everything in order. So, I did that for a couple of months, getting things together. I am the type of person, who when leaving, will try my best to be sure that everything has been done right and leave on a good note.

This funeral metaphor can be interpreted as mourning the loss of her ideal job. Julie had an immediate need to leave but she wanted to leave by her choice. Julie made her plans so that she would not be fired or become the victim of downsizing.

Julie also addressed immediate issues on the job in exploring options to create balance in the coping phase. She knew she needed to acquire the information about the other two facilities within her organization if she were to effectively market the assisted-care facility. Julie also considered volunteering more in the community. Volunteering as a representative of her facility is a proven strategy for increasing the visibility of the organization. Thus, volunteering provided an acceptable venue for professional recognition and for marketing her facility.

Julie knew she could not change the Administrator and she had trouble accepting the Administrator's inconsistent, moody behavior on an emotional level. Julie attributed some of the Administrator's inconsistent behavior and tardiness to the stress of her personal problems, coping with a divorce and the stress of becoming a single parent. Julie felt that she could make allowances for the Administrator's behavior, even though she viewed this behavior as inappropriate for the workplace. She also knew that she could avoid interacting with the Administrator on bad days by retreating to her office.

During the next few months, Julie found ways to implement her coping strategies. She identified three positions for which she was qualified and submitted the application. To obtain the organizational information the Administrator "forgot" to give her, Julie avoided confrontation by circumventing the Administrator. She used her network from the reengineering teams and spent time in the other facilities talking to her colleagues. She also paid close attention to the observations and complaints of the hands-on staff and volunteers to keep her information on the organization current. Julie continued to manage her emotions in the workplace and perform her job effectively.³³ She received recognition from the staff, residents,

³³ For more information on emotion work: Hochschild (1983), and Goffman (1959/1973)

and their families who often thanked Julie for her help in solving problems. Regarding volunteering in the community, Julie explains:

I put my energy out into the community and had appreciation and respect wherever I went. I would go out and participate in different committees and people would appreciate what I did. I would feel good about it. I didn't get it (appreciation) at work, but I felt it outside work. That helped me through quite a bit.

Julie continued to avoid the Administrator as much as possible, but she found the Administrator's management style harder and harder to ignore. In retrospect, Julie realized that the Administrator's behavior had varied little from her behavior since she hired Julie. Julie's acknowledgment of the problem--her loss of autonomy, her inability to communicate her concerns to the Administrator and her personalization of the Administrator's behavior--resulted in Julie being unable to ignore the Administrator's behavior as she had done during the first five years.

Julie's family continued to listen to her descriptions of feelings and interactions in the workplace. Her husband encouraged her to do something, be it to find another job or to stay where she was, whichever choice that she preferred. Julie found herself becoming more and more unhappy about her job. The three themes-- emotions, authority, and recognition--in conjunction with the constructs--lack of autonomy, no communication on Julie's concerns; personalization--are building for the next surge in the process. Julie explains:

She (the Administrator) would do little things that would take away [from my responsibilities]. I had been attending a meeting on a regular basis at the nursing home for some time, when she came to me and told me I did not have to go to that meeting anymore. I thought, well there goes another way of getting the information I need. She had a good way of changing her mind. She would tell me to do something one way and I would do it. Then, she would get mad and ask me why I had done it this way.

I felt like she was watching every move I made, especially my mail. I didn't like getting faxes because she would read them. I didn't feel part of the team. It was little things, to the point that I thought she had a bug in my office. I didn't feel comfortable no matter what I did. That's why I felt as if I should look for another job.

Julie had been holding in the coping phase for about six months. Outwardly she was still performing well in fulfilling her position responsibilities. But at home, she complained about her work situation to her husband each evening. Internally, she was feeling the frustration of not being able to resolve the job issues and of managing the emotions she was unable to express at work. Julie found herself thinking about her situation during her waking hours, but she does not remember losing sleep or experiencing any illness at this time.

Julie learned of this study while she was in the coping phase. For the first time, Julie became aware that other people might be experiencing similar work situations with similar reactions. This awareness validated Julie's concerns:

I thought that this sounded like what I was going through. I had never given it any thought (that other people might feel like I do). I thought it just happens in some jobs. It is something that is happening to me at this time in my life.

Action This phase represents the action one undertakes to change the situation. This phase has both the *creating balance* process of the intra-actions and taking action process. *Creating Balance* occurs when an individual explores available options to act or to change the situation. *Creating balance* also includes examining the pros and cons of the situation, defining the problem, giving meaning to how one copes or how one acts. Some individuals also look deep within themselves and begin to challenge their basic beliefs, values, and assumptions. The themes of emotions, authority and recognition are powerful motivators in creating balance. Individual factors external to the organization are powerful constraints in creating balance. Options can be both short-term and long-term.

At this time, Julie thought she had two options: She could stay in the current situation or she could find another job. She felt *desperate* to leave her current job. She also knew that positions existed that were similar to her current, but they were not easy to find. She did not consider long-term options at this time. Julie was comfortable with the external coping strategies she had implemented in her organization. Julie recognized that staying in her current position, although not easy for her, was her only other option, at least until she could find another position.

Julie decided to find another position. She interviewed for two jobs but was not selected. The third job was in an area in which Julie did not have much experience base and she decided not to interview for that position.

Consequences are the outcomes, aftermath, effects, or results of taking action. The researcher describes the consequences as being both conscious and unconscious to the professional. As the professional becomes consciously aware of the results, the energy from the themes builds and channels the individual to assess the short-term results of the action taken to manage the experience. This assessment either brings closure to the experience or refocuses on a process phase. Julie's first attempt to leave the organization for a new position had failed but she was still comfortable with her coping strategies on the job. However, her coping strategy for home, which consisted of talking to her husband about the work situation, was not going as smoothly:

I had one interview but I felt like it was a bait and switch. They asked me questions I wasn't prepared to answer [the questions did not pertain to the advertised vacancy]. They switched and asked questions on care management, something I had not done in years. I was told the position was actually care management although that was not mentioned in the vacancy position. I had a feeling they wanted someone else, and that's why they did it.

I did another interview and wasn't selected. I decided not to interview for the third job. It was a different type of work.

My husband became tired of my complaints every night. He said you have to do something, if you are not happy. He didn't care what it was, but he couldn't tolerate my unhappiness.

Action Julie cycled back through the action phase. The results of the interviews, her husband's frustration in trying to help her, and her own frustration with her job situation combined to energize her to re-examine her options through the creating balance process. The energy of the interrelationships of the constructs and the themes helped Julie make some important breakthroughs at this time. This occurred seven months after the situation surfaced and she had acknowledged the issue to herself.

Julie was now in her seventh month of the workplace devaluation experience. She realized that she needed more information. During this month, Julie moved back and forth several times between creating balance and acting to change the situation. This back and forth movement was iterative as she looked at what she knew, what information she needed, what meaning the information had to her situation. Julie then integrated this new information with her feelings and with her knowledge to determine what actions she could take to change the situation.

Julie called the "bait and switch" organization to ask why she was not selected for the job. Receiving this information would help Julie prepare for future interviews and plan new strategies. Julie developed an explanation or *made sense* of her interview experiences. Julie continues beginning with the comments about the bait and switch interview:

Later, I was told the director in that place wanted to hire me but the other interviewer wanted another person. The interview questions were geared to that other person. If I had known what they were looking for, I could have prepared myself and I could have done well. This was another reason why I returned to my current position. I had to think it through.

I would have loved that job, but maybe this job [the one I have] does offer more positives. I made a list of what was positive and what was negative. There were more positives, even though I had to work through my unpredictable boss. She has moods that go from one extreme to the other. The staff always wonders what mood she is in today. It's sort of a joke.

I was just desperate to get out of the job. Then I thought, why am I doing this when I like what I am doing. I may not like my boss and I can't kick my boss out of her position. I had to make a decision, because I couldn't get another job. I just could not quit to look for that exact job. I didn't want to commute into the city. This job was ideal because it was so close to where I lived.

I also thought that a new job might result in the same type of situation I had, only in a different environment. That's when I thought I better do something about it. I couldn't take being in the middle position.

As Julie looked for other ways to create balance, she began to reframe the situation. She began to realize that changing jobs might not be the best solution at this time because she could experience a similar situation on the next job. Julie decided to list the pros and cons of her current job which was something she had not done before. She also talked to a trusted co-worker about her job search. Julie realized that although she knew much about how not to approach the Administrator, she did not feel comfortable about how she should approach her:.

Then I talked with a co-worker, about looking for another job. She suggested I talk to the Administrator and to tell her what I was doing. She [the co-worker] told me that she would hate to see me leave because I was really an asset to this facility. She convinced me to talk to the Administrator. I decided to do that because I couldn't take it anymore. I had to do something at that point.

I thought I can't give this up. I know I can't change the Administrator, but maybe I can present my situation to her. The talk (with the Administrator) can be positive. And if the talk wasn't positive, it would mean I still need to keep looking for that job. I felt I had nothing to lose. That's why I was bold enough to do it.

Asked to explain bold enough, Julie responded:

I would not have done it. I have seen the Administrator turn around and get mad if someone was trying to be honest with her. Even to this day, you have to figure out how to approach her.

Julie began to take action. As part of the action, Julie decided to tell the Administrator she was looking for another job and to specify the issues. Julie not only said that the Administrator did not recognize her contributions; she listed specifics. Among these were a computer upgrade to meet the requirements of her position, and the need for standard policy, and many others. She explains:

I wrote a two and a half page list of my concerns. I felt that, either way, I am looking for a job. I would be fired or I would improve her appreciation of me. I made an appointment with her and we talked. I explained to her what I was doing [interviewing for other positions], it was all legitimate, so she would understand everything. I felt that there were things she really was not handling properly.

I forced the different issues upon my boss to make her realize them. In fact she told me at the conclusion of our meeting that if she was not acting properly to let her know. Sometimes I still think I had better not because she might get mad or insulted.

After discussing her concerns with the Administrator, Julie moved again to the consequences phase.

Consequences. In this phase, the individual usually assesses the results of the action phase. Based on this assessment, participants often revisited the coping or action phases. As one becomes consciously aware of the results, the energy from the themes builds and channels the

individual to assess the short term results of professional devaluation. This assessment either brings closure to the experience or refocuses on a process phase.

Julie found that the discussion validated her concerns. Julie saw evidence in the Administrator's actions that she understood the reasons Julie was ready to leave the organization, and that the Administrator was willing to change her behavior, at least toward Julie.

Since then, she has given more effort towards me in trying to show her appreciation. Sometimes it's little things, but I can see that she is trying to change. But then I also see her when she doesn't appreciate some of the other staff. So, it's hard to say. But, for me it is working out a little better than it was. There are times I look back and think it could be better, yet she is doing better than she was before.

Nine months after Julie acknowledged to herself that the Administrator did not demonstrate respect or appreciation for Julie as a competent professional, Julie felt she had learned to successfully manage the situation at work.

I found since then, that a person's state of mind can make a big difference about her attitude. I made a turn around back to where I was when I first started working again because the Administrator is cooperating to work with me on some of the items we discussed. She communicates with me more, and thanks me more for what I do. She gets more involved with certain things that take place, and delegates more responsibilities to me. She has also ordered the new computer that I need. Because of this, I have a different perspective. I feel better about my position and what I am doing.

I have made a turn around because she [the Administrator] is giving me comments both good and bad, I am getting the resources [new computer system with e-mail] I need, and she is also very liberal with me in letting me do what I need to do. I now look forward again to going to work.

Returning to the constructs' confluence that triggered Julie's awareness of the situation, patterns become visible. Julie negotiated the professional freedom (autonomy) that she needed to do her job. She communicated her concerns to the Administrator and was able to recognize that the Administrator's criticism was not directed at her personally. Through her observations and talks with the hands-on staff, the Nurse, and volunteers, Julie understood that the Administrator's management style was to criticize without providing positive comments. The interrelationships of the themes and workplace issues continued to surface. The emotions of fear and frustration are not as overwhelming. Thus Julie no longer feels she devalued.

The researcher's first two interviews with Julie occurred four and five months after Julie met with the Administrator about her concerns. In those five months Julie had assessed her experience, her coping strategies, and her actions. Julie's perspective of herself and of her job had changed. She had learned how to manage the work situation and she no longer felt devalued, even though the Administrator demonstrated little behavioral change. She did admit that the Administrator was working with her on those areas most important to her--more autonomy in her job, making available adequate resources [Administrator had purchased Julie's

new computer], and recognition of her contributions. The researcher then asked Julie to explain how her attitude change came about. She described a transformative change, change in perspective, or change in world view. :

I could describe it like I was going into mourning and continued to mourn when I was at my lowest [wanted to leave]. Then, after it [discussion with Administrator] happened, like the death, I just woke up to everything, like rebirth. Now it [attitude] is back to like it was or even better.

Julie also became cognizant of long-term opportunities for her professional self:

Another thing is that we [my husband and I] bought some property out West. I look at this job as temporary, because I am looking forward to moving in the future. We have plans to move and to build our own home.

I would also like to have my own home business something to do with the elderly. I envision a future where I can sell products to the elderly and their care givers. I know how I would like to market these products. I even have copyrighted the name for my business. I believe in inter-generational activities. My son, an engineer will help me with projects or inventions.

I am planning to be prepared, in case something like this happens again. I am not bound to that one place, that same type of work. That is helping me feel a lot better. We are not turning our backs on anything. It's our long range plan and we are working on it.

Most important, Julie knew that the Administrator respected and supported her in fulfilling her responsibilities. The Administrator represents the power of the organization. Julie had observed the effects of this power first-hand. The Administrator fired the nurse when Julie first joined the organization. The second nurse resigned after two years on the job because of the Administrator's behavior. In addition to insights into her own reactions, Julie learned how other staff reacted to the Administrator's management style.

The Nurse is leaving because she can't take the pressure from the Administrator. More or less she [the second nurse] was also driven out of her position by the Administrator because she didn't perform the way the Administrator wanted. The Administrator found it just right when the timing came to cause her [the second Nurse] not to feel part of the team. She ended up with the pressure, and quit. She [the second Nurse] has given her resignation. I'm glad I was able to resolve it [devaluing experience with Administrator]. Our Nurse couldn't resolve her problems. I felt like she [the Nurse] at one time.

One of the hands-on employees tells me he doesn't care how he talks to her [Administrator] as long as he doesn't say anything disrespectful. He chooses the right words to be a little obnoxious, but not to get fired. That's how some people are. They don't care because they know they can go out and find another job. The jobs are more plentiful working as a housekeeper or a maintenance person. I have to be careful, I

can't find the same position anywhere. There are only one or two my type of management position in each facility.

Our maintenance man tells me he is ready to leave. He is hanging in there because he wants to make more money. I also talk to our housekeepers. They say they know they can just quit today and go to another job.

Consequences Revisited

Between the second and third interview, Julie took a one-week vacation. When Julie returned, she found five changes in her organization. She felt excluded and frustrated in her dealings with the staff. Julie's emotions and the Administrator's behavior were moving her from the final phase of the process, consequences phase, back to the awareness phase. The power of the emotions at this time appeared to obscure any connections of the feelings and the magnitude of organization changes occurring in the span of six weeks (the time between the two interviews). Julie had developed a stronger level of trust with the researcher. Thus, she was willing to share a deeper level of her assumptions about the changes.

The first significant change directly affected Julie's primary responsibility of maintaining a high occupancy rate in the facility. Julie learned that there were twelve empty apartments, which was significantly more than before her absence. Julie describes the situation.

We are low in our census [resident population] right now. We have twelve empty apartments. Whenever that happens, she [the Administrator] gets into a panic mode. She starts to get paranoid about empty apartments. Then she will make remarks that are not very nice, negative remarks. She can be rather curt and somewhat nasty about it. But I expect that because it always happens when we have the low cycle. . . I think what upsets me or bothers me the most is that some of the empty apartments didn't have to be. She [the Administrator] didn't like certain people; she found reasons to give them a discharge notice.

The second significant change was that the Board of Directors announced publicly that they were actively exploring a merger with a for-profit health service organization. After two years of indecision and rumors, the Board of Directors began to communicate with all levels of the staff about the future of the organization. Julie voiced many concerns about the effect of this decision on the organization and her job responsibilities, but she did not mention the effect of this decision on her feelings, or on the feelings of the staff. She did address a new initiative that the Administrator championed as a way for the facility to remain a leader in the area.

I just found out last week that we [Board of Directors] are negotiating to be bought out by another company. Instead of being non-profit, we will be for-profit. We [assisted-living and nursing home of ABC organization] will be the only long-term care facility in the new organization. We are in the red, so I don't know what can happen. They could sell our facility or they could change it. Maybe this is where I should consider looking for something else.

Another thing from the marketing aspect our facility is getting older and we don't have the funds to make it nicer. We are working on a project to bring pets, animals, plants,

and children to the residents. Our Administrator heard about it a year ago and she sent our Activities Director to their training session to be certified. We're hoping that will revive the facility. It takes a team effort. Right now, I don't hear the staff wanting to cooperate with that change.

The third significant change for Julie was the Administrator hired a new nurse. She was the third nurse to hold this position in the seven years of Julie's employment. Julie had had strong working relationships with the two previous nurses. One had been fired and the other had resigned after two years on-the-job. The new nurse was sharing the Director's Office until she became familiar with her job responsibilities. Julie described the Nurse as unfriendly and uncommunicative toward her.

We have a new Nurse. I feel she is not very friendly. I didn't participate in the hiring process because I was on vacation when she was hired. Since she started a month ago, she doesn't seem to be a team player. However, in the eyes of our Administrator, she [the Nurse] has done no wrong. It is more or less the honeymoon period. I am finding that it is hard to work with her [the Nurse] as she doesn't want to work as a team player. [Julie described the specific behavior to support this statement.] I have heard little comments through the grapevine that she is not too friendly with the residents. I don't see her as being the type of nurse that we need. It's just causing more discomfort. I am uncomfortable around her. When I asked her help to provide a requested service for a resident, she never answered me directly. She did make the required arrangements, then ignored me when I asked what was her decision. I did not want to leave till she answered me. The Activities Director was there and said she [the Nurse] is having a stressful, busy day today, trying to cover up why she wouldn't talk to me. I thought this was a very unprofessional way to treat your co-worker.

Julie felt excluded and appeared to personalize the Nurse's behavior toward her. The researcher asked Julie to describe her experience as a new employee.

Yes, I had to feel her [the Administrator] out. That happened to me a few times when I was new to the position. I couldn't read her mind, but she expected me to know what she wanted. So if I didn't do certain things the way she wanted, she would spend a whole week riding me and just getting upset. She would do that from person to person. Now after all these years, I know what to expect and how to avoid it. When she is in that mood, I stay in my office and do that work. That has worked out really well.

The researcher asked Julie how she felt when this occurred. The question evoked strong feelings in Julie.

There were times I would break out crying in frustration and the other nurse [the Nurse that was fired] would spend time talking to me and explain how I could deal with her [the Administrator] because she had been there much longer than I. Now it's not the same, it has changed everytime we have had a new employee come in.

The fourth significant change for Julie was the change in group dynamics of the management staff as a result of one nurse resigning and a new nurse being hired in Julie's

absence. Julie related an incident with the management team. When asked how the Board of Directors communicated the projected sale of the organization, Julie recalled an incident with the management team. A meeting with a Board member and the management staff had been publicized in advance, but potential residents arrived for a facility tour right before the scheduled meeting. This being a priority task for Julie, she decided to come late to the staff meeting.

I came to the meeting twenty minutes late, after I finished the tour. I asked was it too late to sit in for a few minutes. They [Julie's management team] said everything is the same, you don't have to sit in. I felt that wasn't very nice and that it was another demeaning gesture that wasn't necessary.

Asked what would have happened if she had just come in and sat down without asking, Julie answered:

I probably would have been OK. They wouldn't have said anything. I was kind of upset. I thought that is not the way to talk to anybody.

Julie's concerns about the group dynamics surfaced again in a further discussion of the new initiative that Julie had with the Activities Director.

We [the management team] are supposed to get together with our few people tomorrow. That is our second meeting in the planning process. I haven't been involved with all the other areas. Many times I think they think I am not necessary because I am busy giving a tour or working on other things.

I mentioned today that I needed more information about the new initiative for the marketing aspect [to the Activities Director]. Her answer [at first] was that you can't market it till we [the Facility] get certified. I said, I just want some information so I can market it and people will know what I am talking about. Then she said well maybe I can find some information, like she didn't want to share it with me.

Julie is aware of the changes and is aware of her feelings. She is developing explanations to herself at this time to try to understand her feelings.

A fifth significant change for Julie was the installation of her new computer system. This was a result of her meeting with the Administrator a few months previously.

I finally got one. I feel like she [the Administrator] really worked on that for me.

Julie felt the Administrator recognized her and understood her needs.

Julie recognized the Administrator's behavior patterns in managing the changes, but she did not appear to recognize her own patterns in coping with the situation such as her attempts at finding another job.

I see the same thing coming through. My thoughts are that we [the management staff] are going to go through this same thing again, every time. Now that her [the Administrator] marital separation is completed, she is back to her old mode again. She has her days that are good and bad. She doesn't realize how she talks to people.

Now I am starting to think maybe I should seek another place to work. I love my work, I love the residents, but it gets old to go through these cycles of how you are treated. She's OK right now, but it's that cycle. The resources are not there in the facility. Things have declined considerably. The staff morale is low and we have two good employees leaving. I always felt that management sets the tone, and now it seems we just need a change in management up above. That's how I see it right now.

Asked what she would do, if the Administrator reverted to her old behavior toward her, Julie responded.

Well, I have seen her reverting back. Now that she is over her personal problem, she settles back into her routine again and her ways of treating [riding their case] people. I am seeing that. I'm not sure if I should just sit back and watch because in the next two months our organization will be purchased and go for-profit. The facility may be sold or be the same as it has always been. I don't know what will happen to us. I don't know if I could change things, which I can't. That's why I am sitting back and waiting unless something really good comes up so I could just leave. I really wish I could just finish school and not deal with work. Work alone could be frustrating and now with this new nurse on board, it has put a little glitch in everything else. It doesn't help. I don't see her being the type of nurse that I thought she was supposed to be. It's just causing more discomfort.

Because Julie placed a strong emphasis on the need for communication in organizations and she had effectively demonstrated good communication in all areas except with the management staff, the researcher asked Julie to be more specific about what she meant by "communication" in the statements she volunteered during the first interview.

[Julie's statement on importance of communication] One comment I would like to make is that the biggest thing [in workplace] is miscommunication and communications. And that is where the biggest problem lies, just not communicating information [correctly]. Then the other person just because of a change in shift, feels they were not told this information. Sometimes people won't share their information because they have power over the other person.

Well right now, if I could change anything, maybe it's communications. Because I think if there is a problem, I think it usually goes back to communications from one person to another on the staff. If there is miscommunication with families, it is the nature of the work I'm in. People usually come to me when they are in stress and looking for a facility for their loved ones. They only see what they want to see. In most cases they also have quite a bit of guilt, so they don't see the full picture objectively. And that's where I try to refocus them.

Julie explained in detail how the daily operation of the facility is based upon communications. Effective communications are essential to the care of the residents, to the maintenance and cleanliness of the facilities, to the required administrative paper work, to the records of who did what and when and to the sharing of information after meetings. Although all the significant changes Julie discovered upon her return indicated a need for effective communication among the management staff, Julie omitted this in her explanation. When asked about the omission, Julie replied::

The staff will communicate among themselves with those certain ones they chose to [communicate with]. If they don't want someone to know, they don't pass them the information. It's like they keep hold of it for someone else.

The researcher asked Julie why she had not mentioned staff communication within the context of organizational communication. Again, Julie avoided the question:

Oh that, I guess I should have mentioned those examples.

This topic was uncomfortable to Julie. The researcher observed that communication among the management staff, including the Administrator, was as important to Julie's not feeling respected on the job as communication was to the hands-on staff and residents. Julie's response to this question seemed to establish Julie's initial awareness of another problem that contributed to her strong emotions and assumptions resulting from the recent changes. Often, when an individual is not sure how to proceed with a problem, the reaction is similar to Julie's experience. Julie defines the problem:

It's just a way of life, the culture there. It's more of a personality problem.

The themes--emotions, authority, and recognition--resurfaced in this awareness. Julie knows the behavior that the Administrator demonstrates when she "flies off the handle." Again the three constructs of the process were present. Julie perceived her lack of inclusion of the original planning of the new initiative as limiting her ideas in marketing the facility, especially with the twelve units being vacant (autonomy): Julie did not know how she could confront the Administrator or her co-workers about her being excluded from the team. She was unable to discuss her concerns at this time (communication). She also felt that the Administrator and Activities Director had intentionally left her out of the planning stage of the new initiative (personalization). Julie thought through her dilemma aloud, which is a way of reflecting how to create balance and how to cope with and act upon the situation.

I thought I had addressed it well enough with the other examples in the past. It is something that takes place. It has become a way of life there in that facility.

It is because our Administrator has become close friends with the Activities Director. They communicate between the two of them all the time, but I don't get that information. They planned all the new initiative information and what they wanted to do. I thought if I am her supervisor, I should be the one that the Activities Director should be doing all the

planning with. I don't want to sound unprofessional if I say you are not giving me information I need as the Activities Director's supervisor [and as the marketing and admissions director]. I'm starting to think I do need to talk with the Activities Director. It is a sensitive issue because she is friends with the Administrator and I have to worry about my job. It is poor communication and I am left out of it. It's like a triangle.

And with the Nurse being new, I can't yet say I see a communication gap coming up. I guess with the Nurse I will have to go and talk with her and ask her if she has a problem that keeps her from being able to talk to me.

When we had management meetings, our communications used to be a lot better. When she [the Administrator] stops the meetings, our communication becomes fragmented. The information just isn't together. I didn't touch on it. It's just a way of life, the culture there. It's more of a personality problem.

I don't want to say, she [the Administrator] is talking to her [the Activities Director] and not talking to me. That's being childish and that's not the way it is. I can't change her [the Administrator]. I do what I need to do to communicate.

I need to sit down and talk with the Activities Director and I have to sit down and talk with the Nurse. It is only those two people I am concerned about. It's hard to say, that's what I see happening.

Asked to clarify why she appeared to avoid talking with the Administrator, Julie explained:

I don't know. I am afraid that if I talk to them separately, they might tell the Administrator that I am not doing this right. I was thinking about talking with the Administrator. I wasn't sure which one. I don't want it to sound like I am crying on the Administrator's shoulder and saying that this new nurse of ours is not wanting to work as a team I don't know.

The dialogic interview provides an opportunity to present other ideas based on topics that unexpectedly emerge. The researcher suggested that perhaps the Nurse was reacting to the changes, learning her new job responsibilities, and not intentionally ignoring Julie. Perhaps, Julie could reframe her concern as to how can we, the management staff, work together on the new initiative. Julie reflected:

The Nurse and the Activities Director joke around, but if she [the Nurse] sees me, she ignores me. I am always friendly to her. That's just the thing, I am friendly.

I see what you are saying. I am stuck in the middle of all this. I do know that the Administrator respects what I do and she has confidence in me. It is just her moods can be hard to deal with sometimes.

I know what you are talking about. It's something for me to think about.

The interview concluded. Julie and the researcher talked for a few minutes about the researcher's experience, then Julie asked to start the tape recorder. Julie continues:

My boss has always told me I am too nice and not assertive enough. I think maybe that is why these things take place and I feel that people step all over me. Maybe I have to change how I approach different situations.

I guess I have to be a little more assertive in stating my opinions. I guess I sit and brood and feel they are not fully acknowledging me. I think maybe it takes two. It works both ways.

The researcher suggested that sometimes when you are aware of your emotions toward an interaction, that is a good time to challenge assumptions that you might have about the other person's behavior. Julie had done that in regard to the Administrator's management style. Julie replied:

Maybe I can take that kind of perspective in certain situations. Maybe it won't be what I feel or thought it was.

Yes, I am starting to go back to those feelings again. I probably have to approach it differently. Maybe the approach you are suggesting.

I know she is approachable, but I have to reapproach her again and say some things that will make it better for the rest of the group.

Four weeks later, Julie called the researcher to verify the accuracy of the interview and to provide an update on her work situation. She had decided to stay with her organization after developing some strategies (creating balance) and taking some actions (action). The organization decided to sell the hospital and keep the assisted-care facility and the nursing home. Julie did another pros and cons list on staying or leaving. The pros are stronger than the cons and include her long term goal of moving West and starting her own business in two years and her accrual of organization benefits and salary over the past seven years. Both organizations were located close to her home.

The ups and downs of my job still exist. Some days are better than others with the management staff. Things are going better with the Nurse, although some days she is still aloof. The management staff is still working on interpersonal issues. The new initiative slowed down over the holidays, but it is still progressing. I turned down a job offer from another facility that is being built a short distance from my current one. There are more positives than negatives here.

Six weeks later, at the participants' focus group,³⁴ Julie offered the following comment, *Speaking for all of us, you helped us get a different perspective in some areas.*

³⁴ All participants met as a group with the researcher who presented the general findings of the study including the process model of their experience. The researcher transcribed the taped discussion of the meetings.

The intervention of active listening by the researcher appeared to accelerate the process for Julie as she struggled with her emotions relating to the organization changes and the Administrator's moods. Julie's preference is to avoid any confrontation with her colleagues in the workplace. She believes that professionals should be able to solve the problems of the workplace without confrontation. As a result, Julie avoids confronting her co-workers or the Administrator and will often develop unverified explanations of their behavior. Julie's participation in this study helped her reflect on the situation and learn from experience.

Julie's Learning

At first, Julie saw her primary learning from this experience as recognizing the importance of effective communication in preventing many conflicts in the workplace. During the focus group almost eight months later, Julie found she now had a *different perspective in some areas*.

The dialogic interview methodology provided Julie a means of reflection. Through the interview process, she became aware of tacit knowledge that she had learned.

I did experience a panic feeling one other time when I knew I had to find another job. My other job was being dissolved, but it wasn't like this. I didn't have to deal with those other factors.³⁵

The main thing [insight about the Administrator] is that whenever she [the Administrator] felt stressed, she took it out on her employees, which was not good.

