Moments, Meaning and Metaphor:
Self-Reflections of a
Psychic Life Coach & Social Practitioner

Rosamund Goodliffe
1 Moments, meaning and metaphor. (Private collection of R. Goodliffe)
Declaration

Name of Candidate: Rosamund Goodliffe

This thesis entitled:

Moments, Meaning and Metaphor: Self-Reflections of a Psychic Life Coach and Social Practitioner

Is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Unitec Institute of Technology degree of:

Master of Social Practice

CANDIDATES DECLARATION

I confirm that:

• This thesis project represents my own work;
• The contribution of supervisors and others to this work was consistent with the Unitec Regulations and Policies.

Candidate Signature:    Date: 15/2/18

Student number: 1417713
Abstract

This self-reflective study explores my own practice as a psychic life coach. The overarching research approach was reflective practice and insights were gained through reflective journaling. A template of questions was designed to trigger reflection and observation, to gain an understanding of the processes and actions of a psychic life coach’s practice. The data generated from the questions provided material for analysis from the perspective of before, during and after sessions with clients. The subsequent analysis of data led to discussion, review, and recommendations for further professional development. The observations gained in this process were for me, engaging, at times surprising, and deeply revealing.

This study has enabled me to appreciate the value of reflective practice as a methodological approach. I have undertaken an enquiry which has realized rich benefits for my profession and opened the way for other practitioners to engage this approach to apply it to their own practice. I achieved an understanding that reflective practice is a revealing and very worthwhile method of professional development which extends beyond that of crisis intervention or as a tool for staff management. It facilitates an enriching and valuable approach to professional growth which has afforded me a greater understanding of practice, identified areas of potential change and growth and charged me afresh with inspirational momentum.
Dedication

This is dedicated to my parents from whom I learned at first hand, the art of story. I want to thank my darling mother Eva Goodliffe (née Hart) for her encouragement, tireless belief in me, compassion, love and her ceaseless curiosity in life. I am grateful to my father Tony Goodliffe for his ingenuity, tenacity and high moral fibre. He inspired and guided me by his lived example to always ‘do the right thing’. Dad was known to be highly ethical and a true gentleman in his show-business profession. On the last day of his life, I thanked him for these qualities and announced that I had just received an A+ for the ethics assignment upon which he had advised me. As Dad gazed at the photo of his beautiful wife I recounted to him the poignant story of ‘Brigadoon’ in which Mum had sung on stage. It tells the story of a mortal man and an immortal woman who meet in a magical moment in time, where for one day every hundred years, an enchanted village appears in the Highlands of Scotland. They fall in love, but are destined to lose each other as the village disappears into the mists of time. After this event, the man is heartbroken and searches in vain for his love. Eventually he meets the village mayor who tells him ‘if you love someone enough, anything is possible.’ Suddenly, a bridge appears, the young man crosses over and disappears into the mists of Brigadoon and into the arms of his love.

Figure 1 Eva Goodliffe and Tony Goodliffe. (private collection of R. Goodliffe)
Acknowledgments

My children Melody and Robert, and my grandson Axel gave me the determination and reason to carry on through the grief of the loss of my father part way through my master’s studies, and to ultimately complete my thesis. Anthony Tresham gave me invaluable technical support with the production of this work. Dr Sydney Jones whose inspirational talk on ‘finding meaning in the later part of life’ gave me direction, context and purpose in many aspects of my personal and professional life. Working collaboratively with him to research the effectiveness of complementary therapies for older people gave me confidence, and the grounding, to believe that something exploratory and alternative could be researched within in a conventional framework, and gain reputable acceptance. Those experiences early in my career laid the foundations, which have led me, once again, into an innovative study to research something I am passionate about. I am grateful to Dr Helene Connor, my principle supervisor, whose help and guidance has been vital during the initiation, development and accomplishment of this research. My associate supervisor, David Kenkel who encouraged me to achieve a greater definition. Caroline Malthus and Catherine Mitchell from Te Puna Ako at Unitec whose encouragement and direction have helped me to keep going through the challenges of study. The closeness and connectedness of my friends and loved ones gives me the reassurance of their acceptance despite my work often being on the edge of the mainstream. My clients have contributed a richness of experience in often a collaborative way in the coming together under an umbrella of soulful shared experiences. The planned and the chance encounters throughout my life which have lead me on journeys exciting, harrowing, eventful, fulfilling, frustrating and the trajectory of these moments, and throughout the research, which have enabled revelations of insight and meaning. These, fused with the grit of determination have brought this thesis to a state of completion, and bookmarked a place to start the next chapter of my life’s narrative journey.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Declaration</th>
<th>iii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figures</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prologue</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER ONE: Introduction</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and rationale for this study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research aims</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research questions</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of thesis</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summary</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER TWO: Literature review</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective practice</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journaling</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual journaling</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Coaching</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphor and other language devices</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual images and self-expression in coaching</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The unconscious</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledging the unconscious</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art and the unconscious</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining access to the unconscious</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of spiritual psychic practice</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summary</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER THREE: An individual approach to coaching</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction 27
Neuro linguistic programming (NLP) 27
Counselling practice 29
Identifying the psychic intuitive process 29
My Practice 31
Values and ethics guiding my intuitive practice 37
Summary 40

CHAPTER FOUR: Research methodology and methods 41
Introduction 41
Methodology 41
  Narrative Inquiry 42
  Reflective practice 44
Methods and the research process 49
  Methods of data collection and analysis 49
  Journal keeping 53
  Data analysis methods 57
  Ethical issues 59
Summary 60

CHAPTER FIVE: Findings and discussion 61
Introduction 61
Methodological note on the reflective journal 61
A. ‘On action’ reflection: Retrospective self-observation after consultation 62
  1. What was I paying attention to before the session? 62
  2. What were my cognitive processes and how did I utilise them? 66
  3. How did I engage an empathetic process? 69
  4. Was I aware of/attend to, any unconscious processes? 70
  5. Was I aware of any specific language or images? 71
6. When I allowed my mind to engage in a process of free association with any
images and language, what observations and insights was I making? 73

B. ‘In action’ reflection: Self-observation, in the moment during consultation 76
7. How am I feeling? 76
8. What methods and modalities am I implementing? 81

C. ‘Critical reflection’: Learnings and development 88
9. Did I learn anything new? 88
10. What new knowledge could I explore to improve my practice? 92

Discussion of research questions 94
How does reflective practice journaling inform my practice? 94
How can reflective analysis before, during and after a consultation enhance a
coach’s practice? 94

Reflecting on the research method 96
Research Challenges 99
Summary 101

CHAPTER SIX: Conclusion 102
Introduction 102
How does reflective-practice journaling inform my practice? 102
How can reflective analysis before, during and after psychic life coaching
consultations enhance a coach’s practice? 103

Implications for practice 103
Limitations of study 104
Suggestions for further research 105
Final reflection 106

References 108

APPENDICES 117
Appendix 1: Worksheet of Self Reflective Questions 117
Appendix 2: Code of Ethics 117
Figures

Figure 1 Eva Goodliffe and Tony Goodliffe. (private collection of R. Goodliffe)...............................v
Figure 2 "Matapo, a blind tohunga" by Wilhelm Dittmer, 1907 (“Tohunga”, 2013)......................... 22
Figure 3 Phantoms (Gaskill, 2002, plate. XV)................................................................................ 25
Figure 4 Lifepath image (Leckridge, 2013)....................................................................................... 36
Figure 5 Boud’s model of reflection. (The Open University, 2016)................................................. 46
Figure 6 Gibbs Reflective Cycle (“The Open University”, 2016)....................................................... 47
Figure 7 Atkins and Murphy’s reflective model (“Southern Cross University”, 2016)..................... 47
Figure 8 Conscious competence learning model (Taylor, 2007)..................................................... 48
Figure 9 Thinking, intuiting and how (own Graphic)...................................................................... 66
Figure 10 Table of images and words .............................................................................................. 72
Figure 11 The Shaping of heritage. (own graphic)........................................................................... 74
Figure 12 Spider (own graphic)....................................................................................................... 75
Figure 13 Table of feelings. .............................................................................................................. 78
Figure 14 Clock face pie chart (own graphic).................................................................................. Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 15 Client and me (own graphic)............................................................................................ 86
Figure 16 Game of Cat and Mouse (own graphic).......................................................................... 87
Figure 17 Curiosity. (own graphic).................................................................................................. 96
Figure 18 Journals: top left: data analysis, top right: raw data, bottom right: in-consultation sketchbook, bottom left: study journal. (own graphic)......................................................... 97
Figure 19 Identifying my approach to reflective practice (own graphic)......................................... 98
Figure 20 Goodliffe’s model of learning through open reflection (own graphic.)......................... 99
Figure 21 Lightbulb moment (own graphic).................................................................................... 107
Prologue

Today I saw the first-fall of our autumn leaves floating and landing upon the bright green short-cropped lawn forming a beautiful, organic design. Simultaneously I remembered my grandmother’s lush green carpet of leaf design in her Devonshire cottage, which reminded me of the first poem I wrote as a child:

Autumn leaves, autumn leaves
floating through the air.
Autumn leaves, autumn leaves
Landing everywhere (Goodliffe, 1962)

Evocative of that poignant beauty of the once youthful leaves so nurturing to the tree, that now float down to form a rich carpet which will in turn nourish the tree from within. Like the leaves in this story fragment, story is observed in this thesis as therapeutic, powerful and revealing of the soul.

I started my thesis journey in autumn of 2015. Where will I emerge in the autumn of 2018 after this long, life-giving adventure of seeking out enrichment and new growth? What will have happened, what will be my process, will there be an epiphany, how will I grow and nurture my clients and how will my lived-journey inform society?

Words are waves of energy moving through your body and into the world around you. Ardagh, C. (personal communication, February 13, 2016)

As I sit gazing out of the window of the Takapuna Public Library I ponder the occurrences of the ebb and flow of my life. I remember how, when I moved my family into the house next door to the library sixteen years ago, I felt the exhilarating breeze of youthful optimism on my face as I surveyed the scope of our new home on the beach. My dream of being able to hear the waves crashing as I drifted off to sleep at night, and to be close to my children’s schools, had come true. My daughter was in her first year of intermediate school, and my son was nearing the end of primary school. I had a meaningful career as a counsellor running support groups for people with mental health issues, and I was seeing individual clients for psychic life coaching. I had just established a limited company so I could run my business in a more financially effective manner. I had just come out of a bad relationship. I had been through a tortuous encounter with cancer. It was great to be free and to be alive. I now had a blank canvas upon which to
write my life. As I sit and reflect upon these events, I am again reminded of how far I have come, and that I never thought I would be in this position now of being able to write an academic reflection of my life and career.

During the 1980’s I was in London where I developed a programme of provisioning nursing and retirement homes with activities and therapies for their elderly residents. I was stunned to see people in the living rooms sitting in chairs and staring into space, not talking to each other. I wondered how I would be able to stimulate conversation and enable friendships between the residents. An activity known as Reminiscing as Therapy had just been introduced to England which was aimed at encouraging conversation between people who were suffering from dementia. I was approached to initiate a reminiscing group within my activity programming in nursing homes.

As a New Zealander who had recently arrived in London, I knew very little about English social history. Through the running of reminiscing groups, I learned a great deal about the experiences of people born around the turn of the century who grew up and lived through the harrowing times of World War I and II. This formed the backdrop of the memories which I elicited from the elderly when I facilitated these groups. I soon learned that this process of looking back and reflecting on life provided not only therapeutic opportunities for the person who was reminiscing, but also furnished a myriad of creative activities and learning possibilities. I observed that the action of remembering could take a person’s preoccupation away from frailty or ill health. One of the early documents I produced from the reminiscing group, was a journal of the participants’ anecdotes entitled “Looking forward to looking back”. It was a compilation of their personal experiences, and marked the early beginnings of my interest in the value of enabling people to explore and reflect on their life experiences through the telling of story. It was also my first experience of documenting a narrative process.

This thesis celebrates narrative. My practice embraces life and encompasses lives. This is a story about stories about story-ing. This prologue introduces the key ideas of story and reflection. I now move from telling a story of my own journey to introducing the work of this thesis which is discussed in the following chapter.
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

Introduction and rationale for this study

The social practice sector embraces a wide range of ‘talking therapies’ including counselling and psychotherapy; psychic life coaching falls within this scope. People may choose to seek out the services of a psychic life coach to gain insight, and to help them ‘move on with their lives.’ The title of this thesis, “Moments, Meaning and Metaphor”, contains the literary device of alliteration. This heralds the exploration into languaging, reflection and expression not only in this study, but also in my consultations with clients, which are central to this research thesis. This study investigates some themes which are not commonly explored in the area of social practice, as indeed nor have these received attention from the perspective of a social practitioner/psychic life coach.

Psychic life coaches may engage an empathetic approach when working with a client in order to enter into the client’s world and see things from their viewpoint. This method may give rise to mental impressions which influence the coach’s process and their subsequent expression. Very little research has focused on the intellectual processes of the coach, and even fewer on their intuitive processes. Jung (1976) described intuition as “perception via the unconscious. Using sense perception only as a starting point to bring forth ideas, images, possibilities, ways out of a blocked situation, by a process that is mostly unconscious” (p. 72). Intuition is a perception of the unconscious which initiates ideas, pictures, potentials and reactions to challenging situations. The formula which I follow in my practice aligns with this. Research to reveal themes of symbolic images, sensory methods and psychophysiological factors could provide useful information about such processes (Alvarardo, 2010). I am curious to explore how a coach’s perception and mental processes (mental cognition) shape the content of communication and could therefore influence expression. I am interested to investigate this, utilising a framework of reflective practice, from my perspective as a professional psychic life coach.

2 A client may use this vernacular phrase to express their desire to live without any impediments which they may be currently experiencing.

3 The unconscious in the context of the unconscious mind, being the repository of various mental phenomena, which are not available to conscious deliberation.
The findings of this study could add new knowledge to my own practice, to that of other professionals, inform clients and add to the body of knowledge available to a wider audience. Other life coaches and a number of disciplines within academia such as anthropology, parapsychology, psychology and psychiatry could also be interested in the scope of my research, including the methods and findings. Some of the data I investigate has an illustrative focus which could provide new understandings for artists and creative therapists. This innovative nature of this study necessitated the adaptation and development of several research approaches and methods. These may be useful for others to employ for their own research and professional development.

I created my own approach to life coaching through a synthesis of Rogerian-based Person-Centred Counselling, Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), psychic skills and art. My fine arts studies have given me knowledge of the role which symbols and visual cues play in mental perceptions. I am aware of, and draw meaning from, these visual phenomena when I am engaged in my practice. I have been a support group facilitator for over thirty years, and my scope of subjects embraces a wide range of areas including creative therapies, mental health issues and life skills. Topics including depression, anxiety, dealing with stress, anger management, assertiveness skills, parenting alone, art therapy, returning to the workforce, ageing issues, and supportive social groups have all been areas of groupwork which I have facilitated. These groups follow a narrative process and my experiences of such have enabled me to develop a great sensitivity in the understanding of the ebb and flow of dialogue and the languaging of conversation.

Brennan, Drake and Gortz (2008) assert that life coaching is a co-created exchange between coach and client. I have found that to enable a flow of communication is a fundamental skill which I engage when I am facilitating groups or when I am in the role of counsellor/coach. This seems to help people to become more present with their ideas and issues. I utilise various (active and silent) listening techniques to facilitate these processes. One method I find particularly useful is a counselling technique known as reflective listening. This is a method which aids understanding and empathy whereby words and feelings are paraphrased and offered back to the speaker to gain clarity and deepen understanding. This process enables a deeper level of engagement and enriches

---

4 A field of study which includes psychic and paranormal phenomena such as extra sensory perception (ESP), mind/matter interaction, mediumship, precognition and near-death experiences.
communication. Gross (2012) explains that when a coach reflects conversation back to their client, new possibilities arise. Reflective listening is an element of active listening. Active listening embraces a range of methods including open body language, asking questions to gain clarity, expressing acknowledgement. These are employed by the counsellor to help build trust and rapport, and to achieve productive therapeutic outcomes. Silent listening is another component which the counsellor may employ to demonstrates they are paying attention to the client through the use of non-verbal sounds such as *uh-huh*, makes eye contact, and utilises open or matching and mirroring body language.