I know I could be more assertive. But it doesn't do any good, if the other person does not see a problem where you see a problem.

Well, I think I should have been more up-front in the very beginning and told her [the Administrator] that she was inconsistent. If I had been more assertive, it could have helped.

As Julie became aware of the Administrator's management style towards others on her staff, she began to channel the energy of the themes--emotions, authority, and recognition-- feeling devalued toward coping with the situation and acting to change the situation. Conscious awareness of insights and learning emerge during the consequence phase. Julie learned from this experience; all that Julie has learned is still to be determined.

Julie identified her insights in responses to the following questions:

³⁵ Some of the factors previously mentioned are, no expressed thanks for all her hard work; not being given timely information about changes in the organization that affected her marketing strategies; invasion of Julie's professional privacy to include reading Julie's faxes and mail; inadequate resources to do her job such as an old computer system with no e-mail capability; removal from some of the organization's committees with no explanation; the Administrator's reversal of operating procedures without communicating her change and then telling Julie she was wrong.

- What do you wish you had known beforehand in dealing with this type of situation?
- How has the experience changed you?

Julie’s insights were grouped into the four categories of learning: professional knowledge, organization knowledge, interpersonal learning, and intrapersonal learning. Julie had as many insights under the interpersonal skills category as the intrapersonal learning. (See Table 2.)

The researcher found the number of items of interpersonal learning to be an interesting finding. Interpersonal skills appear to be both Julie’s strength and weakness on the job. For example, the hands-on staff, the residents, their families, and the Administrator saw Julie as an effective communicator. She also demonstrated effective communication skills in her community activities and in her marketing strategies. Yet, Julie found it difficult to apply her interpersonal skills to effectively communicate on issues important to her with the Administrator and the management team.

Summary

Workplace devaluation was a new experience for Julie. Her awareness developed over a period of five years through the accumulation of many small incidents. She was either able to explain them to herself without personalizing the incidents or was able to consciously avoid dwelling on them. Then, an interaction occurred that Julie could not explain or consciously avoid. This triggered the process of professional devaluation. Throughout the process, Julie’s observable behavior in performing her position responsibilities continued to be professional and competent.

Table 2. Julie’s Expressed Insights

<p>Professional Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More knowledge in managing a home for the elderly. I see how certain things could be run and what work is involved. • More about the community, more networking connections. <p>Organization Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saw the potential for the same situation occurring in a different environment. • Awareness of organizational barriers to communication--how communication is not always communicated from the top down. <p>Interpersonal Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most important things are miscommunication and communication. This is where the biggest problem lies, not communicating available information. • Awareness of patterns with Administrator’s behavior. • What behavior to expect from Administrator. • How to avoid Administrator’s moods by staying in her office. <p>Intrapersonal Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If I can’t change situation, work with what I can and do the best I can. • I have grown more in realizing people’s needs, being empathetic, knowing how people should be treated, and seeing how some people can be biased toward some individuals and for this reason not treat them equally. • Be more assertive with Administrator in the beginning when her inconsistencies, moods were difficult. • A person’s state of mind can make a big difference about her attitude. • I don’t feel that I am locked into my position, I have other professional options. • How to see an issue from different perspectives.

The duration of Julie's first complete cycle through the process was approximately nine months. The duration of the consequence phase is not known at this time as Julie continues to manage many the issues with her position. One result of her discussion with the Administrator (act phase) helped Julie to approach her work with a positive attitude instead of the negative attitude she held when she experienced workplace devaluation. Julie experienced another effect of the consequences phase when she returned after a one week trip and discovered significant changes in the workplace. Julie recognized that her emotional reactions to these changes were similar to those she had experienced when she felt devalued. The dialogic interview methodology for this study provided Julie a means of reflecting on her reactions to the changes. This reflection process enabled Julie to develop strategies (create balance) for action from a different perspective. Although Julie did not consciously think of learning during the experience, learning occurred.

Paul: The Innovator

Innovator aptly describes Paul. He views himself as a problem-solver and as a person open to innovative ways of conducting business. Throughout the three interviews, Paul emphasizes the inertia of the hierarchical, bureaucratic organization. Paul learned a great deal in the leadership classes he attended. He was ready to apply many innovative ideas to how he and his work group could improve the working relationship with their clients and with the rest of his organization.

Background

Paul, an unmarried professional in his early thirties, moved from another region of the country to begin his law career with his organization. He views his graduation from law school as one of his major accomplishments: *Just knowing how hard law school was, and the time, the effort that went into it to graduate.* Before entering law school, Paul taught in public schools and worked on the staff of a state governor.

The Organization

Paul's organization has more than 10,000 civilian and military individuals nationwide. Although 800 individuals work at Paul's location, his branch or workgroup has fewer than 10 people. Paul's organization is hierarchical with four levels: (a) District, (b) Region, (c) Headquarters, and the (d) highest level composed of executives and their staffs. Districts are organized into regions. All Regions report to their headquarters. The Headquarters are accountable to a higher level of the organization located approximately five miles away. The highest organizational level has final authority over contract deals between the government and local communities; the district that negotiates with the contractor at the community level must have approval from the highest organizational level, before implementing the contracts in the community. The executive approval process with its inherent scrutiny of the negotiations is often adversarial with the district and frequently delays the closing. The organization has a formal awards process and a formal grievance process. In addition, the staff receive regular salary increases that, in Paul's opinion, do not appear to reflect job performance.

Responsibilities

Paul fulfills a dual role within the organization. On the one hand, he is a traditional attorney who drafts contract documents for government projects. But additionally, he is a project manager who coordinates the efforts of various groups who work together to implement these projects. In his position, Paul works directly with field offices throughout the country often traveling to their location, to carry out his responsibilities. Paul enjoys the opportunity to travel and to develop working relationships with the subject matter contract experts located in the field offices. He takes pride in his role as a problem-solver in complex contract issues.

The Professional.

Paul is a contract attorney for a large government agency composed of civilians and military personnel. He has five years experience with this agency, two years as a law student intern and three years as an attorney. Paul's reasons for accepting this position after law school were that the job enabled him to begin paying back law school loans; and he liked the people:

During the past three years, the managers recognized Paul in various ways. They offered him a position after graduation and selected him to attend leadership development seminars. They also promoted him to GS-13³⁶ and appointed him project manager for new policy development. When asked what he values about his profession, Paul replied:

As an attorney, I provide a much needed service to help untangle complicated issues. Attorneys are like problem-solvers, where we have all these problems to deal with to accomplish our objective of implementing this contract. In a larger sense, our office has been tasked to fulfill an objective designated by Congress. We are doing what Congress has envisioned which, theoretically, is in the taxpayers best interest.

Paul's Experience

For two years, Paul was satisfied with his position in the organization. He thought his work and relationships with management and co-workers was going well. However, within a few days, Paul experienced the phenomenon of workplace devaluation by decision-makers. Paul relates:

When I started working there, they sort of brought me along slowly, as far as being involved with projects. So I didn't really know my job or much about the subject matter. I deferred to a lot to people at higher levels. When I gained more experience and felt more comfortable with what I was working on, I was given a couple of big projects. It [the experience] hit me like running into a wall.

For Paul, the first complete cycle of the process (refer to The Model, [Figure 1](#)) took twelve months from awareness until creating the balance to act.

I can't think of anything in my own experience that had me feeling this way. This is the first time I have worked in such a large organization with so many layers of authority, so I guess it is kind of unique.

The experience might be like being the editor on a Rupert Murdoch newspaper. Rupert Murdoch owns half the media in the world. Sometimes he will edit the editorials of some of his newspapers. I think that sometimes people who are so far up, reach so far down into the weeds.

³⁶ GS-13 is a key promotion on the government pay scale. It is seen as the gateway to high-level professional careers and carries with it the potential for the Senior Executive Service. Paul is the youngest, by about ten years, attorney at his grade in his office. He also has the fewest years in government service at this grade, in his office.

Interactions (Refer to The Model, [Figure 1](#)). The professional's experience of devaluation begins with an interaction that involves lack of autonomy, inability to communicate, and personalization. After two years Paul felt comfortable with his responsibilities and the working relationships he had established. Then, his Branch Chief assigned him the most important project to date--that of formulating new policy on an issue in which his office viewed themselves as substantive experts. No policy covering this issue existed at this time. Paul estimated that this assignment would only take three weeks because he already had an initial proposal that had been reviewed with the regional offices. He and his Branch Chief sent the policy forward to the next higher office for approval. The higher office not only rejected the policy as written, they also required substantive changes. Paul had "hit the wall." The process that Paul navigated for approval of the new policy took a year. Paul explains:

Things came to a confrontation. I saw this big conflict within the organization. This higher office was questioning what we were doing on a contract matter. Basically they [the higher office] didn't know what they were talking about. My office is supposed to be [the organization's] subject matter experts in this field.

Well, it took about a year, and it should have only taken a few weeks. Throughout this process after I had put together the proposal, staffed and coordinated it with all the different organizations that would use this policy, I would then coordinate with the higher office. After I had coordinated with everyone else, they [the higher office] would change everything. This policy guidance went through a couple of different revisions. Everytime I would coordinate with the people who would use it and accommodate their needs. I would go to the office above me, because they demanded the right to approve it. They would change everything, again. It was a nightmare.

Intra-actions The intra-actions are the conscious and unconscious interactions among the individual's emotions, beliefs, values, knowledge, and assumptions. With the policy rejected as written and with the higher office requiring major policy changes, Paul shared some of his intra-actions:

We have non-subject matter experts, people who are higher up telling us what to do. They really don't know what they are talking about. Because they are higher up in the organization, they could overrule us. We can talk to them all we want, but they don't listen. They have their minds made up.

I guess what really bothered me about the policy project was the involvement of a higher office. That role was really inappropriate. The higher office believed they are supposed to get involved, as if they have a duty to get involved in our work. I totally disagree with that. Part of it is that they question our expertise, both as an office and individually. Also, their own particular personalities drive them to get involved regardless of who is below them in the organization.

The confluence of the constructs--decrease in autonomy, lack of communication, and personalization--had occurred. Paul respected his Branch Chief and knew his Branch Chief supported him. The decrease in autonomy resulted from the micro-managing of the higher office on the policy issue. Paul felt that he did not have the freedom to create an innovative policy based on the requirements of the field professionals. Paul felt the lack of communication in that communication is a two-way process that requires both parties to acknowledge what the other has said. The higher office did not acknowledge the competence of Paul nor of Paul's office nor the competence of the people in the field. They did not inquire about Paul's rationale for policy content. They basically ordered Paul to make the changes. Paul interpreted their required revisions as intentionally criticizing his substantive expertise, his methods, and himself as a professional. He personalized the rejection of the policy as being intentionally directed towards him by the higher office.

Awareness and Acknowledgment For Paul, the time between the awareness and acknowledgment phases was almost immediate and therefore will be discussed together. Awareness is that phase in the cycle at which the professional knows that the interaction has caused an internal emotional reaction. The professional has usually not experienced this type of interaction; and it has not been a part of his life experience. Acknowledgment occurs at that moment when one is able to name (or to admit the name of) the interaction at least to one's self. The themes--emotions, authority, and recognition--exert strong forces at this time.

Paul became aware of conflicting feelings and contradictions at this time. His analogy of *hitting a wall* aptly describes the emotional forces--anger and powerless--that he experienced. Paul felt powerless in that he, individually, had so little influence in the larger organization. He also acknowledged to himself that his Branch Chief actually had little influence with this higher office. Paul felt angry and frustrated at such a hierarchy that could allow this type of behavior. Paul recounts:

I also realized, a light bulb went on, that I saw this happening. It didn't happen right away. When it did, it was very noticeable.

Part of the dynamics of all this was a power struggle between my office and the office above us, involving the bosses. It was a larger power struggle causing this. One individual in the office above us, started at the same time I did. He has great influence and he doesn't trust our office. He works to convince people at higher levels not to trust us. Part of it [power struggle] is that they have not been satisfied with our work product and the quality of our work. There is a general feeling that they just want to control everything at higher levels.

My Branch Chief is very sympathetic, but he also gets overruled. I have a good relationship with him, but he is less than a year from retirement. He agrees with all of us who are trying to change things. He fights a little bit, but not much. Even when he does pick a fight and try to support us, he knows he won't be successful. He has probably learned that it is better not to put forth the effort, because it won't help matters at all. He jokingly tells me he is a religious man. When I am really frustrated he quotes me the

serenity prayer about 'Having the courage to change the things I can, accepting the things I can't change and the wisdom to know the difference.'

Paul describes his feelings:

I have extreme frustration. Sometimes it's anger, sometimes it's almost humorous. You see things that are mind boggling that you disagree with. We joke that this is not the same military that won World War II because we do everything backwards. There is often pure frustration bordering on anger on real bad days.

My frustration is that I and other people in my office often get overruled just because of our ability.

Most difficult for me is not having control. I work in a bureaucracy, and I am unable to have an impact. No influence to try and improve things or get things done. You can work very hard, the long bureaucratic process, you can bust your butt and work very diligently. When the product goes to the next step, if the person is not working very hard, everything you have just worked for, stops. It is wasted!

Also, it is difficult for me believing I have ideas to improve things and knowing they will not be implemented. I don't have the input.

In previous positions, Paul remembers being overruled on projects by people who were higher up in the organization. He saw this situation with the new policy as something very different:

This is the first time I have worked in such a large organization with so many layers of authority, so I guess it is kind of unique. When I was overruled [previous positions], the organizations were much smaller and there was more direct contact, it was more appropriate. I guess the disagreements are over the merits of an issue. My experience in working with the military is that they just pull rank because they can. I guess what really bothered me about this project is the involvement of a higher office. The role was really inappropriate.

Paul also felt contradictions with recognition of his contributions. His immediate supervisor (his Branch Chief) recognized his ability, as did his colleagues in his office and in the field. Paul recognized his abilities and thoroughly researched his projects. He took pride in producing the best work that he could. In his office and in previous positions with smaller organizations, authority figures respected Paul's work and explained the rationale for changes. Paul was accustomed to receiving respect for who he was as a person and a professional, and sometimes receiving recognition for his work. Now, in this position, authority figures higher than his office ignored not only the quality and substance of Paul's work; the authority figures also ignored Paul. He felt their authority only as a way to control his work:

In hindsight, I feel like I was never valued that much. I am just starting to realize it right now. I don't think I was at a point where the people higher up in the organization really valued me or my office. They never have or haven't in recent times. And I am just

starting to realize that more right now. I feel that I am appreciated and valued in my immediate office, but not valued by the people above me in the organization.

At a meeting with the higher office concerning our mission, I voiced a disagreement on how we are doing things. I offered an alternative way of accomplishing this. Some military person who was higher up, just got up and said, 'Well, that's just Paul spouting off again.' He completely disregarded what I said. I guess it is an organization mentality where they want to control things from the very top. They are not comfortable giving up any power or letting anyone else have responsibility. I think if I were 20 years older and had gray hair, he would not have reacted the same way. In the work that I do, I am one of the youngest people. Most people are in their late 40's or 50's.

Paul also saw contradictions when he remembered how the organization showed and didn't show appreciation for what he did:

One example is when I have a short deadline to get approvals from the higher office. I am doing a very menial task when if we have contract awarded assigned to the community, they [the Region] FED EX it to my office. I have to go through [it] and put a package together. Literally I walked it over to the other building and walked it from office to office to get it approved. Basically [I am] doing a messenger's job. But if we are in a big rush, then we are under a tight deadline to do that. That is when people will say, you are doing a great job, even though it's completely menial work. That's when I hear the most praise from people. Actually [I am] doing something that is not professionally related. You could get a sixteen-year old kid to do that.

Another example is that we do a lot with government agencies. I have developed a good relationship with some of the agencies we work with. There have been a couple of times that I have had to convince these agencies to cooperate with what the Army is trying to do. And when I have been able to persuade them, people have taken notice and they appreciated it. I thought I was just doing my job. Part of the job is getting things done. It took a lot to persuade another agency to agree with us. That in itself was a reward. I think people overplayed thanking me. I thought it was just part of my job.

There are other times when I am working on a project; and I'll spend a lot of time going through it and changing some things and improving it. Then when I send it to the next level for their review, they will undo all my changes. They could care less. They never ask me why I made the changes, they just go ahead and change it because they can.

Paul shared the observable behavior--awareness of his feelings and acknowledgment of the problem primarily with his supervisor. He shared his frustrations concerning the uncaring hierarchy with his colleagues in the office:

We always joke about it in the office, I guess at the traditional [gathering] around the water cooler or coffee pot or whatever. Or if we go to lunch as a group, we always poke fun at ourselves and the organization.

Cope This phase represents the thoughts, actions, strategies that one implements to protect self in the situation. How the individual manages the emotions usually falls into one of four strategies: repress the emotion, direct the emotion inward, direct the emotion at another individual or the organization, or channel the energy toward self growth. Important to this phase of the process are the intra-actions. The term, *creating balance*, describes this intra-action, a self-reflective process that individuals use to feel that they are in control or that they are safe. This phase of *creating balance* is when an individual explores options to cope with the emotions and to protect self during the experience. Paul wanted to *fight* the higher office. By *fight*, he meant that he wanted his rationale for the policy's substantive content to be understood by the higher office. Paul did not want to make the ordered revisions for the purpose of change. He wanted to understand if there was substance behind the change or to find a creative solution. His preferred method was to actively work out the differences with the parties involved. Paul's strategies for coping was to rely on what had worked for him in the past.

For the first half of the project, six months, Paul continued to manage his frustration and anger in his usual ways. He talked and sometimes joked about the situation, with his Branch Chief and his colleagues. He swore at his computer or telephone. He let the Branch Chief be the chief spokesman on the policy project. And, he included the higher office through phone calls and meetings on progress with the policy development. Paul comments:

I used to manage my frustration by swearing. For me swearing is a kind of release, it's a stress valve. In cubicles³⁷ I got in trouble for it. Like if I was on a phone call with someone, I wouldn't swear at them, I would hang up the phone and I would swear at my phone or computer for a couple of minutes to get it out of my system.

Two women in my office filed an EEOC complaint against me for swearing at my computer. They said I was creating a hostile work environment. I thought it was ridiculous that they would file a grievance against me. My boss had to reprimand me. He took me outside and said, 'Don't blankety blank swear again, for the record.' I was frustrated but I didn't take it personally.

It also helps if I go to lunch with one of my co-workers and we just have a bitch session, complain together and laugh about it.

Paul realized that his coping strategies were not working. He became more frustrated and more vocal about the frustrations. Although he did not personalize the EEOC complaint about his swearing, Paul no longer managed his frustrations in this manner at the office. While helpful personally, talking with his Branch Chief and colleagues was not changing the situation. Paul also saw little progress being made by including regular status reports to the higher office, or by working through his Branch Chief to influence views of the higher office. Paul also thought about finding a job outside the government. He explains:

I've been described as the 'untrained horse.' Many people I work with are career government employees who have been there for ten to fifteen years. They have gotten

³⁷ A cubicle, approximately eight by eight feet in size, serves as an individual's private office or individual work area with no doors and partial walls.

into their routine. They are kind of used to getting beaten down and not being listened to. They kind of coast along, going through the motions.

I guess I'm new enough to the government where I haven't reached that point yet. I think if someone forced me to do something that I disagree with, they would need a better enforcement mechanism than simply having the authority to order me to do it. I haven't been with the government or this job very long. I'm still an 'untrained horse.'

The themes--emotions, authority, and recognition--moved Paul to the next phase.

Action This phase represents the action one selects to change the situation. Action has both the *create balance* process of the intra-actions and taking action. *Creating balance* is when an individual explores options to act or to change the situation. *Creating balance* also includes examining the pros and cons of the situation, defining the problem, and giving meaning to how one copes or how one acts. Some individuals also look deep within themselves and begin to challenge their basic beliefs, values, assumptions. Emotions and recognition are powerful motivators in creating balance. Individual factors external to the organization are powerful constraints in creating balance. Options are both short-term and long-term. The individual explores both short- and long-term options, to act or to change the situation. Paul undertook some difficult reflection during this phase.

The Branch Chief tacitly withdrew from his role and no longer tried running interference to influence the higher office to approve the new policy with each revision. Paul willingly assumed that responsibility. He saw it as an opportunity to gain control of the situation. The coping strategies he had been using were not that effective. Paul also realized that he needed more information about the players involved. Halfway through the project, he began to get this needed information. Retrospectively, Paul noted:

Having a better understanding of the organization would have helped. If when I started, someone had pulled me aside for half an hour and given me a frank discussion of all the players, the people involved, how they are and what they are like. Sometimes it is not good, because you don't want to skew or create bias in a new employee. I think it would have been helpful if someone had been honest with me about the dynamics of the personalities involved.

The frank and candid discussion is more a function of someone who feels comfortable with you on a personal level. As you get to know the managers on a personal level, you start hearing the frank discussions. The managers are taking a risk by having a conversation with someone new. They don't know how that person would use that information. Well, I guess I can understand why they [the managers] don't do it, but I wish there was some middle ground.

Paul thought of the leadership development programs he had attended and developed some strategies to apply what he had learned to this situation. He also thought about why he should stay or leave the organization. He needed money to pay off his loans; and he enjoyed the

problem solving aspects of contract law. He did not have any personal constraints that required staying with that organization at that location. It was time to look for another job.

Paul also examined his assumption that his difficulties with the higher office were intentionally directed at him:

At first I took it personally that they [the higher office] didn't trust my work product. Then I realized that it was more of an organization thing. That this higher office wants to get involved with what my office does, regardless of who is working on it in my office. So that situation I didn't take personally. That is just the way those people are. They want to control everything at my level.

I think if it were just a quirk in my personality, you would think it could be fixed through self-examination or whatever. But other people in my office have the same frustrations. I work with a lot of people out in the field and I am aware how they feel about how our work is being done. Corporately, there is a very large problem.

My personality profiles are that I am kind of an emotional person. In some ways I think it has helped me. Because when I am in a meeting, if I voice my opinion rather strongly on an issue, they back off, 'Oh no, here goes Paul again.' But in other respects it might have hurt me as they are much more involved in the details of our work than they really should be.

If I could fix it [organization bureaucracy] by myself or go to my supervisor to have him fix something, it would have more meaning to me. But, it is such a structural problem. No individual is going to fix it necessarily.

We [his office] find, too, that we have a good product that people out in the field want, need, and like. Yet this higher authority ignored this office and the rest of the real world on how to approach something. I didn't see their involvement improving the product.

The new policy issue is part of a larger power struggle that is causing all of this. The problem is that my office and the higher office have very fundamental philosophical differences on how to conduct our business. So there is always going to be this conflict. They use their higher authority to micro-manage us. My philosophy and my office philosophy is that we try to delegate to the lowest level practical in an organization. We try to empower workers. The higher office's philosophy is that they don't trust anyone in the organization. They want every decision and action controlled by people at their level, the highest part of the organization.

And that's the big problem, dealing with the military. There is a chain of command, yet, many times they circumvent our office and go below [districts or regions] and deal directly with the offices that are lower than mine. Then they complain about our office not providing any kind of quality control. Yet, we are taken entirely out of the loop at times.

Paul was ready to change the situation. At this time, Paul thought he had many options: He could continue to fight the higher office, try to influence them to understand the rationale of the new policy. He could give up and accede to the demands of the higher office regarding the new policy. He could also start sending out resumes for a new job. He could trust his Branch Chief to let him know when he did something wrong or use other strategies such as providing status reports of policy projects to the higher office. He could also select which battles were worth fighting and change his attitude that made him believe the higher office was intentionally criticizing Paul, the person and the professional.

Paul enjoyed the autonomy to work directly with the higher office. He continued to “fight” for what he and his colleagues in the regional offices knew was needed in the new policy. He did try some new strategies in the way he approached the higher office to build support for the changes he needed and by including the higher office in the coordination of the policy. Paul continues:

Finally, they [the higher office] backed off on a few of the issues. My office got a lot of what we wanted to do. The higher office compromised more than we had to compromise, but only because we refused to give up and kept fighting and fighting. It got to the point where they gave in. It was really eye-opening. I saw to what degree this higher office was willing to meddle in the work that was essentially delegated to my office.

One thing is the need to develop trust. When you are having problems with a higher office and they don't trust your work products, there is one realization you come to, you must improve your work production, so you can develop trust. If you do, they will back off and be less involved.

Dealing with the higher office has become a lot less personal. I guess, I used to talk to them a lot by telephone. Maybe I feel burned by the whole experience, so now, most of my communication with this office is by e-mail or fax instead of talking directly with them by phone.

I have gotten some ideas from the seminars on leadership techniques. When you try to convince one person you usually can't. Sometimes, if you try to convince other people who have an influence on that person, they will influence him to your way of thinking. I have tried this a couple of times on the nemesis of my office who controls everything. I have gone to the staffers in this particular office and convinced them of my side [of the arguments]. When the nemesis and I get in a discussion on how to approach something, by working with the staffers we have been able to get the nemesis to back off. He won't listen to me, but if I can convince the person above me, I can have a chance.

Paul did send out resumes occasionally to various law firms. He did not get any responses. The lack of response to his resume did not bother Paul at the time, as he was working directly with the higher office for their approval on the new policy. He liked the people in his immediate office; and he was getting good experience.

The Second Time Around

Finally, the higher office approved the new policy thirteen months after Paul was given the assignment. Then two months later another interaction occurred that sent Paul back to the beginning of the process. He became the subject of an investigation. Two of Paul's co-workers, the same two who had filed an EEO grievance, accused him of making allegations that a general was operating illegally on one of Paul's projects. As Paul recounts this interaction, he describes his movement through the awareness and acknowledgment phases

There were two women in my office that tried to get me fired. As you know the military has a chain of command [that one is supposed to follow]. About 10 months ago, the two women sent an e-mail directly to a general who is about twenty layers up the food chain from me. The women are at my level, GS-13. They made up some blatant lies about my accusing this general of operating illegally on this project I was working on. It wasn't true that I had made these allegations. The general went crazy when he saw the e-mail and called me into his office. I couldn't figure out why

I am too far down the totem pole for a general to pull me into his office.

He yelled at me for about an hour one day and threatened to do an investigation which is like a criminal investigation. I would have certain rights and they would provide me with an attorney and all that kind of stuff. Then I waited and waited.

The confluence of the three constructs--loss of autonomy, inability to communicate about the issue with the decision-makers, personalization of the incident--occurred with event. Paul knew that his professional actions in the office would be closely monitored (loss of autonomy). He also realized that he was not in a position to communicate on this issue with the general (unable to communicate). Paul saw this as an intentional act by the two co-workers to defame him (personalization). Paul explains:

From the very beginning I thought it was very personal. My suspicions, knowing these two women, were that the allegations were personal in the sense that I am a white male and would be competing against them for higher grades [promotions]. So I think they looked on me as a threat. I am comfortable in saying that. I work hard at my job and I am very proud of it. They are not very hard workers, so maybe they felt threatened in some way. I don't think it was a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Their allegations were very personal and directed against me.

One woman sits in the cubicle [office space] next to me. The other women's cubicle is about fifteen feet away. Apparently these women came into my cubicle after hours and searched through all my papers and found a memo to our new boss. It was a candid, frank memo. I just made references of a conflict of interest between the general and this mayor as there was another similar situation at another location with another general. They [the women] copied this document, highlighted some sentences that were vague and ambiguous, and sent it with a note that I am accusing the general of being a racist. I had the memo buried under a stack [of papers] and it was upside down.

Paul learned that legally the government can not only go through your business papers but also the government can listen to your phone conversations at work. He appeared resigned to the invasion of privacy:

Legally, I guess, for the government, I have no right of privacy in my work station. Is it something that should be done? Of course not. Employees should not go through another person's desk. Morally it is not the proper thing to do.

Paul attempts to provide an objective presentation of other information he learned that led to his encounter with the general. He also communicates some of the emotion he still feels with his choice of words:

The rest of the story made it so nasty. I will try to give you an objective view. First of all, I am obviously a white male. The two women accusing me were black as well as the general and his friend who was named in the allegation. There is a huge conflict of interest between the general and his friend. The general stayed out of it, which he was smart to do. The undercurrent of all these allegations is that I am a racist. The General, for whatever reason (I think the race issue), was willing to face their allegations on the basis of the e-mail. I was guilty until proven innocent. Because if I was to send an e-mail directly to the general, not only would he not respond, my bosses would get chewed out for me going outside the chain of command. But it was perfectly acceptable for these women to go outside the chain of command and go directly to the general.

My reputation was being questioned. When you are accused of being a racist, even though I am not, you hate to see even the allegation made. The allegation makes the front page of the newspaper, the correction is made six weeks later on page 20. No one knows it.

I think, legally, I could have pursued some kind of civil action against the women who accused me, some sort of libel or slander or defamation of character or intentional infliction of emotional distress for my having to go through something like this.

Coping Paul moved to creating balance with his emotions. Paul's preference was to confront the two women or to have the Branch Chief talk to them. The same individual supervises Paul and the two women. Paul did meet with his immediate supervisor and his next two managers up the chain of command. Together they developed a coping strategy. Paul recounts:

Well, I was lucky in that my immediate supervisor and the next two higher managers supported me from the very beginning. There was no question that they knew the allegations were false, as they knew me well enough. From the very beginning, they said they would not take negative action against me. They just encouraged me to cooperate with the investigation, which I did. I had nothing to hide. It meant a lot to me emotionally knowing that they knew I didn't do anything wrong.

They were willing to support me, but they really couldn't get into a bloody, knuckle fight with the general over something like this. The nature of the organization and this general's known sympathy for EEOC {Equal Employment Opportunity Commission} complaints of any kind made the managers kind of gun shy in confronting them [the women]. They [the managers] just try to avoid conflict and let things run their course. They couldn't take any action against them[the two women].³⁸

The themes--emotions, authority, and recognition--were interacting with the constructs to help Paul cope with the situation. Emotions of fear, anger, and no control are very strong forces. Paul knew that he was innocent, the decision-maker, the general, who possesses the authority and power of the organization, told Paul in their meeting that Paul was guilty until proven innocent. Paul's management advised Paul to cooperate with whatever happened and do nothing else. These managers also gave Paul mixed support. On the one hand, they believed that he was innocent, and that he had not acted improperly. Paul found emotional strength to cope with the situation from that remark. On the other hand, the managers said they would take no action with the general or with the women. Outwardly, the managers' words and actions were neutral. They had decided to do nothing and let the situation run its course.

With the energy from the themes--emotions, authority, recognition--Paul decided to implement the strategies that he developed to protect their core self from the perceived threats of the situation. Paul decided to follow management's advice: to say nothing to the women and cooperate with any investigation. Paul was in this holding pattern for the next six months. He also continued to perform his other responsibilities in a professional manner. He systematically sent out resumes looking for another position in a smaller organization. However Paul was getting very few responses to his resume:

The legal field is very competitive for job seekers. Going to a law school that is not well-known in this area, I had a difficult time finding other work. Things [at his organization] had quieted down. I actually got promoted five months later. I thought that things were kind of over with. I knew that management was not supposed to promote you if you are the subject of an investigation.

Paul thought he did not have to worry about the allegations against him. He also thought he would not be the subject of an investigation.

Nothing happened for five months when apparently this general decided to do an Inspector General's (IG) Investigation. I think he chose that because the general can manipulate and control the IG. It is not an independent IG. They [IG] do not have to show me the evidence against me. They don't have to tell me who is making the allegations or tell me what the conclusions are or give me a copy of the IG report or anything. So I went through this entire investigation for four months.

Action This phase has both the *creating balance* process of the intra-actions and taking action. *Creating balance* is when an individual explores options to act or to change the situation.

³⁸ According to Title VII, management cannot take any retaliatory action against employees who file grievances.

Creating balance also includes examining the pros and cons of the situation, defining the problem, and giving meaning to how one copes or how one acts. Some individuals also look deep within themselves and begin to challenge their basic beliefs, values, assumptions. Emotions and recognition are powerful motivators in creating balance. Individual factors external to the organization are powerful constraints in creating balance. Options are both short-term and long-term.

Paul knew the culture of the organization. He understood what consequences the investigation could bring if the allegations were found to be true. Paul summarizes his feelings and concerns as he contemplates his actions:

I got so frustrated and fed up with the organization. How could a couple of people make up malicious lies about me and have them trigger this huge investigation. I mean it was bad enough for me, but there are a lot of very good people out in the field who got dragged into this whole affair and were interrogated.

My only concern was that someone else would lie. Everyone supported me, but they couldn't be too assertive in supporting me with the general.

I really got angry at my organization that they would let something like this explode into such a controversial matter.

During this time, Paul also became more vocal in expressing his anger within the organization:

More and more recently I have gotten the reputation of being a 'grenade thrower' in the sense that I tend to voice my frustrations.

Part of me (I am quite an emotional person) wanted to fight. I had a strong feeling of really wanting to fight back. It is not my nature to just sit back and let people accuse me and just hope that the investigation comes out the way it should. My management really encouraged me to cooperate, let the process take its course and things will work themselves out.

I would have liked to have my manager, once this controversy came up, to sit down with me and the two women and say that these allegations have been made. I am going to move you away from each other until this is all sorted out. If you have problems, come talk to me before you go straight to the general. It would have been nice if we had had some sort of sit-down and had reached some sort of understanding.

Paul's strategy also included accelerating his job search, by sending out more resumes.

Paul's strategy was to let the IG investigative process run its course. He managed his emotions and controlled his preference to be more assertive in the process. Paul also interviewed for several positions. Paul continues:

I avoided the women at work and they avoided me. There was all this tension for months. I went through six to eight months of crap. I thought it was totally unfair.

It was very frustrating because I was getting busy. I didn't have a lot of interviews, but it helped me realize how much I really wanted to leave. I could see it was something I wanted to try. It was depressing to go back to my job after interviewing, knowing I wanted to leave. I was so desperate I would have taken any job, just to leave.

This period was difficult for Paul. He had interviewed for three jobs and was not selected. Then, four months after the IG investigation began, he learned that the IG had exonerated him of any wrong doing. Paul comments:

They [the IG and general] weren't going to tell me I was cleared. The general had no intention of telling me. They wanted to keep me on edge. But, I guess a manager who is two or three levels higher than me had a meeting with this general and pulled the general aside and asked him the status of my investigation. The general admitted that the IG had cleared me of any wrong doing and recommended that the whole thing be dropped. The general said he would be willing to drop it. He would never tell me directly. No apologies or nothing. So, I wanted to leave as quickly as possible. I lost all faith and loyalty to the organization.

Paul decided to do something else. He learned of this study from a friend and decided to volunteer. Paul's interviews were completed in the next five weeks. During that time, he interviewed for another position and was selected. Paul describes his reaction to being selected:

The frustration was in the greater organization. From the very beginning, I didn't plan on making the government a career, so professionally I had a lot of frustrations. Once I got the job offer and put in my two weeks notice, it was just like a huge weight had been lifted off my shoulders. So when I was wrapping up my work the last two weeks, I didn't get upset about all the goofy stuff that goes on that I would normally get upset about, like the upper levels micro-managing us. I was just kind of fine, do whatever you want.

It's very risky to take a new job or to leave. It's human nature, you get into a safe routine. There is still the safety of getting the pay check every two weeks. You know the subject matter and everything else.

I am kind of nervous or anxious, because when you start a new job, you feel so dumb because you are learning everything from start. Also, I think change is good. I'm the type that if I stay in a job for too long, my brain and my energy go stale. I think the change is good, but as unhappy as I was, there were still feelings do I really want to leave. I don't know if it's lack of self-confidence, but there is a risk in taking a new job because you may not be happy or something.

Consequences This phase of the process embraces both observable behaviors and the intra-actions. Consequences are the outcomes, aftermath, effects, and results of taking action. In the three months since the last interview, Paul is now working for a law firm. He works longer

hours but enjoys the smaller organization without all the bureaucratic layers. Paul found the methodology of the study a helpful way to reflect on his experience of professionals' devaluation by decision-makers:

Through these sessions, it has been a retrospective look at my job with this organization over the past two or three years. Self-examination is good and it reminded me of why I needed to leave.

I was really sad to leave the last day. My immediate supervisor was like a Dad to me. All the managers and the rest of the co-workers were really nice to me.

The two women who filed the complaint against Paul were on sick leave due to stress. Neither women had returned to work before Paul left. Paul continues:

No one has taken any adverse action against them that I know. I don't know if it has anything to do with my investigation, but they both stopped coming to work. I don't know if there is a correlation or to what degree.

It really bothered me. After all is said and done, these women were not punished, even though the objective IG said there was no wrong doing and these were false allegations. They went through my papers and my workstation. They won't be punished for any of that.

The work environment was much better when those two women were not there. The frustration was with the larger organization. I dealt with it better because I didn't have the tension of these two women at work. But, it was still very evident [frustration with the larger organization].

Paul's experiences lasted approximately eighteen months. For Paul, the experience dealt with the organizational structure and his sense of not being valued in a bureaucratic, hierarchical organization. Paul observed:

I hope that I don't come across as complaining or whining about my job. The government is an easy target to show the faults of an organization.

I think a lot of times when people take a critical look, critical being an analytic view of the work environment, you tend to think of the bad things first rather than the good things. It is like the teacher who is asked how was your third period class and replies, Little Johnny was a pain. Well there were 30 students, 29 were behaving. One student was obnoxious and ruins it for that one period. But there were a lot of good things I experienced on my job as well.

The people, the co-workers, there were some good people. I could see how a bad organization really inhibits people because there are some very good workers and very competent people. The structure of an organization and the management of an organization can destroy any kind of ingenuity or creativity and the productivity of

workers. Plus, there are people who are just plain lazy and all they do is complain at work. I don't want to be put in the same group as those people.

Part of it [the experience of not being valued] is maybe we tend to forget what our real priorities in life are. There are other things in life. My dad died three years ago. You can be at work one day and you get all upset about some project you are working on, then the next day you get a phone call from a family member. It puts everything into perspective. Maybe that's what workers, people, in my situation need to be reminded of. Maybe even if there is real intent going on, it is not the most important thing in life to worry about.

At this time, Paul is busy establishing professional relationships and learning how his new organization operates and what his responsibilities are. Paul is not sure how these experiences will influence other decisions in his life. During the participant focus group, Paul was curious about the aftermath. He had not thought of that aspect. In the future, Paul may examine his beliefs and assumptions, relative to the two co-workers that initiated the IG Investigation, in the same way he examined his professional role in the large organization. When the researcher asked Paul if he would ever consider working for a large organization again, Paul replied:

Mmmm, I would consider it. It would be under much different circumstances. I wouldn't do a job like I just left. It would be [pause] I would have to have much more responsibility and authority. I wouldn't go back to become a grunt, to go back and be a worker bee.

Paul's Learning

Currently Paul is in the consequence phase of the process. Paul articulated some insights; all that he learned from his experiences of professional workplace devaluation is yet to be determined. Paul knew he had learned a great deal about large organizations and the field of contract law. Paul expressed his insights in response to the following questions:

- What would you tell your replacement to help him be better prepared for the position?
- What do you wish you had known beforehand in dealing with this type of situation?
- What will you do differently on your new job?

The researcher categorized Paul's insights as they related to professional knowledge; organization knowledge; interpersonal learning; and self learning in Figure 3. Paul's Expressed Insights. Paul stated more insights about self, then the organization, followed by interpersonal learning.

Table 3. Paul's Expressed Insights.

<p>Professional Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Substantive knowledge of contract law <p>Organizational Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need for control by decision makers and the extent they will meddle.• Someone in the organization will always interfere with your work.• Be prepared to follow orders given by people higher than you in organization "<i>which are completely crazy and insane, but they have the authority to order you to do something, so do it.</i>"• Good understanding of the organizational structure: Who are the players? What they are like? What dynamics of different people involved?• Understand the power that your office has in the organization.• Management structure of organization can destroy productivity and any kind of ingenuity or creativity of professionals. <p>Interpersonal Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Techniques to influence decision-makers.• When someone feels defensive professionally, they will question your judgment.• Depersonalize communication if you are taking it personally, e.g., use e-mail or fax instead of face-to-face or phone interaction.• Observes (recognizes) fear of management and pervasive apathy towards doing things differently in colleagues.• Develop good working relationships with all levels of organization.• Most people in government avoid confrontation. <p>Self Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cannot be autonomous in a hierarchical bureaucratic organization.• Focus on your real responsibilities, e.g., "<i>Stay in your lane and don't get worried about other issues that might come up.</i>"• Don't take criticisms personally. It is an organization problem.• Acceptance that this is the way life is in an organization• Keep everything in perspective. Your job is not the most important thing in life to worry about.• Greater understanding of his emotions and how to manage them (has strong emotional profile).• Pick your battles. You cannot fight the senior management on everything. It is better to retreat, let them have their way on some things. Save resources for a few important battles.• In today's environment, be more careful of what you say and who hears it
--

Summary

Workplace devaluation's were new experiences for Paul. His awareness felt like running into a wall after two years in the position. He "ran into that wall" when he was assigned a high visibility project to develop new policy. In retrospect, he also felt that the decision-makers had never really valued him as a professional. Shortly after he completed that project, he learned that two co-workers had gone outside management channels and made allegations about him that directly affected a general. He, thus, became the subject of an IG investigation that had racial undercurrents. Paul experienced the process of professional devaluation for two different reasons. Throughout the process, Paul's observable behavior in performing his position responsibilities continued to be professional and competent.

The duration of Paul's first complete cycle through the process lasted approximately thirteen months. The duration of the consequence phase is not known at this time. Paul was at the consequence phase with his first experience of workplace devaluation when he began another cycle through the process related to the IG Investigation. At this time, Paul is at the consequence phase for both of these cycles. The final outcome of how these experiences will influence his life is as yet unknown. Paul's greatest learning from the experience appears to be self-learning at the intrapersonal level and organization learning, followed by interpersonal learning.

Danny: The Mentor

The Mentor captures Danny's approach to his career. Early in his career, Danny's management recognized his technical proficiency and encouraged him to become a supervisor and manager. Danny describes his move to supervision and management as a way to help staff do their jobs better. He has always liked being in charge and being able to share his knowledge with others. As a manager and supervisor of supervisors, Danny attempts to model and encourage other supervisors to teach and develop their staffs. An effective mentor is also a self-directed learner willingly questions himself and others and then willingly searches for the answers.

Background.

Danny is a professional in his mid-fifties who describes himself as an individual who "has a real good integration of the technical and managerial leadership." Married, he is the father of one child, and a grandfather of two children. His work experience includes instrumental music teacher in public schools, computer programmer, and systems analyst. He has also held many supervisory and managerial positions in the information technology field. Danny has earned a B.S. degree in music education, MS in information systems, and has completed all academic course work in a doctoral program.

The Organization.

Danny's organization employs approximately 500 people at one location. The organization, part of a larger agency, has a focused mission in the electronic communications field. This organization's structure consists of senior executive staff, division chiefs, branch chiefs, project managers and employee teams. The larger agency encourages senior executive staff to hold different positions within this organization and their other organizations, usually moving them to a different position every three to four years. The organization has formal award, grievance, and promotion policies. Danny noted that staff assigned to mission-direct positions, in general, receive more organizational awards, such as higher performance ratings and higher compensation.

Danny commented that the organization has been in a slow, steady state of decline for approximately eight years. The senior executive requires all managers to develop and to communicate their mission, vision, and goal at the branch and division level. The senior executives also required all managers to communicate corporate values of honesty, diligence, and clarity. As a result of decreasing funds, no one at his level has received monetary awards for two years. Danny observed a trend to think corporately at his level and above, especially in sharing the diminishing staff as special needs arise due to hiring constraints. Managers no longer expend as much time using competitive strategies of expanding their power base by increasing staff, space, equipment, and money. The decision-makers now recognize managers for their ability to make decisions based on the needs of the organization.

Responsibilities

Danny has responsibilities in two areas. One area ensures that all information technology systems are functioning and appropriate to support the organization's mission of software integration. Danny manages twenty-five people including several supervisors in his area. His group is responsible for providing information technology support for software integrators. This support includes all the organization's personal computers, all software used to connect people across the network; all outside connections to the Internet as well as telephone connectivity throughout the building. A system of computer servers monitors the system. Danny's staff interacts with internal customers to service their technology needs. Danny, himself, interacts more with the other managers at his level and with senior management.

His second area of responsibility is the development, mentoring, and training of his staff. He finds this area to be the most exasperating and yet the most satisfying aspect of his position. Danny perceives the development and mentoring of his staff to consist of four related areas. One area is listening to his staff's ideas for solving technical problems integrating them into his decision-making process, often with a short deadline. The second area is to help his staff understand organization's big picture-- particularly policy and decisions. In this area, he often acts as buffer between his staff and senior management. The third area has to do with the disciplining and counseling of employees "*who have fallen on hard times, gotten into drugs or alcohol or both*" which interfered with their job performance. He related his experience with two different employees. One did not work out and the employee left the organization. The other employee, on the other hand, was able to work through his problems and "*today is a great employee.*" The fourth area, developing his staff usually consists of teaching them to give consistent customer service following standard procedures.

The Professional

Danny is a technical manager supporting information technology systems for a large government organization. He has twenty-eight years experience with government agencies in the information technology field, and fifteen years with his current organization. When asked what he liked about his job, he responded:

It's exciting. New and different things happen on different days. I keep track of the big picture, the vision of what to do with technology. For me, it's the challenge of discerning the real important technology changes from the fluff to achieve a good reliable system with great functionality for the organization.

Danny acknowledges that his contributions are recognized by senior management in various ways. For example, Danny views the fact that availability and reliability of the LAN system throughout his organization has not been an agenda item at senior level staff meetings for many years as a type of implicit recognition. He does not have to explain to the senior managers why the LAN or other information technology that they use is not working.³⁹ Other ways that he

³⁹ When the LAN is down in an organization, almost all work stops. In many organizations, unavailability of the LAN can be a daily, weekly, or monthly event. The LAN status is usually "a hot topic" at many staff meetings. It is a significant accomplishment that he has managed and maintained a stable LAN environment for the past eight

knows senior management appreciates his contributions are verbal “atta boys” and their willingness to approach him for help in problem solving technology problems.

When asked what he considered his most significant achievement, Danny cited a general purpose interactive software system that he developed alone some twenty years ago, in a short time at much less expense than a contractor’s quoted price. The organization used this system for 10 years yet Danny received no formal recognition or award.

When considering his managerial capabilities and those times he was successful in helping troubled employees--especially one employee who is now a valued, contributing member of his staff today, he said, “*I really cherish this. Actually if I was to weigh one against the other in the big picture, certainly helping someone along the way like that, is a lot more meaningful and lasting than something I did for a computer system.*”

Danny’s Experience

Danny’s first experience with workplace devaluation occurred eleven years ago. At the time of the interviews, Danny worked for the same organization and held the same title as he had when the experience occurred. Six months prior to the experience, Danny’s manager, who had hired him for the position, retired. Danny describes Sam, his new manager, as “*untrusting of people, short fuse, short temper.*” Danny had not dealt directly with Sam in his previous position although some of Danny’s staff had. Danny describes those first six months with Sam as “*fine, things seemed to be going OK.*” One day, Sam’s secretary calls Danny to come and pick up an envelope. Picking up that envelope was the start of Danny’s experience. Danny relates:

If there was something that happened that he [Sam] didn’t like or was perceived as going counter to him, or if something was not working well, he took this as a personal affront. So, he would write out a scathing, short thing on paper and give it to his secretary to give to me. She would put it in a brown envelope, seal it up and say “For Your Eyes Only, Danny.” She would then call me to her office. When I got there she would give me the envelope and say, “Sorry.” She also told me that he didn’t want to talk about it.

You couldn’t go in to see him (Sam) about it. You had to just take this thing, read it and then figure what are you going to do from here. At times, he would just say this is the most absurd, idiotic thing, don’t ever let this happen again, or I am putting so and so in charge of this, from now on they have this whole project. That was it. No recourse, no discussion. He was my boss for four years.

When asked to further describe the situation or compare it to something similar in his life, Danny responded:

Oh, OK, to describe it. I would have received a lot of self-worth and affirmation from my job, and it’s your boss that you get most of that from. If you don’t get it from him, it you

years..

get negative from him, it's like nothing else matters anyway. It's such a hard situation, it's even hard to think or describe around it, like you want to block it out.

What I am thinking is rejection. Essentially what it was is just a huge tremendous form of rejection. And I guess the only time I have been rejected before is like, say, a girlfriend. Let me ponder on that a little bit.

It's interesting that I mentioned it that it is like being rejected by your girlfriend. I'm thinking back to my high school days and I guess, I'm thinking in terms back then. When I was rejected, I didn't know what to do, I was frozen. I couldn't do anything. With my boss, I was prohibited from going into talking with him. The secretary said, "That's it. You can't go in, he doesn't want to talk to you. That's it. Period." And so it's like a severing of the tie, of the connectedness that you have in a working relationship. It is a relationship. He is taking a part of it and severing it, with no recourse. It is traumatic, very traumatic.

You go through a lot of feelings. What do they say, when there is a death, you go through these stages. There is anger, denial. I forget the others. That's what I went through. It's like a death that you go through. Very severe, very traumatic.

After reading the transcript of the first interview, the researcher asked Danny if he remembered anything else about the experience. Danny reflected:

Not really. I guess about the only thing I was thinking about is what it was like. Because before, I had never really thought about what was it like--the separation, a cut, like if someone went through a divorce, that sort of thing. There are some drastic things there.

Danny moved very quickly through the first three phases of the process--awareness, acknowledgment, and coping. He then recycled through these phases, when he received the second "brown envelope." In retrospect, Danny estimated that the first of the process (refer to The Model, [Figure 1](#)) took one day from becoming aware until creating the balance to act. Danny continued:

I think sometime before I went to bed that night, I began thinking, is there something about me that I need to change. Is there some message in there for me? I knew right off the bat, that it probably wasn't him being all good and me being all bad or the other way, that it was somewhere in--between, a mixture of who knows what.

Interactions. (Refer to The Model, [Figure 1](#)). The professional's experience of devaluation begins with an interaction that involves lack of autonomy, inability to communicate, and personalization. The interaction occurred when Danny received the first "brown envelope." Danny's description:

When he came at me the first time, oh man, that really knocked me for a loop. I was in denial. I couldn't believe that this thing was happening. So that set me down.

Intra-actions. The intra-action are the conscious and unconscious interactions among the individual's emotions, beliefs, values, knowledge, and assumptions.

At first, I felt helpless about what I could do to change the situation.

I thought about it. When I think, I think quietly, I don't talk through. So during work, coming and going home, I thought about it.

The confluence of the constructs--decrease in autonomy, lack of communication, and personalization--occurred. Danny realized that he could not continue to perform his responsibilities with as much autonomy as he had done in the past. He did not know what he could do to gain control of the situation and his job. He knew that he would not have the autonomy to work as independently as he had done in the past. Danny was unable to communicate with Sam on this issue. Sam was clear that he did not want to talk. Danny understood that he could have insisted on a meeting; but he did not think anything would be gained from a meeting. Danny felt there was no recourse. Danny took Sam's method of communicating through scathing memos with no face-to-face meeting as a threat to his career and a personal attack on his professionalism.

Awareness and Acknowledgment For Danny, the time between awareness and acknowledgment was almost immediate and will be discussed together. Awareness is that phase in the cycle wherein the professional knows that the interaction caused an emotional reaction within himself. The professional has usually not experienced this type of interaction; it does not fit into his life experience. Acknowledgment is the moment when one is able to name (or to admit the name) of the interaction at least to one's self. The themes--emotions, authority, and recognition--exert a strong force at this time.

Danny became aware of conflicting feelings and contradictions at this time. His analogy of being rejected and feeling frozen or unable to act describes the force of the emotions--anger and powerless--that he experienced. Danny had experienced no similar professional or personal experience to compare with his situation. He felt powerless in that he had no way to talk with Sam, his supervisor, about the issue at least not in the near future. Danny, also, felt anger with the content of the note, the method of delivery, and his inability to discuss the issue with Sam. He did not name the experience as a rejection until the interview.

Danny shared his feelings and his acknowledgment of the problem primarily with his wife.

Of course, come home and talk about it. Getting it out certainly helps. The first time, just incredibly so. You wonder, "What happened here? What is this?"

Coping This phase represents the thoughts, actions, strategies that one implements to protect self in the situation. How the individual manages the emotions usually falls into one of four strategies: repress the emotion, direct the emotion inward, direct the emotion at another individual or the organization, or channel the energy toward self growth. Important to this phase are the intra-actions. The term, *creating balance*, describes the intra-action, a self-reflective process that individuals use to feel that they are in control or that they are safe. *Creating balance*

is when an individual explores options in coping with the emotions and protecting self during the experience. In retrospect, Danny moved into this phase the same day he received the brown envelope. His main method of coping was reliance on his strong faith in God. Danny explained his thought process as follows:

I know in part, my general orientation is to think positive. I guess you might ask where does that come from. I knew at the time that God was in control, because He always is. No matter what we think and even during the rough times that happen, God is in control. I knew He had a reason. Of course I doubted. I guess that the strongest thing was this is for a reason, refining and building character, whatever. Even though I don't understand what is going on, everything [that happens] is for the best.

Again, I didn't think that way at first; I recoiled from that position. Knowing that in me, quickly helped me through that point.

I guess along with that optimism, I have an orientation for whatever reason, empathizing with the other person. What is it they are going through? What is it that made them that way? Is he really lashing out because he is hurting from something or had did something really hurt him? So my thought went to that too, being open to the fact that is it really me? Maybe a part of it was.

Danny implemented two coping strategies: First of all he prayed that God had a reason for him to experience this situation and that God would help him get through it. Secondly he tried to learn more about Sam. Danny continues:

In his previous position I had known times where he [Sam] would pretty much go off his rocker, become irrational, go in his office, slam his door, and refuse to let anybody to talk to him. I knew he was a little different. I had not known of Sam doing that in this position and not to me at this time. So it's interesting. After I got that first brown envelope, that's when I started asking around in more detail about what he does.

It was not until I got the second brown envelope that I asked the secretary if I was the only one who gets these. She said not to worry, you are not the only one. All the others at your level get them. Then I thought, 'Whoa, that makes me feel a little better, actually.'

After I learned that, I approached one of the others and said, 'I got one of these brown envelopes, do you get these too?' He said, 'Yeah, can you believe that.' Before that everyone was holding that information close at least with me, because I had not heard of that before.

No one had thought to ask that question until Danny asked it. The researcher asked Danny to provide reasons for the lack of discussion.

Like you are out there on your own. It's not something you usually talk to anyone in the workplace. Most people wouldn't want to lose face or something like that.

While Danny gathered more information about Sam one of (Danny's coping strategies), Danny became more aware of Sam's behavior in the office. Danny continued:

Then, a couple of things happened that underscore that this guy [Sam] is not all there, he's on the irrational side. There were situations that happened that just indicated this guy's not quite right.

He [Sam] would lose control; he would yell. There was one time when the person that he [Sam] wanted was overseas and he ordered, 'Well call him and tell him to get on the next plane out of there. I want him in my office tomorrow morning. No way was he [the individual] going to follow that order. Sam had a habit of bypassing all the chains of command and just calling directly to a person down the organization. It's OK if you are just going to talk, but when you start directing someone to do something you need to follow the chain. This guy [Sam] was ranting and raving--nuts.

The themes--emotions, supervisor, recognition--were also interacting with events and thoughts during this phase. Danny was very aware of his emotional reactions to the *brown envelopes* and Sam's behavior.

I'm not one to do any physical anger. It was a lot of pent up anger and frustration. You get a feeling that, gosh, maybe it's true, maybe I'm worthless, that sort of thing.

Danny also felt contradictions with recognition and the supervisor's role. For example, his previous manager personally recruited him for this position based on his professional reputation as a manager and as a technical expert with information systems. Danny knew his professional capabilities. Danny's staff had actually provided Sam's staff (in Sam's previous position) with good customer service.

I think he [Sam] brought familiarity and acceptance of the staff that he had worked with before and distrust of the new people he now managed. Sam viewed my old boss, who had departed, as the enemy. They were always going at each other. So that anybody that Sam identified with the old boss, he just thought that they were the enemy also.

Even though there was nothing I had done to antagonize Sam in his previous job, or any of Sam's people. Matter of fact, my job was to support them. He just had that mind set, hey, that's the other team. I don't think he could fully accept us because of that.

After getting the second envelope and observing Sam's behavior, Danny moved to the *action* phase.

Action This phase encompasses both the *creating balance* process of the intra-actions and taking action. *Creating balance* is when an individual explores options to act or to change the situation. *Creating balance* also includes examining the pros and cons of the situation, defining the problem, giving meaning to how one copes or how one acts. Some individuals also look deep within themselves and begin to challenge their basic beliefs, values, and assumptions.

Emotions and recognition are powerful motivators in creating balance. Individual factors external to the organization are powerful constraints in creating balance. Options are both short-term and long-term options. Danny undertook some difficult reflection during this phase. Danny explains:

After a couple of times, I thought, 'OK, why is this happening? Is there something about the way I am? Is there something in it for me to improve and get better. At least I finally arrived at that place instead of remaining in resistance and denial for evermore.

I knew no matter how bad it gets in the hometown patch, God is still out there. He is still in control. God doesn't take a vacation every so often and leave us to run rampant.

I tried to do my best and follow along to find the purpose. It wasn't always that easy, but I did have this perspective and it helped me a lot.

Danny also thought about what information he had discovered. Other professionals at his level were getting the “brown envelopes” and Sam’s controlling behavior in the organization. The researcher asked Danny how this information helped him. Danny continued:

For me, it was an affirmation of the fact, that maybe it was not so much me. It was him. That was the problem as he [Sam] was doing this to other people, too. If he was doing this only to me and no one else, that would kind of tend to make me think there is something in me to reconsider. If he is doing it to everyone, everyone can't be like that, in which case, that starts to point more to him as the one with the problem.

The researcher asked Danny if he had thought of leaving the organization. Danny responded:

Good question. I'm sure I must have thought of it. Back then, I was looking around for promotion up the corporate ladder. I would put in for them once in awhile, but they never came along. I must not have thought of it that much or that seriously. I'm sure it crossed my mind. It wasn't like voting with my feet. I had been there for so long and I liked the job and what I was doing. I also knew that people who have had that [Sam's] position often retire. He retired after his fourth year.

The researcher also asked Danny if Sam’s manager was aware of his actions. Danny said:

I am not aware of it, if this person was. I do not know of any incidence where a manager⁴⁰ at my level went higher to complain. You know you are supposed to be loyal in your group there and not run. Again, you might win the battle and lose the war. And for whatever reason they put this guy [Sam] in a position of authority and if they really knew what he was like, it is a surprise that he got that far anyway. So I tend to think, that his manager sees him as doing a good job because he gets in there and kicks ass, and takes names.

⁴⁰ Danny and other managers at his level were GS-15, the highest government grade before the senior executive service. It is equivalent to a vice-president position in medium-sized organizations or a Captain in the Navy or a Colonel in the Army, Air Force, or Marines. Sam’s manager would be equivalent to the CEO.

There were some situations that I do know that people lower in the organization did go to Sam's manager and complain about various things. I don't know what they were. I am aware that some did go. There were discussions and it's like they [senior management] didn't want to handle him too much as he would fly off the handle and get irrational on them too. They figured the guy is going to go in so many years, don't worry about it.

Danny decided to stay with his current position and to use his coping strategies. He would continue to pray that God had a reason for him to experience this situation and would help him get through it. Danny planned to learn more about Sam. Danny defined the problem this way. How do I work with Sam for the next couple of years until he retires. Then he developed a strategy to support his decision:

Slowly Sam's attitude changed. I think that came from my not openly him, showing resistance at least to him. Although when he pops you with a brown envelope, you go down and there is tons of resistance in that. I kept the resistance to myself. I never openly resisted him.

I got over my resistance quickly by saying to myself, 'What can I do with this situation? What is this situation teaching me? What can I learn from it?' It's interesting that it's difficult to think clearly about this. Things get cloudy on you as if maybe there is a block going on there. That's amazing. Hold on.