I have been working for over twenty years as Psychic Rose, a psychic life coach. I want to explore and gain new knowledge so that I can become reflective and more proficient in my practice. Castell (2013) recommends the use of self-reflection by practitioners to help them recognise, understand, focus on, and challenge any assumptions of their own schema of practice. Rather than just maintain a plateau with my learning, the discipline and rigour of academic research can provide the framework to establish further knowledge and attain greater competence as a practitioner. I have become so accustomed to my work it has become automatic to me and as such I am often unconscious of the methods and processes I utilise, and how well I am performing when I provide my coaching. Part of the procedure of a session is that I engage a deeply empathetic perspective with the client. In so doing I am often more conscious of my client than of myself. I utilise intuitive cognition to facilitate a flow of insights for the purpose of providing assistance for my clients. Intuitive processes within this context are, for me, a way of knowing without engaging conscious reasoning. I would like to become more cognizant of what is happening during these aspects of the consultation, so that I can gain a greater understanding, critique the processes and look for ways to develop my practice.

I am self-employed and have been a sole practitioner for the majority of my career. I do not operate within a team and as such there is no opportunity for collegiality, peer feedback or managerial appraisal. This situation of working in isolation, and over a long

---

5 Intuitive cognition is mental processing which functions without any apparent trigger, and is recognised via non-sequential sensory perceptions (Zander, Öllinger & Volz 2016)
time, often leads me to wonder *how am I doing, is there any way I can develop and enhance the quality of my work, what are the elements of my processes, and how can I become cognizant of my practice?* This research allows me the opportunity to develop self-feedback skills within the framework of a disciplined study. To such ends, keeping on track and focused has been vital to see this project come to fruition. Reflection is an ongoing cyclical process of the elements of action, reflection and application, while retaining a focused and centred approach. A risk of the reflective process is that it can render a person to become overly introspective. I utilised the structure of creative art interests and real-world concerns such as family activities to provide balance and grounding during the processes of reflection, research and analysis. The transformative potentials afforded by such insights require a transition of these processes from the abstract into concrete thinking in order to bring about changes in my practice.

**Research aims**

Reflect on my own practice before, during and after psychic life coaching consultations

Explore any insights which emerge from the language and illustrations recorded in a reflective journal.

**Research questions**

1. How does reflective-practice journaling inform my practice?

2. How can reflective analysis before, during and after psychic life coaching consultations enhance a coach’s practice?

**Structure of thesis**

This thesis documents a self-reflective journey of inquiry into the process and outcomes of an introspective discipline. I have often pondered over my work and wanted to gain definition of what it is exactly that I do, but as I am so involved in the procedure, and in a state of deep focus with the client, I am often unaware of my actions and methods. I have carried on without affording time to pause and reflect on the how, why, what, where and when of my activities. Frequently I have wished I could be a ‘fly-on-the-wall’, so I could observe and analyse my processes and methods and to give self-feedback. Similarly, I also desired to find a way identify, express and document the internal systems of my perceptions. I had always thought that it was not possible to be the
subject, and the do-er, and at the same time to be the object and the observer. Further
to this, to be the scribe and the artist and the analyst and the narrator/broadcaster of
the outcomes. However, through the process of this research, I have engaged a way to
carry out a study which at first, I thought was too abstract to not only undertake, but
also methodologically challenging in that I am only one person trying to do the job of
many.
Chapter one introduces the basis for the conception of the thesis. It provides a broad
overview of the study, its motives and objectives.
Chapter two explores thinking on unconscious processes, empathy and psychic life
coaching via exploration of seminal texts. A considerable amount of investigation was
done by early psychologists and artists over a hundred years ago to establish the concept
the unconscious mind. This is reflected in the focus of the literature discussed within
this chapter.
Chapter three describes the various approaches utilised within the context of coaching
utilised within the study.
Chapter four details the research methodology of reflective practice, methods
employed to collect the data and its subsequent analysis.
Chapter five focuses on the material amassed in the written and visual journals. This was
a very exploratory process because much of the prevailing examples available fell into
the categories of sketch books, or therapeutic visual diaries. The focus of much of the
existing written journaling is for educators and clinicians to use for critical incident
analysis and professional development. The purpose is clearly inherent in the process,
and this enabled me to replicate a similar thinking around my design. I used the
overarching research questions and aims to influence the creation of the questions
juxtaposed alongside the methods of reflection on action, reflecting in action and critical
reflection. This necessitated much thinking, and subsequent design for a purpose-built
rubric of questions and areas of concentration for writing and drawing. The very nature
of journal writing tends to be unstructured and therefore the risk of producing material
which was difficult to assess for evaluative purposes was significant. Again, a
customised evaluation system was developed in order to understand and make practical
use of the reflections. The analysis follows the sequence of questions in the same order
as shown in the rubric (attached in appendix).
Chapter six summarises this study and gives an overview of the research process and outcomes. Further research ideas, opportunities for professional development and explorations for new knowledge are identified.

Summary

There is little opportunity for feedback when working as a sole practitioner and therefore this may inhibit professional development. Through the lens of reflective practice, I am embarking on a journey to explore the opportunities which may arise through journaling, to enhance and inform my practice. While there is a plethora of material available regarding psychics, there is not much academic research into psychic life coaching. Through this study I intend to broaden the scope of knowledge.
CHAPTER TWO: Literature review

Introduction
This chapter gives an overview of the literature which is relevant to the key aspects of this research project. Reflective practice is introduced with reference to its role in professional development, and the various styles of journaling is investigated through pertinent literature. Key sources of knowledge which inform my coaching practice are discussed.

Reflective practice
Examination of self as a practitioner via reflective practice is defined by the characteristics of experiential learning in order to gain new insights and perceptions on a personal perspective (Johns, 2009). Reflective practice calls for the practitioner to become self-aware, to review and critically appraise their experiences and responses in a professional setting. The aim of this deliberate and purposive reflection (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 2005) is to achieve a greater depth of knowledge which can be applied to future practice (Finlay, 2015). Indeed, this is considered by some as an essential element of conscientious and professional practice (Fook, 2004). Critical reflection encourages a contemplation of other perspectives, with regard to the events we have been confronted by in our practice (Open University 2016). Furthermore, Fook (2004) asserts that critical reflection has a transformative function. Chick (2017) emphasises that it can draw attention to strengths and weaknesses and help in the identification of strategies and in so doing, increase self-knowledge.

Reflection is active thinking. Reflective practice utilises the concept of metacognition which is thinking about thinking and, according to Chick (2017), relates to the procedures used to organise, examine and evaluate one’s own professional development. Adaptations and adjustments may be developed as a result of this type of conscious and deliberate analysis which can ultimately lead to modification of practice. This may require the practitioner to challenge preconceived hegemony and result in the development of new understandings. McGregor and Cartwright (2010) assert that reflexivity can begin to develop and evolve from deep and discerning reflection, and that it can lead to further exploration and study.
Reflective practice has become a popular approach utilised by professionals (and students) within health care, education and social work. Helyer (2015) states that it can be valuable to communicate the outcome of any learnings gained from self-reflective practises with others. People who work in the aforementioned settings often work alone, independently, with minimal supervision or management, and therefore this developmental tool, with its ascribed reflective writing tool, aids in the communication of learnings. Bolton (2001) uses the analogy of “the hawk in your mind constantly circling over your head, watching and advising on your actions- while you are practising” (p. 15).

**Journaling**

“We write to taste life twice; in the moment and in retrospection” (Nin, 1939 as cited in Stuhlmann, 1977, p. 38).

The writing of memoirs, journaling, and diary keeping is a widely-used practice which has a great many applications and functions. The style of writing may have a report-like tone and be used for the keeping of records, be introspective, personal and have a therapeutic or cathartic purpose as in a journal, or they may be purely factual as in a ships log. Holly (1989) defines the distinction between diary and journal in that the journal is a place to come back to, reflect and make sense of the material. Furthermore, Klug (2002) remarks on the attributes of journaling as a place for self-focus, creative ideas, introspection and realisation, as an outlet for the emotions, to act as a friend and confidante, and provide a medium for the development of writing. Sometimes the original purpose of the journal can have outcomes which the author may not have originally intended by contributing other layers of understanding not only to the individual, but also to society. In the later part of the twentieth century, journaling became popular with social practitioners and educators as a means of gaining greater professional awareness and competence (Smith, 2013).

One of the earliest diarists is the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180 A. D.) who wrote a journal during his battle campaigns in the later part of his life. His journal entries are made as reflections of gratitude to his forbears who influenced his life and his personal musings on how stoic philosophy shaped his life. Originally written in Greek he entitled his work ‘To Myself’, as its purpose was to serve as a personal reflective aide-memoire to guide him in his political and personal life and to support his self-
improvement. His manuscript was eventually translated and published in 1558 and retitled “Meditations”. Suibhne (2009) suggests that the book is an early prototype for reflective practice journaling.

The reflective journal is an analytical, developmental tool used to record thoughts and to make meaning of the learning experience (Coughlan, 2007). Wood (2013) describes a professional narrative journal as one which is used to record thoughts, feelings, incidents or observations which occur at work, in a therapeutic environment or during consultations. Furthermore, Wood (2013) asserts that it only becomes a reflective journal through self-questioning and contemplative interaction with the material. Nin (1939) acknowledged that journal-keeping possesses a reflective quality in “its moment of stopping your life to become aware of it” (p. 117). Cooper and Stevens (2006) observe that professionals use journaling to create self-conversation about experiences and requirements of their practice and of their lives, and provides a method for further examination through reflection accordingly.

Carl Jung used a journal between 1913-1917 to record his experiences of explorations into his imagination. Although he entitled his manuscript “Liber Novus”, or New Book, it was later changed to “The Red Book” when it was finally published in 2009. The publishers, W. W. Norton heralded it as the most influential unpublished work in the history of psychology because Jung used it as an experiential self-experiment to process and reflect upon his confrontations with his creative imagination (Corbett, 2009). It is through this process that Jung developed many of his psychological concepts including archetypes, the collective unconscious and the transcendent function. Jung used a combination of language and illustration to record his explorations. His experience of his creative process during the exploratory process of the Red Book was multi-sensory and he describes it thus:

Sometimes it was as if I were hearing it with my ears, sometimes feeling it with my mouth, as if my tongue were formulating words; now and then I heard myself whispering aloud. Below the threshold of consciousness everything was seething with life. (Jung, 1957, as cited in Kittleson 1996, p. 121)

Jung exemplified the characteristics of the reflective journal in that he used journaling to think deeply, to question, and interact with the material, and the insights resulted in the creation of new ideas and learnings. Jones (2014) asserts that a reflective journal requires the writer to engage in critical analysis, to synthesise and personalise the data
and to recognise further professional developmental opportunities. The reflective journal is discussed in greater detail in the methods section of chapter four. The next section details information about using illustrations as a form of journaling.

**Visual journaling**

“If, as is often said, the eyes are the window to the soul, then sketchbooks, as visual journals, are the window to the soul of the artist.” (Marder, 2016, para. 2).

During sessions with clients, when I am in a state of deep empathy, I am aware that I ‘think in pictures’ and perceive mental images which (may) relate to them. During the consultation, I give verbal descriptions of these visions to facilitate the unwrapping of the insights. Capacchione (2001) asserts that it is a common trait for artists to think in pictures, and describes how the keeping of a visual journal can help with the unfolding of an intuitive process and how any creative insights which become evident may reveal a portent of things to come. Furthermore, Capacchione (2001) refers to this process as that of the “practical visionary” (p. 19). Therefore, in my understanding of this process, the inner psyche can reveal itself through a disciplined practise of drawing, reflection and analysis and with the practical application of any of these insights, can help in the creation of potential future eventualities.

Creating art and writing self-reflections in a book is what is understood as a visual journal (Jones, 2008). Visual journals differ from artists’ sketchbooks in that they are for a self-reflective process, whereas an art sketchbook is kept for the purpose of recording images (which are usually hand drawn). An artist may keep a workbook in which to amass visual and written ideas as a resource for further exploration and application for subsequent works, whereas a visual journal is for personal exploration (Batten, 1997). Artists may keep sketch books for the study and practice of drawing, or as in the case of Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) for a myriad of purposes. He made sketches and notes relating not only to his works of art, but also of anatomical dissections, botany, geology, engineering, and of his inventions. His sketchbooks have afforded us a glimpse into his life and into his mind.

---

6 The inner psyche refers to a stream of consciousness, a flow of thoughts and mental images.
The Swiss-German painter and theorist, Paul Klee (1879-1940) who used sketchbooks and diaries to convey his ideas on light, colour, form, design, and movement. It is from his Pedagogical Sketchbook that we now have the pithy observation, “a line on a walk” (Klee, 2000, p. 26). This sketchbook is a compilation of his notes and sketches which he used to teach his students while he was at the German art school, the Bauhaus from 1921-1931. His justification for its production was: “when I came to be a teacher, I had to account explicitly for what I had been used to doing unconsciously” (Klee, 2000, p. 10).

Michael Bell, who is a social activist and teacher of art journaling, asserts that a person can access their own inner language of imagery and through the process of creating art journals can develop verbal and visual expression (Bell, 2006). Wood (2013) describes the process of an art journal is to use creative, artistic methods to feel, rather than to think a pathway to understanding. Some social practitioners encourage clients to use visual journaling to helps them express deep aspects of the self which may be difficult to convey with words. (Batten, 1997).

Moon (2004) encourages the professional to use a journal for the recording of explanatory illustrations and sketches to help identify associative links with professional or personal events, and ideas or models of theory. Rainer (2004) advocates a playful approach to journaling in the form of doodling and sketching to free the imagination and enable purposeful self-communication.

In the next part of the literature review, I turn to examine some of the key research about life coaching.

Life Coaching

According to the Meriam-Webster dictionary, the first use of the term ‘life coach’ was in 1986 ("Life coach", 2015). It is a relatively new profession which seems to have evolved from psychological theorists of the early twentieth century. There is a plethora of academic and self-help publications on this subject with an array of methods to engage strategies with which to approach life’s challenges. People seek professional help with problems including depression, anxiety, grief, addictions and assistance to break through barriers to achieve goals (“American Psychological Association”, 2015). Life transitions are life-events deemed to have a major impact such as birth, marriage, divorce, death. Grisanti (2013) refers to these as turning points and lists those of
particular significance as; work, divorce, family challenges and death. Such changes can cause stress, and people who have trouble adapting to the impact of these events may seek professional assistance to help them adjust to circumstances beyond their control ("Adjusting to change/life transitions", 2015). Furthermore, it is at such times that people may seek to confront the profound questions of life and meaning (Goss, 2015). It is under these circumstances that people may seek guidance from a life coach. Rogers (1951) asserts that given the right conditions of a trustworthy relationship, a person may develop a strong internal frame of reference and ‘self-actualise’ to be the person they are meant to become, where they trust their own ‘locus of evaluation’ (trustworthy sensing) to form their own sense of self.

The purpose of the life coach is to “help people make decisions, set and reach goals, or deal with problems” (“Life Coach”, 2015). Life coaches may come from a background in psychotherapy or psychology and adapt these skills to life coaching (Skibbins, 2007). Many psychotherapists also refer to themselves as life coaches (Roberts, 2006). Counsellors and social workers also apply these approaches within their practice while there are also various organisations who provide training to become a qualified life coach.

My experiences as a professional in the field of facilitating reminiscing7 groups and as an archivist of oral histories has, through the sharing, collecting and examination of life stories, deepened my knowledge and understanding of many people’s lives. Bolton (2001) describes how “people perceive their lives as narrative” (p. 203) as a method of self-perception and as the vehicle of communicating their experiences to others. Narrative has significant bearing on the modus operandi of life coaching and is a recurrent modality within the various scopes of praxis of my career.