The researcher and Danny talked a little about Sam's behavior. Then Danny continued with the original question on the strategies he applied to change the situation. Over the next two years, Sam gradually stopped giving Danny the *brown envelope*. Danny continues:

I'm pretty sure it [the change in Sam's attitude] came from the fact that I just kept trying to learn, just trying to be more responsive to him. I think, over time, he could see that I wasn't a backstopping, trying to get even type. I was just trying to do a job, better and better, reporting to him, talking to him.

That's not true, I can't say I didn't talk about him; I did talk about him behind his back to the other managers at my level. We did talk a little bit, but not the incessant digging (he really does this). More likely, the conversation might last three to five minutes when we saw each other. It was an acknowledgment, 'Yep, you're not the only one. They're getting them [brown envelopes] too. There have been some bad, hairy times with them.' It gave me the confirmation that it was not only me.

Consequences This phase of the process embraces both observable behaviors and the intra-actions. Consequences are the outcomes, aftermath, effects, results of taking action. In this phase, the individual usually assesses the results of the Action phase. Based on this assessment, participants often revisited the coping or action phases. As one becomes consciously aware of the results, the energy from the themes builds and channels the individual to assess the short term results of his action. This assessment either begins to move the individual through consequences or refocuses back to an earlier process phase.

Danny's experience includes both short-term consequences and the long-term consequences, after Sam retired. The short-term consequence of Danny's action to remain and not openly show resistance to Sam did seem to work. Danny did continue to cycle through the stages of the process every time he received a *brown envelope* from Sam. Although the emotional reaction decreased slightly each time Danny received one of Sam's scathing notes, he still felt strong emotions. After two years of "brown envelopes" with scathing memos, Danny didn't remember receiving any the last two years. Danny continues:

He's [God is] there. Whatever happens there is a purpose to it. I tried to do my best and followed along to find the purpose. It wasn't always that easy, but I did have that perspective and it helped me a lot. Also, for me, I just had a feeling this was something I had to work through instead of just looking for another job somewhere else. It was like I just knew that this was something to work through to perfect myself. It's interesting, there are things that you just know. That's how that one came across to me. I just knew.

The researcher asked Danny how he handled his 'pent-up anger and frustration.' Danny responded:

I rarely get sick even under times of incredible stress. No illness or anything like that. I can carry stress. I guess for me it is not stress, even though it is stress for someone else. So through all this, I never took any sick leave. Just a lot of feeling about separation. Yeah, that's a good one. Probably the same type of thing that someone might get going through a separation or divorce. The conversation gets more stilted and belabored. You know when people start separating they start going through lawyers and things just start being blown up out of proportion. So I was careful--guarded. It cuts down on creativity.

I also would sit with my wife and talk over it [my experiences with Sam]. I could vent my anger, not towards her, but talking about Sam. She was a part of all that. She could empathize and feel what was going on. Talking with my wife also gave me another opinion on the situation. I imagine that if I didn't, not having someone else's fresh perspective there, that could have lengthened the time or deepened the cycle.

The researcher asked Danny how this experience changed him. His response also provides details on Sam's unstated expectations of his managers. Danny continues:

Sam was really demanding. He was demanding to the irrational. At least what I did taught me that regardless of what person you are supposed to support, really do more to anticipate their needs, what they are thinking, the way they think, to work into those. Whereas, I was just going about my own way, from my own perspective. He was just more of a micro-manager. He wanted more details and he wanted them immediately. So that taught me to work with a supervisor.

I just assumed that anybody in the positions that we were, we would do the best on automatic, report back exceptions. He [Sam] didn't want that. He didn't say what he

wanted. He was definitely a micro-manager and he wanted to be in control of every little thing.

I guess you should just be able to read a supervisor and find out what level of input he really need from you. I tended to want to do things more the way I thought they should be done and to stay out of their hair. [I thought I would] do them in a way coming from mastery and stay out of his hair to give him more time for the real important things of his job. And he [Sam] didn't like that.

Sam just wanted iron clad control of every little nitnoid. And so when I didn't provide him with all those details or if he thought that I wasn't doing something, he would just go bonkers [yelling, brown envelopes, irrational behavior]. So I knew just to provide him more information. Just let him micro-manage me and just give him what he wanted. I had to learn to read that because I hadn't done that before. I hadn't needed to do that before.

The researcher observed that Sam seemed to be operating on a set of unstated rules that defined what Danny could or could not do. These unstated rules or boundaries of expected behavior were unknown to Danny. Danny had also observed others in a similar situation. Danny commented:

My perceptions were my boundaries and I had to move my boundaries to accept his boundaries. If I had been someone who could not change my boundaries to accommodate Sam, I could have broken, Then who knows, people go into nervous breakdowns, take a lateral, a downgrade. In order for my perception to change from what's wrong with him to what's wrong with me, that's a perception change, a boundary change. I have to grow.

I was aware that I could have fought. I could have gone in there anyway, even when the secretary said he didn't want to see me. In order for me to grow, I had to accept that which is a shift in boundaries. I have seen some people crushed [who didn't change their boundaries]; they get stifled and they don't grow anymore.

Whatever came [from Sam], I finally got to a point, no matter what he yelled, the brown envelopes, I just kept trying to do my best for him. So I worked for him for four years. I don't remember where it changed; I know it feels like the last two years I didn't get any envelopes. During the fourth year, he finally upped my performance review.

The first and second year [performance reviews] were absolutely terrible, they were horrible, but not enough to really ditch me. He knew what he was doing, down enough to get you but not down enough to get you in the organization, just down enough to make his point.

Then after the third year, the rating and his comments were a little better. Then after the fourth year, he actually put me in for the highest performance review. That was kind of a milestone to say, 'OK Danny, you learned a lot from this one. Way to go!'

Danny's first experience of professionals' workplace devaluation appeared to end. Danny had survived the four years with much prayer, empathetic listening by his wife, and hard work in learning to meet Sam's unstated expectations. Although Sam's behavior had changed very little over the four years, Danny did not receive "brown envelopes" for the last two years. Danny felt that he learned much about himself and that he learned the importance of clarifying what his manager expected. Sam retired. But, Danny still had another experience of workplace devaluation to navigate.

More Workplace Devaluation Experiences

Beginning with Danny's performance review the year Sam retired, Danny had two different experiences in which the themes--emotions, supervisor, recognition--played an important role. Two of the experiences highlighted contradictory organizational messages that create the experience of professionals being discounted by decision-makers.

Danny's performance review in the fourth year was again at the level he had been rated by previous supervisors, the highest rating possible. A corporate level review board decided that his performance that year did not meet their criteria for the highest rating. Danny explains:

When it [Danny's performance report] went up to corporate, they knocked it down one because quota's were involved.

The Corporate Panel performs an oversight function on performance reports. It determine if the performance of the employee does meet the criteria for the performance rating. One responsibility of the Corporate Panel that year was to ensure that only a specified number (or a quota) of managers received the highest rating. The performance ratings are also an important factor in the selection for further promotion at Danny's level in civil service. The reviewer also asked Danny if the previous three years' performance reviews were a factor in panel's decision. Danny continued:

Yes, I think so, they were not exceeding these quotas. They saw it as a pattern there. 'We [Corporate Panel] could put this guy back down without any ramifications.' They happened to chose something to put me down on that was one of the best things I did. They were just arbitrarily picking something to lessen the rating.

For what they selected to lower, I had a lot of documentation that would uphold the fact that I exceeded this responsibility. If I had pushed it [filed a grievance], I probably could have won. But I didn't.

During the participants' review of the research findings, Danny referred to experiencing the same process over this issue. The researcher also asked Danny why he did not go forward with the grievance. He explained:

You hear that even if you grieve something and even if you win, you lose in the long run. It's like you might win the battle and lose the war. You're also seen as a whistle blower. So I decided, no, I'm not going to play that one. I will just keep on doing my best there.

Danny's experience with the corporate panel and his performance review illustrates a common occurrence--decision-makers discounting the professional's contribution, especially if their position is classified as support rather than line. Danny understood the unstated expectations for managers at his level and the organization environment. Danny continues:

I am in a support role. I even had one boss confirm it. For example, when there is a quota system out for awards and recognition, the person in the support role often doesn't get it. Often it is the person who is upfront, you know carrying the spear [the line mission]. Not the one feeding everyone, that gets the glory. That's the way it is.

Then there was a time when no one at my level got awards [due to a cost saving strategy as a result of budget cuts]. At least we were all on a level playing field. And then, after that, it almost didn't matter. I knew I was doing my best and doing a good job. From time to time, people would recognize what I was doing by some words. I'm OK with that now. I wrestled with that for a number of years, too.

Danny's experience with Sam and the Corporate Panel happened at a time of great change in his profession. Information technology moved from the mainframe computer to the world of local area networks (LANs), servers, and personal computers (PCs). Danny relates:

At that point I was still challenged professionally. I felt a little bit worried, anxious, maybe even a little scared because I saw all this new stuff. I could manage it, but I really didn't understand it. And I like to understand what I am managing. So that's what led me to go back to school, to start picking up some classes there and learning the new technology.

I did go back to school [about two years after Sam retired] working on a Ph. D. But it wasn't really to work on a Ph. D. It was really an aside. Actually, when I went back to school, it was just to get some classes in data communications. The school said, 'Oh by the way, why don't you sign up for the Ph. D. program because you are taking the same track anyway.

I came from the big mainframe and I knew all that very well. When the local area networks came in, and networking that was just hubs and routers. That was totally foreign to me. So going to school gave me that knowledge and understanding, so that I could be an effective leader. More effective in listening, especially when someone was telling me something without having to go to the board and explain it to me. I felt I was in kindergarten. It was just difficult for me to understand what they were trying to tell me, because they might not really know themselves. I wasn't getting the right picture and I could tell that I needed to know more.

Danny discovered another contradiction with his managers and their support of his quest to remain current in the field. Danny explains:

The organization did support me financially; they paid for the books and the classes. They didn't support me in any other way. No one was saying, 'Great, I'm really glad you're doing that. That's a lot of hard work, I know. I really appreciate that, keep at it.' None of that. It was just totally neutral.

And actually to get the organization to pay for the classes and the books, I had to find out what funding was available, what program to charge the funds. I had to ferret out all that stuff. No one was doing it for me; no one was offering it. It was totally neutral. You think they could care less.

The researcher observed that Danny's managers saw him functioning very well and weren't even aware that he was struggling to understand. Danny responded:

Right. They probably weren't. I hadn't thought about it in those terms. They probably didn't perceive my struggling with understanding how my people underneath me were trying to explain things to me. And it (LANs, routers) was new for them, too. It was just difficult to explain and new for all of us.

It's like for me to really understand which path we should take, like if you commit a certain amount of money, you will probably be stuck with that technology for 3-5 years. You have to make sure you really understand where you are going. That is what I was responsible for.

Danny had gone to graduate school to obtain professional information he needed to make decisions in an area where he felt unsure. He had not worked through or reflected on the contradictory response from his managers--the funding of the classes not backed up with any comment. At this time, Danny has completed all course work and has not yet decided if he will do the dissertation.

Danny's experiences provide a glimpse of long term effects. Except for his wife, Danny had not spoken to anyone about his experience with Sam since Sam retired eleven years ago. Danny's participation in this study provided an opportunity for Danny to talk about this experience. The researcher met with Danny for four interviews⁴¹ over a four month period. The first two interviews were especially difficult for Danny. Although, he could not remember specific details of the experience; Danny could remember and feel the strength of the emotions and their interrelationships with all aspects of the process. Danny comments:

I knew at first when we were sitting and talking the first time, 'Man, it was like I could see it tightening up, you could probably see it too.'

⁴¹ The tape recorder malfunctioned during the first interview. The researcher interviewed Danny for an hour at that time unaware of the malfunction.

The methodology of dialogic interviewing presented Danny another way to reflect on the aftermath of workplace devaluation. For example, when reviewing the process model, Danny commented:

My case is like the model. The supervisor I had the problem with, it was so severe to me, that I never went back to him seeking any resolution. It [process] was like this over time. There was no arrow going back to the interaction or going back to him. Even to the point, when I saw this guy a couple of years later [five years] at a vendors' conference, I didn't want to be near him. I didn't want to talk to him. At the end, we ended up walking almost together out to the parking lot. I purposely stayed enough distance from him so as not to interact with him. I was not doing any arrow back to him [had not tried to bring closure with Sam and his effect on Danny]. I guess this is all about an interaction so severe to the receiver that it is difficult to go back for a resolution, so therefore, we go on and cope. Basically, that is what it is about. As of now, I have probably softened enough that it would be OK. That might be part of the healing process.

During the interviews Danny also commented on this encounter with Sam. Early in the interview process, the researcher asked Danny to describe his feelings toward Sam. Danny responded:

I feel sorry for the guy. I don't see how he could have had a happy family life or been happy with himself. He was not a people person as you could imagine. I feel sorry for the guy, but there is still a little part of me that says, 'man, that was a son of a bitch.'

Seven weeks later, the researcher asked Danny what would he do if he saw Sam again and why he would react in that manner. Danny replied:

I think I would be more inclined to talk with him and see how he is doing. I think I would be in that place that I could do it.

Having gone through that [workplace devaluation] changed me in a way when other things came along. I was less defensive, less threatened, more corporate in thinking, more looking out for the bigger picture as opposed to me and my area. And once I worked in that area [the bigger picture], the more it widens how you work and how you react to challenges. It is just like you look at things differently and react to things differently. While as before when I didn't want to approach him and say hello to him, there was still resentment there. I guess I have gone further through the process.

Danny's participation in this study appears to have helped him bring closure to this experience. During the consequences phase, Danny brought an intellectual closure to the experience. He had coped during the process by trying to learn from the experience. Danny could articulate what he had learned. Yet, Danny had not brought closure to the emotional aspects of the experience. In talking through the experience and his feelings, Danny became consciously aware of the emotional aftermath. It appeared that cognitively he had brought closure to the experience; he discovered that emotional closure is now needed.

Danny's Learning

Danny had worked for government agencies for almost fifteen years and had received timely promotions. He was a mid-manager with aspirations of future promotions when Sam became his supervisor. Danny had a substantial experience base of organization and professional knowledge when Sam became his supervisor. Danny coped with the experience by reminding himself to think what can he learn from this experience. As a result, Danny found it easier to articulate his insights. Danny is uncertain if he is aware of all he learned. The researcher compiled the list of Danny's insights from his responses to the following questions:

- How did this experience change you?
- What would you do today if you had a new manager come in like Sam, that basically rejected what you did?
- How does experiencing a form of workplace devaluation relate to becoming a professional?
- What role does pain play in growing from the experience? How would you describe the pain?

Danny's insights fall into three of the four categories: organization knowledge; interpersonal learning; intrapersonal learning. Danny related more insights about intrapersonal learning, then interpersonal learning, followed by organizational knowledge. Danny did not mention learning any professional knowledge from this experience (Figure 5. Danny's Expressed Insights)

During the dialogic interviews, Danny was able to step back from the emotions and reflect on the broader aspects of the experience. Although his observations do not fit the chart, they address the research question: How did the professional learn from the experience? First,

Table 4. Danny's Expressed Insights

<p>Professional Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• None <p>Organization Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How to read a supervisor and find out what level of input they really need from you (not your perspective of what they need)• Organization rewards those performing the mission, not supporting the mission• Learn management style of new managers, what they want and in what form they want it <p>Interpersonal Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Realization my boss was doing the best he could with what he had.• It taught me that regardless of what person you are supposed to support, really do more to anticipate their needs, what they are thinking, the way they think <p>Intrapersonal Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The organization saw me functioning well technically and did not understand why I would want to go back to school• I need to feel competent in both technical and management areas• Confirmation that problem was Supervisor's not so much mine, when he learned that others had received same treatment• Reaffirmed my trust that God had a purpose for me to work through this situation and not leave.• Asking myself: what is this situation teaching me, what can I learn from it• As hard as it was back then, I know I benefited from going through that. But. I wouldn't have wished it on anyone.
--

Danny summarized how he endured the experience as he chose to remain in his position and learn to work with Sam. The researcher asked Danny how he would summarize the process he had gone through the past eleven years. Danny begins:

I thought of the experience as evolving. It is a process in which I take where I was, what happened, all the happenings, and integrate that into myself, my being, my character. The character is constantly growing with the person. The character goes through a reiterative refinement of integrating all the internal and external influences.

The external influences would definitely be the on-the-job situation. Everything you bring to the job, or the job brings to you. The boss, everything that's happened, how he reacted, how I reacted, how the other people around me reacted to me and also to the boss on their own. Feedback I would have gotten from my spouse as I didn't talk too much about that openly with too many other people.

Internally, I knew there was a higher purpose and a higher calling beyond being responsive to the immediate stimuli. I knew there was a higher purpose and that makes an incredible difference. If you know that you really are cared for, loved, and there is a plan for your whole life, even though you might not know what it is, you know you can take a lot.

You have a personal belief system. You have an organizational belief system, or how I thought of myself in an organization. My area of mastery would be for me to do my thing to support him [Sam] so that he could go off and do his thing with the more important work. That belief system that I had didn't work well with his.

I had never met up with his type of belief system before. His [organizational belief system] is a higher ranking one than mine [because he has more organizational authority than I do]. I had to stop, step back and reshape my organizational belief system.

In order to move through that, like the five stages of grief, the quicker I got to accepting that, the quicker I could move on. Because it would be natural for someone to resist, never accept it, in which case they never refine themselves, involve themselves to benefit from that experience

Danny viewed his experience with Sam as self-growth and as necessary to confront and to acknowledge the issues and his beliefs. Danny then mentioned a co-worker who received the *brown envelopes* and who seemed to dig in, didn't change, and waited for Sam to leave. Danny continues:

So that's another way of handling it. By doing that [resisting any changes], he [co-worker] cuts himself short of the process he could go through.

The researcher reminded Danny that his colleague might have saved himself from experiencing much emotional pain. Danny responded:

You mean the pain from having to change. I would tend to think that he might have more continuing pain for the rest of his life because he holds it in.

The thought I am having is that if you form a barrier to protect yourself from the outside, that same barrier is constraining you from the inside. It is like a fence works two ways: it will keep others out but it also keeps you in.

Danny and the researcher also examined the growth and learning an individual gains from the experience of workplace devaluation by decision-makers compared to the experience of being mentored and developed by decision-makers. Danny had grown professionally from both types of experiences. Danny views workplace devaluation as an uncontrolled, unsafe situation, whereas he views mentoring and development as a controlled, safe situation. Danny categorizes the pain from workplace devaluation as an unknown bombshell that explodes next to you. He categorizes the pain when one is mentored as growing pains or a painful process similar to doing a term paper or dissertation. Danny continues:

I know in my younger years, I learned a lot on how to lead, mentor, and help people by the poor examples demonstrated by some of my supervisors. I learned by not what they did to me, but what I saw them do to someone else. Observing it helps build character through awareness. However, nothing is like going through it.

If the [growth] experience is gauged to what the boss thinks a person can handle, that's a positive thing. They bring them along a little bit, they encourage them. If it's an uncontrolled situation that happens to a person, that person may not come through. I have seen people who have been so badly burned they don't want to have anything to do with what they could do. As a result, either in total or in part, they are less of a professional than they could be.

Summary

These types of experiences were new for Danny. He compared his experience to a huge rejection when his new manager gave him a “brown envelope” with scathing remarks about his performance. He acknowledged the emotions that Sam’s method evoked and decided to work through the situation. Danny challenged his assumptions about himself as a professional and his beliefs on how he fit into the organization. He coped with the situation by talking through his feelings with his wife and by praying that he would understand the greater purpose. He also asked questions and observed Sam’s behavior, thus learning that others also received the *brown envelopes*. This information confirmed that a good part of the problem was Sam. Danny’s strategy and actions enabled him to develop a broader view of his role in the organization. The methodology, dialogic interviewing, also helped Danny to bring closure both intellectually and emotionally to this experience. Throughout the process, Danny’s observable behavior in performing his position responsibilities continued to be professional and competent.

Danny experienced the phases of workplace devaluation as represented in the model for a two year period with Sam through the Act phase. Each time Danny received a *brown envelope* he recycled through the Awareness, Acknowledgment, Coping, Coping, and Action phases. The

time and the strength of the themes diminished somewhat, as he learned what to expect. Danny was stuck in the consequences phase for eleven years. Also, Danny had two different experiences soon after Sam retired in which he felt that the decision-makers discounted his contributions. When Danny learned that the Corporate Panel lowered his performance review, Danny recycled through the model. He also recycled through the model when he went to graduate school to stay current in his profession since the decision-makers did not acknowledge his action. Danny continues to enjoy his position and responsibilities. His current manager is similar to Sam with one exception. He states his appreciation of Danny and his staff's contributions. Danny tries to mentor his staff in understanding both their perspective and the decision-makers perspective when disagreements occur on policy and business practices.

Sunny: The Free Spirit

Free spirit epitomizes Sunny's approach to life and to her job. Her freedom and her independence to perform her responsibilities and to develop her interests are most important to her. Sunny willingly works a regular work schedule if she has the flexibility and autonomy not only to decide how she meets her position responsibilities but also to decide when she uses her vacation time without the constraints of project deadlines. Sunny views meaningful work in her chosen profession, not necessarily her job, as necessary for personal growth, creativity, and knowledge. She actively seeks diverse professional opportunities for self development.

Background

Sunny is a professional in her late forties who describes herself as an educator and "free spirit." Divorced, she has been in the workforce for almost thirty years with twenty years experience in her current position. Her work experience includes social worker, teacher for institutionalized psychiatric patients, curriculum and program designer, free lance writer, and researcher. She earned a B.A. in History, M.A. in Education, and a second M.A. in International Trade Law. She is currently enrolled in a doctorate program.

The Organization

Sunny works at a government institution that has an international reputation for its research. At this time, the organization employs more than 3,000 staff located in several buildings at the same site. Sunny describes it as a hierarchical organization in several dimensions. One hierarchy is the formal organization structure of branches within divisions feeding into three main components. A fifteen person Commission, similar to a Board of Directors, is at the executive level. Another existing hierarchy comprises credentialed professional staff and remaining staff. Many levels such as research versus direct services exist within this hierarchy depending on the primary component. Diversity factors of age, gender, disabilities, race and ethnicity, are also key factors within this hierarchy. In addition, the organization has a strong, "old boys" network. The organization has a formal grievance policy and formal award program, though less money is available for awards.

Like many organizations, this one is undergoing change. Sunny describes the management changes at the executive level: "*People are running the place who have been brought in and who have no clue as to what's needed. They are not clinical people. The organization is regressing.*" Among the components, divisions and branches, strong competition exists for scarce funds, positions, computers, and space. Many rumors fly about as to which services will be outsourced. Adequate space for staff and clients is at a premium due to fewer available buildings,⁴² smaller staffs, and different client focus.

Sunny works in the Education Services Branch (ESB) which falls under the larger Combined Services Division (CSD). CSD provides direct services to organization clients in

⁴² Some of the more than 100 year old buildings have recently been condemned because of structural and safety hazards.

occupational therapy, recreational therapy, speech therapy, chaplain services, and education services. The organization is thinking of outsourcing these services. Recently, the organization co-located the two remaining ESB staff members,⁴³ Sunny and a co-worker, with the other services of CSD as their former building was condemned for safety reasons.

The CSD division chief and branch chiefs average thirty years experience, most of it within the specialty area of the branch. The professional staff are not as stable; many professionals stay for short periods of time to gain specialized experience⁴⁴ and then leave. Most management and administrative staff retire from the organization after thirty or more years employment.

The management style of Sunny's previous Branch Chief⁴⁵ was to create an environment for professionals to work independently and to offer guidance when asked. The Division Chief was not involved in the day-to-day business of the Branch.

Responsibilities

Sunny's position meets a specific requirement of the 1976 Disabilities Act that stipulates education services are to be provided for institutionalized clients. The professional employed in this position must be a certified teacher with a four year degree.

Sunny's primary responsibility is to provide an individualized educational program (IEP) for adult clients whose education requirements range from illiterate to college graduates to professionals who need or want additional education. Sunny assesses referred clients' reading, writing, and mathematics skills, develops instructional materials, and instructs them according to the prepared IEP. She spends approximately half of her time instructing thirty clients, twice a week, in small group settings. The remaining time is divided among her other responsibilities: (a) assessing newly referred clients; (b) developing instructional materials; (c) writing reports; (d) completing the Branch's quarterly statistical report; (e) representing the Branch at management and patient staffing meetings, and (f) providing information on available educational services.

The Professional

Sunny is an Education Training Specialist with nineteen years experience in this position. Asked what she liked about her job, Sunny mentioned the independence she has in scheduling and program planning along with flexibility in taking annual leave. She also appreciates that stability of this job with its flexibility and autonomy. These factors have allowed her to pursue other professional interests in the evenings and on week-ends. These interests--for self-development, for fun, and for employment--include traveling, free-lance writing,⁴⁶ tutoring,

⁴³ The Branch Chief retired eighteen months ago, but the position has not been filled. The Division Chief of Combined Services Division also acts as Branch Chief regarding personnel issues, although he does not acknowledge his role as a supervisor. The Education Services Branch had more positions at one time. As people retired or resigned, the positions were transferred to other areas of the organization.

⁴⁴ Many professionals regard professional experience at this institution as prestigious.

⁴⁵ The Branch Chief held that position for fifteen years and retired with forty years government service.

⁴⁶ Sunny is a published author.

developing educational programs for community groups, researching specific topics for clients, and completing academic requirements for a doctorate,

Sunny's Branch Chief informally rewarded her writing skills. Primarily the rewards were in the degree of flexibility and autonomy that she had in program planning. Sunny had learned not to expect organization recognition for performing her responsibilities. Instead, she looked within herself for self-recognition and outward to the community for professional recognition. *"I found myself going out and doing other things where I could be successful."*

Asked to describe her profession, Sunny responded:

I would say an educator, but I would not restrict myself as an educator at ABC organization. I did not want to be an educator; I fought it for a long time. People have such a bad impression of what a teacher is. They think of someone running around a kindergarten classroom in a hoop skirt. That was my first job when I got out of college and it lasted a short time. . . . About fifteen years ago, I finally accepted the fact that I am an educator. And the thing is, once you are an educator, you are always an educator. Once it is in your heart and your soul, no matter what you do in life you are always teaching and learning. I am an educator.

Speaking of her career, Sunny continued:

To be honest with you, I see myself as kind of a free spirit. By that I mean, I feel that I have the ability to do many different things, that I do many different things and I can continue to do many different things that I like to do, like my writing . . . or just being creative in a number of different ways in whatever comes my way. I am always open to things. I know the things I want to do but I don't know everything. I definitely know the things I don't want to do. I leave myself open for opportunities. I am very optimistic and very hopeful. I am always thinking there is going to be something out there and that is why I fall into situations [interesting professional opportunities]. I am always looking, always listening, always actively listening for things. I just want to do what I want to do at this point in my life.

Sunny's Experiences

Sunny's experiences of professional workplace devaluation encompass both types--organization and individual--over a nineteen-year period with the same organization. When she began the interviews, Sunny was in the *coping* phase of one experience and the *consequence* phase of the other experience. The themes--emotions, authority, recognition--are prominent as Sunny relates her experiences of professionals' workplace devaluation by decision-makers. The process acts as a guide to explain the complexity and interrelationships of her experiences.

The Beginning The first experience began in Sunny's second year on the job, when her co-worker joined the Education Services Branch. At the time, the branch consisted of the Branch Chief, and five education specialists. The Branch Chief and Sunny were white females. The other staff members were black females. Sunny explains:

When I was hired, they [the Education Services Staff] felt that I was hired because I was white and my supervisor was white. They thought she wanted another white person there. That's how they were feeling. One of the women wanted the supervisor's position and she didn't get it. She was very angry that my supervisor was brought in and resented that all these years. My office was not located with the Branch. It was located at another building where I was teaching. So I was very much removed from everyone. I functioned very well like that for awhile. I would come over [to the Branch office space] once a day to show my face.

Sunny was aware that there were racial issues when she accepted the position. Her supervisor and division chief had explained the situation and Sunny was willing to take the position. She wanted the security of a government job; she had the required teaching credentials and experience in the field. The organization had an outstanding reputation and very few job vacancies. Sunny remembers:

It was just a miserable situation.

A year later, her co-worker joined the staff. Sunny continues:

It's a very black-white situation racially. He's black. Most of the people who work at my organization are black. He had an issue with me being a white female. From the time he got there it has become just progressively worse to the point where he has this incredible hatred for me. And of course, in response to the fact that he hates me, I have developed this tremendous dislike for him.

This man has never liked me, he has always been very rude to me. We've very rarely talked. In the beginning we had a couple of conversations. He doesn't know me well enough to dislike me.

Nineteen years later, Sunny is now *creating balance* at the action phase of the process with this experience.

Interactions (Refer to The Model, [Figure 1](#)). The professional's experience of devaluation begins with an interaction that includes the three constructs: (a) lack of autonomy, (b) inability to communicate, and (c) personalization. Sunny had not experienced a situation like this before. The first interactions with the co-worker, did not result in a lack of autonomy for Sunny. The other two constructs--inability to communicate and personalization--did occur. Her co-worker was clear that he did not want to communicate with her. Sunny recognized his behavior as intentional and directed at who she was--a white, professional woman. At this time, this interaction did not result in a loss of autonomy for Sunny. Sunny was aware of the umbrage her co-worker held against her. Sunny comments:

To dislike someone from the beginning, there has to be some issue. What else can it be? It is either my gender, my [skin] color, or both.

Sunny and the co-worker were able to cope with the situation for the next three years by avoiding each other. Sunny had her office and performed her responsibilities in another building. Sunny had very little reason to interact with her co-worker although that they were assigned to the same Branch. Their supervisor and the other staff were cognizant of the situation, but nothing was done. The physical arrangement of Sunny's office in another building encouraged avoidance as an effective coping technique. Also, Sunny had set some professional goals for herself. Sunny continues:

When I first came to this job, I thought I will come here for three years, get my three year tenure. Then I'm set and I will transfer.