**Empathy**

Empathy, of course, is a special kind of understanding. It's not an understanding of the head where we just mentally understand what another person says. It's something far deeper and more precious than that. Empathic connection is an understanding of the heart in which we see the beauty in the other person, the divine energy in the other person, the life that's alive in them. (Rosenberg, 2005, pg. 80)

---

7 Bluck and Levine (1998) describe reminiscing as the act of recalling one’s past experiences. A reminiscing group facilitator encourages members to share their lived experiences with peers. This process stimulates long term memory recall, helps break down barriers to communication and encourages socialisation.
Empathy has a commonplace meaning of having an affinity and compassion, where one is able to feel with a person. Sympathy on the other hand is when there is a feeling for a person. This is an important conceptual difference which distinguishes empathy from sympathy. The analogy of standing in someone else’s shoes is often used as an example to illustrate its meaning. However, in psychotherapy empathy has a deeper meaning and significance. It may be employed in a deliberate manner so as to enter a clients’ perspective, to achieve an understanding which goes beyond that of an everyday experiencing of someone else’s world (Haugh & Merry 2006). The psychoanalyst Hans Kohut (1981) postulated that when empathy is combined with introspection it becomes an “informer of appropriate analytic action” (as cited in Siegel 1996, p. 191), and believed that it held the key to the way forward for future advances into the understandings of the inner-life. Kleinman (1988) entreated for doctors to utilise “an empathic witnessing of the existential experience of suffering” (p. 10) as a new model of doctor patient relationship. Furthermore, he asserted that employment of such would facilitate a greater understanding of symptoms, aid diagnosis and therefore rationalise any subsequent treatment.

Carl Rogers (1995) Person Centred Therapy is an approach to counselling where he identified that a warm and caring environment is conducive for the client to explore and develop within a therapeutic consultation. He identified empathy as one of the ‘core conditions of worth’, along with congruence and unconditional positive regard. Rogers stipulated that these conditions were a vital aspect of the person centred, client counsellor relationship. He asserted that in order for the counsellor to harness an empathetic stance they must assume the clients’ internal viewpoint to be able to comprehend their context and to convey this understanding with an attitude of “did I understand you correctly?” Rogers (1951) detailed that it was important to “sense the clients’ private world as if it were your own, but without ever losing the as if quality – this is empathy, and this seems essential to therapy” (p. 284).

Metaphor and other language devices

My psychic life coaching sessions are a narrative engagement, full of the richness of the spoken word. The act of narration is an art-form because as Benjamin (1988) states it is “artisanal mode of communication” (as cited in Abrahao, 2012, p. 39). Smith (2001)
asserts that it is useful for a practitioner to have a range of metaphors to draw upon which can be used to reframe situations and create fresh insight. I often convey information in a storied manner, and draw on various ideas from allegories, paradox, fables and metaphor. It is for this reason that I explore the devices of language in the following section.

Metaphor is a significant device of written and spoken narrative and is used for rhetorical effect, and to convey added expression. A metaphor is a figure of speech which suggests a comparison to an object or action to which it appears dissimilar. Geary (2012) estimates that on average, one metaphor is used for every ten to twenty-five spoken words. The language of metaphor is made up of a great many structures including emotive and sensory similes. Language would indeed be a barren wasteland were it not for the use of metaphor. This example demonstrates how metaphor can be employed to create interest, impact and to emphasise an important point. The words “barren wasteland” ‘meaning to be infertile, unproductive, unfruitful, inhospitable, are far more evocative than saying ‘language would have an emptiness were it not for metaphor’. However, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) argue that the function of metaphor goes beyond mere linguistic device. They assert that it is how humans perceive, process and make sense of the world, and that new metaphors are capable of creating new constructions and new actualities. “Metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language, but also thought and action. Our conceptual system, in terms of how we think and act, is fundamentally metaphoric by nature” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 3). Furthermore, they go on to explain that works of art are also metaphors and that they have an ability to create new gestalts of experience, spark imagination and therefore generate new realities.

Metaphor is often associated with poetic language and is a technique used in prose and poetry. Barfield (2010) explains how poetry is the delivery of metaphorical thinking, much of which lies just below the surface of customary consciousness. The Welsh poet and writer, Dylan Thomas, made masterful use of metaphor in his works. We see it crafted to a refined interplay of word and image in his play which he wrote for radio in 1954 entitled Under Milk Wood. The narrator of the story is a retired and blind sea captain who describes the sleeping harbour-side town, just before dawn:

To begin at the beginning: it is a spring, moonless night in the small town, starless and bible-black... You can hear the dew falling, and the hushed town
breathing…Only your eyes are unclosed to see the black and folded town fast, and slow, asleep. And you alone can hear the invisible starfall, the darkest-before-dawn minutely dewgrazed stir of the black, dab-filled sea where the Arethusa, the Curlew and the Skylark, Zanzibar, Rhiannon, the Rover, the Cormorant, and the Star of Wales tilt and ride…Time passes, listen, time passes. (Thomas, 1954).

A grammatical device similar to metaphor is allegory, which is an extended metaphor (or story) used in literature and the visual arts. Visual depiction of allegory employs the use of symbols to convey a story, such as to tell of a person’s life or beliefs.

Parables are stories used to convey a moral lesson such as in the parables of the Bible, or as in fables attributed to the ancient Greek fabulist, Aesop. A parable uses humans as the characters in stories, whereas a fable employs animals and inanimate objects to convey meaning. The story of the Hare and the Tortoise is one of the best known of Aesop’s fables and tells of a hare who challenges the slow-moving tortoise to a race. So sure of success is the hare, that he stops to sleep along the way, which gives the tortoise time to amble on and cross the finishing line before the hare awakens. The moral of the story being; ‘slow but sure wins the race’. Rather than just using direct and explicit language to convey the lesson, its meaning is inferred and the moral is left for the listener to comprehend and evaluate. These stylistic devices of language are purposeful in that they are employed to convey a meaning in an interesting, implicit manner which allows the listener to engage their imagination.

Usifu Jalloh, from Sierra Leone uses the tradition of storytelling as a medium to educate and bring about social change. He believes that the richness of the experience of sharing stories can bring a greater meaning than by speaking in a purely factual and informative manner. He believes that many ‘truths’ can be shared through the magic of storytelling. He tells a charming tale which demonstrates this in the form of an allegory:

There’s a story about truth. Truth was left on the edge of the village naked and cold. You see the villagers were afraid of truths nakedness. Parable was passing by and saw truth and took truth in, fed truth and clothed truth with his story and sent truth back out. When truth went out, truth didn’t even have to knock on the door, they invited truth in, and why? Because truth is now clothed in story. (Jalloh, 2015 [Video])

Joseph Campbell saw many depths and facets in myths and legends. Mythology, to Campbell (1972), is as acquiescent to life itself as to the preoccupations, passions and desires of each person, culture and epoch. Furthermore, Campbell (1972) asserted that
the individual is a “fraction and distortion of the total image” (p. 330), and as such one person is an expression of society, humanity and the cosmos. Jung, (as cited in Bailey & Gilbert, 2000, p. 98), identified that “ultimately, every individual life is at the same time the eternal life of the species”.

**Visual images and self-expression in coaching**

In 1901 Sigmund Freud published his monograph, *Psychopathology of everyday life* (Freud, 1901/2010). He hypothesized that by enabling patients to gain access to their unconscious minds, they would acquire a deeper self-understanding and thus initiate a beneficial and therapeutic process. He also theorized that thoughts or feelings may express as a minor mistake or unintended use of a word, phrase or action. This came to be known as a **Freudian slip or parapraxis** (Erard, 2007). Freud developed a psychoanalytic technique whereby the patient was encouraged to withhold intellectual self-censorship and freely disclose any thought. He determined that this would gain access to the unconscious mind. This came to be known as **free association** and became a significant clinical technique of psychoanalysis (Waldron-Skinner, 2014). In 1921, Hermann Rorschach combined his interests in art and psychoanalysis to develop a system of reading meanings into random ink images which came to be known as the Rorschach ink blot test (Rorschach, 2015). Psychologist, Carl Jung, put forward the concept that archetypes are an aspect of what he termed the **collective unconscious**. He explained that archetypes are archaic factors common to the human condition and are expressed in literature, art, religion, dreams, mythology, images and also exhibit as characteristics of behaviour (Jung, 1947). According to Jung such archetypal themes include life stages, character roles including the great mother, the wise old man and the hero. He put forward the notion of the shadow being the representation of the personal unconscious as an expression of the persons shadow, unknown to one self. Some of Jung’s archetypal themes maybe become apparent to me during a consultation, these maybe expressed as visual images, symbols, life stages or factors of the human condition.

---

8 This is also known colloquially as a ‘slip of the tongue’.
9 Jung conceptualised the collective unconscious to be an aspect of the unconscious mind. He postulated that it is a repository of archaic experiences of humans and as such, influences conscious behaviour and expression.
which are relevant to my client. The human condition is a subject which has been examined by various philosophers, anthropologists, biologists, sociologists and psychologists. Carnevale (2018) identifies the characteristics of the human condition as the concept and understandings of human nature, the complexity of relationship and of society. Issues and events of a negative or positive nature include birth, growth, conflict, aspiration, emotionality and mortality. These notions may be present as themes in literature and expressed in the visual arts. Furthermore, Carnevale (2018) asserts that in the midst of this, is story making. These stories become the legacy of successive generations.

In regard to my own work, these ideas may become apparent when I am engaged with a client, I have a sense that I adopt a state of deep empathy and become aware of these phenomena expressing within my unconscious processes as mental pictures, words and sayings in the form of archetypal themes, motifs and symbols. I communicate these creatively to demonstrate various meanings which clients may tell me are relevant to their issues. Carl Rogers (1951) asserted that empathy is a vital element in the creation of a successful therapeutic intervention. Within my own practice, I have noticed that there seems to be a coincidental relationship between themes, life conditions and transitions presented by the client and my cognitive awareness of certain symbols, metaphors and archetypes when I employ an empathetic perspective. Whitworth (2007) explains that within the consultation process, the role of the coach is to put their own judgements aside, provide balance, employ curiosity, listen effectively, enable the client to move forward and to utilise intuition. She emphasises the value of intuition in being able to synthesise more information and impressions than could ever be processed knowingly. I am interested to sift beneath the surface and shed light on some of these impressions through the mediums of language and imagery. Much research has centred around how language and symbolic images can reveal a greater understanding of the mental processes of a client, but very little has involved how such processes influence the cognition and expressions of a coach.

Carl Jung developed a technique called *Active Imagination*, to access the unconscious mind and record insights thus gained via illustrations and writing. It involved entering a meditative state to allow the mind to follow any images and experiences which became apparent. After a period of twenty or so minutes this would be followed by a period of
recording, by writing or sketching what had been seen and learned. Jung saw this was a way to be able to heal the past, but also to reveal a person’s destiny (Miller, 2004). Jung produced The Red Book which was an elaborately(self) illustrated journal of his journey using this technique. He claimed that it was by utilising this method that enabled him to develop his major theories of the collective unconscious, archetypes and individuation (integration of personality). More than just a psychoanalytical tool, it was also a way of personal development and discovery.

The years, of which I have spoken to you, when I pursued the inner images, were the most important time of my life. Everything else is to be derived from this. It began at that time, and the later details hardly matter anymore. My entire life consisted in elaborating what had burst forth from the unconscious and flooded me like an enigmatic stream and threatened to break me. That was the stuff and material for more than only one life. Everything later was merely the outer classification, the scientific elaboration, and the integration of life. But the numinous beginning, which contained everything, was then. (Jung, 1957, p. 39)

The unconscious

Acknowledging the unconscious

Samuel Taylor Coleridge philosophically mused on the hidden depths of the conscious. Coleridge (1798) wrote in his autobiographical manuscript, “Of a great 11metaphysician he looked at (into?) his own soul with a telescope. What seemed all irregular, he saw and shewed to be beautiful constellations: and he added to the consciousness hidden worlds within worlds” (as cited in Toor, 2004, p. 89). Although we learn, in this extract of the poem by the English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a reference to consciousness, he is describing the internal hidden worlds.

This concept, of deep contemplation of the conscious would be picked up a little over one hundred years later by the German psychiatrist Sigmund Freud. Although the notion of the unconscious mind was not a new, Freud was responsible for its acceptance as a major concept of psychoanalysis. In 1905 he developed the model of the iceberg as a way of explaining his theory of the mind being divided into three levels. At the tip of the iceberg he explained, was the conscious mind, where thoughts and perceptions are available and of which we are aware. In the next level, and submerged, is the preconscious mind where information is stored of which we are not conscious but are

11 The term metaphysician was used in Coleridge’s day to refer to a philosopher.
able to retrieve. In the next level is the unconscious mind where repressed memories, thoughts, feelings as well as dreams and intuitions reside. He believed that through the process of psychoanalysis, the unconscious (which he asserted was the major part of the mind) can be brought into conscious awareness and through this process the patient will experience a reduction in anxiety and relief of symptoms (McLeod, 2013). Many psychotherapeutic models still operate on the premise that the unconscious mind houses hidden fears and traumas and through the process of revealing these, it is possible to examine and choose other ways of dealing with them.

Jung identified that the unconscious mind as having two essential features. The first he referred to as the personal unconscious which contains forgotten memories, much like Freud’s notion of the preconscious. The other comprises the collective unconscious which contains inherent functions of the psyche and archetypal experiences. Jung (1960) (as cited in Bailey & Gilbert, 2000, p. 98) described the collective unconscious as “the whole spiritual heritage of mankind’s evolution, born anew in the brain structure of every individual”, and explain this to be a layer of the psyche which contains inherited elements.

The concept of the unconscious mind, by its very nature, provides a challenge to identify cognitively. The Merriam-Webster dictionary refers to the unconscious as aspects of mental faculty which cannot ordinarily be accessed consciously (“Unconscious,” 2018). Furthermore, the dictionary describes the conscious as marked by deliberate mental processing, and as a state of wakeful awareness (“Conscious,” 2018). Since Freud’s description of the model of the unconscious, the idea has gone through many changes and modifications (Curtis, 2015). Today it is an expression which is in everyday use and there are many interpretations of its meaning.

**Art and the unconscious**

“Art does not reproduce the visible, it makes things visible” (Klee, 2000, p. 54).

Andreasen (2011) defines creativity as an inventive capacity with which to formulate new ideas and concepts, and the ability to create objects, and art. Andreasen (2011) asserts that the creative ability is conceivability the most significant attribute of the human brain, but despite this very little is known of its neural processes. Research
reveals that it is unconscious processes which give rise to creative perceptions (Andreasen 2011).

In western art, explorations into the imagery of the unconscious emerges in art movements such as abstract expressionism and surrealism. Among the many artists whose work spans the era known as modernism, Salvador Dali, Rene Magritte, (both Surrealists) Paul Klee, Marc Chagall and Wassily Kandinsky, were particularly noted as those who delved into the subject matter, symbolism and imagery of exploring the unconscious. For centuries, artists from the European tradition were charged with the responsibility to make visual, pictorial records of events, nature and people. In the early 1900’s, artists started to let go of depicting figurative representations and began to explore the realms of abstract images.

The Russian abstract artist Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) believed that a non-religious, age of spirit was coming. He was convinced that the most appropriate artistic style for this epoch would be totally non-figurative, intellectual, metaphysical and philosophical (Hughes, 1991). Kandinsky wrote a ground-breaking book, The Spiritual in Art, where he postulated that art would become introspective and that it contained the seed of the future (Kandinsky & Sadleir, 1977). He suggested that the artist would no longer pay attention to the emotions of such as grief, joy or fear but would venture forth to explore subtle emotions as yet unnamed (Kandinsky & Sadleir, 1977). Kandinsky is widely credited with being the first western/non-indigenous artist to paint a totally abstract work (Hughes, 1991), (however there is another artist whose abstract work predates Kandinsky). He was not only an artist, but also an academic, teacher and prolific writer. In his philosophy of his art he wrote:

The work of art mirrors itself upon the surface of its consciousness. However, its image extends beyond, to vanish from the surface without a trace when the sensation has subsided. A certain transparent, but definite glass like partition, abolishing direct contact from within, seems to exist here as well. Here too exists the possibility of entering art’s message, to participate actively, and to experience its pulsating-life with all one’s senses. (Kandinsky, 1991, p. 17)

Even in the written word, Kandinsky utilised metaphorical imagery so that it became a veritable feast for the senses. His description of art and its message is not explicit, but implicit and tied into the experience of art. Here he extends a clear invitation to participate with the senses, rather than to stand back and observe.
While Wassily Kandinsky is widely credited as being the first Westerner to pioneer abstract art, we are now aware of the work produced by the Swedish female artist, Hilma af Klint whose first abstract artwork of 1906 predates that of Kandinsky’s by five years (Voss, 2013). Klint entered a deep meditative state to paint her abstract and symbolic works. Both the artists embraced Theosophy, and their paintings were expressive of its spiritualist, esoteric philosophy.

Art as a therapeutic intervention arose in the mid 1950’s. It is now established and recognised as a psychoanalytically orientated therapeutic activity, which is held in groups or in individual coaching sessions. There are various training centres offering short courses or accredited tertiary qualifications. The method and purpose of art therapy is to utilise creative activities such as drawing, painting and sculpture to allow expression of an inner world. Art can obtain and give expression to aspects of the psyche which may not be conscious (Dean, 2016). Art therapy communicates directly to the unconscious (Alexander, 2015).

**Gaining access to the unconscious**

Dreamwalker, a medicine man, was walking across the plains to visit the Arapaho Nation. He carried with him his pipe. The feather tied into his long black hair pointed to the ground, marking him as a man of peace. Over the rise of the hill, Dreamwalker saw a herd of wild mustangs running toward him. Black stallion approached him and asked him if he was seeking an answer on his journey. Black stallion said “I am from the Void where Answer lives. Ride on my back and know the power of entering the darkness and finding the light.” (Carson & Sams, 1988, p. 177)

The unconscious mind may be accessed through not just slips of the tongue or word association, but also via dream analysis, hypnosis and meditation. The practice of meditation involves a quietening of the mind to enter a state of such deep relaxation that many claim to be able to gain access to the unconscious mind. Wood (2013) advocates this view and describes the technique as sitting quietly, letting go of any tension in the body, ensuring the breath is gentle and rhythmic, quietening the mind and putting aside any thoughts as they arise. Furthermore, Wood (2013) points out that in this state a person can utilise intuition, envision images and inspirations. Jung developed a system of accessing the unconscious mind via a process he termed active imagination. "For the production of those contents of the unconscious which lie, as it were, immediately below the threshold of consciousness and, when intensified, are
the most likely to erupt spontaneously into the conscious mind” (Jung (1957/1960), as cited in Miller, 2004, p. 13). The “Jungian Centre for Spiritual Sciences” (2016) identify that the synergistic collaboration of the conscious and the unconscious facilitates what Jung refers to as the transcendent function.

**History of spiritual psychic practice**

The role of the psychic has been part of many cultures throughout history. It is interesting that even disparate societies where there have been no cross-cultural influences, such as the Aborigines of Australia and native Americans, have a shaman or witch doctor who act as prophets or healers. These visionaries are known by many different names and include: fortune teller within gypsy societies; the druid priests of Celtic Britain and Ireland during the Iron Age; oracles who were priestesses of ancient Greece; witchdoctors who were healers within tribes of Africa; Caribbean islands, Indonesia, America and Polynesia; Shaman who were healers and mediums and communicated with spirits and existed in cultures around Siberia, Asia, Europe Oceania; Witches of Europe, Oceania, Asia, Spain, America, India; and the Tohunga Matakite of New Zealand Maori. You can look into most cultures and eras to uncover a belief in some form of mysticism and spirituality.

![Figure 2](image.png) "Matapo, a blind tohunga" by Wilhelm Dittmer, 1907 (“Tohunga”, 2013).
In colonial America in the 1840’s the Fox sisters claimed that they could have conversations with the spirit of the previous occupant of their family home via a system of tapping. The word spread about these communications and lead to the establishment of ‘Spiritualism’ in the 1850’s (Fuller, 2001). It was a movement supported by Radical Quakers and led by the ordinary person. It became the first of the ‘New Age’ belief systems where people, (mainly women) could practice without any formal training. It was at a time when women did not frequently hold office in mainstream religion. News spread quickly and was widely published throughout the world. Technology had its part to play and with the recent development of photography people could have spirit photographs taken. The public could attend lectures on Spiritualism and on social and religious topics (including women’s rights and the abolition of slavery), take part in séances which were meetings where ghosts materialised, voices spoke from floating trumpets, messages ‘wrote themselves’ on slates, and witness physical mediumship. Spiritualism became very popular; it could entertain, give comfort to the grieving, and provided numerous opportunities for scientific investigation into phenomena such as levitation (lifting and floating), telepathy (mind-to-mind communication), automatic writing (spirit writing through a person) and physical mediumship (when the medium’s body produced a strange filmy substance called ectoplasm). Scientists were better equipped to substantiate their explanations for the universe so Spiritualist phenomena gave more for science to investigate. In 1888 the Fox sisters declared that it had all been a deception, but subsequent to this one of them stated that the confession itself was a deception and continued to promote Spiritualism.

In 1882 the Society of Psychical Research was founded in London to examine phenomena of a paranormal nature using meticulous scientific methods (BBC, 2013). It was led by highly respected academics, and is still functioning today. Similar organisations were established in USA and other parts of the world. Early in the 1930’s in Britain, there were around two hundred and fifty thousand people who described themselves as practising Spiritualists, and some two thousand Spiritualist groups including those who offered platform mediumship’ (someone giving messages from spirit to an audience) and ‘development circles’ (to train people become mediums) (Sutcliffe, 2003). “In 1898 the Roman Catholic Church condemned Spiritualism, and at

---

12 The New Age movement embraces a wide range of spiritual and religious beliefs and practices.
the 1920 Lambeth Conference the Anglican Communion acknowledged that it encouraged people to find a spiritual meaning and purpose in human life” (Sutcliffe, 2003, p. 35). It was largely a proletarian religious movement whereby the working class had a sense of its own authority wanted to bring about change the world. Early Spiritualism was a significant social movement of the time (BBC, 2013).

Many interesting personalities supported and helped to establish the Spiritualist movement including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (author of the Sherlock Holmes detective series), Sir Oliver Lodge (physicist involved with wireless telegraphy) and Hannen Swaffer (journalist), Charles Dickens (author), Marie and Pierre Curie (medical researchers), Abraham Lincoln (President of USA).

The account of the medium Helen Duncan highlights the importance that this type of work carries great responsibility and must be handled with integrity and care. Duncan’s husband was unable to work due to chronic injuries he sustained during active service in WWI. As a mother of six, she had been supporting her family as a practicing medium since the 1920’s. In November 1941, she held a demonstration of her mediumship in Portsmouth at which she indicated knowledge that the Royal Navy battleship HMS Barham had been sunk. This was classified information at the time and news travelled fast about Duncan’s disclosure. These were sensitive times. It was WWII and she posed a security threat (Gaskill, 2002). According to Gaskill (2002) from 1940 security had been tightened. The Home Office, MI5, MI6, police, the Admiralty, telephones, radio, newspapers were all monitored and regular reports were made” (p. 185). In 1944 she was arrested at a demonstration of mediumship, tried at the Old Bailey, found guilty under the Witchcraft Act of 1735 and sent to Holloway Prison. The Admiralty had wanted her taken out of the public arena, and some suspect it was because they felt that her spirit messages were a threat to the security of the top-secret plans for the D-Day Landings. During her time in prison she had a premonition that the prison was going to be bombed. She managed to convince the warders to move prisoners from the wing which she claimed would score a direct hit. She was right, and her insight saved many lives (Gaskill, 2002). During her demonstrations of mediumship, she ‘made spirits appear’ by using muslin cloth attached to papier mache heads which she claimed were
appearances of her spirit guides. The appearance of these was very phoney, but none the
less she had a large following of audiences who paid to see her.
There was a propaganda campaign at the time which encouraged the public to be careful
with what they revealed about the war effort, and to whom. One of the slogans was
‘loose lips sink ships’ and another was ‘careless talk costs lives’. Her messages would
have been much less subject to controversy had she taken care to not disclose
information of a sensitive nature to her audiences. Nonetheless, Winston Churchill, who
was Prime Minister at the time, demanded that the Home Secretary provide him with a
report explaining why a modern court should waste time on a trial under the Witchcraft
Act of 1735 (Gaskill, 2002). Regardless of his protestations the proceedings went ahead
and she was sentenced to nine months in prison. The Witchcraft Act was finally repealed
in England as recently as April 2008 (BBC, 2013).
Another interesting example which illustrates issues of power and control was that of
Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986) who was mentored by the Annie Besant. She was a
prominent British socialist, women’s rights activist, writer and orator and supporter of
Irish and Indian self-rule, leader of the Theosophical Society (a philosophical group
which has links with Spiritualism) to become the leader of the ‘Order of the Star in the
East’. Born into a life of poverty at the age of fourteen Krishnamurti was picked out by
the Theosophical movement to lead the world into a new philosophical paradigm
(“Krishnamurti Foundations”, 2013). Under the guardianship of Besant, he was educated and cared for and accepted his role till 1929 when he broke away announcing;

I maintain that truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect. Truth, being limitless, unconditioned, unapproachable by any path whatsoever, cannot be organised; nor should any organization be formed to lead or coerce people along a particular path. ... I want to do a certain thing in the world and I am going to do it with unwavering concentration. I am concerning myself with only one essential thing: to set man free. I desire to free him from all cages, from all fears, and not to found religions, new sects, nor to establish new theories and new philosophies. (Sirian Free Man, 2011)

He spent his life writing and lecturing about these essential points. Indeed, he was expressing what he saw as a developmental pathway forward for humankind, to be free of religious dogma and to find one’s own spirituality. It has opened the way to a huge upsurge of belief systems.

Today, many people are actively engaged in the pursuit of their own philosophies, independent of the framework of religion. “Something new is emerging and we can see evidence of it all over the world. It is a new philosophy, a new spirituality. It has no organization and makes no claims to exclusive truth. At the moment, it has little status alongside the other religions and faith communities that claim public and official space, but it may well become the major form of spirituality on the globe” (Bloom, 2004, p.3). Bloom (2004) refers to this new spirituality and philosophy as “Holism” and explains how this is a “relational spirituality, with friends and strangers, with God and nature with our own bodies and core, with diversity and novelty. Interdependence and connection are both precisely to do with relationship” (p. 231).

Summary

A range of literature was discussed relating to life coaching and various aspects of engaging with clients and the languaging associated with verbal communication. Methods of perception and visual expression were investigated along with exploratory enquiry into locating and understanding the notion of the unconscious mind. Reflective practice was identified and so too were various approaches to diary and journal keeping.
CHAPTER THREE: An individual approach to coaching

Introduction
This chapter describes aspects of the methods which contribute to my personalised approach to coaching clients. Information on the background of these approaches and explanations as to how and why I draw upon these modalities to provide my professional practice. A discussion of my values and ethical perspectives in my coaching practice forms the concluding part of this chapter.

Neuro linguistic programming (NLP)
NLP has developed significantly since its inception by Richard Bandler and John Grindler in the 1970’s (Dilts, 2016). Maupoint (2009) asserts that NLP is a blend of various approaches contained within personal development, psychotherapy, and hypnotherapy and employs various techniques to bring about attitudinal and behavioural changes. Furthermore, she affirms that some individuals involved in education, life coaching, business, health, therapy and parenting skills trainers may utilise NLP strategies. Tad James went on to develop NLP and created Time Line Therapy. This therapeutic approach is where a client enters a hypnotic state to imagine their life as a line in which it is suggested they are able to create changes in order to bring about a desired future, or to address emotional issues (James, 2016). Additionally, he theorised that all learning is unconscious and therefore it is in this state where changes may take place.

I have integrated some elements of Time Line Therapy into my own practice, in that I utilize the concept of life having a direction and a flow. I become sensitive to the clients’ lifepath and view the images which I perceive contained therein. I find that I am able to visualise the direction and movement quite clearly, and to understand the unique motifs of their life. I seem to be able to make strong and even empathetic connections with these motifs by utilising my five senses in a state of keen sensitivity. Certain aspects of NLP give me a conscious awareness that I need to be attentive to verbal and non-verbal aspects of a session. However, I am also conscious that NLP may make sweeping assertions about what it can do, and that there have been claims that it is a pseudoscience which has not been properly researched. I practice caution and only employ aspects of NLP which I find to be valid and ethical. These include paying attention to tone of voice, pace of speech (matching my tone and tempo to that of my clients to
create rapport), using story telling as a device (to illustrate paradoxical similes to help a client see things from a different perspective), the concept of external events being processed through a series of internal filters (such as values, beliefs, memories, attitudes which distort, delete and generalize) which create an external physiology and behaviour, and my adaptation of the Time line structure.

Caution needs to be exercised if therapies claim that a person has the ability to self-heal by following a particular process. Some protagonists of certain approaches such as Brandon Bayes’, who claims she was able to heal herself of a malignant tumour by going on an exploratory therapeutic encounter with herself, which she calls ‘The Journey’. Louise Hay claimed she cured herself of ovarian cancer as a result of acknowledging that it had been caused by being assaulted as a child. She claimed that by undergoing a regime of self-forgiveness, affirmations, counselling, by paying attention to her nutrition and refusing conventional treatments she went into remission. Both these women have written books which have become best sellers. Louise Hay has gone on to establish a publishing house and an industry based on her beliefs.

I believe there is a danger in the assertion that by applying these strategies it is easy to cure these terrible diseases. It may lead people to neglect medical treatments in favour of the recommendations and therapies extolled by these people. These people, and the strategies they recommend, have a large following. I think that it is important to exercise a healthy scepticism, not to accept what may be presented on the surface, and to scrutinise before accepting something blindly. Similarly, it is dangerous to turn a patient, or a client, into a victim by alluding that they are responsible for any ill health they may suffer because of a lack of self-care and that they can heal themselves by practicing positive affirmations and adopting an attitude of self-love. A therapist told me when I was diagnosed with cancer that it was a result of a lack of self-care. This made me feel terribly guilty and foolish. The incident resulted in a profound personal experience and now I use caution when discussing health issues. I am careful to refer clients to medical professionals to seek medical treatment from them for health issues.
Counselling practice

It seems to me, at bottom, each person is asking, “Who am I really? How can I get in touch with this real self, underlying all my surface behaviour? How can I become myself?” (Rogers, Stevens, Gendlin, Shlien, & Van Dusen, 1967, p108)

I remember distinctly the exercise early on in my person-centred counselling studies which triggered my decision to develop a synthesis of deep engagement, beyond that of empathy, could enhance the counselling modality which I was studying. We had been learning techniques which would enable an empathic connection with the client, and were instructed to observe another student in the room who was out of our field of vision and without looking at them, describe them, the house in which they lived and their hobbies. I found I was able to do this easily. My descriptions of what the person was wearing, the colour scheme, decor and layout of their home, their interests as reflected in their possessions I observed, I was informed were remarkably precise. The subsequent exercise was to look into the eyes of another student and say what they were thinking. The feedback I received was that I was uncannily accurate. Subsequent to this my classmates started to come to me for insights about their life and asked me to use these processes to help with their problems. At that time, I was also undertaking studies to develop my intuition and psychic awareness. I found that when I was engaged in counselling sessions with people, intuitive skills afforded me a greater cognizance of them. My counselling engagement with people was more attuned and my sensory awareness of people was deepened. These skills seemed to be a very helpful adjunct to the person centred counselling skills I was learning. This gave me food for thought; how would it be if I were to incorporate these approaches of deep engagement, and offer a unique form of life coaching for clients?