Sunny did not experience professional devaluation at this time. She was able to cope with her co-workers dislike. In retrospect, these three years established the foundation for Sunny to experience the phenomenon of professionals' devaluation. At this time, the narrative shifts to another form of workplace devaluation.

Reduction in Force The second experience occurred in her fourth year when the organization had a reduction in force (RIF).⁴⁷ Sunny explains:

We all went through a rough time when there was a RIF. I was displaced and reassigned to another area at a very low, low, low level. Even though I kept my pay, I was put into a position that patients worked, it was so minor. They [education services' management] wanted to keep me and it was the only thing that they could do. They had to stick me somewhere for awhile until they could bring me back [to education services]. So I was working on travel vouchers.

Sunny, in accepting the temporary move, did not feel devalued. She knew how management would implement the RIF. She and her Division Chief discussed the situation. Sunny understood that this assignment would last at the most a few months. Management viewed her as a professional that was an asset to the staff. Also, Sunny did not perceive the move as an intentional threat to who she was as a professional. This type of assignment is a result of a RIF, how the government sometimes has to do business and Sunny was not the only person accepting a temporary re-assignment.

For Sunny, the first cycle of the process (refer to The Model, [Figure 1](#)) took three months from becoming aware until creating the balance and acting. When Sunny began the temporary assignment, she found herself in a situation that she had never before experienced. Sunny relates:

It was traumatic for me. It was like someone made a hole at the top of my head and just started stripping me of my skin.

⁴⁷ At different times over the years, Congress mandates that certain agencies reduce the number of civil service employees. At that time, government employees who do not have career status (three years employment) are laid off. Management then decides which jobs are essential and non-essential. Employees in non-essential positions are moved to positions classified at a lower level. Employees who are moved, continue to receive the same pay, the position is usually at a lower-level. For example, supervisors and managers are moved to line positions.

Interactions (Refer to The Model, Figure 1). The professional's experience of devaluation begins with an interaction that includes the three constructs: (a) lack of autonomy, (b) inability to communicate, and (c) personalization. Sunny continues:

I had a supervisor, who knew my position and would indirectly say things to me: 'Oh, these college graduates think they know.' This was the finance area and I was just doing these menial things.

Not only was she verbally abusive, her boss was also abusive. I wasn't used to going to lunch and having to be back by a certain time. I know most people do that, but as a professional person you usually make your own lunch hour. Her boss [Sunny's second-line supervisor] would be standing at my desk like this (Sunny demonstrated with her arms crossed, looking at her watch). I thought this was awful, you know I just hated it. I would take an hour, probably by law it is 30 minutes. But if I was a minute over an hour, it was just brutal.

Intra-actions. The *intra-actions* are conscious and unconscious interactions among the individual's emotions, beliefs, values, knowledge, and assumptions.

Here I was. I was working on my second masters. I felt I was well-educated. I had goals and aspirations and here I was working in a situation where I was treated very badly. It was really an abusive situation.

The confluence of the three constructs occurred when Sunny began working in the Finance Section. Sunny felt unable to communicate with her first- and second- line supervisors about the disparaging comments and their attitude toward her concerning her lunch schedule. Sunny realized the loss of autonomy the assignment would require. She describes the job in this way, *I just sat there and did this rote work.* In addition, her supervisors monitored the length of her lunch hour. She personalized the comments about her education level and lunch hour.

Awareness and Acknowledgment For Sunny the time between the awareness and acknowledgment phases was very short and so these phases will be discussed together. The *awareness* phase is that phase in which the professional becomes aware that the interaction caused an emotional reaction within themselves. The professional has not previously experienced this type of interaction, and it did not fit into her life experience. The *acknowledgment* phase is the moment when one is able to name the interaction at least to one's self. The themes--emotions, authority, and recognition--exert strong forces at this time.

Sunny's description of her experience illustrates the strong emotions she felt. Her supervisors represented the authority of the organization, yet Sunny knew she completed a high volume of travel vouchers in a timely manner. They had the power to expect that Sunny conform to the lunch hour and other policies. Sunny does not remember the supervisors providing any positive recognition while she was working there, and that her friends and others called to say thank you because they had received their money so promptly. The interaction of these themes propelled Sunny toward creating balance within the coping phase.

Coping This phase represents the thoughts, actions, and strategies that one implements to protect self in the situation. The individual usually manages the emotions by employing one of four strategies. They repress the emotion, direct the emotion inward, direct the emotion at another individual or the organization, or channel the energy toward self growth. Important to this phase are the intra-actions. The term, *creating balance*, describes the intra-actions, a self-reflective process that individuals use to feel that they are in control or that they are safe. *Creating balance* is when an individual explores options in coping with the emotions and protecting self during the experience. The second aspect of *coping* is the thoughts, actions, strategies that one implements to protect self in the situation. Individuals work at controlling or managing their emotions during this phase. Coping is the *holding pattern* that one adopts until the emotional pain grows enough to generate action.

Sunny moved very quickly to establish a coping strategy for use in this situation. She tried two approaches. She kept herself busy and did not respond verbally to her supervisors' negative comments and behavior. Sunny explains:

I wanted to keep myself busy. I was getting a lot of work done. I was doing it purposely because I wanted them to feel it when I left because they were treating me so poorly. [When Sunny felt her supervisors were verbally abusive] I just kept thinking, consider the source. He [second-line supervisor] had a lot of problems. But you know, I got through it. Somehow I managed to get through it.

The themes--emotions, authority, recognition-- moved Sunny to the next phase.

Action This phase has both the *creating balance* process of the intra-actions and taking action process. *Creating balance* occurs when an individual explores options to act or to change the situation. *Creating balance* also includes examining the pros and cons of the situation, defining the problem, giving meaning to how one copes or how one acts. Some individuals also look deep within themselves and begin to challenge their basic beliefs, values, and assumptions. Emotions and recognition are powerful motivators in the creating balance phase. Individual factors external to the organization are powerful constraints in creating balance. Available options may be both short-term and long-term options.

After three months, Sunny saw one option clearly--quit. She was ready to act. She remembers:

I almost quit. I called up the head of the division who I knew and said, I can't stand it anymore. I was there almost three months, I really need to leave. She said, 'Just hold tight, wait another couple of weeks and things will start happening.'

Sunny moved back to creating balance:

When I first graduated from college, I was jumping around with jobs for eight and a half years. I had decent jobs, but I was jumping from job to job and I needed to have some security.

There is a certain status that comes from working here. My organization is internationally known for the research conducted here. So, on paper [when looking for another position] to still be working here looks good. That can't hurt either. It is very difficult to get these jobs and there is not much turnover.

When I first came to this job, I planned to stay for three years, get my three year tenure. Then I would be all set and I would transfer [to another government job]. I wanted the security.

When Sunny originally planned to start looking for another place to work, her organization together with most government agencies experienced a reduction in force (RIF). If Sunny wanted the security of a government position, she would need time to find another government position. She knew from experience that it was easier to find another government job, while still employed with a government agency.

As her chief suggested, Sunny decided to wait a couple of weeks before taking action. Sunny made the conscious decision to remain for a few more weeks to see what options would become available. Sunny continues:

Sure enough they brought me back. When I left, it was a big loss to them [the finance supervisors]. She [supervisor] told me, that she really missed me because I was doing a lot of work.

Sunny's plan to return to her professional position was possible. She now entered the consequences phase of the model.

Consequences This phase of the process embraces both observable behavior and the intra-actions among the individual's emotions, beliefs, values, knowledge, and assumptions. Consequences are the outcomes, aftermath, effects, or results of taking action. The researcher describes the consequences as both conscious and unconscious. Tacit learning is an example of unconscious consequences. As one becomes consciously aware of the results, the energy from the themes builds and channels the individual to assess the short- and long-term results of the devaluing experience. These assessments either bring closure to the experience or refocuses on a phase of the process.

Sunny's experience in this phase provides many insights. She has not gained closure to the aftermath of staying with the organization during the RIF. During the first interview, Sunny reflected:

Sure enough they brought me back which was probably the worst thing that could have happened. They [Education Services Management] probably should have let me leave. I would have been better off.

During the second interview, Sunny observed:

Actually it [the experience] was good for me. It forced me to be creative and forced me to get out there, do other things, see myself, see what I was capable of doing--which I might not have done. It also gave me independence because I am really kind of a free spirit.

When all the participants were discussing this phase during their review of the findings, Sunny made some observations on not being able to bring closure to the experience:

It's hard not to have closure with this situation. I think that is where all the emotions come from. It feels like it was yesterday because I never got through it.

During the next fifteen years, the themes--emotions, authority, and recognition--continued to flow through and highlight certain interactions in Sunny's workplace. The interrelationships of the themes and the interactions provide more information to facilitate understanding the many assessments of this phase and the recycling through the other phases.

When Sunny returned to her professional position, she had a new supervisor:

She [Sunny's first supervisor] was gone at that point. They had the RIF, so I had this new supervisor. He was very nice. He was waiting to retire and he did not want to make waves or get involved with many of the issues.

Sunny tried over the years to find ways to improve educational services for the patients on the ward. Three main issues continued to surface. Not getting the response needed from the ward staff in administrative matters such as referrals or required forms was consistent over the years. The second issue was the inability to reserve the large activity room on the wards for classroom use. The third issue was to persuade the staff to have the patients available for instruction when she arrived. Due to the organizational hierarchy, Sunny would ask her supervisor for assistance in getting the ward staff to cooperate. However, she found her new supervisor to be very different from her previous supervisor:

She [previous supervisor] trained me. She was good and very bright. She saw me trying to be innovative. She was very critical, too. I couldn't get away with the stuff I got away with my second supervisor. If I saw some work issue that I was unhappy about I went to her with that information. We would work on it together and she would help me. She was more of a fighter. She was a female and she had more insight.

When I went to him, he would talk with me and come to a meeting if I asked. I thought if I brought my male supervisor to a meeting, maybe we could get a response, since no one would listen to me. We could have gotten the response, except he would not act on it properly, and he twisted it so that I had to take care of it. It was very frustrating. I stopped doing it after a while. It was ridiculous. He would turn it around everytime and make it my responsibility to make the change or have the other person work with me to make the change.

Sunny's new supervisor was socializing her to the culture of the organization: (a) don't make waves, (b) just do your job. He recognized Sunny's administrative and writing capabilities and he also understood her need for flexibility and autonomy within her daily schedule:

If you ask me what my job is, I have been basically doing all the supervisory things since my new boss came, except for supervising the other people. I do all the quality assurance, any reports, anything innovative, coordinating, and anything that took some creativity or some skill. My boss, as nice as he is, has no writing skills. I even went to meetings for him.

He would always thank me. In return, although I never asked for anything, if I wanted to leave early or take a little time off, he wouldn't put anything in. He would always say, you did this, you did that, just go ahead. It was great.

I like to travel. I can just put in my time [leave slip] and say I'm taking off this week. I have never been questioned about it, which is very rare.

Sunny and her supervisor eventually negotiated a strong working relationship. He addressed her need for recognition by informally rewarding her with time off for all the projects and reports she did and the meetings she attended for him. He also became the buffer between Sunny and her co-worker. He helped Sunny to avoid confronting her co-worker's hostile behavior so she would not file a grievance. Sunny described her expectations of a supervisor:

I do not need someone to supervise my every step, because that is basically the way we function here. If you are credentialed, your supervisor is not signing off on everything you do. You are working independently. Your chief is there if you have a question or you need some extra help. They also oversee things to make sure things are going smoothly. I view a boss as someone who will let me function independently and guide me but will let me develop, create and implement and set time constraints. I don't expect someone to be breathing down my neck.

Meanwhile, Sunny's co-worker also continued to work in the branch. Over the years, he would say nasty things to Sunny and she would complain to their supervisor. She knew her supervisor acted as a buffer between her and her co-worker. Sunny continues:

There were times, certain things happened that deserved a grievance and I didn't [file one]. I let it go for the good of the Branch. I let it go for my Boss. I didn't want to involve him in all that, not to make waves.

If I had put in a grievance, then you are looked at as a troublemaker at that point. I didn't want that. There are positives and negatives in taking action. You get something good out of it, but something bad is going to happen, too. Someone is going to look at you and think of you in that light or they will not want to hire you if another position comes up that's better. They are going to think if she took out a grievance against him, she might do it against me. Basically, I learned how to back off and learned how to put up with things. I am not proud of that. I didn't really have a choice. I could have lost

my job over making waves. There is always that chance. Even though, it's government, there are ways.

Many times I would go to my boss and say, 'I know you are my supervisor. You have to do something.' He would respond, 'No, no, I am not dealing with this. Just let it go. This went on for 15 or 16 years. He would not deal with it.

He [co-worker] tried to take out a grievance against our supervisor at one time. He wanted an outstanding on his performance review because of course it looks good and you get a cash award. He finally got it, because people didn't want to make waves. They were afraid that he was going to say something because he did try to file a grievance at one time.

Management knew what was going on. They were just as happy to have everything contained. The division chief knew about it. He just didn't want to deal with it either.

People didn't want to bother with him. For all these years they are just waiting for him to retire. Well, you know what? He is seventy eight and he hasn't retired yet! So it's interesting. He came here when he was sixty. People are waiting and waiting.

I can understand the division chief's point. Two people should be able to get along and work out this situation. However, this situation has been going on for too long. There was no intervention, no addressing it and nothing has been done over the years. Obviously, a situation is going to reach a point where you will have a real problem.

Sunny recycled through the action phase periodically during these years. After much thought, Sunny always decided that the pros for staying were greater. Thus, each time she went through the creating balance phase, she decided to keep the *status quo* at work. Sunny explains:

I had to weigh the situation. Is it worth it to leave over? I have such a good situation here. It would disrupt my life totally if I left. I wouldn't be able to travel when I wanted. Those were things that are important to me. I didn't have a family. This was my life, traveling and being a free spirit--being able to do what I wanted, the way I liked to live and chose to live. To put myself in a position where there were constraints would have defeated the whole purpose.

Then I found it very difficult to transfer. There were some opportunities. I looked at the jobs and I said, 'You know what, these are projects, there are time constraints. I won't have the freedom. Is this something I really want for maybe \$10,000 more. I don't know if it's worth it. I can make more money by doing things in the evenings. I would have the energy by not having to stay the expected late hours.

I looked at other jobs. I did go on interviews for program analyst type jobs. I thought I would like middle management as opposed to direct services. I saw the constraints and that is what really discouraged me. I realized how important it was to have my freedom and how unhappy I would be at that point in my life if I had those kind of constraints.

I know a lot of people who have left the organization. They have said to me, you don't realize how good you have it till you go somewhere else.

My life after five o'clock was free lance writing, teaching, program development, going to school [for advanced degrees]. I was doing all kinds of things that I was getting credit for, feeling good about and enhancing me personally.

I really weighed the situation. In the long run I thought I was better off to stay. After ten years, I realized I had invested time in the system. Do you want to terminate? So before you know it, you are there.

So each time Sunny cycled back through the action phase she decided to stay and not do anything to change the situation. She did not explore long-term options except to view her outside activities as preparation for future opportunities. Her office remained in the other building away from the branch staff. The physical separation contributed to her sense of autonomy and schedule flexibility. Her supervisor also saw no need to retire. Sunny created an intricate balance between her job and her need to be a free spirit. Sunny understood the organizational culture. She had learned not to make waves and developed a coping strategy over these years to manage her need for security. She explains:

You just get to a point in your life where you don't want to fight it anymore. It is a lot of energy to fight and you are not going to win. I know if everyone thought this way, where would we be. If you continue to fight, you end up looking like a fool and you often wind up with a letter in your folder or a grievance or whatever to make you look like a fool. I have seen it turn around on people. That is why I don't put grievances in. People who use the formal grievance system look like trouble makers. I don't want that kind of reputation. They [management] want team players. If you can't be a team player, then leave. It's not worth it. I am just one person, I am not going to win. I could make a big fuss, but I am not going to win. And I could wind up looking like a fool. I don't feel like putting myself in that position. I know what is going on. As long as I have an awareness of what is happening then I am a step ahead of if. I can be OK with that.

If I didn't have an awareness, I would be in trouble. Awareness helps professionals to survive and protect themselves. You have to take care of yourself. It is interesting as you get older, you recognize what is important, the unwritten survival. You have to be sure you can pay your mortgage and you have a place to live. These are the most important basics.

She saw the experience of professionals' workplace devaluation to be a result of the organizational dynamics and the changes occurring in the workplace. Asked to summarize what she sees as the experience of being devalued in the workplace, Sunny responded:

The experience of being devalued [pause] Well, it's a very frustrating feeling, because you try to be innovative and get things going or you try to do something for the good of the Branch and no one is interested. And so, you go through these different phases of

withdrawing and then coming back out and trying to do something--these little spurts of creativity. Then it doesn't work and then you just stop. Basically, it creates a feeling of frustration and hopelessness.

You really become quite depressed because the eight hour work day feels like it is useless because nothing is happening. You don't feel valued because you don't feel valued by anyone there including those using your services. With all of these things together, you feel you are going through the motions and not accomplishing anything except taking up time and showing that a service is being performed.

Sunny also observed:

I think that the people are afraid of losing their jobs. Maybe not so much afraid of losing their jobs, but of making waves because the organization is so disorganized in this recent reorganization. They [The Commission] bring people in who don't know what they are doing and nothing is really working very well. So the people are afraid to say anything. We find ourselves, right back where we started from, again. It just goes in this big cycle over and over again. For years now this has been happening. But no one really wants to make waves because we just want to get out, put our time in and leave. We do our job. We just do the minimal and get out. I don't know too many people who are putting in the extra effort these days.

I am going to say it could have been a much better experience. It is really sad to see an institution go down the drain. Even now, when I tell people where I work and what I do, there is a certain impression. That is a nice thing to be doing; you must have gotten a lot of training for that; that is an interesting job. This gives me some validation in terms of what I am doing, even though it is not what it appears to be.

It has been the last ten years, the organization has been slowly going downhill. People who I know have left. We have lost funding.

Sunny's supervisor retired a year ago with more than thirty-five years experience. Sunny had planned to leave when he retired, but she became aware that she had a lot to gain by staying for eighteen more months. Sunny would have twenty years with the government and she would be able to retire early⁴⁸ and to keep her medical insurance, important factors for her personal security needs.

Not Making Waves

Approximately a month after her supervisor retired, the division chief in conjunction with senior made some decisions that catalyzed the relationship between Sunny and her co-worker into workplace devaluation. The decision-makers decided that all branches of Allied Services Division would be co-located in another building for safety reasons. Sunny and her co-worker would share office space. Sunny understood the safety concerns--the one hundred year old building was structurally unsafe. But her office was not in that building, so the decision to move

⁴⁸ Sunny's organization offered an early retirement package for employees who had twenty years experience.

her 'didn't make sense to me.' Asked to describe her feelings about this decision, Sunny responded:

I just went with it, because I really didn't have much choice. I wasn't going to make a big fuss over it. We were going through so many changes, the whole organization was just going through so many changes.

He [the co-worker] made a big fuss over it. He didn't want to be there with me. He made a very big fuss about it and he was very, very angry about the fact that he had to share an office with me. I think that was also one of the reasons why I downplayed it a little bit, that passive-aggressive side of me. I thought, 'Good, be unhappy, I'm going to sit in here. I hope you're miserable.' So, I think that's why I didn't make a big deal of it.' He definitely said something to a lot of people. It's really quite a situation.'

This man I work with is very difficult for everyone to work with, it's not just me. I guess he is just getting old and frustrated. He is reacting to his age. Everyone is having a hard time with him.

Interactions (Refer to The Model, [Figure 1](#)). The professional's experience of devaluation begins with an interaction that includes the three constructs: (a) lack of autonomy, (b) inability to communicate, and (c) personalization. Sunny relates:

The situation has magnified. It's manifested since my boss retired almost a year ago.

One day, about a month after the supervisor retired, the co-worker confronted Sunny about the changes. The confrontation ended with Sunny and the co-worker calling each other names. The co-worker physically threatened Sunny. Although this was not the first time, the co-worker had confronted Sunny or physically threatened her, it was the first time Sunny had responded at the same level. In the past, Sunny would walk away, talk to her supervisor, and return to her office in another building. Now, Sunny and the co-worker shared the same office, her supervisor--buffer--was no longer there:

It [the situation] had gotten out of control when he raised his cane as if to hit me [Sunny demonstrated]. I said go ahead. At that point, I thought go ahead, we'll call security, get the grievance in. That will take care of that.

My credibility with myself was challenged. I was sorry to see myself get that way. I was sorry to see that I allowed myself to submit to that, to call someone an 'old fart.' I don't like that in myself. He drew that out in me. I was sorry that I allowed him to do that. I was really, really angry with myself because number one, I have the utmost respect for people, especially seniors. I don't really like that in myself. I really have to be pushed to the limits to say things like that. He called me things like 'bitch.' What am I supposed to do? Stand there and say 'oh, okay.' It's very hard, especially being divorced and being on your own. It's just you feel compelled to defend yourself in a way.

The confluence of the three constructs occurred with this interaction. Sunny no longer has flexibility with her schedule and is held accountable for her time in the office and on the ward (loss of autonomy). The Division Chief does not use the informal rewards of time off. Sunny felt unable to communicate on the issue with her co-worker on their prejudices and biases. More important, she was unable to address the lack of accountability. Management avoided dealing with the hostile relationship between Sunny and the co-worker for years, and then suddenly to have them share the same office space, totally ignoring the well-known animosity between the two employees. The Division Chief had fifteen years longevity in his position and was aware of the situation, and yet he decided to have Sunny and the co-worker share an office. Sunny recognized the intentional threat of the co-worker's comments directed at her in the two areas she could not change--her sex and her skin color. (personalization)

Awareness The awareness phase of the cycle occurs when the professional becomes aware that the interaction has caused an internal emotional reaction. Sunny relates:

It happened all at once. I could have let it go again [avoided saying anything to the Division Chief], but at that point I said, I'm must not doing this at this time. Let's get this over with. It's time.

I did say to myself at that point, why am I here? Why am I doing this to myself? Why am I allowing myself [long pause] This was also eighteen years of this building up, avoiding it. I knew it was there, it was blatant. I'm realizing that even though I don't feel I am upset, it is upsetting and it does take its toll on you. Even though you don't see it.

Asked which is more stressful, avoiding the situation or confronting the situation, Sunny responded

They are both stressful situations but when you let something build over a period of time, it is a consistent stress. Then you realize you have to do something. There is a burst of stress, a panic stress.

The other [consistent] stress is just like a continuous hum. When you have to confront it, it is really a dangerous stress. All of a sudden you are backed into a corner and know you have to do something. It is your decision.

I think it's shocking. It's all of a sudden this awareness that something has to happen now. I don't think there is one word to describe it. There is a certain amount of fear, because you have to take a step and you'll never know if it is right until you do it.

In my particular case that was very scary, because at that point I had to make a decision. Will I go down the hallway and make that phone call? Or am I going to let this go?

Acknowledgment The phase is that moment when one is able to name of the interaction at least to one's self. The themes--emotions, authority, and recognition--exert strong forces at this time. Sunny had not acknowledged her need to act in this situation. In the past she often

asked her supervisor to act. When he refused, she did not want to make waves and perhaps lose her job or be labeled a trouble-maker.

It happened all at once. I could have let it go again, but at that point I said, 'I'm must not doing this at this time. Let's get this over with! It's been coming for a long time. My boss wouldn't handle it. Let's get it understood right now.

I opted to make the phone call because it was time.

I think sometimes you are put in such a position, you feel so belittled, you feel you can't go out and do anything, so you just remain there.

As a result of Sunny's phone call to the Division Chief about the altercation with her co-worker, a meeting was called with the co-worker, Sunny, the timekeeper and the Division Chief. Sunny recounts:

We were told that we get this together or you both can be fired. I know he [Division Chief] was coming on strong to make the point. The body language was interesting during the meeting. Everything was directed at this other person [the co-worker].

The Division Chief asked him [co-worker] what is it you dislike about Sunny. He said, 'It's the way she walks, the way she talks, she thinks she is better than everyone.'

It was interesting. I don't see that and no one else as far as I know has seen that as a problem. I think he thinks he is better than I am or he resents who I am and is just saying that. He is trying to fulfill some image that he has of a white female.

The manager then asked him if he is going to make this work. The guy [co-worker] just kind of looked, 'I'll try to do my best.' I knew at that point, he was not going to make an effort, that he didn't really care. I had heard that before at meetings.

I knew then that I needed to make sure that everything goes smoothly till I can retire in a few months.

Sunny described her feelings at the meeting.

It was very scary to have this man [Division Chief] come over and say, 'If you don't like it here, you can leave.

I know he was referring to him [co-worker] and did look at him when he said it. But he also said, 'If you two cannot get along, you two don't have to be here. And even though I knew that was not being referred to me, you don't want to hear it.

It's humiliating, it's embarrassing, it's upsetting. No one wants to hear those words because you feel at that point you feel stupid. Why can't I have some control over the situation. Why did I even allow it to get to this point. I fed into it, too. I'll admit that.

Intra-actions. The intra-actions are conscious and unconscious interactions among the individual's emotions, beliefs, values, knowledge, and assumptions. Throughout the interviews Sunny mentioned various issues that might be part of the intra-actions as she moves to the coping phase. As her co-worker's hostile behavior became more overt towards Sunny in their shared office space, her awareness of the situation increased. Sunny continues:

The fact they stuck us in the same room. We could have survived somewhat. There would have been problems if we stayed in our separate offices, but putting us in the same area. It was just a disaster.

There was anger by my second-line supervisor. He didn't feel he should be bothered by this kind of nonsense by two professional employees. There was anger. He was angry at the other person.

Asked if the Division Chief was aware of the prior incidents between her and the co-worker when he made the decision that they share an office, Sunny responded:

They [management] had been aware. There just was no consideration of it. This is another value thing. If you value me, why, why, are you putting me in a situation like this? Why are you forcing me into a situation where you know I'm going to be miserable? Do you think that little of me? Things are bad enough here, now you are kicking me while I am down.

The researcher asked if there were other possible solutions in using the space. Sunny responded:

It could have been a different situation. We have a conference room and one large room. They could have given one of us the conference room and one the large room. The problem was that they were supposed to hire some people and they were thinking of using the conference room for the chief's office. So they put us both in the large room.

It really goes beyond a room. It is at a point that I am working with someone that I cannot communicate with, like I am all by myself there. If my supervisor was still here it probably would not have happened. I would have definitely said to him, 'Look this is not going to work, don't do this.' But I had no choice once he was gone. I did not make a big fuss over it, I just said okay.

Sunny also comments on her loss of autonomy with this situation:

In retrospect, I am sorry he [supervisor] did that [rewarded her with time-off]. He was not supposed to do that but he did. I should have been there, I should have stuck around. If there is an emergency or if I need time off, I can take my leave. I thought for many years I had a good deal, but also I had a bad deal. It didn't keep me in line. It is hard to have to be somewhere when you didn't before. And now, I'm there, but I'm not even in my office. I stay in another place on the grounds because I don't like to be in my office

unless I have to be there. So I mean, his legacy was not a positive one. He left me with a bit of a mess. What is done is done. I just have to deal with it.

Now that he has retired, Sunny views the duties differently:

Anytime things happen, people come to. I don't really like it because I don't want to be an Administrator. Basically it is what I have always done. It is very much the same way, but I resent it more now because my supervisor is not there. I'm sharing this branch with one other person. I do resent the fact that he is not taking any responsibility.

The energy of the themes--emotions, authority, recognition moved Sunny to the cope phase.

Coping This phase occurs when an individual explores options in coping with the emotions and protecting the self during the experience. Sunny examined several options. She could plan her schedule so that she is not in the office during the same times as her co-worker. She could work through the time-keeper and secretary when she does need to communicate with her co-worker. She could do only the essential element of her job, working with the patients and doing whatever the Division Chief specifically requests. And she could walk away if her co-worker confronts her.

I made a conscious decision that I cannot jeopardize whatever I have got left here. It's not worth it. He's not worth it. I'm not going to let him do that to me. Because that is what will happen.

Walking out of the office is the only option I have left, now. I will start losing credibility with my Division Chief. He supported me. If I let this happen again, it will be different. Then, he would be very disappointed in me and say why are you letting this happen. You knew, we talked about this the last time. So now, it is the way it has to be.

The researcher asked Sunny if she considered documenting the incidents. Sunny replied:

I was told not to. I said to my supervisor that I would like to document this. He said, 'I don't want to go that route.' I have done some stuff myself, but it's not official.

The problem here is there are a lot of politics at my place. This guy [co-worker] has the good ole boy network and some of them work up there. I know my supervisor would be upset and I don't want to hurt him. He's trying and he supported me. And so I am in a bad place, between a rock and a hard place.

I am starting to, how can I say it, limit what I am doing. I am starting to slow down my functions. I am not going out of my way to do orientations or to client treatment meetings. I am starting to withdraw a little bit at a time from what is going on, so that when I leave, it will not be a big deal. I will just have my classes and my presence won't be miss in all these places.

Asked if she has support or someone to talk through the situation, Sunny responded:

I used to have a lot of friends at work, but slowly people began leaving. Now I have my good and best friend still there. We don't see each other at work that much. We talk all the time. She is my support system. We lean on each other. I am very close with one person in another branch. Her office is next door since management moved Allied Services to one location. That's nice. They are in the same spot I am, not totally, but somewhat.

Sunny decided the *holding pattern* to adopt. She decided to spend as little time as possible in the shared office space when her co-worker is there. She will work through the timekeeper or the Division Chief's secretary when she is unable to attend meetings and the branch needs to be represented. Most important, she will walk out, if the co-worker confronts her.

I have found a way to work within this problem. I am just not or very rarely in the office in the mornings, which leaves me only two hours in the afternoon with him and only on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. He leaves at 3:30 every day.

Action This phase has both the *creating balance* process of the intra-actions and taking action process. *Creating balance* is when an individual explores options to act or to change the situation. *Creating balance* also includes examining the pros and cons of the situation, defining the problem, giving meaning to how one copes or how one acts. Some individuals also look deep within themselves and begin to challenge their basic beliefs, values, assumptions. Emotions and recognition are powerful motivators in creating balance. Individual factors external to the organization are powerful constraints in creating balance. Options can be both short term and long term options.