Identifying the psychic intuitive process

Neuroscientists argue that the whole, external world is experienced from within the brain (Karunamuni, 2015). Similarly, psychic phenomena is experienced from within the brain. These thoughts and perceptions flow through as a ‘stream of consciousness’ (a term coined by the early North American psychologist William James). James (1890) (as cited in Laughlin, 1997, p. 20) gives a colourful description of his understanding of how seemingly random observations can trigger intuitive understandings:

If pure thought run all our trains, why should she run so fast and some so slow, some through dull flats and some through gorgeous scenery, some to mountain-
heights and jewelled mines, others through dismal swamps and darkness? - and some run off the track altogether, and into the wilderness of lunacy? Why do we spend years straining after a certain scientific or practical problem, but all in vain - thought refusing to evolve the situation we desire? And why, some day, walking down the street with our attention miles away from the quest, does the answer saunter into our minds as carelessly as if it had never been called for - suggested, possibly, by the flowers on the bonnet of the lady in front of us, or possibly by nothing we can discover? If reason can give us relief then, why did she not do so earlier? James (1890 as cited in Laughlin, 1997, p. 20)

While the occurrence of intuitive perceptions may be unpredictable, the psychic practitioner needs to process intuition in a controlled and deliberate way in order to provide meaning for the client. Hassett (2003) asserts that the practitioner’s aim is to uncover that which is unknown to the client via interpretation of sensory perceptions and symbols, through the bringing together of conscious and unconsicous processes. Hassett (2003) refers to practitioners as readers, who may use a variety of methods of divination, including clairvoyance and clairaudience. Clairvoyance and clairaudience refer to the visual and auditory sensing of a spiritual medium, and clairsentience is the term used to describe sensing through taste, smell and touch. There are other mental processes which may be employed by a psychic, such as telepathy and premonitions (also known as precognition).

Author and biologist, Dr Rupert Sheldrake, has undertaken investigations into the incidence of telepathy and claims to have found a great deal of supportive evidence for its existence (Sheldrake, 2013). On his website he invites people to email him to report incidents of; telepathy and animal to human ESP. He also invites people to participate online in experiments entitled; “Can you tell who is calling? Can you tell when someone is hearing the same music as you? Can you tell when you are being stared at?” (Sheldrake, 2013, para. 3). He continues to develop the scope of his research field and travels widely to lecture on these subjects.

Often people report feelings of knowing that something is going to happen or premonitions, before disasters. I had a personal experience of this at the age of seventeen when I was walking through the city centre of Christchurch, I had a very strong feeling of being ‘stuck’ in Cathedral Square. I felt terrified because I had a sense that I couldn’t find the way out. Years later I realised that it was a premonition because

---

13 Divination is the practice of foreseeing or foretelling future events by utilising unusual insight or intuitive perception to discover hidden knowledge through interpretation of signs and omens (“Divination”, 2017).
that is exactly the scene of the terrible earthquake of 2011 where many people lost their lives. Reports of this nature have been prevalent in other incidents of disasters. The mudslide in the village of Aberfan in Wales in 1966 was a tragedy where 128 children and 16 adults lost their lives when tons of slurry slid down a mountain and buried them inside their school. Following this there were so many reports of people having premonitions of the event, that London psychiatrist, Dr J. C. Barker conducted a survey and found that much of the information could be validated. In response to this he set up The British Premonitions Bureau in order to carry out further investigations into this phenomenon. The bureau was established to collect information, to carry out further investigations and to try and take action on any reported premonitions so as to avoid impending disasters. He found that the reports were of a subjective nature, often scant, or that they would be reported too close to the incidents to do anything to prevent their occurrence or to take action, so it was eventually disbanded. However, Barker had found that there was a body of accurate reporting by the public, on details of future events. The following year a similar strategy, The Central Premonition Agency, was established in North America to report and scientifically investigate reported incidents of premonitions in order to avoid future disasters (“Central Premonitions Registry,” 2001).

Sensing future events may be a natural ability which people use from time to time, but the psychic practitioner uses these skills in a controlled and deliberate way to access information to benefit the client. The role of the psychic practitioner is becoming more accepted as a credible way of helping people with problems, to make decisions and to give assistance with certain factors of life.

**My Practice**

As a life-long practitioner of meditation, I am aware of the benefits provided by going into a deep state of unconscious awareness. It affords me a deep calmness and often presents an insight into aspects of life which may be otherwise hidden. Longe (2018) discusses how meditation can transport a person into a deeply relaxed state while restoring a sense of equanimity and harmony while instilling self-acceptance, acceptance of others, and empathy. I access a state similar to a very light meditative awareness when commencing a consultation with a client. This helps me to embrace an intuitive process, while becoming attuned to the person and enabling an engagement
of empathy. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines intuition as the faculty of obtaining cognition or knowledge without evident rational thought (“Intuition”, 2016). A person who is using psychic skills does this by actively utilising their intuition. The term psychic refers to someone who claims to have “extraordinary or mysterious sensitivity, perception or understanding” (“Psychic”, 2016). This is the term by which many of my clients would understand my processes, however the strategies and skills I employ in my consultations encompass a far wider spectrum than identified by this definition alone. I discuss these further in the findings section.

A number of clients seek out my services because they are in a state of crisis. This may be due to a life event such as relationship difficulties, financial problems or the loss of a loved one. Many people feel that they want their consultation to give them a spiritual experience. “I came to you because I want something spiritual, rather than just counselling.” (Client 1, personal communication, April 6, 2016).

“An increasing number of spiritually-minded people are currently busy with their own lived enquiry, and are seeking an open and constructive dialogue about it. I call this social phenomenon, with which I closely identify, a newly emerging and participatory spiritual culture” (Heron, 2006, p. 1).

Spirituality is something which is hard to ascribe a concise definition which is applicable to all cultures and epistemological viewpoints. I believe that the moral aspect of a person comes from a different place than both the soul and the spirit. I believe that the soul strives for experiences and enlightenment and this process may assist a person to define a moral code. My experiences in my practice has led me to believe that the spirit is connected to the metaphysical plane (a reality beyond what is perceptible to the senses) and floats in and out of conscious and unconscious processes. Joseph (1987) (as cited in Canda and Furman, 2010, p. 65) defines spirituality as “the underlying dimension of consciousness which strives for meaning, union with the universe, and with all things; it extends to the experience of the transcendent or a power beyond us.” This, to me, is closer to my own understanding, although I feel that the soul is that aspect of a person striving for meaning because it is more closely related to the earthly experience and the spirit to the metaphysical aspect of a person’s life purpose. I believe that the spirit charges the soul the inspiration to fulfil life’s purpose. Canda and Furman (2010) examined a study done by Canda in 1986 on the diverse definitions of spirituality where the concept was summarised thus, “I conceptualize spirituality as the gestalt of the total
process of a human life and development, encompassing biological, mental, social, and spiritual aspects. It is not reducible to any of these components; rather, it is the wholeness of what it is to be human” (p. 66). Faver (as cited in Canda & Furman, 2010) refers to “the universal aspect of human beings, by which we orientate ourselves and the universe” (p.65). Joseph (as cited in Canda & Furman, 2010) defines spirituality as “the underlying dimension of consciousness which strives for meaning, union with the universe, and with all things it extends to the experience of the transcendent or a power beyond us” (p. 65). These authors all have their own definitions of spirituality as do I, leaving one to believe that spirituality has many different meanings and different interpretations for different people, (Cash, McSherry & Ross, 2004).

A common reason why people seek my services is to help them with relationship problems. My view is that our human social structure occurs in a framework of relationship, which can be compelling, perplexing, rewarding and challenging. It may be full of crisis, mediocrity or excitement, and offer the promise of fulfilment on the journey of life. Often, I see clients who are struggling to find balance with their relationships. This may cause them to suffer from low self-esteem. Some clients have reported to me that the sense of spiritual contact and reassurance provided during their session with me has given them a profound healing experience.

When I was a child I had many experiences of a paranormal nature, but accepted them as normal. As I grew up I realised I had many questions about these, but I could not find anyone who could offer any insight into what these were about. This sparked in me the desire to travel to somewhere where I could learn about these phenomena. In London, I found some answers when I attended Spiritualist Church services. I was having psychic experiences like others who attended. The service was like that of a normal church service, someone would play a church organ and the congregation would sing hymns and say prayers. Once the formalities were over, the guest speaker would give a demonstration of mediumship. There were lots of “yes, dear” and “bless you” spoken in response by audience members who received a message. To me it had little meaning and was repetitive, until I finally was given a message from a medium who told me “I see six blue building blocks, you are very psychic and should join a development group”. Something clicked in me as I remembered when I turned six, I started to question what

14 The act of communicating messages between the spirits of the dead and the living.
all these things were that were happening to me, up until that age I just accepted them as part of life. I went on to join their development circle and learned a great deal, but after a few years, I felt there was nothing more they could offer me. The Spiritualist Church merely aims to prove the existence of life after death, so I looked further afield and found the College of Psychic Studies, who offered a large range of courses by many different teachers. The college had been founded in 1884 by Reverend Stainton Moses who was an Anglican Priest and a Spiritualist Medium. I enrolled and studied at their college which was based in West Malvern, a beautiful village in Worcestershire. Here I learned practical skills of self-protection, healing and how to connect with a deeper and more meaningful essence than I had previously experienced. It was enquiry-based learning and employed scientific principles where concepts were analysed, not just accepted. I furthered this through counselling studies and amalgamated these modalities to work therapeutically with clients. I now work as a psychic practitioner because my learnings answered so many questions for me and I wanted others to benefit in this way. I learned from people and from spirit who connected me to higher principles, to personal spirituality and to spirituality outside myself. This process helps me to guide people to find their own meaning.

I provide a psychic life coaching service. I have trained in both psychic and psychological therapeutic processes. I studied Person Centred Counselling in England and one of my teachers used to set various exercises whereby we would look directly, or use peripheral vision to focus on each other so we could gain information about each other. I found that I was able to do this easily and gain information about my classmates which they affirmed was accurate. I thought deeply about how I could combine my psychic and counselling skills to form a new approach to social practice. Hence, I utilise an integrated, eclectic strategy. I do not call myself a Psychic Counsellor, because that would only go part way to describe what I do. While people mostly seek out my services as a psychic, I also give guidance which embraces counselling, and the term psychic life coach is more fitting for my particular practice.

Freud, (1901/2010) theorised that the unconscious is a repository of previous experiences and knowledge. Jung (1947) discussed that the unconscious has access to the collective unconscious which is the accumulation of archetypal experiences expressed through symbols and dreams, while Erickson’s hypnotic trance techniques,
access the unconscious state of a patient for therapeutic benefits (Erickson & Rosen, 1982). Erikson also claimed to enter a trance state himself in order to listen intently to the patient; “I go into trances so that I will be more sensitive to the intonations and inflections of my patients’ speech, and to enable me to hear better, see better” (Erickson & Rosen, 1982, p. 66). With regards to these factors, my approach draws on aspects of Freud, Jung and Erickson. Intuitive processes enable me to become aware of some of the clients’ previous knowledge and experiences, the collective unconscious manifests through symbolic images, metaphors and archetypal phenomenon, and I utilise the Ericksonian notion of trance engagement with the client.

I close my eyes and commence a session with an invocation thus: “I want to ask for the guidance of the friends and loved ones in spirit, to connect and protect and for the wisdom to come from the highest possible level, so that you receive just what you need.” For me the invocation is important as it sends a clear message of intent, that this is a spiritual space and the contract is to receive (and to provide) what my client needs. I do not want to hold on to any information which I cannot deliver to the client. Some people have expressed concerns that I may not pass on something if it is not good news. I have chosen carefully, the words of the invocation to frame the process of the consultation, and assuage fears a client may have. While I am saying this, I am also mentally placing the symbol of the heart and the cross around my client and myself with the intention of offering a balanced, safe and compassionate atmosphere for the session. By this stage I will have started my empathetic sensing. I may have already become aware of an imbalance in the persons love and emotional issues, if I find it difficult to place a uniformly balanced heart image around the person. If this is the case I commence a healing process by adjusting the heart and the cross to a harmonious colour and symmetrical form. I then look along the client’s lifepath, which is a technique I adapted from NLP timeline.
For example, if I were to see the image (above) expressing a person’s lifepath, I may say that it represents that they have ‘navigated the water, and found their way to the shore and now have ahead of them a pathway which has stepping stones showing them the way forward. Their path they are now on is sure footed and has hand holds on either side which creates a safe and secure future direction’. I would add that ‘in the past, while they may have felt that they were foundering in the water with no current or navigational aids, the figure midway on the right is a beautiful guide watching over them and giving them encouragement and directing them to the shoreline’. As these images in my mind develop and change I will tell my client what I am seeing. Past events will show up along this lifepath, and I will explain how they look or feel. I may see bright lights appear at strategic points which, depending on the colour and feelings I sense, will tell me of positive or negative formative experiences which have brought my client to their current situation in life. I will then scan ahead to their future and sense how these circumstances could create consequences and shape their future.

I offer these concepts to my client in an open manner so as to encourage them to consider the options which they may have. At various points times throughout the engagement, I may sense an otherworldly presence which I could perceive as that of a significant of a friend or family member who wishes to make contact with the client. This often necessitates that I enter into a deeper trance state. Empathy, once again, seems to be the method with which I become associated with to facilitate this process, and the which enable me to perceive spirit communication. It is interesting to observe that when these are older relatives of the client, they often still resume a paternal role.
Even when the client is an adult, their relative will often still regard them as someone for whom they carry a responsibility to guide and care for them throughout their life. People will come to me for all sorts of reasons, the main motivators being love, money and career, however they may also want insight on property development and purchase, investments, solving crimes, retirement planning, health, finding missing persons, disputes over wills and many more. At the end of the session I close with a prayer, which is dedicated to the client’s individual circumstances, and ‘come back to earth.’

**Values and ethics guiding my intuitive practice**

I have developed my own approach to coaching. I draw on knowledge I gained from my studies of art, and skills I learned from counselling training, and the abilities I gained through undertaking studies in, and the experiencing of, intuitive processes. I combine these to provide a social practice which affords my clients a wide perspective and to give gentle, encouraging guidance to help them with their challenges and their opportunities along life’s journey. I am also influenced by my life experiences. Many of the issues and challenges which my clients face, are those which I too have faced.

A number of ethical elements guide me in my work. As in the person centred approach to counselling, unconditional positive regard, congruence and empathy are my guiding principles. My aim is to provide a high quality, caring and authentic service for my client. I do not believe in using language during a consultation which has ambiguous meaning. I avoid using dramatic statements such as; ‘you are not finding love because you haven’t learned your lesson yet’, ‘you’re going through a healing crisis’ or ‘you cannot change your destiny’. These clichés may be of a popular idiom but lack any real meaning and do not convey information which could be used constructively, particularly in the setting of a consultation. Such statements may be used by those working within the intuitive professions, but to me are misleading, potentially dangerous and may leave the client feeling disempowered by the coach. I have developed my own ethical framework (see Psychic Ethics appendix ii) which serves to guide me in the intuitive field of my work. It also enables my clients to understand my approach to working ethically with them.

I began my career as a psychic life coach in London, giving sessions at 15 mystic fairs. I found that customers were apprehensive about going to psychic practitioners and

---

15 Markets which specialise in the sale of products and services associated with psychic and tarot readings, and complementary therapies.
seemed to prefer to use the services of tarot readers. However, when I came back to New Zealand, I found that the opposite was true, as people were very accepting of psychics and more apprehensive about consulting practitioners who used tarot cards. My client base in Auckland grew rapidly, and it was not long before I was working full time.

While some may regard phenomena of this nature with scepticism, parapsychology has been taught at the University of Edinburgh since 1962. Dr John Beloff incorporated it into the Department of Psychology and it has continues to be a very popular area of study (Watt, 2011). Beloff played an important role in bringing the Koestler Bequest to Edinburgh University which helped to further develop the faculty. The author Arthur Koestler had keen interest in paranormal phenomena. He gave his entire estate to the establishment of a faculty dedicated to parapsychology at a British university “to research the capacity attributed to some individuals to interact with their environment by means other than the recognised sensory and motor channels” (Watt, 2011, para. 2). As in the story of Duncan, the psychic must exercise respect and at times be circumspect with the insights afforded via metaphysical realms. I am now cognisant of the cautionary accounts of past practitioners which allows me to work with greater wisdom and respect and to enable me to reflect on my ethical stance.

The Auckland Foundation of Spiritualist Mediums NZ Inc. has identified a creed which they refer to as ‘the seven principles’. They assert that it serves as a guide, and not as a condition of acceptance into their foundation. Their organisation is a charity which they affirm is established to educate prospective mediums on the philosophy of spiritualism. They state that their organisation is based on honesty and integrity and is for the advancement of spiritualist mediums.

The Auckland Foundation of Spiritualist Mediums NZ Inc. The Seven Principles:

1. Acknowledgement that there is a creative being or force.
2. Importance of respecting each other’s opinions
3. Accepting that communication exists between the physical and Spirit world.
4. Knowing we have eternal life.
5. Personal responsibility for all our thoughts and actions.
6. Compensation and retribution for good and evil deeds done on earth. The natural law of cause and effect is unchangeable.

16 “Parapsychology” (2017) is a branch of psychology which focuses on the study of psychic phenomena, telepathy, near-death experiences, premonitions etc.
7. Eternal progress open to every human soul. We are responsible for our own spiritual progress.  
(The Foundation of Spiritualist Mediums New Zealand Inc., n.d.)

These principles are an adapted and updated version of the Seven Principles of Spiritualism as used by the Spiritualist National Union (SNU) of the United Kingdom. Their principles were written in the late nineteenth century and used language which related to that era. Despite this, they are still in use today. I believe it is important to have a creed which is current and to which people can relate. I have developed my own code of ethics (Goodliffe, 2018) which is displayed on my website and in my consultation area (see appendix 2). People are able to read these and understand my ethical perspective. This helps them to be informed about what they can expect, before they come to see me for a consultation.

Hassett (2003) posits that readers who have professional experience in other social service careers are likely to be influenced by the ethical guidelines and norms of practice within those occupations. This is true in my case as I have extensive experience in the caring profession and am mindful of working with an ethical approach. Similarly, I am also aware of the need to be caring, and careful in how I convey information to my clients. People sometimes ask me to ‘make things happen’ and I am very clear in my explanation to them that this is not an area of work to which I address my services. I convey to them that they have the ultimate responsibility to make choices with which to influence the course of their life. I give them insights and guidance, but the responsibility to make adjustments to shape their own future lays with them. My professional approach is to uncover potentials, and to reveal consequences of the options which are currently available for them. This approach may be different to other readers who may absolve themselves of personal responsibility for the content of their sessions by statements such as “if I don’t say the exact words I’m told by spirit, the person doesn’t understand it” (Hassett, 2003, p. 87). Furthermore, she adds that ethical frameworks are down to each individual psychic practitioner to identify, and that some readers accept that there are those in the profession who do not work ethically. I believe that my perspective, experiences and values are part of who I am and this in turn influences the content and expression of the session, and therefore an ethical framework is paramount to my service. There are times during my sessions when I
pause to mentally check my ethical stance in response to questions which are posed by clients, or when I check the content of my communication.

Summary
My practice draws on a number of different approaches. I am not aware of any other practitioner who utilises the modalities and skills in the same way. Some of these draw on historic traditions, as in the role of the psychic, whereas others are more recent, such as various strategies which have been developed in psychology. Along with the development of my individual approach, I have also developed ethical guidelines with which to conduct my practice with clients.
CHAPTER FOUR: Research methodology and methods

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the research methodology of qualitative research and associated approaches including narrative enquiry and reflective praxis. An account of the methods of gathering and researching the data along with detailed description of the analysis is discussed as well as an explanation of ethical issues.

Methodology

To undertake this study, a qualitative approach was utilised. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) (as cited in Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, and Ormston, 2013) describe how qualitative methodology is associated with “words and images, rather than numbers” (p. 13) as in quantitative methodology. A qualitative approach fits well with the aims of this research which seeks to explore the images I perceive, my verbal communications and processes during consultations, via the written and pictorial reflections I record in a journal after sessions with clients. A feature of qualitative research is the investigation of how we organize and relate to each other, according to Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012).

Within the qualitative research framework a number of methodological approaches are available. I utilised narrative inquiry, which enabled me to focus on a self narrative perspective, and pay specific regard to the principle of the individual being the site of what happens in our social world. Narrative as a method of inquiry is a fairly recent development and is part of the postmodernist social constructionist approach, and draws on poststructural analysis. As such Andrews, Squire, and Tambouku (2013) draw our attention to how as narrative researchers, our presence through how we perceive and make meaning, is imprinted on the data which is collected. Furthermore, it is important for us to consider the impact of this positioning through our scholarship, research and reflection.

I drew on a self-reflective approach to investigate and seek to gain a greater understanding of my practice. The narrative approach recognises the significance of story telling, autobiography, journals, and life experiences which are the fundamental features of my study. This research seeks to make sense of my coaching practice
through analysis of my contributions to dialogue, via my writings and illustrations which I recorded in a reflective journal. Indeed, the visual diary format is utilised by a number of therapists and coaches (Batten, 2004) and is an area of research to which I am drawn to because it enables me to use images as well as words to form the research data. Reflective journaling is practiced frequently in qualitative research, and in particular is used for reflexive purposes (Etherington, 2004). This research is undertaken for personal and professional enhancement and to make informative epistemological contributions to praxis, and also to individuals who may be interested in the phenomena which are central to this study. Malterud (2001), discusses how the background of the researcher will have an influence on what they select to investigate, their perception of the findings, and dissemination of conclusions. As such, the researcher’s perspective will always influence their research.

**Narrative Inquiry**

A man is always a teller of tales, he lives surrounded by his stories and the stories of others, he sees everything that happens to him through them; and he tries to live his life as if he were recounting it. (Sartre, 1963, p. 61) 17

As exemplified by Satre, the telling of stories is central to the perceptions, experiences and understanding of individuals. Barthes and Duisit (1975) observe that narrative is conveyed via language and image in a myriad of ways and is present at all times, in all places and in all societies. Indeed, it is narrative that conveys the very history of humankind. As Clandinin and Connelly (1990) observe “humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives” (p. 2). Hardy (1968) asserts that narrative plays a fundamental role because “we dream in narrative, day-dream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative” (p. 5). Riessman (2008) identifies that the term narrative relates to the telling of stories whereby events are organised into an order which can be retold later in such a way as to have a significance for the teller and for the recipient. To achieve coherence and meaning, a process of selection, organization, connection and evaluation takes place. Salmon and Riessman (2008) observe that narrative enables a discernment of “meaningful patterns on what would

---

17 Roquentin, the fictional narrator and central character in Jean Paul Sartre’s existential philosophical novel ‘Nausea’, comments on his task of keeping a reflective journal while writing his thesis.
otherwise be random and disconnected” (p. 78). The notions of time and memory are essential elements of narrative in that the lived experiences are stored within the person, and can retrieved at a later date for review, re-telling and for further exploration. Temporal ordering, through the retelling of stories, “helps to demystify them and establish coherence across past, present and as yet unrealised experience” (Ochs & Capps, 2001, p. 10). Narrative can also help us shape our lives and contribute to self-understanding. Moreover, understandings can be drawn about identity through narrative accounts of personal stories, and through the accounts of others. These stories can reveal personal traits with which individuals identify and about those which they deny (Yuval-Davis, 2007, as cited in Schutt, 2009).

Narrative inquiry is a recent methodological approach to research. Mitchell and Egudo (2003) explain that narrative inquiry utilises the stories told by individuals as the object of study. This methodology embraces a wide range of approaches which can incorporate visual illustrations or written and spoken records (“Scientific Software Development GmbH”, 2015). Narrative as an inquiry methodology recognises the importance of journals, autobiography, biography, stories and life experiences as components of investigation into the way that people create understandings and meanings in life. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) describe how narrative inquiry focuses on the meanings which people make of these components rather than on the content of these components. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) identify narrative inquiry as studies of personal experience, and experiences of others, as understood and expressed through story.

A narrative approach is highly relevant for my research for a number of reasons. Narrative form is deeply implicated with my style of engagement with clients. It is also the process I have utilised to document my observations following consultations, and the process of analysis as well as in the writing of this thesis. It is also applicable to my research which has its focus on exploring insights of my practice which arise from the words and images I recorded in my professional reflective journal. This methodological approach suits my enquiry as my research involves review, and reflection and meaning-making of my journal entries. Pinnegar, Daynes and Clandinin (2007) explain "narrative inquiry embraces narrative as both the method and the phenomena of study" (p. 4).
Several aspects of my research methodology and methods are fundamentally linked to the manner of the exploration of this thesis.

**Self-Narrative**

The site of narrative inquiry can be on the individual, groups, societies or even countries (Riessman, 2008). My coaching work is the focus of study and as such am employing a self-narrative approach. Self-narrative contains an autobiographical element and, according to Yong and Roberts (2005) “is where the narrator occupies the position of subject” (p. 51).

**Reflective practice**

When discussing the ‘how’ of the method or the model of methodology, it is important to understand that there is a great deal of discussion amongst academics regarding the considerations of reflective practice not fitting concisely into method or methodology. Some believe that it can be understood as a methodological framework while other researchers identify it as a research method. It is a developmental approach which can be used to reflect on professional work and can be understood in the research context as both a methodology and as a method. The theoretical approach and pragmatic application of reflective practice are the subject of a great deal of examination. Fook and Gardner (2007) postulate that reflective practice intersects with a postmodern theoretical framework, and that it has a relationship with people’s personal associations regarding their beliefs and conventions. They propose that it has not only an overarching theory, but it also has a practical application of reflective research. With regard to these elements, my research methodology and methods are intrinsically linked not only to the research approach, but also to the manner of undertaking the exploration of this thesis. Jasper (2016) argues that:

> Although reflective writing is increasingly becoming visible within qualitative research reports, it needs to be further acknowledged as central to the methodological processes within research studies and recognised as an essential part of their methodology (p. 247).

In my study, I understand reflective practice in a broad scope and am employing it as my methodology. To undertake the reflection of my processes I will utilise reflective journaling as my central method.
Reflective practice is practice-based and embraced within a number of occupations including health care, social work, education and business. It provides a self-evaluative approach to enable analysis and to critique one’s own practice, and as such it can be an important self-development tool. Consideration of these factors were critical in my search for an appropriate research approach. I required a flexible, yet structured system which allowed me to stand back and consider deeply the insights which arose from my research questions. Reflective practice offered me opportunities to craft my own processes, to analyse how I undertake life coaching and to explore and engage opportunities for further learning and development.

Osterman and Kottkamp (1993) argue that reflective practice is not a solitary process, and therefore is best undertaken collaboratively. They assert that the reason for this is because it helps to have different viewpoints to critique responses to critical incidents. Events of this nature were not the only focus of my enquiry, however when they arose I was able to gain any required support and perspective from supervision. As a sole practitioner, and pursuant of an approach which would inform me about my practice, reflective practice presented the ideal investigative tool. A key strength of the reflective process is that it offers a temporal framework which enables the practitioner to stand back and deeply consider their practice before, during and after consultations. This also provides a strong foundation to understand and evaluate story and narrative in my work. Fook (2004) asserts that a reflexive research method is one which allows a practitioner to examine their own practice in order to make adjustments and to develop. Schön (1983) identified the reflective practice inquiry concepts of “reflecting in action” (thinking while doing) and “reflecting on action” (thinking after the event). The post-action activity of reflecting on action employs critical self-reflection, which is an experiential process undertaken to gain new understandings. Reflecting in action takes place while involved in the situation, and calls for the practitioner to pay attention to their feelings and their previous responses or reflections, make adjustments and apply them in the moment. This skill is often associated with a proficient practitioner (LaTrobe, 2012). Findlay (2008) asserts that the aim of such is to achieve an outcome whereby growth occurs and improvement to professional practice is enabled. Reflective practice is an approach which enables a way of standing back, evaluating, critiquing and developing practice, and as such this is the practical objective of my study.
Various models of reflective practice can be utilised to deconstruct events and sift beneath the surface to gain a deeper perspective, analyse processes, evaluate assumptions, increase self-awareness and attain new understandings. I found that by utilising a mixture of different approaches to reflective practice, I was able to develop a worksheet questions to undertake self reflective research into my practice. The following are various methods which I utilised, and extracted elements of, to create my own reflective approach to learning.

![Figure 5 Boud's model of reflection (The Open University, 2016).](image)

A fundamental approach to learning through reflection was identified by Boud (Boud et al., 2005). The model was a cycle of experience, reflection, learning. “The Open University” (2016) describe the model as simplistic because it lacks definition on how to apply reflection to achieve a learning outcome. “The Open University” (2016) have developed Boud’s original model by including an explanation of what to do at the different stages to be able to achieve and learn.
Gibbs reflective cycle is structured in a way to allow the analysis to lead to identification of an action plan. It involves progressive reflection on the aspects of; the experience, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action plan. However, some would argue that this model does not necessarily encourage a sufficiently critical stance when considering different perspectives, and that future changes may be inconsequential as it has not involved a critical analysis of the situation (“Open University”, 2016).
The above model harnesses a greater use of feelings with which to evaluate practice. However, to divide events into ‘good or bad’ seems a rather over-simplified mode of analysis.

I was needing an approach from which to develop my practice to be able to stand back and assess not only what I already knew, but also what I did not already know. I turned to the model of the four stages of learning as identified by Noel Burch in 1970. Adams (2016) identifies that his model of learning ascends through a sequence of stages from unconsciously unskilled, consciously unskilled, consciously skilled to unconsciously skilled. While bearing in mind that reflective practice calls for you to stand outside yourself and observe, I utilised this approach and applied the Burch model to become conscious of my practice, and thus opening the way for new learnings.

I am employing as sense of critiquing my data, rather than looking at it from the perspective of reflecting on incidents or events, such as for an intervention tool for challenging situations. However, I did find the discipline of reflective practice very useful during a very challenging consultation. Analysing the situation from this stance afforded

Figure 8 Conscious competence learning model (Taylor, 2007)
me a detached perspective whereby I was able to remove myself from the sense of being the subject, and freed me up to utilise this system of data gathering and analysis from a more critical perspective and I then become actively engaged in searching for new or alternative methods of reviewing and creating strategies to reposition myself in the situation. Indeed, this was to become a wonderful learning opportunity, rather than a having a personally and professionally challenging viewpoint. At this point I realised the liberating effects of a disciplined and systematic approach to journal keeping as a reflective practitioner. The reflexive aspect is present throughout the research. In the very act of analysis, my self-knowledge grows and enables opportunities to apply new learnings. Professional development is an important factor in my choice of this research method, and in order to achieve this, a critical perspective was required while embracing the very constraints of researching myself.

**Methods and the research process**

**Methods of data collection and analysis**

This study used several methods to research, analyse and process the data. Elements of action research were used in the critical self-reflective process of gathering material from observational analysis and making plans and adjustments accordingly, to make personal and professional improvements.

This research seeks to draw meaning from the language and images contained within the data, and therefore a qualitative research approach was utilised. This afforded the collection of rich data and allowed a process of deep scrutiny of such. To undertake this critical self-reflective research, it was necessary to embrace a disciplined, analytic perspective throughout the whole process of data collection, analysis, in the writing up of the findings and the subsequent discussion. Paying attention to self-care was important to ensure a balanced approach and to be able to attain reliable data. Troublesome incidents I encountered provided the material to critique my practice, so a stable perspective was needed in order to be neither too condemning, nor overly optimistic with my self-analysis. This would ensure self-care and a productive piece of work. Bassot (2013) explains that paying attention to these aspects would increase the potential of being able to draw up realistic and useful action plans from the reflections.
As this was a study of self as subject, and utilised reflective data which was observed and annotated by the author, it is written in the first person. As Jasper (2016) asserts, it is important to acknowledge that the details relate to the experiences, observations and insights of the author. Using the “I”, the personal pronoun throughout the data collection, analysis and in the writing of the thesis, demonstrated how this research is deeply connected with the writer of this research. The researcher is strongly connected to the research, and to authenticate this, images of handwritten notes and illustrations are included in this thesis. All the data was recorded in the author’s own hand. This afforded an expedience of data recording following each session, and allowed a flow of thoughts and illustration not available to a type written format.