Sunny estimates that it has taken her a year to move into this phase. She continues to use her coping strategies as she explores her options to create balance. Sunny has reflected on the pros and cons of her situation the past year. The cons outweigh the pros at this time. To create the balance that she needs, Sunny expects to retire or resign from her organization when she completes her twenty years so that she may retain her medical benefits. She is planning to finish her doctoral program as a full-time graduate student and to become a consultant for large organizations in her area. Sunny also plans to continue her free-lance writing and research. Recently an article was published in a national magazine.

Sunny found that her participation in this study helped her to reflect and to develop strategies for action in a few months. She finds that her coping strategies are meeting the short-term needs to stay with the organization for the benefits that are available after twenty years of government service. Her plans for her life after this job are working out. She feels confident that she will be ready to act in two months to change the situation.

Sunny is creating balance in the act phase of this workplace devaluation experience. Due to the management style of her Branch Chief, the physical location of her office and responsibilities, and the organizational culture on not making waves, Sunny avoided acknowledging the increasing hostile behavior of her co-worker for eighteen years. This

avoidance resulted in her inability to bring closure to her first experience of professionals' workplace devaluation.

Sunny's Learning

During the interviews, Sunny's focus was the coping phase (managing her emotions), creating balance (examining her short- and long-term options) to help her decide what action to take to change the situation. During all of these phases, the themes--emotions, authority, recognition--strongly influence the intra-actions. The researcher asked Sunny to be more specific on what learning or insights she had from the good experiences she had mentioned. Sunny's response illustrates the need to channel or manage the force of the themes, especially the emotions before an individual can articulate any learning that resulted from experience. Sunny continues:

I cannot even think of any good experiences there. That's why you didn't get any positive examples. I can tell you a lot of bad experiences.

I know it sounds very odd to say that. I'm not saying that nothing good has ever happened. It's just that it is so rare.

I cannot take an eclectic look at this, because I am right in the middle of it. I really can't. I can step out of it. If I step back and I look at it, then it is very upsetting.

The first ten years are really okay. I had friends there, I had outlets there. It was workable.

Adult learning literature (Brookfield, 1987; Mezirow, 1991; Boud, Cohen, and Griffith, 1993; and Griffin, 1987) espouse that adults learn when they reflect and give meaning to their experience. The researcher and Sunny dialogued on this aspect of adult learning. Sunny responded:

I don't especially need to make sense of this experience. I don't feel the need to make sense of it. I feel that I understand. I feel, maybe I don't understand, but I feel comfortable with what happened and where I am going with it now. It's not that I am sitting here with regrets. I consciously chose to stay. I'm a certified teacher; I could have gone to any school, in any county and gotten a job until I found something I wanted to do. I was not at a loss for work. That was not the problem. This is a conscious decision, and I don't regret it. I think it reflects well on my resume, which is a big concern. It paid the bills. It was secure which was important to me. The security is still very important to me and I don't really have regrets. I just want to get out now, more than ever.

Sunny knows that she had learned much about herself although it is difficult for her to be specific at this time. She defined learning from her experience:

In my experience, I think of learning as becoming more 'street smart' or 'organization smart.' I can apply it to so many situations in my life that are not part of the organization. I can see where the experience has been useful. It is not a totally negative experience.

The researcher developed a list of Sunny's insights from her responses to the following questions:

- What tips or suggestions would you tell your replacement to help him or her be better prepared for the position?
- What do you wish you had known beforehand in dealing with this type of situation?
- What have you accomplished that you think most highly?
- What did you learn that helped you survive in this organization?

The researcher again categorized her insights according to the schema: professional knowledge; organization knowledge; interpersonal learning; and intrapersonal learning. Sunny stated more insights about intrapersonal learning, then the organization, followed by professional knowledge, and lastly, interpersonal learning (Figure 6. Sunny's Expressed Insights).

Summary

The model provides a framework to understand the complexity of Sunny's experiences of workplace devaluation. At first, these types of experiences were new for Sunny. Her awareness and understanding of the organization's implicit and explicit culture resulted in her attaining her professional goals. Sunny stated that the methodology of the study helped her to progress through the phases and have a clearer understanding of self.

The duration of Sunny's first complete cycle through the process to the consequence phase was approximately four months. The duration of the consequence phase is not known at this time. Sunny has been in and out of this phase for the past fifteen years. Sunny was at the consequence phase with her first experience of workplace devaluation when we began the dialogic interviews for this study. As she gained more understanding of job different issues, Sunny would move back to the coping and action phases. After taking action, she would move to the consequence stage. Throughout the process, the co-worker's behavior toward Sunny was a factor that management refused to acknowledge and that Sunny avoided so she would not be seen as a trouble-maker. She then began another cycle through the process related to incidents

Figure 5. Sunny's Expressed Insights

Professional Knowledge

- Improved decision-making, problem-solving, and coordinating skills.
- Better assessment of situations without going through trial and error process; I have the precedence to which I can refer.

Organization Knowledge

- Difficult to transfer within organization and the same freedom as with her job.
- Learn to deal with the politics.
- Organization more concerned that they can state that education services are offered to meet accreditation standards than what is accomplished for the patients care.

Interpersonal Learning

- Learned a lot about getting along with people, not just in teaching people.

Intrapersonal Learning

- What I am capable of doing, creatively in time off the job.
- Don't expect anything from job.
- Importance of flexibility in scheduling to meet my needs.
- Insight about understanding unspoken factors in situations is better.
- Developed my skills and my knowledge, and am able to put them to use doing something I really want to do.
- I thought for many years I had a good deal (flexible schedule), but I also had a bad deal, it didn't keep me in line. It is hard to have to be somewhere when you didn't before.
- Learned to be a little bit afraid.
- Became much more street smart in how to protect myself. I learned to stay a step ahead so I could look back and see what was going on.
- Developed a good awareness on how to handle things.
- Let a situation go.
- To hold in what I had to say
- Can understand why Division Chief does not want to deal with issues between myself and co-worker. Two people should be able to get along and work out this situation.

with her co-worker of eighteen years, her supervisor's retirement and the involvement of her second-line supervisor. At this time, Sunny is in the consequence phase for her first experience of workplace devaluation and at the creating balance of her second experience.

Summary

Chapter IV presented the research findings derived from grounded theory analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990/1998) of the data. The data were twelve transcripts of dialogic interviews with the four participants plus the participants' focus group transcript when they met to review the findings. A process model of the workplace devaluation experience (Figure 1) emerged from the data. Each participant's experience was different, yet the process was consistent. The process illustrates how these four professionals re-focused the force of their emotions from feeling powerless, fearful, and angry to feeling in control, safer, and more confident in their ability to manage the experiences of everyday organization life. The four narratives highlight the fundamental process. Participants agreed that the dialogic interview methodology acted as a catalyst in helping them to better understand their experience and to facilitate their movement through the process cycle. The participants discovered that they did learn from the experience, although learning was not a conscious effort during the experience except for Danny.

This section summarizes the research findings in the context of the research questions: (a) what was the experience of professional devaluation like? and (b) what and how did professionals learn from the experience?

What is the experience of professionals' workplace devaluation?

The participants found the experience to be distressful and emotionally painful. No one developed physical illnesses. No one filed a formal grievance, though Danny and Sunny stated that they seriously considered this option. Paul considered a civil suit and decided against it. Julie did not mention any consideration of formal procedures. Participants' age, sex, profession, or organization did not seem to affect the process of the experience; all participants moved through all phases.

At this time, Julie and Danny have decided to remain with their organizations for the next couple of years. Paul began a new job with a small, private-sector organization a week before the third interview and so far has no regrets. Sunny plans to leave her organization in a few months to finish her doctoral program and take advantage of new opportunities.

Three constructs--autonomy, communication, personalization--influence two related types of workplace devaluation. One type results from the overall bureaucratic structure of the organization that produces a culture with barriers to open communication of issues and little consideration for how professionals perform their responsibilities. The second type results when professionals recognize an intentional threat to their reputation and self-concept by another individual or group. All participants experienced a loss of autonomy in becoming aware of the experience. All participants, Paul, Danny, Sunny experienced both types of workplace devaluation.

Three primary themes--emotions, authority, recognition--and their interrelationships with the constructs influence the professionals' movement through the process. All participants

expressed feelings that encompassed the emotions of anger, fear, and powerlessness during the process. The composite list of participants' expressions of feelings ([Appendix D](#)) illustrates the range and variety of ways that participants describe these emotions. How and when the participants acknowledged the power of these emotions influenced both their coping strategies and their actions to change the situation.

The supervisor represents the authority of the organization. Whether participants viewed the supervisor as supportive or as the cause, all supervisors socialized the participants to the existing organization culture. Both Julie and Danny identified the supervisor as the main cause of their experience. Sunny and Paul identified the supervisor as supportive and identified the organization structure as the cause of their experience. All participants understood the power that the organization delegated through management over their job responsibilities and their careers.

As the participants examined their options to create balance and implemented strategies in the cope and act phases, they recognized the power they had to influence the situation. Thus, whether the participants stayed with the organization or left the organization, each knew the rationale for their decision. As a result, the professionals experienced a decrease in the feeling of powerlessness of being devalued and an increase in their personal power to change the situation.

The participants stated that the study methodology, dialogic interviewing, facilitated their understanding by providing an effective means of reflecting. The researcher observed that the method also evoked their felt emotions. The data are inconclusive on these findings.

Recognition is a multi-faceted theme. Recognition of self-worth contributes an important dimension. At first, participants did doubt their competency in that they asked themselves a form of this question, "Is there something I am doing in the workplace that caused this situation that I can change?" All participants used various methods of information gathering to answer that question as they examined options to create balance for themselves and solve their problem. The methods employed by the participants included: (a) asking questions of colleagues and managers; (b) seeking patterns of behavior through observation and listening to employees and volunteers; (c) participating in professional activities external to the organization; and (d) applying for other positions external to their workgroup. In doing this, all participants discovered patterns of behavior within the organization system or with the decision-makers that influenced their decisions to take action.

Organizational awards or bonuses are another dimension of recognition. The participants stated that organization awards or bonuses are nice to have but not as important to them as demonstrated respect and appreciation for their professional contributions by decision-makers above them, starting with the supervisor. In the two organizations that awarded yearly bonuses to everyone, participants noted no relationship to the bonus and quality of professional performance. Participants stated that verbal recognition such as "thank you, good job" when used by decision-makers carried little meaning for them when the recognition focused on administrative procedures considered to be part of their responsibilities. The participants observed that they rarely received verbal recognition on their professional competency. The participants preferred comments or interested questions on the practice of their profession. In

addition, participants stated that inadequate resources, such as people, materials, physical space, or technology, to effectively perform their professional responsibilities indicated decision-makers discounted their contributions. The researcher found that positive recognition by decision-makers pertaining to the practice of their profession was minimal or non-existent in these four situations.

The consequence phase brings closure to the experience. The data is not conclusive on the length of this phase or all that happens. Paul is at the beginning of this phase. Julie, Danny and Sunny appear to be somewhere in this phase and moving toward closure. Sunny is also in the creating balance of the act phase. The participants did assess the actions they took during this phase. Based on the assessment, they would either go back to the cope and act phase or move toward bringing closure. Data on how to bring closure to the felt emotions were inconclusive. The participants expressed that they would like to discuss the issue(s) of their experience with the decision-makers and found it difficult to find an acceptable venue within the organization. Julie and Sunny successfully took the risk. Both are aware that if they discuss these issues too often (defined by the organization culture and the decision-maker) they will lose credibility with the decision-maker and be seen as complainers or trouble-makers. The data indicate that individual's intra-actions at the conscious and unconscious level play a role in closure. Much of the learning from the experience appears to evolve during this phase.

What and how did the professionals learn from their workplace devaluation experience?

The professionals, except for Danny, did not think of learning as an outcome of their experience. Danny coped with the experience by integrating his Christian faith with the belief that he would learn something to augment his development. The primary method of learning is tacit learning. Participants were able to express what they learned when asked the questions that avoided the term learning. For example:

- What do you wish you knew before in dealing with this type of situation.
- What would you tell your replacement to help him or her be better prepared for this position?
- What new insights did you gain to help you manage the situation?
- How has the experience changed you?

Participants were not able to answer the question what did you learn from the experience with any degree of clarity. All professionals articulated some learning from the experience. The extent of the learning is yet to be determined. The researcher categorized the learning as professional knowledge, organizational knowledge, interpersonal learning and intrapersonal learning. A composite list of the participants' expressed learning illustrates how the researcher categorized their responses ([Appendix E](#)). The researcher incorporated participants' changes in behavior and attitudes in the list. As a group, the most learning occurred in the intrapersonal learning category, followed by organization knowledge, then interpersonal learning and last, professional knowledge.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This inquiry of professionals' workplace devaluation and the resulting learning provided a rich description of this experience from four professionals in diverse fields and different organizations. Adult development and learning theories established a conceptual frame to examine workplace devaluation (Delors, 1997; Boucouvalas, 1995; Mezirow, 1991; Jarvis, 1987b; Malatesta and Izard, 1984; Polanyi, 1976; and Neugarten, 1969, 1976). Related research pertaining to learning from experience identified the relevance of current research (Taylor, 1997; Cranton, 1997; Fenwick, 1994; Fletcher, 1994; Kegan, 1994; Boud and Walker, 1990; Mezirow and Associates, 1990; Boud and Griffin, 1987; Boyd and Fales, 1983; Schon, 1983). In addition, research regarding organizational life identified relevant workplace issues (Boucouvalas, 1997; Easterby-Smith, 1997; Pedlar, 1996; Agarwal, 1995; Ely, 1995; Gallois, 1993; Atkouf, 1992; Baskett and Marsick, 1992; Schein, 1992; Van Maanen and Kunda, 1989; Guy, 1985; Hochschild, 1983; Kanter, 1977; Goffman, 1959/1973). Application of grounded theory method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990/1998) yielded: (a) a seven-phase process: interaction, intra-action, awareness, acknowledgment, coping, action, consequence; (b) six embedded constructs: autonomy, communication, personalization, emotion, authority, and recognition; (c) four categories of learning: intrapersonal learning, organization knowledge, interpersonal learning; and professional knowledge; (d) primary learning method of tacit learning involving much emotion; and (e) dialogic interviews' effects on the professionals' apperceptions and reflections.

This chapter presents the conclusions with respect to the findings and the literature reviewed organized by the research questions. Specifically the three research questions were:

1. What is the experience of professionals' workplace devaluation ?
2. How did professionals learn from the experience?
3. What did the professionals learn from the experience?

In addition, the chapter offers recommendations for further research in adult learning, adult development, and professional development within organizations to inform both theory and practice. [Appendix F](#) lists specific recommendations.

Conclusions and Research Recommendations

This section presents three major conclusions that are a composite of this study's findings, theory, and data grounded in the literature. A rich description of workplace devaluation offers the reader a glimpse into this complex topic and its unsettling effects on the professionals' lives at the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and organizational levels. The *learning process*,⁴⁹ grounded in the data, depicts how these four professionals used the power of their emotions to create balance within themselves as they attempted to explicate their situation of workplace devaluation. Although the professionals found it difficult articulating what they learned, the

⁴⁹ Learning is used in the broadest sense of the term and refers to the learning or insights one gains from life experiences.

results indicate that the greater learning occurred in intrapersonal knowledge and organizational knowledge--two areas where further research is needed. Also included in this section are research recommendations (Appendix F) and questions to stimulate scholarly and public dialogue (Appendix G). Ethical questions on accountability and ethics are also noted.

What Is the Experience of Professionals' Workplace Devaluation?

Conclusions Professionals' workplace devaluation is a complex phenomenon. The most important aspects of the experience are the influence of emotions and the constructs' interaction in creating conscious awareness. Specifically, the principal conclusions for this question are:

- The experienced emotions and the resultant powerful feelings highlight their influence on learning and organizational behavior. The emotional descriptions of workplace evaluation, even fifteen and eleven years after the experience, illuminate the complexity of the experience and the potential for debilitating consequences for the individual, for the organization, and perhaps for society. The emotional and painful descriptions are similar to the findings in the literature on transformative learning (Mezirow, 1995; Taylor, 1997), transpersonal learning (Maslow, 1968, Boucouvalas, 1996, Miller and Cook-Greuter, 1994) and learning from experience (Boud and Griffin, 1987, Boyd and Fales, 1983). The professionals' acknowledgment of their strong emotions to themselves and the presentation of their professional (unemotional) persona in the workplace also support the literature on emotion work (Hochschild, 1979, 1983; Noon and Blyton, 1997) and to a lesser degree impression management (Goffman, 1959/1973).
- The experience and its effects appear to be *trigger events* that can lead to learning and adult development or to non-learning and emotional distress. The participants' narratives highlight the similarity of workplace devaluation to critical incidents that are well-documented in the literature. (Neugarten, 1969, 1976; Aslanian and Brickell, 1980; and Merriam and Clark, 1991).
- Recognition of the constructs' confluence can facilitate conscious awareness of workplace devaluation. Once aware of the constructs, professionals and decision makers can make conscious choices on possible actions. These constructs and their interrelationships with the constructs of emotion, authority, and recognition connote ethical and value concerns for decision-makers and professionals. Public dialogue on these issues can bring conscious awareness to understanding the many facets of workplace devaluation. This finding adds another perspective to emotion work, organization culture, and the power factor in communication (Hochschild, 1983; Rafaeli and Sutton, 1989; Van Maanen and Kunda, 1989; Gallois, 1993).

Description of professionals' workplace devaluation The four professionals describe a painful, emotional experience different from anything they consciously remembered. Their analogies create a vivid picture in the readers' mind: total rejection, preparing for a funeral, someone made a hole at the top of my head and just started stripping me of my skin, or being the

editor on a Ruppert Murdoch⁵⁰ newspaper when he decides to edit an editorial. Although the four professionals endeavored to relate their experience in a professional, logical manner, the telling of the experience evoked strongly felt emotions (fear, anger, powerlessness) that were expressed in the telling of their experience. (See [Appendix D](#) for a list of expressed feelings.)

As the four participants attempted to resolve this contradictory experience, they continued to perform their responsibilities in a professional manner. This reaction to act in an expected manner and to sometimes suppress emotional reaction raises another issue. What are effective and appropriate emotion norms in the workplace? Van Maanen and Kunda (1989) identified a need, supported by this researcher, to explore ethical considerations of culture control-- leadership actively creating an organizational culture with explicit rules governing expressed emotions.

Recommendations for research Understanding emotion and its interrelationships with learning and adult development requires further research. Listed below are questions to stimulate research and dialogue for decision-makers, professionals, and adult educators:

- What is the relationship of emotional intensity to new experiences?
- What are the best ways to inform and facilitate awareness of workplace devaluation?
- How can the frequency of this experience be estimated?
- What are appropriate emotional norms in the workplace?
- What are the ethical issues pertaining to workplace devaluation for the individual, for the immediate workgroup, the organization, the profession, the industry or society?
- What is the relationship of workplace devaluation to professional development?
- What is the relationship of workplace devaluation to adult development theories?

Interaction The congruence of the three constructs--autonomy, communication, and personalization--during the interaction mark the beginning or awareness of the experience of devaluation and warrant further discussion. The constructs define the experience and its characteristics. In the four case studies, the professionals remembered having the autonomy they needed to perform their responsibilities within the constraints of organizational policies and procedures. Autonomy is interrelated with trust development. When decision-makers exhibit little or no trust, professionals feel the effects as constraints or barriers. Micro-management and criticism are constraints and barriers that inhibit professionals' practice and invite defensive behavior.

Lack of autonomy is not the sole cause of devaluation, although research does indicate lack of autonomy as a factor of work alienation (Witt, 1993), conflict (Pedlar et al., 1996;

⁵⁰ Ruppert Murdoch owns half the media in the world.

Atkouf, 1992; Fergusson, 1984), role stress, job burnout (Potter, 1993), cynicism (Van Maanen and Kunda, 1989), ways to “cheat the system” (Noon and Blyton, 1997); emotion work (Hochschild, 1979, 1983), impression management (Goffman, 1959) and frustration perhaps leading to anger (Allcorn, 1994).

Lack of communication on issues important to the professional does not stand on its own as an indicator of workplace devaluation, but the power differential that affects interpersonal communication is a factor. Gallois (1993) noted that people with greater power in communication do not pay attention or understand the concerns of people with less power. All four professionals were cognizant of the power that the decision-makers have on promotion, assignments, job security plus an organizational culture that encouraged silence on any issues that might *make waves* for the decision-makers. The participants also had developed networks that provided essential information for their responsibilities. In these case studies, professionals perceived that senior management condoned or ignored the decision-maker's inappropriate behavior.

Personalization is a potent factor. If participants only felt personally threatened, they viewed the interaction as a personality clash and found ways to avoid the threat. In addition, as the four professionals gathered information to help them understand the experience, they were able to redefine the problem as an organizational issue or typical behavior of an individual toward others, not just targeted at them personally. However, when all three constructs came together in an interaction, the participants became aware of a targeted threat toward them, personally and professionally. At first, they usually felt the fight or flight response as the congruence aroused basic emotions of fear, anger, and powerlessness.

Recommendations for research: Much research exists on the three constructs individually; little research exists that addresses the interaction. The powerful emotional effects and potential negative effects for the individual and the organization warrant further research within an organizational setting. Listed below are questions to stimulate research and dialogue for decision-makers, professionals, adult educators:

- What is the responsibility of decision-makers who manage supervisors and second-line supervisors when they are aware of inappropriate professional behavior that demeans professionals?
- What best practices from downsizing and prevention of sexual harassment are applicable to workplace devaluation?
- How does Boydell's modes of being and learning⁵¹ or Gibb's Environmental Quality Scale⁵² apply to this confluence at both the personal and organizational level?

How Did Professionals Learn from the Experience?

⁵¹ An in-depth description of this model is found in Pedler, Burgoyne, and Boydell (1997).

⁵² An in-depth description of this scale is found in Gibb (1975).

Conclusions The *workplace devaluation experience* depicted by the process cycle emphasizes the duality of learning at the conscious and unconscious level. The process highlights the centrality of reflection in adult learning and highlights the realities of reflective practices and the active construction of meaning from learning. The researcher suggests that the seven-phase process that emerged informs adult learning theory in several ways: the influence of emotion in the process cycle and the professionals' use of reflection. Specifically, the conclusions to the question, how did professionals learn from the experience, are:

- Each phase had an external and internal focus. The external focus highlights the public persona and the interrelationships of the professional with decision-makers, colleagues, customers, co-workers, family and friends. The internal focus, create balance and consequences phases, may provoke reflection as the intra-actions of conscious thoughts, felt emotions, assumptions, beliefs and the unconscious react. On the other hand, the internal focus may contribute to avoidance and, in some individuals, denial or repression of thoughts and feelings.
- The duration of the learning process that emerged parallels the experience of bereavement and loss. The long-lasting effects of the experience illuminate the necessity to acknowledge workplace devaluation and to further explore the effects of the organizational culture in perpetuating its existence.
- The intensity of the emotions were at times a motivator or a deterrent. The four participants in this study acknowledged their emotions; they avoided situations that triggered the emotions and sought opportunities to gather information in the workplace. At first, all went through a period of self-doubt--what do I need to change about me, that caused this to happen. By acknowledging this question, they then sought information to validate their perceptions of themselves and the others' perception of them. This acknowledgment helped the participants move through the process. These findings also support recommendations that a transpersonal orientation might provide insights on transforming anger in the workplace (Boucouvalas, 1996).
- The participants' professional skills of innovation, problem-solving, intuition and reflection influenced the transformation from the potential self-destructive emotional energy to energy that assisted the acknowledging, *letting go* and moving forward through the process. This transformation was a lengthy, painful and difficult process. At times, the professionals remained in the coping, action and consequence phases of the process for long time periods or recycled through the phases multiple times.
- These four professionals applied their problem solving skills as they reflected on their options. Consistently at first, they explored two options--to leave or to stay. As they gathered the information and reflected, they discovered more options. The participants went outside the organization to validate their self-worth by volunteering in the community, interviewing for other positions, or developing their professional knowledge.

- The learning process model differs from other models (Merriam and Clark, 1991; Boud and Walker, 1990; Taylor, 1981) in that the learning was not consciously self-directed and that participants were not enrolled in a structured learning environment⁵³ to understand the experience. The learning process took place in a natural setting, the workplace. The process model supports the other models (Mezirow, 1991; Boud and Walker, 1990; Taylor, 1981) in that reflection was an intentional part of the process.
- The participants used reflection to create an intrapersonal balance that integrated the intensity of the emotions with cognition. The reflective process illustrates how these professionals apply their professional abilities of innovation and problem-solving. This type of reflection differs from the critical self-reflection that questions strongly held beliefs, values, and assumptions described in the literature (Mezirow, 1991; Boud and Griffin, 1987). The findings also support Taylor's (1997) proposal to reconceptualize the process of perspective transformation. The reflective process supports the adult development and adult learning literature in that reflection is essential to adult learning (Boucoulalas, 1993, 1995; Boucoulalas and Krupp, 1989; Boud and Walker, 1990; Boyd and Fales, 1983; Cranton, 1997; Fowler, 1981; Jarvis, 1987b; Kegan, 1994; Langer and Browne, 1992; Miller and Cook-Greuter, 1994).

The Learning Process What does this process depict about the human experience? The learning process does show how four professionals were able to transform a personal traumatic experience interpreted as a threat to the core of their identity to an interpretation that asks how do I explain the behavior of the other toward others and me. In other words, these professionals established a perception that the intended threat occurred because they incidentally (by chance) happened to be a target; they were not central to the incident. Many aspects of the devaluation experience and the learning process are similar to bereavement and the grief that accompanies a loss or a death. Julie felt as if she was in mourning for months, then felt as if she was reborn. Her attitude had changed although the same issues remained. Danny felt as if he went through the process of grief similar to how a person feels experiencing a divorce or after the death of a close family member. The phrase, mourning for your ego, resonated with the four professionals to describe the process. The process had changed their perception of who they were. Although all recognized they had gained or learned from the process, the participants also recognized that they had lost something of themselves. In other words, these four professionals were able to begin *to let go* or begin to separate from strongly held beliefs, values, assumptions.

The duration of this process from initial awareness to bringing a sense of closure in the consequence phase is noteworthy. Duration appears to be dependent on the individual experience to include the individual's socio-cultural biography at both the conscious and unconscious levels of awareness. Closure is also difficult in that the professional often has no way to connect or to communicate with the individuals who were part of the initial interaction. Duration in one respect is analogous to the time necessary to heal bereavement or pain of loss. Over time, pain diminishes; because wounds heal. The individual's ability to *let go* facilitates or retards the duration. In another respect, socialization influences facilitate or retard duration. For example, if individuals learned to confront issues or to deal with conflict and strong emotions by

⁵³ The researcher defines structured learning environment as seminars, workshops, and academic classes offered by organizations, academic institutions, religious communities, and other community groups.

avoiding the issue, the duration will probably be longer. The duration of the process is lengthy. In the four case studies, the expressed duration is variable, from over two years to sixteen years with no closure. The participants agreed that they were unable to bring closure during the data collection and analysis phase. Thus, the data are inconclusive on the duration of the process. The data do indicate that duration is dependent on the socio-cultural aspects of the individual's biography plus those aspects of the others.

Emotions The influence of emotions and feelings, at times overwhelmingly, flow throughout this process. Interestingly, the four professionals continued to perform their professional responsibilities competently without developing the physical or emotional illness, often noted in the literature (Potter, 1994; Seligman; 1976; Allcorn, 1994; Gaylin, 1984; Lerner, 1985; and Yazak, 1994). The researcher did not consciously select participants who had no debilitating physical or emotional effects from the experience.

Reflection The professionals primarily reflected on appropriate decisions to gain personal control of the situation rather than feeling they had no options to change the situation (powerless or helplessness). The learning process suggests that participants may do the critical self-reflection that often results in changes to cognitive structures during the consequence phase. The data are inconclusive to ascertain if participants transformed mental structures.

The four participants noted that dialogic interviewing facilitated or helped them clarify their understanding of the issues involved with professional workplace devaluation. In addition, the researcher notes that the participants reviewed a transcript of the previous interview before each interview which also facilitated reflection and apperception of the experience. A central premise of the dialogic interview was "listening with understanding" so that the researcher could "see the expressed ideas and attitudes from the other person's point of view, to sense how it feels to him, to achieve his frame of reference in regards to the things he is talking about" (Rogers, 1961/1989, pp. 331 and 332). This type of listening implicitly requires listening without making judgments in interpretation (a difficult skill to master). Perhaps finding a person who the professional trusts and has some proficiency in *listening with understanding* is essential to facilitating movement through the learning process.

Another perspective on this finding is that *The Hawthorne Effect*, contributed to the participants' feeling that they are in some way receiving *special* attention (Gay, 1992). This perspective also supports Fenwick's (1994) finding that public expression of the professionals' lived experience validates the relationship to the shared reality of the external environment.

Recommendations for Research Learning from experience appears to be a truism that formed a strong foundation for adult learning theory. The evolving body of literature demonstrates a critical reflection on the part of many theorists. In challenging this strongly held assumption, a better understanding of how adults learn emerges. This research highlights an existing need to conduct research pertaining to the influence of emotions on learning and supports recent research by Boucouvalas (1996). The inquiry of Boucouvalas (1996), framed and informed by a transpersonal orientation, explored the development and practice of latent human capacities to capture and transform the powerful energy of anger. She identified a research path to go beyond the "almost exclusive emphasis on negative aspects of anger and the

interventions designed to control and suppress it” (p. 2). Listed below are questions to stimulate further research and dialogue:

- How does the learning process delineated in this study apply to other experiences of workplace devaluation?
- How can this learning process be applied to other interactions that cause conflict?
- How long does the consequence phase last?
- What can be done to facilitate closure to the experience?
- How does age affect the duration of the learning process?
- How does age affect the options available to those who experience workplace devaluation?
- What are the patterns of constraints that limit choices?
- How can the knowledge on states of consciousness and other ways of knowing in the transpersonal orientation apply to life experiences?
- How can the process of reflection be further explicated?
- How can the process of tacit learning be further explicated?
- What are the short- and long-term implications of this process to the workplace?

What Did the Professionals Learn from the Experience

Conclusions The fundamental conclusion is that the participants acquired tacit knowledge: mostly intrapersonal knowledge and organizational knowledge. The participants did not concentrate on learning or making sense of their workplace devaluation experience.⁵⁴ The professionals focused on managing the effects of the experience so that their professional reputation was not tarnished and that leaving or staying with the organization was their choice. As a result, participants found what they learned difficult to articulate. They were aware of insights gained that they used to manage the effects of the experience. Specifically, the conclusions to this question are:

- Awareness of learning was outside the participants’ current focus of their attention resulting in the acquisition of tacit knowledge and the difficulty in articulating what they learned.

⁵⁴Danny did ask himself what can I learn from this situation. The researcher interpreted this question as a form of prayer and Danny’s coping strategy in which he integrated his Christian faith with the belief that he would learn something to augment his development.

- As the participants move through the consequence phase, the awareness of this tacit knowledge tends to increase as they apply the intrapersonal learning and organization knowledge to life experiences. Sunny expressed this concept when she alluded to her learning that she called *street smarts*: “I do know I’m much more prepared in situations.”
- The professionals’ articulated learning plus the emotional description of the workplace devaluation experience suggest that the participants may be experiencing movement to a higher level of consciousness as documented in adult development literature (Loevinger, 1976; Fowler, 1981; Kegan, 1994; Miller and Cook-Greuter, 1994). The participants’ learning indicates changes in attitude, perspectives (reframed problem and distanced feeling-self or ego to observing-self) and acceptance of other perspectives of the situation. At this time, the data are inconclusive to state with certainty that transformations or changes in structures of consciousness and cognition occurred. An emerging trend is that the participants will become more critically reflective as they progress through the consequence phase.
- The professionals tacitly acquired greater *political acumen* within organization life. *Political acumen* is the discernment of the interdependence of culture, leadership and power and their relationship to individuals and decision-makers (Bowditch and Buono, 1994). Acquisition of political acumen integrates organizational knowledge, interpersonal skills and intrapersonal knowledge. The participants demonstrated proficiency in their interpersonal skills. The expressed insights gained from workplace devaluation were primarily intrapersonal knowledge and organizational knowledge. The experience of workplace devaluation challenged the participants to think differently about the organizations and themselves.

Recommendations for Research The greatest learning occurred in the two areas-- intrapersonal and organizational culture--two areas where many research issues exist. Also, both areas comprise the conscious and unconscious aspects of the individual and the organization. The emerging literature base in these areas looks promising as theories and techniques evolve on making the unknown, known. Listed below are questions to stimulate research and dialogue:

- How can organizations critically examine the unstated cultural norms to clarify understanding of their portent to workplace devaluation?
- What are the ethical responsibilities of decision-makers when they become aware of these practices?
- What are the factors that influence decision-makers to continue the suppression of issues related to workplace devaluation? Is this experience considered a rite of passage?
- How can tacit knowledge be made explicit?

Recommendations for Praxis

Praxis is a very important element of the research process, especially the application of the findings and conclusions. Listed below are some suggestions grounded in the data and the researcher's professional knowledge to stimulate professional practice and facilitate awareness of workplace devaluation.

For Facilitators of Adult Learning

A facilitator of adult learning supports, encourages, listens, learns and instructs as required to help individuals learn. Specifically, this term refers to professionals who are actively involved in formal programs found in the workplace, academic institutions, and community and informal programs such as mentoring and on-the-job training. Facilitators of adult learning have a professional responsibility to understand not only substantive content but also theories and practices of adult learning.

- Present a holistic picture of the learning process to learners. Adults learning a new language, new computer skills, a new sport, interpersonal skills, or intrapersonal learning experience varying levels of discomfort, frustration, embarrassment. These feelings exist whether the person selected the learning experience, the supervisor required the training or a significant life event occurred. These feelings or emotions are as necessary to the learning process as substantive content and skills. In addition, much of the learning will be tacit. Adults may already have acquired some relevant tacit knowledge; part of your responsibility is to encourage them to see the connections. When the emphasis on learning is fun or the high of achievement, a disservice is perpetuated without explaining the whole process. Provide students with a map or model of what to expect during the learning process; make it explicit. Implicitly, facilitators convey this message by creating a safe, comfortable environment.
- Learn more about adult development and the process of learning from experience. Discuss the theories and practice in the literature with colleagues. Apply your knowledge to your praxis.
- Allow time in your classes, workshops, seminars, facilitation for participants to reflect on the shared experience of the activities and identify applications of their learning to their personal life, professional life, or community life. For example, encourage participants to continue their dialogue outside the classroom through informal activities, phone calls, e-mail.

For Organization Decision-makers and Professionals

Acknowledge that *workplace devaluation* exists in organizations. Multiple realities exist and have validity. Begin the public dialogue. Workplace devaluation will probably always exist; its constructs are part of human nature. Understanding both the interrelationships of autonomy, communication, and personalization plus the learning process will help. Best

practices of organizations on downsizing and prevention of sexual harassment are two examples that illustrate this recommendation.

- The evolution of sexual harassment prevention in organizations is relevant. Anita Hill in her televised testimony before Congress on sexual harassment began the process of public discourse. Sexual harassment will probably always exist; its constructs, especially the abuse of power, are also part of human nature. Through media, awareness programs, and public advocacy, organizations have policies and procedures that address the issue and encourage public discourse. Organizations make known available options for those individuals, male and female, who need recourse.
- Organizations learned that when positions and programs are eliminated, managers' demonstrated respect for the individual is essential. Respect takes many forms. For example, clear, open communication on the business reasons for the action and acknowledgment of emotional consequences for those who leave and for those who stay provide a supportive environment for mutual understanding. This type of behavior demonstrates decision-makers have considered the personal consequences to the staff and communicated the issues in a public forum. Although employees may not agree with the decision, the opportunity for dialogue is available.
- Encourage and support programs that provide a venue for professionals and decision-makers to clarify their issues before meeting face-to-face to explore options in the workplace. A program could be similar to alternative dispute resolution (ADR) programs or conflict mediation. Central to the program is open communication without judgment. For example, organizations may be able to adapt successful methods developed by the Common Ground Network for Life and Choice. Their techniques effectively facilitate public dialogue among pro-choice and pro-life supporters resulting in innovative practices.
- Practice the skill, listening with understanding. Management, leadership and professional development program facilitators need to weave this concept and its application through out the program, not only as an isolated block of instruction.

Summary

. . .To those who have experienced its fury, the mere mention of the word arouses strong emotions and vivid, sometimes painful memories (Danielson, 1998).

This study aimed to understand how professionals experienced workplace devaluation. Specifically, the stated purposes were to:

- Understand how professionals experience workplace devaluation.
- Discover if a common process existed in how each professional managed the situation.

- Identify what professionals learned from the experience.
- Ascertain how learning occurred during the experience.
- Give others an opportunity to glimpse this lived world by providing a rich description of the experience.

The four narratives and the findings met the goals of this study and established a foundation to begin scholarly and public dialogue to better understand the professionals' experience of workplace devaluation. In closing, a metaphor highlights the significant insights gained from the scholarly research process. The quote above describes hurricanes, the chosen metaphor for workplace devaluation.

*Hurricane*⁵⁵ captures the essence of workplace devaluation. *Hurricanes* are storms with windspeed greater than 75 miles per hour and a fairly calm center known as the *eye*. In the eye of the hurricane, winds are less, skies are partly cloudy or clear. The eye shrinks as the winds increase and conversely, the eye enlarges as the windspeed decreases. An *eye wall* surrounding the center contain the strongest winds (Office of Emergency Management, n.d.; Kirby, 1997). The workplace devaluation experience and the learning process often feel like a hurricane moving within the individual and the organization. The individual's sense of self represents the eye of the storm, not completely calm, but presenting the professional image required by the organization culture. The strong emotional and biological reaction to workplace devaluation corresponds to the eye wall. The experience diminishes the individual's sense of self. The stronger the reaction, the smaller the self becomes. As the strength of the emotional reactions lessen; the self expands. If the sense of self is large and calm, the individual can look beyond her self and her emotions to find a way to proceed. The force of the winds and rains are similar to the force of emotions. Both forces have a tendency for changes in intensity and movement dependent on changes in the atmosphere or in the organization milieu. Hurricanes are also known as typhoons or cyclones. Workplace devaluation often masquerades behind other names.

Meteorologists still seek to understand the causes of hurricanes although they know certain factors⁵⁶ provide the impetus to form the hurricane. When winds rotate counter-clockwise near the ocean's surface, the wind and moisture flow inward to a central point, the eye of the storm. The wind strength of the upper atmosphere determines the intensity of the storm. Light upper level winds allow the moisture to spread out and increase the hurricane's intensity, while strong winds above prevent the moisture from spreading and decrease the intensity (Office of Emergency Management, n.d.; Kirby, 1997). Individuals, like meteorologists, at all organizational levels continue to search for the causes of workplace devaluation. This study's findings, description of workplace devaluation, the process of learning, and the constructs are similar to the known hurricane information.

⁵⁵ The information on hurricane formation was obtained on the internet at <http://www.mhhe.com/earthsci/geology/danielson/goals/Ch13Goals.mhtml>; <http://www.ci.houston.tx.us/OEM/hurricane/formation.html>; and <http://master.ph.utexas.edu/CTC/LKirby/hurricane/hurrinfo.html>.

⁵⁶ Kirby (1997) identifies the ingredients as warm water (about 200 feet deep); moisture (evaporation process); a convection activity of rising warm air meeting sinking cold air and the Coriolis force that begin the spinning.

The findings of this study suggest that the congruence of three constructs--loss of autonomy, inability to communicate the issues, personalization--begins the inward flow of workplace devaluation toward the individual's self--the eye of the storm. The decision-makers are comparable to the upper winds of the atmosphere. Weak decision-makers, those who are "light" on demonstrating accountability and respect for the individuals on their staff, allow the constructs to become stronger, increasing the impact of workplace devaluation. The effective decision-makers, those who are "strong" on demonstrating accountability and respect for the individuals, acknowledge their accountability and respect for the individual, arrest the growth of workplace devaluation and encourage timely and effective strategies to develop.

Danielson (1998) provides another perspective on the similarities of workplace devaluation and hurricanes:

Hurricanes are among the most destructive storms on earth. Their long life spans and trajectories, and their propensity for sudden changes in intensity and movement combine to make hurricane forecasting a difficult and important problem. (Internet address: <http://www.mhhe.com/earthsci/geology/danielson/goals/Ch13Goals.mhtml>)

Workplace devaluation can also be very destructive to the individual and this destruction impacts on the workgroup, the organization, the family, the community, and society in ever-widening circles. The constant changes occurring in society are reflected in the workplace. The individual within the organizational milieu is a microcosm of the total effect. Thus, like a hurricane, workplace devaluation has a tendency to change in intensity and movement so predicting how individuals respond is difficult.

With increasing knowledge and new emerging technologies, meteorologists predict hurricane formation early. As a result, the deaths from hurricanes have declined dramatically while damage costs have dramatically increased. For example, the twenty deadliest hurricanes in the United States occurred between the years 1881 to 1972, with a range of 8000+ deaths in 1900 to 122 deaths in 1972. The twenty costliest hurricanes in the United States occurred from 1955 to 1998 with damage costs ranging from \$500,000 to \$5 billion dollars⁵⁷ (The National Hurricane Center, 1997 and National Climatic Data Center, 1999). The increased cost of property, buildings, and material goods along with greater population density probably contribute to the huge costs. With early prediction, lives are saved.

The time required to repair the property damage and heal personal suffering from hurricanes is lengthy. The findings related to workplace devaluation and the process cycle also indicate a long duration to heal and to repair the wounds from forces of workplace devaluation.

The connection continues to exist with workplace devaluation. Humans are unable to control the weather; yet, with knowledge and early recognition, safety precautions can be taken

⁵⁷ The National Climatic Data Center compiled a list of the 37 weather related disasters over the past 19 years with related damage costs at \$1 billion or more. Two hurricanes in 1998, Hurricane Georges and Hurricane Bonnie had not been added to the National Hurricane Center but are included in these statistics. (<http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/ol/reports/billioinz.html>)

to lessen property damage and, most importantly, save lives. Individuals are the organizations. Individuals and decision-makers can learn to recognize workplace devaluation in its early phases, explore organizational and personal options; and take safety precautions to minimize the emotional and potential physical pain experienced with workplace devaluation.

REFERENCES

- Achawls, S. and Renesch, J. (Eds.) (1995). Learning organizations: Developing cultures for tomorrow's workplace. Portland, OR: Productivity Press.
- Agarwal, S. (1995). Influence of formalization on role stress, organizational commitment, and work alienation of salespersons: A cross-national comparative study. Journal of International Business Studies, 24 (4), 715-740.
- Allcorn, S. (1994). Anger in the workplace: Understanding the causes of aggression and violence. Westport, CT: Quorum Books.
- Argyris, C., Putnam, R. and Smith, D. (1985). Action science. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Aslanian, C. B. and Brickell, H. M. (1980). Americans in transition: Life changes as reasons for adult learning. New York: College Entrance Examination Board.
- Atkouf, O. (1992). Management and theories of organizations in the 1990s: Toward a critical radical humanism? Academy of Management Review, 17 (3), 407-431.
- Barritt, L. S., Beekman, T., Bleeker, H., Mulderij, K. (1983) Handbook for phenomenological research in education. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, School of Education.
- Baskett, H. K. M. and Marsick, V. M. (Eds.) (1992, Fall). Professionals' Ways of Knowing. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 55.
- Baskett, H. K. M. and Marsick, V. M. (1992, Fall). Confronting new understandings about professional learning. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 55, 7-15.
- Basseches, M. A. (1989). Dialectical thinking as an organized whole.. In M. L. Commons, J. D. Sinnott, F. A. Richards, and C. Armon (Eds.) Adult development volume I: Comparisons and applications of developmental models (pp. 161-17). New York: Praeger.
- Belenky, M. F., Clinchy, B. M., Goldberger, N. R. and Tarule, J. M. (1986). Women's ways of knowing: The development of self, voice, and mind. New York: Basic Books.
- Benveniste, G. (1987). Professionalizing the organization. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Boucouvalas, M. (1980a). An analysis of lifelong learning and transpersonal psychology as two complementary movements reflecting and contributing to social transformation. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Florida State University.
- Boucouvalas, M. (1980b). Transpersonal psychology: A working outline of the field. The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 12 (1), 37-46.

- Boucouvalas, M. (1981). Transpersonal psychology: Scope and challenges. The Australian Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 1 (2), 136-159.
- Boucouvalas, M. (1983). Social transformation, lifelong learning and the fourth force--transpersonal psychology. Lifelong Learning: The Adult Years, 6 (7), 6-9.
- Boucouvalas, M. (1984). Transpersonal psychology: Guiding image for the advancement of international adult education. Graduate Studies Journal, University of the District of Columbia, 2, 17-35.
- Boucouvalas, M. (1988). An analysis and critique of the concept of self in self-directed learning: Toward a more robust construct for research and practice. Leeds, England: Proceedings of the Trans-Atlantic Dialogue Research Conference. 55-61.
- Boucouvalas, M. (1991, October). The transcultural self: An issue area for comparative adult education research. Paper presented at the World Conference on Comparative Adult Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.
- Boucouvalas, M. (1993, Spring). Consciousness and learning: New and renewed approaches. New Directions in Adult and Continuing Education. 57, 57-69.
- Boucouvalas, M. (1995). Transpersonal psychology: Scope and challenges revisited. In E. M. Neill and S. I. Shapiro (Eds.), Embracing transcendence: Visions of transpersonal psychology. (pp. 1-25). Stafford Heights, Australia: Bolda-Lok Publishing and Educational Enterprises.
- Boucouvalas, M. (1996, June). Positive adult development around the world: Understanding and transforming anger. Paper presented at the Society for Research in Adult Development, Boston, MA.
- Boucouvalas, M. (1997, July). An analysis and critique of transformation theory and adult learning: Contributions from consciousness studies. Paper presented at Crossing Borders, Breaking Boundaries International Conference, University of London, Birkbeck College.
- Boucouvalas, M. and Krupp, J. (1989). Adult development and learning. In Merriam and Cunningham (Eds.), Handbook of adult and continuing education (pp. 183-200). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Boud, D., Keogh, R., and Walker, D. (1985). Reflection: turning experience into learning. London: Kogan Page.
- Boud, D. and Griffin, V. (Eds.) (1987). Appreciating adults learning: From the learner's perspective. London: Kogan Page.
- Boud, D. and Walker, D. (1990). Making the most of experience. Studies in Continuing Education, 12 (2), 61-80.

- Boud, D. and Walker (1993). Barriers to reflection on experience. In D. Boud, R. Cohen and D. Walker (Eds.), Using Experience for Learning (pp. 73-86). Bristol, PA: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.
- Boud, D., Cohen, R., and Walker, D. (Eds.) (1993). Using Experience for Learning. Bristol, PA: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.
- Bowditch, J. L. and Buono, A. F. (1994). A primer on organizational behavior (3rd ed.). New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Boyd, E. M. and Fales, A. W. (1983). Reflective learning: Key to learning from experience. Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 23 (2), 99-117.
- Boyd, R. D. and Myers, J. G. (1988). Transformative education. International Journal of Lifelong Education, 7 (4), 261-284.
- Bridges, W. (1980). Transitions: Making sense of life's changes. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Bridges, W. (1991). Managing transitions: Making the most of change. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Brookfield, S. (1987). Significant personal learning. In D. Boud and V. Griffin (Eds.) Appreciating adults learning: From the learners' perspective (pp. 64-75). London: Kogan Page.
- Brookfield, S. (1990) Expanding knowledge about how we learn. In R. Smith and Associates, Learning to learn across the life span (pp. 327-345). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bry, A. (1976). How to get angry without feeling guilty. New York: Signet Books.
- Bryant, N. L. (1992). Experiences of women counselors. Dissertation Abstracts Online. DAI, Vol. 53-11A, p. 4102. Accession No: AAG9307171.
- Burns, R. W. (1970). Sociological backgrounds of adult education: Papers presented at a Syracuse University Conference, October 1963, Sagamore, New York. Syracuse, New York: Publications in Continuing Education.
- Carter, J. (1991). How to cope with angry employees or colleagues. Supervisory Management, 36, 6-7.
- Cervero, R. M. (1991). Continuing education for the professions. In Merriam and Cunningham (Eds.) Handbook of adult and continuing (pp. 513-524). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Clark, M. C. (1993, Spring). Transformational Learning. New Directions in Adult and Continuing Education, 57, 47-56.

- Collard, S. and Law, M. (1989). The limits of perspective transformation: A critique of Mezirow's theory. Adult Education Quarterly, 39 (2), 99-107.
- Collins, M. (1981). Phenomenological perspectives in adult education: Implications for research and practice. Unpublished paper. Manhattan KS: Kansas State University.
- Comuzzi, C. M. (1992). Trying to catch the wind: Subtle and covert discrimination against professional women in the workplace. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto. unpublished dissertation.
- Cook-Greuter, S. R. (1994). Rare forms of self-understanding in mature adults. In M. E. Miller and S. R. Cook-Greuter (eds.) Transcendence and mature thought in adulthood: The further reaches of adult development (pp. 119-146). Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Crank, J. and Regal, Robert, et al. (1995, June). Institutional and organizational antecedents of role stress, work alienation and anomie among police executives. Criminal Justice and Behavior, 22, June, 152-172.
- Cranton, P. (Ed.) (1997, Summer). Transformative learning in action. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 74.
- Creswell, J. W. (1994). Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Daloz, L. A. (1986). Effective mentoring and teaching. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Daniel, L. M. (1985). Organizational, gender, and educational influences on work satisfaction. Dissertation Abstracts Online. DAI, Vol. 47-02A, p. 0661. Accession No: AAG8607535.
- Danielson, L. A. (1998). Chapter goals and overview. In Meteorology, published by McGraw-Hill Companies [On-line].
<http://www.mhhe.com/earthsci/geology/danielson/goals/Ch13Goals.mhtml>
- De Rivera, J. (1984). Development and the full range of emotional experience. In C. Z. Malatesta and C. E. Izard (Eds.), Emotion in adult development (pp. 45-64). Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE.
- Delors, J. (1997) Learning: The treasure within. Report to UNESCO of International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century. Paris: UNESCO
- Denizen, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.) (1994). Handbook of qualitative research. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Dewey, J. (1938/1991). Experience and Education. In J. Boydston (Ed.) John Dewey: The later works, 1925-1953: Volume 13: 1938-1939. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

- Diekman, A. J. (1982). The observing self. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Dirkx, J. M. (1997, Summer). Nurturing soul in adult learning. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 74, 79-88.
- Douglas, J. D., (1976). Investigative social research. Sage Library of Social Research, Volume 29. Beverly Hills: SAGE.
- Durrance, B. (1998, December). Some explicit thoughts on tacit learning. Training and Development, 24-29.
- Eagley, A. H. and Johnson, B. T. (1990). Gender and leadership style: A meta-analysis. Psychological Bulletin 109 (2), 233-256.
- Eagley, A. H., Makhijani, M. G., and Klonsky, B. G. (1992). Gender and the evaluation of leaders: A meta analysis. Psychological Bulletin, 111 (1). 3-22.
- Easterby-Smith, M. (1997). Disciplines of organizational learning: Contributions and critiques. Human Relations 50 (9), 1085-1110.
- Ekpenyong, L. E. (1990). Studying adult learning through the history of knowledge. International Journal of Lifelong Learning, 9 (3), 161-171.
- Ely, R. (1995). The power in demography: Women's social constructions of gender identity at work. Academy of Management Journal, 38 (3), 589-634.
- Erikson, E. H. (1978). Adulthood. New York: Norton.
- Etzioni, A. (1964). Modern organizations. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Felton, B. J. and Shaver, P. (1984). Cohort variation in adults reported feelings. In C. Z. Malatesta and C. E. Izard (Eds.), Emotion in adult development (pp.103-124). Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE.
- Fenwick, T. (1994). New perspectives on professionals' learning: The liberatory and limiting potential of dialogue. ERIC ED 374-243.
- Ferguson, Kathy E. (1984). The feminist case against bureaucracy. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Fishback, S. J. (1998-1999). Learning and the brain. Adult Learning, 10 (2), 18-22
- Fletcher, J. K. (1994). Towards a theory of relational practice in organizations: A feminist reconstruction of "real" work. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Boston University.
- Fontana, A. and Frey, J. H. (1994). Interviewing: The art of science. In N. K. Denzin and Y. Lincoln, (Eds.) Handbook of qualitative research (pp. 361 -376). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

- Fowler, J. (1981). Stages of faith: The psychology of human development and the quest for meaning. New York: Harper and Rowe.
- Freire, P. (1970, 1997). Pedagogy of the oppressed. New York: Continuum.
- Gallois, C. (1993). The language and communication of emotion. American Behavior Scientist, 36 (3), 303-339.
- Garrison, D. R. (Ed.) (1994). Research perspectives in adult education. Malabar, FL: Krieger.
- Garvin, D. A. (1993, July/August). Building a learning organization. Harvard Business Review, 78-91.
- Gay, L. R. (1992). Educational research: Competencies for analysis and application (4th Ed.). New York: Macmillan.
- Gaylin, W. (1984). The rage within: Anger in modern life. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Gilbert, L. A. (1994, December). Reclaiming and returning gender to context. Psychology of Women Quarterly, 18, 539-558.
- Gilligan, C. (1982). In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Glaser, B. (1992). Basics of grounded theory analysis: Emergence vs. forcing. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. (1994). More grounded theory methodology: A reader. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. and Strauss, A. (1967). The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Chicago: Aldine.
- Goffman, E. (1959/1973). The presentation of self in everyday life. Woodstock, New York: The Overlook Press.
- Goffman, E. (1967). Interaction ritual: Essays on face-to-face behavior. Garden City, New York: Anchor Books
- Goleman, D. (1995). Emotional Intelligence. New York: Bantam Books.
- Gooler, D. D. (1990). Changing the way we live and learn in an information age. In R. Smith and Associates, Learning to learn across the life span (pp. 307-326). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Grabov, V. (1997, Summer). The many facets of transformative learning theory and practice. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 74, 89-96.
- Griffin, V. (1987). Naming the process. In D. Boud and V. Griffin (Eds.) Appreciating adults learning: from the learners' perspective (pp. 209-221). London: Kogan Page.

- Griffith, G. (1987). Images of interdependence: Authority and power in teaching/learning. In D. Boud and V. Griffin (Eds.) Appreciating adults learning: From the learners' perspective (pp. 51-63). London: Kogan Page.
- Guy, M. E. (1985). Professionals in organizations. New York: Praeger.
- Hart, M. (1990). Critical theory and beyond: Further perspectives on emancipatory education. Adult Education Quarterly, 40 (3), 125-138.
- Hochschild, A. R. (1979). Emotion work, feeling rules and social structure. The American Journal of Sociology, 85 (3), 551-575.
- Hochschild, A. R. (1983). The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Hyatt, C. and Gottlieb, L. (1993). When smart people fail (Rev. Ed.). New York: Penguin Books.
- Janoff-Bulman, R. (1992). Shattered assumptions: Towards a new psychology of trauma. New York: The Free Press.
- Jarvis, P. (1987a). Adult learning in the social context. London: Croom Helm.
- Jarvis, P. (1987b). Meaningful and meaningless experiences: Towards an analysis of learning from life. Adult Education Quarterly, 37 (2), 164-172.
- Jarvis, P. (1992, Fall). Learning practical knowledge. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 55, 89-96.
- Kanter, R. M. (1977). Men and women of the corporation. New York: Basic Books.
- Kassworm, C. (1982). Self-directed learning and lifespan development. International Journal of Lifelong Education, 2 (1), 29-46.
- Kaye, B. L. (1998, March). The kept on workforce. Training and Development, 32-38.
- Keane, R. (1987). The doubting journey: A learning process of self-transformation. In D. Boud and V. Griffin (Eds.) Appreciating adults learning: From the learners' perspective (pp. 89-97). London: Kogan Page.
- Kegan, R. (1994). In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kirby, L. (1997). Hurricane information page [On-line]. Available: <http://master.ph.utexas.edu/CTC/LKirby/hurricane/hurrinfo.html>.
- Knight, S. (1985). Reflection and learning: the importance of a listener. In D. Boud, R. Keogh, D. Walker (Eds.), Reflection: turning experience into learning (pp. 85-90). New York: Nichols.

- Knowles, M. (1990). The adult learner: A neglected species (4th ed.). Houston, TX: Gulf.
- Lajoie, D. H. and Shapiro, S. I. (1992). Definitions of transpersonal psychology: The first 23 years. Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 24 (1), 79-98.
- Langer, E. J. (1997). The power of mindful leaning. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Langer, E. J. and Browne, J. P. (1992, Spring). Mindful learning: A world without losses. New Directions in Adult and Continuing Education, 53, 11-20.
- Larson, M. S. (1977). The rise of professionalism. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Lemert, C. and Branaman, A. (Eds.) (1997). The Goffman reader. Maiden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc.
- Lerner, H. G. (1985). Dance of anger: A woman's guide to changing the patterns of intimate relationships. New York: Harper and Row.
- Lindeman, E. C. (1926). The meaning of adult education. New York: New Republic.
- Loevinger, J. (1976). Ego development: Conceptions and theories. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- MacKeracher, D. (1996). Making sense of adult learning. Toronto, Ontario: Culture Concepts.
- Malatesta, C. Z. and Izard, C. E. (1984). Emotion in adult development. Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE
- Marsick, V. M. (1987). Learning in the workplace. Kent, England: Croom Helm.
- Maslow, A. H. (1968). Toward a psychology of being. (2nd ed.) Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand.
- McLagan, P. A. (1999, March). Jumping up and down on a fault line: The role of HRD as we enter a new millenium. Paper presented at Academy of Human Resources Conference, Washington, D. C.
- McNamara, W. (1983). Psychology and the christian mystical tradition. In C. T. Tart (Ed.) Transpersonal Psychologies (pp. 397-436). El Cerrito, CA: Psychological Processes, Inc. First published 1975 by Harper and Rowe.
- Merriam, S. B. (1993b, Spring). Adult learning: Where have we come from? Where are we headed? In S. B. Merriam (Ed.) New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 57, 6-14.
- Merriam, S. B. (Ed.) (1993a, Spring). An Update on Adult Learning Theory. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 57.

- Merriam, S. B. and Caffarella, R. S. (1991). Learning in adulthood. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B. and Clark, M. C. (1991). Lifelines: Patterns of work, love, and learning in adulthood. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B. and Cunningham, P. (Eds.) (1991). Handbook of adult and continuing education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B. and Simpson, E. L. (1995). Guide to research for educators and trainers of adults. (2nd edition). Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company.
- Mezirow, J. (1981). A critical theory of adult learning and education. Adult Education Quarterly, 32, 3-24.
- Mezirow, J. (1991). Transformative dimensions of adult learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (1995). transformative theory of adult learning. (pp. 39-70) In M. R. Welton (Ed.) In defense of the lifeworld: Critical perspectives on adult learning. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Mezirow, J. (1996). Contemporary paradigms of learning. Adult Education Quarterly, 46 (3), 158-172.
- Mezirow, J. (1997, March). Transformation Theory - A Summary. Paper presented at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Northern Virginia Graduate Center.
- Mezirow, J. and Associates (1990). Fostering critical reflection in adulthood: A guide to transformative and emancipatory learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Miller, D. B. (1986). Managing professionals in research and development: A guide for improving productivity and organizational effectiveness. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Miller, M. E. and Cook-Greuter, S. R. (Eds.) (1994). Transcendence and mature thought in adulthood: The further reaches of adult development. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Morris, L. (1992, November). A focus on development. Training and Development, 25-28.
- Morris, L. (1995). Developmental strategies for the knowledge era. In S. Achawls and J. Renesch (Eds.), Learning Organizations: Developing cultures for tomorrow's workplace (pp. 323-336). Portland, OR: Productivity Press.
- Morrison, A. M., White, R. P., Van Velsor, E. and The Center for Creative Leadership (1987). Breaking the glass ceiling: Can women reach the top of America's largest corporations. New York: Addison-Wesley.