As in Freud’s model of the iceberg in 1905, the conscious mind is only the ‘tip of the iceberg’ because significant mental processes occur in the unconscious mind beneath the surface (Curtis, 2015). The unconscious is not easy to analyse by the self because as Barnard (1938/1968) observed, the unconscious is difficult to analyse by the person within whose brain these processes are happening, due not only to the difficulty of analysing something of which they are not conscious, but also because of the speed and complexity of unconscious processes (as cited in Sadler-Smith, 2015). These challenges were noted, and reflective practice combined with Schön’s approach, seemed the best method with which to overcome this situation. Due to its temporal context, Schön’s method, and reflecting via journaling enabled a directness of data gathering and led to a deep analysis of my processes, actions and approaches to my practice.

This study focused on making explicit the unconscious and unspoken processes of perception of a psychic life coach within the framework of a consultation perspective. To achieve this a body of narrative and visual data which I recorded within a reflective journal was analysed.

The data was gathered over a three-month period of sessions with clients. I utilised a journal format to respond to the worksheet of questions to record my replies, thoughts and perceptions about my work after each consultation. I utilised words and images to convey observations (of self) which were apparent in my mind from the perspectives of; before, during and after the sessions. My intention was to notice patterns, motifs and any outstanding features which emerged within my journaling, and keep a record by sketching images and writing down information, while paying close attention to the
words and images, and to the themes and processes which emerged. I observed, scrutinized and critiqued these processes in order to gain a greater understanding of my practice and to facilitate personal and professional development.

Naturalistic (self) observational methods of data collection were employed in a manner which was unobtrusive during the process of the consultation. Situational sampling is research carried out in an authentic scenario rather than in a staged situation, such as in laboratory conditions (Nugent, 2017). These approaches were ideal because I needed to observe my practice under authentic conditions in order to gain insight before, during and after actual consultations. A worksheet of open questions framed around Schön’s approach to reflective practice was developed. Responses to these, in the form of images and language, were documented in a reflective journal after each session. I utilised open-ended research questions to facilitate discovery of new knowledge (Hoepfl, 1997). By implementing this type of questioning I was able to become engaged in the process of gathering data-enriched material which I recorded in the journal. This material was subsequently analysed in a second, reflexive journal using thematic analysis, to discern the outstanding themes.

McMahon (2006) points out that unlike action research, reflective practice does not always lead to strategic action outcomes. However, with the addition of critical reflections forming part of the worksheet questions, my work explores and identifies strategies for new development. The worksheet questions were worded in such a way to illicit revealing data and to provide thick descriptions of the material. Some events and issues may have required positive and practical changes in practice, so where indicated by the findings, changes were identified and on some occasions, implemented in a purposive manner. When the data revealed a change was required to improve performance, a reflexive approach was implemented to bring about a constructive change in practice. I built in specific steps to bring about change. These are examined in the discussion of findings chapter. Other elements of the data which provided useful information, was that which added to a clearer understanding to inform the practice of a psychic life coach. These may not have revealed recommendations for strategic actions, other than to call for further investigation to reveal clearer definitions of practice.
I drew up a worksheet of questions which were framed using Schön’s approach to reflective practice of ‘on action’ and ‘in action’ questions, and via critical reflection. I devised a series of pertinent trigger questions under these three headings which were used to stimulate responses to elucidate the processes and practices I utilise, and provide material in order to inform and enhance the practice of a psychic life coach. I employed a mixed methods analytical approach to study the data including thematic analysis and critical reflection. The thematic analysis enabled me to group my observations into recurrent themes and also to sift the findings for specific information, as specified by questions 8 and 9 which asked for detailed accounts of words and images. Questions 9 and 10 focused on any outstanding or problematic issues which I encountered during consultations to be analysed via critical reflection processes.

Through the medium of journaling, and by utilizing a reflective process, I explored the factors and attributes of the empathetic process which I engage during consultations. I observed my practice from different temporal perspectives in order to develop a greater understanding. I utilised a critical perspective in order to view my observations from a situation of standing back and comprehending what I observe. I devised a series of reflective questions and grouped them accordingly; in action, self-observation during the consultation (feelings, actions and processes in the moment), on action, retrospective perspective (observations of what I attended to before and during sessions).

Reflective practice in its simplest form is the discipline of considering and reflecting upon your actions. To apply this as a research method, I adapted various approaches from social and educational theorists in order to identify a framework upon which to design an individual method appropriate for this study. Schön’s (1983) structure of reflecting on action and reflecting in action was applied to a worksheet of questions. This formula provided me with the material from which I could explore and critique critical events which occurred in my practice, as well as information which I could gain further insight via thematic analysis. I employed the method of critical reflection to stand back and see things from a different perspective, and in so doing, create new insights (Fook & Gardner, 2007).
Journal keeping

Reflective journal writing is recognised as a significant element of reflective practice and a chief concept of experiential learning (Jasper, 2016). Professionals working within social practice, health and education sectors are encouraged to keep a professional journal (Adams, 2016). Some educational and professional bodies coach their students and members on the methods of keeping a reflective journal as appropriate for their respective assessment criteria. These journals may be subject to supervisor or peer review and scrutinised on a regular basis as part of the requirements of continual practice development. However the journals are often structured in such a way as to lend themselves to analysis and management of critical incidents which arise in professional practice.

The use of images for research purposes is a fairly recent initiative in qualitative enquiry. Because we are multi-sensory beings, and utilise visual perception as a way of making sense of information, employing images for research purposes is justifiable. Utilising this as a research method has been embraced within anthropology, sociology and psychology research. The images, for such purposes, have been in the form of photographs, graffiti, diagrams, sketches and symbols (Prosser, 2006). Analysis of the aforementioned lies within the context of labelling or naming objects which may be contained in the images, assessing spatial aspects, deriving significance from colour and line, and describing the image to be able to draw meaning from the visual encounter. Banks and Zeitlyn (2015) go on to refer to this as “bringing knowledge to bear upon the image” (p. 3).

I recorded images in my journal as an aide-mémoire of the mental impressions which I experienced while conducting coaching sessions with clients. The images which I recorded were in the form of diagrams, symbols and figurative illustrations. I devised diagrams to create explanatory notes, recorded symbolic images as visual impressions of my perceptions, and detailed figurative representations of the images which I perceived. I assessed the images in order to gain meaning and to make significant understandings. A major difference to the abovementioned is that the images were made AND (researched/critiqued) analysed and assessed by the author. Nonetheless, many of the strategies regarding the anthropological, psychological and sociological use of visual material applied to the visual journaling in my studies.
I found it very challenging to identify how to go about journaling. Clearly there was a greater intent than just journaling for the purpose of keeping a daily record of my thoughts and feelings, or even just to create images to explain visually the words and perceptions I was experiencing. Ortlipp (2008) suggests that there is not much information on how to keep a reflective journal for research purposes or how to incorporate the material into such studies. A structured approach was necessary in order to be able to produce data for analysis.

Commencing the journal posed me with a dilemma. I had researched journal-keeping and visual diaries. The latter was mostly used for psychoanalytic and therapeutic purposes, and while the former presented a rich array, I couldn’t pin-point any examples of exactly what I was requiring as a method to work reflectively for the type of research upon which I was about to embark. Wood (2013) discusses how “facing the empty page” (p.25) can give rise to many responses for the author, from excitement to apprehension, from liberation to overwhelm. Although I have kept diaries, sketchbooks and ideas journals for most of my life professional career, the search for a reflective research journal formula presented me with a new and seemingly formidable task. My first journal entry was, “How do I keep a journal which can be used for my thesis?” (Goodliffe 2016). My early drawings were on themes of ambiguity, nebulousness, purpose and goal. I was dissatisfied at my initial attempts to record any material which showed promise to produce useful material for analysis which could lead to enhancing or informing my practice. I turned to the various methods of reflective practice to assist me to find a useful journaling method, and I found Schön’s (1983) reflective practice model a good basis for design. I utilised the framework of “on action”, ‘in action” and critical reflection” and from this I developed a thematic rubric of self-reflective questions to guide my areas of written and visual observations, with which to illicit meaningful material to provide the raw data for analysis (see Appendix A.). Wood (2013) refers to these as reflective worksheets, although the focus of these seems to be in the context of reflecting on critical incidents or on troubling emotions which may arise in the practitioner and may not seem to have a corresponding causal factor. Conversely, the purpose of my research is to reflect on each session, and identify feelings, illicit meanings, identify and understand processes, words and images, and to research
knowledge arising from these insights. The ultimate goal of which is to develop my professional practice.

I found that I needed to create an introspective and reflective hand-written journal recorded in the first person, and also keep to the responses and critique of the questions I developed by way of responding to the research aims and questions. Some of the responses followed a question and answer format, while others had a flow of and were written in paragraphs. Due to the spontaneous nature of the narrative engagement process with the client, it was important to write in the journal immediately after each session. I found that if I allowed too much time to lapse after the client left, it became more difficult to re-engage with the flow of conversation and make accurate detailed records. The nature of my work necessitates that I engage a deep mental state, and at the conclusion of the session, a similarly disciplined concentration was required to be able to recall the flow and details of the consultation. Part of the motivation for this investigation was to understand what I do in a consultation, so the immediacy of recording was vital in order for the research to be fruitful.

Initially I thought that I would make use of a visual diary with blank pages, and a second journal with lined pages with which to record my writing, however I soon realised that this formula was too disjointed and lacked focus. Once I developed the feedback rubric in the form of the worksheet of questions, I used this system to record reflections immediately following each consultation. In my journal, I used one page to answer the questions and on the opposing page I drew any visual impressions, wrote down thoughts (which sometimes occurred as a stream of consciousness), kept a log of any issues I needed to attend to, and anything else which I deemed to be noteworthy. I drew diagrams and sketch what I remember of these mental impressions, so as to act as an illustrator of my experiences and enable the action of what Alvarado (2010) refered to as the “permeable barrier between conscious and subconscious” (p.212). I examined several pertinent illustrations which utilize symbols and images which express the inner theatre of the mind of a psychic life coach during consultations. Creating drawings can give visceral and revealing expression of deeper levels of consciousness which is a particularly useful approach to capture data in qualitative research (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston, 2013).
As a researcher employing a narrative reflective process to investigate my own practice, I was aware of the need to balance objectivity and subjectivity, and to keep focused on the objectives of the research. It was important to ensure that I was acting as observer of my own perceptions because my interpretations formed part of the data.

The term visual journal is used to refer to a method of making illustrations for explorative and therapeutic purposes. It is sometimes used to refer to the keeping of drawings and images for the purposes of keeping a record of an art diary (sketchbook). Sketchbook-keeping is something I have done on a regular basis since I was an art student. I use a small book with blank pages which is small enough to carry in my handbag, and I record interesting images or ideas which appeal to me, and I may develop these for subsequent larger art works. The therapeutic type of visual journal was a system I used personally and encouraged my students to use when I run art therapy support groups. My purpose for reflective practice recording was not located in either of these purposes. I was needing to convey visual expressions of my internal images which I perceive during a consultation with a client. I found that I was creating symbolic representation and other times literal images of what I was experiencing and conveying through the languaging of a consultation. Many of my images were diagrams, and quick sketches. Early on during the reflective journal keeping, I found that it was very useful to use a sketch book during sessions to help illustrate what I was seeing, or as an aide-memoir whereby I could bear in mind important mental impressions which were guiding me during the consultation, or as a way of explaining ideas to my client, how I would use a white board in a teaching session. This system has also helped me to recall the important points in order to give a summary of the session to the client.

Reflective practice journaling methods focus mostly on the written word, and not on images or diagrams which the journal-keeper can utilise. There was even less information on how other people had gone about utilising visual journals for the purpose of reflective practice, so I decided that I would need to develop my own system of recording and analysing my images. The images needed to be grouped into symbolic, those which are describing the timeline image which I perceive indicative of the events of past, present and future, those which describe figurative and combined with representation of my impressions and diagrams.
Data analysis methods

To undertake an analysis of the data gathered in this study, I drew on Aronson’s approach to thematic analysis and paired this with the work by Riessman on narrative analysis, to focus on the narrative aspects of this research. Narrative inquiry draws on realist, postmodern and constructivist disciplines (Riessman, 2008). This author asserts that while academics and those who practise these approaches may draw on multiple origins and utilise differing ways to undertake analysis of narrative data, they all agree that story telling is how knowledge is constructed and conveyed. Narrative analysis has a focus on the temporality and context of the data and pays attention to larger, overarching themes. It tries to resist breaking up text into small chunks and keeps the story intact to allow ontological and interpretive understandings through a reshaping or judgement about these stories.

Braun and Clarke (2006) consider thematic analysis to be at the core of qualitative data analysis, and they refer to its qualities of flexibility and transferability across various methods. Thematic analysis pays attention to the content and seeks to identify common, or recurrent themes within the data. This is achieved by searching through the data and identifying key or repeated words, phrases, concepts and ideas. Aronson (1994) observed that while narrative was a common approach to data collection, there was very limited information on how to undertake a thematic analysis of the material. This author went on to devise what she referred to as a “pragmatic process for thematic analysis” (p. 3). This was a central feature of my analysis my method of application is outlined in closer detail further on in this section.

I developed a worksheet of open questions to investigate my research topic. The focus of the research was on meaning making of the words and images which I recorded in my reflective journal, and with the objective of finding ways to inform and enhance my practice. I investigated salient and interesting themes and any recurrence of patterns of these themes. I explored the imagery of my illustrations for any significant symbolism and searched to find meaning in these illustrations. I looked for “recurrent ideas, phrases and/or concepts that explain what a statement is about or the meaning of a response or expression” (Guest et al., 2012, p. 282). I used a second, reflexive journal where I dedicated a separate page for each of the ten worksheet questions. I listed the responses to each question and recorded the frequency of their occurrence. On the
opposite page I sub-grouped these responses, searched for patterns, outstanding features and any interesting concepts in order to make meaning. Where appropriate I undertook a deeper analysis via academic literature.

Aronson’s (1994) pragmatic approach to thematic analysis of data involves five steps. I utilised these steps as outlined below. An explanation of how I applied each step to my research is detailed as follows:

1. Collect data-
   The data I collected was in the form of my words and images which I recorded in a reflective journal, as previously described.

2. Look for common themes-
   A second, reflexive and ‘working’ journal was used to record the responses to each of the worksheet questions. I created a separate page for each of the ten questions. On each page I created a list of the responses which I had collated from the raw data. I utilized a bullet point format which aided clarity.

3. Sort into sub-themes-
   On the opposite page of each of the list of data which I had grouped into bullet points, I created sub-groups of these themes. I did this by making a list of the most commonly recurring groups, and then counted the frequency of their occurrence. This enabled me to identify the most commonly occurring themes, any patterns and outstanding or interesting features.

4. Validate via feedback from informant-
   As I was the informant, I went back over my journal and reviewed the information and then examined the themes and sub-themes to ensure the information was accurately matched. Any inaccuracies were adjusted accordingly.

5. Build a valid argument for choosing these themes-
   Features arising from the analysis from step three were given attention in the form of further investigation. The rationale for this was either to take corrective
action (as shown in the critical reflection questions, numbers ten and eleven on the question sheet), or to gain new knowledge to enhance my proficiency.

At relevant places in the analysis I provided transcripts of my narrative and I included some of the illustrations from my journal. I provided accounts of my mental deliberations, described various facets of my engagements with clients, and included detailed descriptions of my feelings and thoughts. This helped to establish the validity of the data and thus demonstrates the benefits of a thick description. This notion of a thick description is where explanation of phenomena is given in a detailed and comprehensive way. Information regarding context as well as behaviour is provided to help create deeper and more meaningful data. This adds to trustworthiness of the material under scrutiny (Shenton, 2004). Moreover, Ponterotto (2006) asserts that the use of a thick description facilitates a closer engagement between the reader and the material. Conversely, a thin description is an account which states facts without any elaboration, and is often the sort of data which questionnaires reveal (Ray, 2017). Evidence of the raw data is depicted in many of the images throughout this work.

**Ethical issues**

Ethical issues are a fundamental principle in the undertaking of research. As such the following section discusses the ethical issues I encountered in seeking to undertake this study, and to ensure it was conducted in an ethically appropriate manner.