- Naff, K. C. (1993, Spring). A glass ceiling found. The Public Manager*The New Bureaucrat, 39-42.
- National Climatic Data Center (1999). Billion dollar U.S. weather disasters 1980-1998 [On-line]. Available: <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/ol/reports/billioinz.html>
- National Hurricane Center (1998). The costliest hurricanes in the United States 1900-1996 [On-line] <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/pastcost.html>
- National Hurricane Center (1998). The deadliest hurricanes in the United States 1900-1996 [On-line] <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/pastdead.html>
- Neugarten, B. (1969). Continuities and discontinuities of psychological issues into adult life. Human Development, 12, 121-130.
- Neugarten, B. (1976). Adaptation and the life cycle. Counseling Psychologist, 6, 16-20.
- New York Times (1996). The downsizing of America. New York: Times Books, Random House.
- Noon, M. and Blyton (1997). The realities of work. London: MacMillan Press.
- Nowlen, P. M. (1990). New expectations, new roles: A holistic approach to continuing education for the professions. In R. M. Cervero, J. G. Azzaretto, and Associates, Visions for the future of continuing professional education. Athens, Georgia Center for Continuing Education: University of Georgia.
- Office of Emergency Management (n.d.). Hurricane information [On-line] Available: <http://www.ci.houston.tx.us/OEM/hurricane/formation.html>
- Osborne, J. (1985). Learning as a change in world-view. Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne, 26 (3), 195-206.
- Pedler, M., Burgoyne, J., Boydell, T. (1996). The learning company: A strategy for sustainable development (2nd Ed.). London: McGraw-Hill.
- Perlman, L. J. (1984). The learning enterprise: Adult learning, human capital and economic development. Washington, D. C.: The Council of State Planning Agencies.
- Perry, W. G., Jr. (1970). Forms of intellectual and ethical development in the college years. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Polanyi, M. (1976). Tacit Knowing. In M. H. Marx and Goodson, F. E. (Eds.), Theories in contemporary psychology. (pp. 330-344). New York: Macmillan. (Reprinted from American Psychologist, 23, (1), pp. 27-43, by M. Polanyi, (1968) Logic and psychology. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

- Pollio, H. R., Henley, T. B., and Thompson, C. J. (1997). The phenomenology of everyday life. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Potter, B. A. (1994). Beating Job Burnout. Berkeley, CA: Ronin.
- Pritchett, P. and Pound, R. (1995). A survival guide to the stress of organizational change. Dallas, TX: Pritchett and Associates.
- Raelin, J. A. (1986). The clash of cultures: Managers and professionals. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Rafaeli, A. and Sutton, R. J. (1989). The expression of emotion in organizational life. In L. L. Cummings and B. M. Staw (Eds.), Research in organizational behavior: An annual series of analytical essays and critical reviews (pp. 1-42). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Redrawn, M. (1998-1999). The Brain: Navigating the new reality: An exploration of brain compatible learning. Adult Learning, 10 (2), 10-17.
- Reason, P. (Ed.) (1988). Human inquiry in action. London: Sage Publications.
- Reason, P. (Ed.) (1994). Participation in human inquiry. London: SAGE.
- Reason, P. and Marshall, J. (1987). Research as a personal process. In D. Boud and V. Griffin (Eds.) Appreciating adults learning: From the learner's perspective (pp. 112-126). London: Kaman Page., .
- Reason, P. and Rowan, J. (1981). Human inquiry: A sourcebook of new paradigm research. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Riegel, K. F. (1973). Dialectical operations: The final period of cognitive development. Human Development, 16, 346-370.
- Riegel, K. F. (1976). Dialectics of Human Development. American Psychologist, 31, 689-700.
- Roberts, T. B. (1988). Multistage education: Metacognitive implications of the mindbody psychotechnologies. Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 21 (1), 83-102.
- Robertson, G. (1987). Learning and the hidden agenda. In D. Boud and V. Griffin (Eds.) Appreciating adults learning: From the learners' perspective (pp. 76-86). London: Kogan Page.
- Rogers, C. R. (1961/1989). On becoming a person: A therapist's view of psychotherapy. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Rogers, E. M. (1995). Diffusion of innovations (4th ed.). New York: The Free Press.
- Roodin, P. A., Rybash, J. M., and Hoyer, W. J., (1984). Affect in adult cognition: A constructivist view of moral thought and action. In C. Z. Malatesta and C. E. Izard (Eds.), Emotion in adult development (pp. 297-316). Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE.

- Rowe, M. P. (1990). Barriers to equality: The power of subtle discrimination to maintain unequal opportunity. Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal, 3 (2), 153-162.
- Ryan, K. D. and Oestreich, F. K. (1998). Driving fear out of the workplace: Creating the high-trust, high performance organization. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Sahakian, W. S. (1976). Learning: Systems, models and theories (2nd Ed.). Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Savage, E. (1997). Don't take it personally! The art of dealing with rejection. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.
- Schein, E. H. (1992). Organizational culture and leadership (2nd Ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Schon, D. A. (1983). The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action. New York: Basic Books.
- Schon, D. A. (1987). Educating the reflective practitioner. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Scott, S. M. (1997, Summer). The grieving soul in the transformation process. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 74, 41-50.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (1975). Helplessness: On depression, development, and death. New York: W. H. Freeman.
- Senge, P. (1990). The fifth discipline. New York: Doubleday/Currency.
- Smith, R. and Associates (1990). Learning to learn across the life span. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). The art of case study research. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Stanage, S. M. (1987). Adult education and phenomenological research: New directions for theory, practice, and research. Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger.
- Sternberg, R. J. and Caruso, D. (1985). Practical Modes of Knowing. In E. Eisner (ed.) Learning and teaching the ways of knowing. 84th Yearbook, part 2. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Stewart, A. J. and Healy, J. M., Jr. (1984). In C. Z. Malatesta and C. E. Izard (Eds.), Emotion in adult development (pp. 277-296). Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE..
- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990/1998). Basics of qualitative research. Newbury, CA: SAGE.
- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1994). Grounded theory methodology: An overview. In Denzin and Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

- Tart, C. T. (1983). Transpersonal psychologies. El Cerrito, CA: Psychological Processes, Inc. First published 1975 by Harper and Rowe.
- Tart, C. T. (1986). Consciousness, altered states and worlds of experience. The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 18 (2), 159-170.
- Taylor, E. (1997). Building upon the theoretical debate: A critical review of the empirical studies of Mezirow's transformative learning theory. Adult Education Quarterly, 48 (1), 34-49.
- Taylor, M. (1981). The role of adult experience in learning: Consequences for the classroom. Paper presented at the Joint Conference of the Association of Community Colleges in Canada and the Canadian Vocational Association, June 1, 1981, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 215 085)
- Tennant, M. (1990). Life-span developmental psychology and adult learning. International Journal of Lifelong Education, 2 (33), 223-236.
- Tennant, M. (1993). Perspective transformation and adult development. Adult Education Quarterly, 44 (1), 34-42.
- Terkel, S. (1970). Working: People talk about what they do all day and how they feel about what they do. New York: New Press.
- Tough, A. (1982). Intentional changes: A fresh approach to helping people change. Chicago, IL: Follett.
- Traylen, H. (1994). Confronting hidden agendas: Co-operative inquiry with health visitors. In P. Reason (Ed.) Participation in human inquiry (pp. 59-81). London: SAGE.
- Tucker, B. (1986). Components of Stress: Anxiety, depression, and alienation. Dissertation Abstracts On-line. DAI, Vol. 47-081, p. 3110. Accession No: AAG8623208.
- Van Buskirk, B. (1997). On publish or perish, pedagogy, and getting a life--synergies and tensions: An interview with Bill Van Buskirk. In R. Andre and P. J. Frost (Eds.), Researchers hooked on teaching: Noted scholars discuss the synergies of teaching and research. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Van Maanen, J. and Kunda, G. (1989). "Real feelings:" Emotional expression and organizational culture. In L. L. Cummings and B. M. Staw (Eds.), Research in organizational behavior: An annual series of analytical essays and critical reviews (pp. 43-104). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, Inc.
- Wagner, R. K. and Sternberg, R. J. (1983). Practical intelligence in real-world pursuits: The role of tacit knowledge. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 49 (2), 436-458.
- Watkins, K. E. and Marsick, V. J. (1993). Sculpting the learning organization: Lessons in the art and science of systemic change. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Weintraub, R. (1994). Transforming mental models through formal and informal learning: A guide for workplace education. In S. Achawls and J. Renesch (Eds.), Learning Organizations: developing cultures for tomorrow's workplace (pp. 317-430). Portland, OR: Productivity Press.
- Weiser, J. (1987). Learning from the perspective of growth of consciousness. In D. Boud and V. Griffin (Eds.) Appreciating adults learning: From the learners' perspective (pp. 98-111). London: Kogan Page.
- Welton, M. R. (Ed.) (1995). In defense of the lifeworld: critical perspectives on adult learning. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Wilber, K. (1990). Eye to eye: the quest for new paradigm (2nd ed.) Boston, Shambahala.
- Witt, L. (1993, April). Alienation among research scientists. Journal of Social Psychology 133, 133-141.
- Yazak, D. L. (1994). Anger management in the workplace. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Montana Association of Rehabilitation, October, 1994, Butte, MT. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 380 735)
- Young, I. M. (1992). Five faces of oppression. In T. E. Wartenberg (Ed.) Rethinking Power (pp. 174-195). Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.

APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Informed Consent for Participants of Investigative Procedures

Title of Project: Workplace Devaluation: Learning from Experience.

Investigator: Clare Dvoranchik Klunk

I. The Purpose of this Research:

This is an exploratory study of a phenomenon experienced by professionals in the workplace. This study will provide a description of the phenomenon plus explicate the internal process of learning. This phenomenon is best described as a paradox. It is the experience when previously valued professionals realize their contributions are not now valued by the decision-makers of the organization, although they were valued at one time and are still needed. Little is written about this experience or its meaning to the professional. This study will examine the experience, the meaning of the experience to the individual, and the personal learning emanating from it. Adult development and learning theory suggest that individuals who are able to validate their personal experience through their narratives, can link the rational knowledge of the public world and their lived experiences. Knowing how professionals make sense of their experiences in the workplace and increase their conscious knowledge is vital to individual, organizational and societal learning. The case studies of this study are a starting place for public dialogue to facilitate professional praxis.

II. Procedures

Participants as co-researchers are integral to this study. As a co-researcher, you will be encouraged to develop a professional collaboration with the researcher to tell your experience, dialogue on the meaning of the experience, and the internal learning process. After the interviews have been completed with all the participants, you will be expected to participate in a focus group to examine the results of the analyses and develop a response to the research questions. To insure anonymity and confidentiality, you and your place of work will be given a pseudonym. Refer to Section V. for more specific information about anonymity and confidentiality.

Three interviews, lasting approximately one hour will be taped (audio). The purpose of taping the interview is for convenience and accuracy of data. The tapes will be immediately transcribed and submitted for your review to verify, edit, or change to ensure that the transcript accurately reflects what you meant..

Once the transcript is complete, any identifying information will be excised. Only a completely anonymous transcription will be analyzed.

III. Risks

Some open-ended questions will ask for some judgments about the conditions at your workplace. You may feel some of your opinions will be prejudicial to your employment status. Protection against these risks will be carefully followed and includes your right to refuse to answer any question or to withdraw from the study at any time. Your exercise of these rights will be respected.

IV. Benefits

Your participation in this study is important. It is hoped that you can use this opportunity to speak candidly about your experiences, while being assured confidentiality and anonymity. Greater understanding about how professionals make sense of their experiences in the workplace and increase their conscious knowledge is vital to organizational and societal learning. Your experience as documented in this research will be a starting place for public dialogue to facilitate professional praxis.

You will not receive any tangible benefits such as compensation of any form for participation in this study, nor is there any promise or guarantee of benefits to encourage your participation.

If you would like a summary of the research results at a later date, you may contact Clare D. Klunk.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

The design of this study promises anonymity and confidentiality to participants. Anonymity (individuals cannot be identified) will be accomplished by the following procedures:

- Audio taping of the interviews will only be done with your permission. The purpose of the taping is for convenience and accuracy of what is said.
- Before taping begins, you will select a pseudonym for yourself and your organization. All references to you and your organization will be disguised.
- Tapes will be immediately transcribed by the researcher. Any identifying information will be excised.
- As a co-researcher/participant, you will also review transcripts for accuracy and anonymity. Identifying information will be excised.
- Tapes will be stored in a bank safe deposit box for seven years. Seven years is not a legal requirement, but a standard for this type of research. After seven years, the tapes will be destroyed.
- After all analyses are completed, transcripts will be destroyed.

Confidentiality (individuals can be identified, but the researchers promise not to divulge that information) is promised. Researchers include the investigator, members of the dissertation committee, and co-researchers who participate in the concluding focus group. The promise of confidentiality may be broken if a participant is believed to be a threat to herself/himself or others. If this should happen, the investigator will notify the appropriate authorities.

VI. Compensation

No form of compensation is to be earned for participating in this study.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

Participants' right to refuse to answer any question, comment on any issue or withdraw from the study at any time will be respected and followed.

VIII.Approval of Research

This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, by Department of Research.

IX. Subject's Responsibilities

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities:

- Participate in three interviews.
- Journal or make notes of other aspects of the experience that might emerge between interviews.
- Participate in a focus group with other participants.

X. Subject's Permission

I have and read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this project.

If I participate, I may withdraw at any time without penalty. I agree to abide by the rules of this project.

Signature

Date

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact:

Clare D. Klunk

703-758-9468

Investigator

Phone

Marcie Boucouvalas

703-538-8465

Faculty Advisor

Phone

703-538-8492

M. G. Cline

Phone

IRB Departmental Reviewer

Northern Virginia Graduate Center

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

I. Introduction:

- ⇒ Description of study, method, ethical release
- ⇒ Choice of pseudonym for participant and organization.
- ⇒ Discussion of anonymity and confidentiality parameters.

II The Interview

Some ideas and question formulation were identified in Tough (1982, pages 168-172)

Let's begin with your work history. (General, neutral questions to put person at ease)

Probes:

What do you do?

How would you describe your job?

How long have you worked for organization?

How large is the organization?

How did you find your current job?

What do you like about your job?

What would you like to change about your job?

Describe yourself as a professional

Probes:

How do you handle your responsibilities?

What do you value about your profession?

What is important to you

How do you see (perceive) yourself as a professional? How do others see (perceive) you, e.g. colleagues, friends, family, boss, organizational leaders

How do you know when your contributions are valued by the decision makers?

How do you know when your contributions are not valued by the decision makers?

What is your professional goal?

What awards or accomplishments have you received? Which has meant the most to you?

Describe your organization

Probes

What is rewarded

What is valued

How do you fit into the organization

When do you think you are valued? By whom? Think of a time when you felt valued as a professional. Describe all that you can remember

When you felt valued for your contributions, what was important to you?

Describe all that you can remember

When do you think you are not valued? By whom? Think of a time when you felt not valued (devalued) as a professional. Describe all that you can remember

When you felt that you were not valued for your contributions, what was important to you?

Reasons to stay with present employer

Reasons to leave present employer

Tell me about your experience

Probes

What is (was) it like?

How did you become aware of this phenomenon?

What was most difficult for you?

How does (did) it feel?

What did you do?

How did you react?

Some related areas to stimulate reflection on their reaction to the experience that people often cite as reference this type of experience (Tough, 1988, p. 168)

body, health, appearance, fitness

relationships in workplace, with friends, with family

goals and values

psychic awareness, expanded consciousness, ultimate reality

spiritual and religious understanding; relationship to God or to the world

emotions, self-perception; self-confidence

wisdom, understanding, empathy, caring

assertiveness, authenticity, spontaneity

What insights did you gain from the experience.

What have you learned?

What information did you have?

What information did you need to get?

How did you learn?

What did it feel like?

Can you compare it to another experience?

What was most difficult for you?

How could you be better prepared for this experience? What do you wish you could have known before you experienced this phenomenon?

In looking back, what would you have done differently?

⇒ Any additional information that wasn't asked

⇒ Comments about the interview.

III. The Follow-up Interviews

- ⇒ After coding and analysis of the interview, I scheduled a second interview. The interview began with questions that emerged from the data analysis and other insights especially on the experience and metaphors to describe the experience and its effects.
- ⇒ The second interview was a dialogic exploration of issues and themes mentioned in the first interview.
- ⇒ The third interview included a summary of the participants' experience of workplace devaluation. Based on their summary, questions were asked for clarification and sequence of the experience.. Probes also included a focused on exploring their insights from the experience.
- ⇒ Comments about the dialogic interview process.
- ⇒ Set an estimated date for availability to meet with the group of participants to verify the findings.

APPENDIX C: CODEBOOK

Codeword	Parent	Definition
Disserta	Dissertation	Summaries of experience and research findings by interviewer
Action	Experience	takes action, makes decision to change the situation they perceive themselves to be in
Awareness	Experience	When does professional become consciously aware there is a serious problem. How does the professional articulate this awareness
Coping	Experience	thoughts, strategies to protect self in the situation
Experience	Experience	events, feelings, actions, coping, issues, context that relate to experience of not being valued as a professional
Feelings	Experience	words, phrases that describe emotions. descriptions of events that evoke feelings
Issues	Experience	events, interactions, incidents that cause conflict for individual, the issues can be internal to the professional or in the work or personal environment of the professional
Options	Experience	professionals' realizations of choices available to them such as staying, find a new job, long-term plan for future. a change in perspective
Alternativ	`	able to articulate another perspective or scenario in defining an issue or problem; reframing the problem.
Insights	Insights	what professional learned, explanation for how the experience is managed, what the professional wish they knew or learned before the experience. Can also be defined as a change in perspective
Techniqu	Insights	Explanation of methods that can help individuals expand understanding of the problem; reframe the problem; understand another perspective
Boss	Organization	Supervisor, second level management, individuals w/ professional's mgmt. chain. perceptions, actions, references to these people (need to recheck Paul's coding)
Job	Organization	responsibilities, duties that professional perceives as part of their job; this also includes boss's expectations and perhaps staff expectations
Organization	Organization	information about the organization, e.g., its size, its mission, and its culture
Process	Process	Professionals' summary of the experience (need to check this on all)
Diversity	Profesself	Main areas of discrimination outlined in Title VII: race or ethnicity, sex, religion, disability, age
Profesself	Profesself	professional self. how does professional see themselves, describe how others see them, values/beliefs about their profession, about themselves
Racism	Profesself	prejudice based on the belief that one's race is superior; antagonism towards other races
Recognition	Profesself	recognition. how is the professional recognized or valued for their contributions by self, bosses, peers, staff, community

APPENDIX D: COMPOSITE LIST OF PARTICIPANTS' EXPRESSED FEELINGS⁵⁸

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1. alone | 39. extreme frustration | 71. numb |
| 2. anger, | 40. fear | 72. panic |
| 3. angry | 41. fear of no control or
choice in leaving | 73. pent up anger |
| 4. angry at injustice | 42. fear of org taking action
if it happens again | 74. preparing for a funeral |
| 5. anonymous | 43. fear of unknown | 75. professional jealousy |
| 6. appreciative | 44. fed-up with organization | 76. resentment |
| 7. apprehensive | 45. feel you are just out there
going through motions | 77. resignation |
| 8. at first feeling helpless | 46. feeling of hopelessness | 78. resigned |
| 9. at mercy of hierarchy | 47. filled with dread | 79. resigned to go with flow |
| 10. at the very bottom | 48. first one--knocked me for
a loop | 80. scrutinized |
| 11. awful fearful feeling | 49. frozen--I couldn't do
anything | 81. severing of the tie with
organization |
| 12. baffled | 50. frustrated | 82. sorry to see self fight
back at that level |
| 13. being controlled | 51. frustrating | 83. stressful |
| 14. bewildered | 52. gosh, maybe it's true,
maybe I'm worthless | 84. surprise " <i>What is this?</i> " |
| 15. bothered | 53. guilty | 85. taken advantage of |
| 16. cannot defend himself | 54. helpless | 86. thwarted professional
goals |
| 17. caught in middle | 55. huge tremendous form of
rejection | 87. unable to do job right |
| 18. compelled to defend
herself | 56. ignored | 88. unappreciated |
| 19. conflicted | 57. in mourning | 89. uncomfortable |
| 20. confounded | 58. inferior | 90. under attack |
| 21. cut-off | 59. infuriating | 91. uneasy |
| 22. crying in frustration | 60. invasion of privacy | 92. unhappy |
| 23. demeaned | 61. invisible | 93. unknown |
| 24. denial | 62. it's like death | 94. upset |
| 25. depressed | 63. it's like nothing else
matters anymore | 95. very traumatic |
| 26. depressing | 64. like a nightmare | 96. urgency |
| 27. desperate | 65. like walking on egg
shells | 97. worried |
| 28. desperate to do
something | 66. lost all faith and loyalty
to organization | |
| 29. despicable | 67. miserable | |
| 30. developed tremendous
dislike for colleague | 68. mystified | |
| 31. diminishment of
responsibility | 69. no control | |
| 32. disadvantaged | 70. not looked at as an equal
worker | |
| 33. discounted | | |
| 34. disenfranchised | | |
| 35. dissatisfaction with
management | | |
| 36. disturbed | | |
| 37. embarrassed | | |
| 38. excluded | | |

⁵⁸Extracted from the participants' transcripts and listed alphabetically.

APPENDIX E: COMPOSITE LIST: PARTICIPANTS EXPRESSED LEARNING¹

Intrapersonal-learning

1. Acceptance and willingness to know and provide decision-makers what they saw as important to them.
2. Acceptance of that is the way life is in an organization.
3. Affirmation that problem was Supervisor's not so much mine.
4. As hard as it was back then, I know I benefited from going through that.....I wouldn't have wished that on anyone.
5. Asking myself: what is this situation teaching me, what can I learn from it.
6. Became a lot more street smart--how to protect myself. just knowing to stay a step ahead so I could look back & see what was going on.
7. Can understand why Division Chief does not want to deal with issues between myself and co-worker--2 people should be able to get along and work out this situation.
8. Cannot be autonomous in a hierarchical, bureaucratic organization.
9. Challenging credibility of herself.
10. Developed my skills and my knowledge, and able to put it to use doing something I really want to do.
11. Don't take criticisms personally, it is an organization problem.
12. Even if there is real personal intent going on, job is not most importance thing in life to worry about.
13. Focus on your real responsibilities, e.g., stay in your lane and not get worried about other issues that might come up.
14. From positive to negative to positive about job.
15. Greater understanding of my emotions and how to manage them.
16. I need to feel competent in both technical and management areas.
17. I though for many years I had a good deal, but I also had a bad deal, it didn't keep me in line. It is hard to have to be somewhere when you didn't before.
18. If I can't change situation, work with what I can and do best I can.
19. Importance of flexibility in scheduling to meet my needs.
20. Importance of job becomes secondary to family, avocation, community.
21. Keep everything in perspective, your job is not the most important thing in life to worry about.
22. Keep it in perspective.
23. Learned to be afraid, a little bit.
24. Let a situation go.
25. My insight about situations is better.
26. Not take criticism about his work so personally.
27. Not to expect anything from job.
28. OK to confront boss with legitimate concerns.
29. Organization saw me functioning well technically and did not understand why I would want to go back to school.
30. Pick my battles; cannot fight the senior management on everything, better to retreat, let them have their way on some things.

31. That others received same treatment.
32. To hold in what I had to say.
33. Trusted that God had a purpose.
34. What I am capable of doing, creatively in time off the job.

Organization Knowledge

1. Aware of organizational barriers to communication--how message is not communicated from the top down.
2. Be prepared to follow orders given by people higher than you in organization "which are completely crazy and insane, but they have the authority to order you to do something, so do it.
3. Cannot be autonomous in hierarchical, bureaucratic organization.
4. Deal with the politics.
5. Developed a good awareness on how to handle things.
6. Difficult to transfer with organization and have same autonomy.
7. From being only boss's fault to also the Board of Directors' fault.
8. From positive to negative to positive about job (change in attitude toward job).
9. Good understanding of the organizational structure, who are the players, what they are like, the dynamics of different people involved.
10. Hierarchical structure of an organization with management can destroy any kind of ingenuity or creativity in people.
11. How a "bad" organization really inhibits people.
12. How to back off and put up with things.
13. How to read a supervisor and find out what level of input they really need from you (not your perspective of what they need).
14. It taught me that regardless of what person you are supposed to support, really do more to anticipate their needs, what they are thinking, way they think.
15. Keep my mouth shut, watch, think before I speak.
16. Learn management style of new managers, what they wanted and in what form they wanted it.
17. Need for control by decision makers and the extent they will meddle.
18. Observes (recognizes) fear of management and pervasive apathy towards doing things differently in colleagues.
19. Organization more concerned that they can say they offer services for accreditation, than looking to see what we are really accomplishing.
20. Organization rewards those performing the mission, not supporting the mission.
21. Saw potential for same situation happening in different environment (job interview).
22. Someone in the organization will always interfere with your work.
23. Understand the power that your office has in the organization.

Interpersonal learning

1. Became aware of patterns w/ boss's behavior.
2. Biggest thing is miscommunication and communication. And this is where the biggest problem falls, just not communicating information.
3. Depersonalize communication if you are taking it personally, e.g., use e-mail or fax instead of face-to-face or phone interaction.
4. Develop good working relationships with all levels of organization.
5. I have grown more in realizing people's needs, being empathetic, knowing how people should be treated.
6. Learned a lot about people, about getting along w/ people, not just in teaching area.
7. Most people in government avoid confrontation.
8. Realization my boss was doing the best he could with what he had.
9. Seeing how some people can be harsh or biased toward some and not treat them equally.
10. Techniques to influence decision-makers.
11. What to expect w/boss & how to avoid it.
12. When someone feels defensive professionally, they will question your judgment.

Professional Knowledge

1. I have learned more about the community, more networking connections.
2. I see how certain things could be run and what work is involved.
3. More knowledge in managing a home for the elderly.
4. Substantive knowledge of law specialty.

APPENDIX F: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The composite list of recommendations provides an easy reference for the recommendations grounded in the study and the researchers' professional experience. Further research is recommended to better understand:

- Emotion and its interrelationships with learning and adult development.
- Confluence of the constructs--loss of autonomy, inability to communicate, and personalization along with the powerful emotional effects and potential negative effects for the individual and the organization within an organizational setting.
- Transformation of the emotions' power to facilitate learning from a transpersonal orientation.⁵⁹
- Reflection and its interrelationship with learning and adult development.
- Acquisition of tacit learning, especially at the intrapersonal level, and the implications for adult development.
- Facilitation of organizational culture's influence on workplace devaluation at the individual and organizational level.

⁵⁹ The participants acknowledged their emotions and used their energy to move through the process. This conclusion supports the research of Boucouvalas (1996). The inquiry of Boucouvalas (1996), framed and informed by a transpersonal orientation, explored the development and practice of latent human capacities to capture and transform the powerful energy of anger. She identified a research path to go beyond the "almost exclusive emphasis on negative aspects of anger and the interventions designed to control and suppress it" (p. 2).

APPENDIX G: QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE RESEARCH AND DIALOGUE

The composite list of questions provides an easy reference for questions to stimulate research and dialogue in both the scholarly and public environments. The questions are framed by the findings and conclusions of the study and the researchers' professional experience.

- What is the relationship of emotional intensity to new experiences?
- What are the best ways to inform and facilitate awareness of workplace devaluation?
- How can the frequency of this experience be estimated?
- What are appropriate emotional norms in the workplace?
- What are the ethical issues pertaining to workplace devaluation for the individual, for the immediate workgroup, the organization, the profession, the industry or society?
- What is the relationship of workplace devaluation to professional development?
- What is the relationship of workplace devaluation to adult development theories?
- How does the learning process delineated in this study apply to other experiences of workplace devaluation?
- How can this learning process be applied to other interactions that cause conflict?
- How long does the consequence phase last?
- What can be done to facilitate closure to the experience?
- How does age affect the duration of the learning process?
- How does age affect the options available to those who experience workplace devaluation?
- What are the patterns of constraints that limit choices?
- How can the knowledge on states of consciousness and other ways of knowing in the transpersonal orientation apply to life experiences?
- How can the process of reflection be further explicated?
- How can the process of tacit learning be further explicated?
- What are the short- and long-term implications of this process to the workplace?

- How can organizations critically examine the unstated cultural norms to clarify understanding of their portent to workplace devaluation?
- What are the ethical responsibilities of decision-makers when they become aware of these practices?
- What are the factors that influence decision-makers to continue the suppression of issues related to workplace devaluation?
- How can implicit learning be made explicit?

VITA

Clare Dvoranchik Klunk
2353 Glade Bank Way
Reston, VA 20191

Education

- B.S. Elementary Education, College of New Jersey, Trenton, New Jersey.
- M.S. Education Psychology and Research, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas.
- Ph.D. Adult Learning and Human Resource Development, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Career Summary

Thirty years experience as an educator in government organizations, public schools, community college teaching, and community programs to include:

- Member of advisory council for adult learning and human resource development program at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.
- Developer and facilitator of parent workshops.
- Chair of conference of math and science careers for fifth and sixth grade girls.
- Member of international school advisory board.
- Representative to the National Army Family Life Symposium.
- Manager of Federal Women's Program

Organizational Experience

- Internal consultant for human resource development issues (HRD).
- The design, evaluation, facilitation, and implementation of technical skills training, interpersonal skills programs, management and employee development programs, orientation programs, and diversity programs.
- Manager of training department, learning center and education testing center.
- Development and implementation of process for identification and review of organization training programs for recommendation of college credit by the American Council on Education.
- Education Counseling.
- Presenter at regional and national conferences.
- Recipient of organization quality improvement award for orientation program and numerous exceptional performance awards.

Public School Experience

- Development and implementation of curriculum for gifted and talented program.
- Instructor for teacher workshops on assessment of student learning.
- Development and implementation of program for children with learning disabilities that included child study team for identification, assessment, and program planning before these services were mandated by Federal law.