A guiding principle of ethical research is to do no harm ("American Psychological Association", 2017). This study focused on the processes and insights of the coach. As this research has a self-reflective focus, I endeavoured to not be too critically self-analytical, so as to avoid the tendency to delve too deeply within. This assisted me to maintain a balance of compassionate self-care during the engagement of the self-research process. Yip (2006) urges students who undertake reflective practice, to avoid the pitfalls of being overly self-critical, to be careful and not focus too deeply on any weak points in a way which may be damaging or unprofessional. Conversely, Brockbank and McGill (1998) point out that it is important to be aware that the reflection process can sometimes lead people to be taken in so much by their own stories and views, that it can render them unable to maintain a critical viewpoint from which to make a fair and reasoned analysis of their own work. I was very aware that a negative outcome could
have been that I develop an overly studied approach with clients and lose that personal touch. Having a too-studied manner with clients could have led to my being overly concerned with what I would say and so lose spontaneity of conversations during consultations. My research objectives were for personal and professional development, so it was important for me to pay attention to these cautionary details. Brookfield (1994) comments that if the person is made aware of these risks, they are more likely to be able to maintain a healthy balance in their study.

The need for ethical approval of this project by Unitec Institute of Technology ethics committee was discussed with my supervisor who advised me that ethical approval was not necessary as I was the only subject of this research. In keeping with 11.4 (a) of “New Zealand Association of Counsellors” (2016) code of ethics regarding conflict of interests during research, I gave priority to my clients during consultations and ensured that the self-reflective questions did not impinge on my ability to undertake consultations. The code of ethics (2016) also highlights the need to evaluate, research and develop professional practice 11.1 (a), and to do so in such a way as to benefits individuals and communities 11.1 (b). My research is a self-reflective inquiry of my own practice which aimed to develop knowledge not only for myself, but also to inform individuals and other practitioners as well as associated groups. As outlined in section 9 of the code of ethics, another requirement is to undertake professional supervision. This is also something I comply with. It is worth noting that reflective practice, which was a key feature of this study, also facilitates a self-supervisory function.

**Summary**

This chapter has discussed a range of methods and methodology approaches. These have been analysed, adapted, blended, developed and innovated for the purposes of this enquiry. In the next section we see how these have been applied to analyse the data and the findings thereof.
CHAPTER FIVE: Findings and discussion

Introduction
This chapter presents a discussion and analysis of the worksheet questions and includes a critique and discussion of the research method. The first section of this chapter (indexed under A., B. and C.) provides an outline and discussion of the findings gathered from the material recorded in the reflective journal. The ten questions were devised specifically for this research under the headings of ‘on action’, ‘in action’ and ‘critical reflection’. Two pages in the journal were assigned to each consultation. One page was allocated for the responses to each question and the other page was for the keeping of sketches, brainstorming ideas, and for noting any interesting or outstanding features of the session. Responses to the questions were recorded immediately following each of the twenty-five in person sessions over a period of three months. I utilised thematic analysis to investigate the meanings of the words and images of this narrative material. Recurrent themes were drawn out of the data and then recorded in a second notebook. They were then broken down further into a list format, and the frequency of their occurrence were noted. The images were scrutinized and investigated for their figurative and symbolic meanings. The purpose of the later section of this chapter is to gain understanding of the significance of the findings through the lens of the research questions. Reflecting on the method of the research was also a part of the study, so an analysis of this is included, and challenges of the research concludes the discussion.

Methodological note on the reflective journal
During the process of developing the research method it became apparent to me that there was no exact formula to draw upon to assist me to identify a method of journaling which was of relevance to my counselling and coaching practice. Therefore, I needed to formulate my own framework. I realised that this thesis was not just about researching the questions, but it was also about identifying, adapting, developing and assessing the research method. There was very little specifically related material which I found I could apply to my intuitive coaching practice, so developed my own structured system. I drew on a range of literature pertaining to reflective practice, and this provided the framework for me to address the research questions. I constructed, extended and
refined a reflective approach which would be appropriate. My developmental processes are described with definitive diagrams, and are detailed after the discussion of the worksheet questions in this chapter.

A. ‘On action’ reflection: Retrospective self-observation after consultation

1. What was I paying attention to before the session?

There were notable and recurrent themes regarding the focus of my attention and activities prior to appointments. These themes are categorised and listed below in descending order, according to the frequency of their occurrence.

**Time**

Client lateness, or not arriving at all, were predominant features of my pre-session concerns. Second to this, and of equal significance were; my preoccupation with preparations before the arrival of the client, and clients needing me to be available at short notice. Due to nature of my work, I am often contacted when a person is in desperate need of help due to a crisis. Although they may not specify the nature of the crisis, I try and fit people into my schedule who contact me at short notice when I sense they are in desperate need of help.

Watching the time prior to the session was a recurrent and significant issue. I was surprised at how often I noted my worries about deadlines and preparations. Regardless of my email confirmation which I send out at the time of booking, I found that some people were still not reliable or punctual. The email contains; address, appointment date and time, payment system, and that if they arrived early to wait till their appointment time before they knock on the door. My consultation room is a caravan in the garden, which I bought specifically to provide a private, dedicated space away from the bustle of the house. I make a note in my diary when I have sent the email. However, there are clients who do not keep their appointment and fail to tell me, and there are those who do not arrive on time. I have a daily schedule of appointment times, which means that if they are late I may not be able to give them the full hour as it may conflict with the start time of the next appointment, so late arrivals can cause problems. Not arriving at all is bad for many reasons, including the inconvenience factor and a loss of
earnings. I endeavour to send a text the day prior to their appointment, which serves as a reminder and enables them to have the opportunity to cancel.

My work as a coach is my profession, but sometimes I found myself wondering if people think it is my hobby rather than a professional service. There are some in my field of work who are neither qualified nor professional and do not ask for a payment or charge a lower rate (while there are others who charge a higher rate). I maintain a professional service with for example a website presence, a Facebook page, newspaper advertising. This is the source of my income, and I maintain professional standards. I run my business as a registered company and as such it is a legal entity and subject to the financial requirements of a business. These factors also take time to manage. Therefore, there are many issues around time to become prepared for a client.

Of secondary concern are two issues; people who want a session at short-notice, and my preparations for the session. People often want urgent help and may not feel they can wait for an appointment. At any time of the day (or night) they may phone and want me to give them an appointment within an hour. Sometimes this is possible and I provide a session for them at short notice, but there are times when I cannot accommodate their requirements. Attending to impulse or urgent calls seem to be the nature of my work. There are times a client may regard my inability to fit them in, as a sign, and not wish to make an appointment for a future date. My caravan also serves as my office and study space and as such I need to tidy books away and prepare it for consultations. This can take time and if a client is early, it can be a problem if it is not ready. I too need to be prepared and available to see a client, and when I am with them, outside interruptions are not acceptable. I work from home, so I need to be able to disengage from domestic factors and become engaged as a professional.

**Thinking about clients**

I do all my own administration including appointment-making and other requirements in order to keep my business operating smoothly. I found that to be able to focus on my client before their appointment, I needed to feel satisfied that all the administration requirements were satisfactorily completed to the best of my ability. Problems such as clients not knowing the address, or changing their mind and not informing me, were a constant problem. Once I set aside these concerns, I could pay attention to my thoughts,

---

18 A portent with hidden meanings
impressions and various phenomena which may arise, which may have meaning for the client. I remember one particular evening, as I was awaiting my client’s arrival, seeing the moonlight catch the outline of a wasp caught in a spider’s web. The client was late and it gave me time to ponder the various metaphors this image may be expressing for the forthcoming encounter. The client eventually arrived and as I escorted her to the caravan I noticed the shadow of the spider, the wasp and the web was next to the window. Indeed, as the session unfolded, I came to understand that it had great symbolic meaning about issues of power and control which were affecting my client’s relationship with her husband. These issues had motivated my client to make the appointment with me. Seeing this event prior to the consultation helped me to comprehend meanings for the client during the session. Incidents of this nature seemed to be a recurrent theme in my reflections. I noticed a correlation between such incidents and Jung’s (1973) story of the scarab beetle, where he describes how an outside event coincided with issues of the client. I discuss this further in question 6 of this section.

Frequently, I would find myself thinking about my client prior to their arrival. This could be anywhere between the time of booking their appointment, (and in some cases before) to their arrival. There are times I am aware of certain circumstances, which may have no reference to me or to current clients, but seem to be a precursor to the issues with which a new client presents. In regard to clients who have been to me before, I may suddenly be aware of impressions of them which may occur such as; wondering how they are, memories of their session which may coincide with current factors, or information which may be of interest to them, and then they contact me for a session to discuss these very issues. These incidents may have some relevance to aforementioned studies by Sheldrake (2013) into telepathy and ESP. At times I may be thinking of a client I have seen before and then they contact me to book a session, or it may be a new client who contacts me just as I was aware of a situation which I may discover during the consultation, which has relevance to them. Clients often discussed with me factors around coincidence as motivators to contact me for an appointment. These included; a deceased friend or relative with the same name as me, seeing a rose or being drawn to me for some unexplainable reason (Client 2, personal communication, April 15, 2016).
Ill health
My physical condition was a recurrent feature. I seemed to have quite a lot of ill health issues, including a leg injury, concussion, respiratory problems, tiredness, headaches and painful eyes. The latter three were probably exacerbated pressures of studying and working). Not being well is something which I have had to attend to and has resulted in my needing to postpone appointments till I am recovered. I have a health condition which I need to pay attention to which means at times that I am not fit enough to be fully present for the client. As a self-employed person, postponing or cancelling appointments also means a loss of income. My work hours involve not only seeing clients, but also promotion, accounts, business planning and on-going training. Having to reduce these non-client contact hours was also affected by ill-health. However, I try to balance my life so that I have holidays, go to the gym or take other forms of exercise, and practice meditation.

Mental/emotional
Before a session my emotions included feelings of; happy, worried, stressed, and apprehensive when the spectrum of emotions was due to issues of time, client challenges, or to family and domestic issues. There were many times when I felt apprehensive. These included concerns around communication difficulties due to language differences, and a challenging incident with a family who all arrived together without warning, to the same appointment.

On one outstanding occasion, I was scrutinised before (and during) the appointment by two relatives of a client who booked an appointment, which was very unnerving. I received a phone call at the appointment time from the daughter who asked me to explain my qualifications and expertise prior to, what I perceived as, giving permission to her parents to attend. She was standing outside my house when she was on the phone to me, and seemed to be barring the way and preventing her parents from entering my property. I was surprised that she and another sibling decided to accompany the parents, and all walked into my caravan and sat down. I perceived their attitude to be saying our parents are keeping the appointment, but we don’t want them to be here. This situation gave me an immediate feeling that I was going to be tested for my competence and negatively judged. This was a mental challenge which impacted my ability to engage an empathetic relationship. The challenges of this event had a
detrimental effect on me, and is discussed later in this chapter, and referred to as ‘the game of cat and mouse’. I found it difficult to muster my confidence to engage with clients again and to re-commence taking bookings. Using my reflective journal helped immensely with this issue.

**Family responsibilities**

My daughter had an accident, and this put a great deal of strain on my time, energy and resources in many aspects. I was the advocate, spokesperson and carer for her and I took over responsibilities for the care of her child. While this, and other occurrences of a domestic nature which arose may seem rather incidental, it is a major feature which impacts my ability to dedicate myself full-time to my career.

2. **What were my cognitive processes and how did I utilise them?**

This question elicited some revealing data regarding processing and utilisation of my cognition. I have bracketed these cognitive processes into three main headings; thinking, intuiting and how did I use cognitive processes. The illustration (figure 9) from my data analysis sketchbook shows the interrelationship and action of these processes. **Thinking** followed a sequential formula and encompassed logical reasoning, whereas **intuiting** seemed random and less sequential. **How did I utilise cognitive processes** refers to the synthesis and consequential formula of processing and application of thought and intuition. Neither thinking nor intuiting seemed to function in isolation. The aforementioned third function seemed to navigate between the actions of thinking and intuiting, as if it was the moderator and **action-taker** of thinking and intuiting. Each of the three facilities seemed to serve as a storehouse of components which played a vital and integral action in the overall cognitive function.
Thinking

I observed that various structures and strategies including self-talk, logic, understanding, existing knowledge and skills played a vital role in my ability to process and express intuition. Thinking provided a structured framework to develop, build, and subsequently express, via a coherent system of delivery, the unsystematic nature of intuition. Thinking also seemed to hold the context of the overall consultation within a timed and sequential schedule.

Intuiting

Intuitive processes manifested without any apparent external stimulus. Once triggered, a stream of consciousness would ensue, where one intuition would often initiate another intuition. Spontaneous intuitive phenomena would become apparent through the five senses. Visual sensing was the key way I perceived information, followed by touch, sound, smell and taste. Visual sensing and sounds were symbolic or figurative, while touch, smell and taste would have a direct, representational meaning. Visual sensing appeared as seeing in my mind’s eye, rather like seeing a visual idea, remembering a dream or seeing an idea. Visual sensing most often initiated the flow of consciousness, upon which the other senses would follow and become apparent to me. Often, spontaneous ideas would spring forth from these sensed perceptions which were relevant to the client’s situation, dilemmas and life-events. At times these could also be relevant for people with whom the client was associated.

How

This piece of data collecting aimed to capture information which would lead to clarifying how these cognitive processes of thinking and intuition were utilised and applied. Through application of the timeline technique, I would gain an insight into the issues of my client in a manner which would provide a temporal perspective of past, present and future. Much like the artist Paul Klee (2000), I would allow ‘a line to take a walk’, and through this process I may notice a (time)line forming in my imagination. I would follow this line and observe any shape, form, colour or texture becoming apparent, and notice its direction. Upon the line I would see images, patterns or motifs develop which I understood denoted events, and feelings associated with them. I would trace the line to my right (their left) and notice images which I would understand as indicative of past events, and then follow this line back to the person, (where this central location would
denote their present situation), and then continue to flow in a direction to my left, (their right) indicating features I would perceive as those of future eventualities. In this future orientation, I would see potential occurrences, options or outcomes. It was important to maintain a consistent narrative commentary of these insights to the client as these were the basis of the consultation. Focus, perception, ideation and expression are essential components of my cognitive processes, which allow me to bring meaning to the session.

One of the systems I use (which mediates between thinking and intuition) is rather like that of a self-interview technique where I mentally ask questions of myself. My ‘logical self’ becomes the interviewer, and poses questions for my ‘psychic self’ to investigate. The ‘psychic self’ scans, and gleans responses and then feeds the information back to my ‘logical self’. My ‘logical self’ then returns with a response. This in turn, is reported to the client.

At times information seemed to spring from different parts of my mind, which I sensed was located, in different areas of my brain. Sometimes I would find that I was accessing the information in an area which felt to be associated with the front right of my brain, and this would often be about the client’s current social circle. To the left centre of my brain I would often find information presenting which related to new factors that would be about to present an influence into in the person’s social circle. Location seemed to be relevant to comprehending the inter-relationships of people to the client. Deceased family appeared to be situated in certain a certain order; maternal side to the right and paternal to the left. Similarly, the generations seem to sit behind the client in ascending order. This seems to aid recognition, and once they are identified, the communication often flowed more readily. I was interested to note a similar formula of positioning was used in the frieze dedicated to Maori tribal ancestors, on the interior wall facing the entrance to the marae at the Mt Albert Unitec campus. Sometimes I noticed that I would gauge geographical proximity in my brain, like a compass using locations of north, south, east and west. An awareness of my having an internal compass to be able to chart the passage of a person’s life is an extremely helpful device.
3. How did I engage an empathetic process?

When I engaged an open and friendly approach, particularly from the first contact, it helped to create conditions which were conducive to the establishment of an empathetic connection. Often people came for a consultation due to distress, crisis, and even as a last resort. I sensed some were nervous or unsure of the process of the session, and at times, fearful of what they may be told. I was aware of my responsibilities and conscious on several occasions, of my client being apprehensive. I informed them of the sequence of the session and asked if they required any further clarification before I began. From their first contact (by phone, text or email), upon their arrival, during and after the session, I endeavoured to put them at ease. The pre-session conversation would help lead to my empathetic engagement with the client. During this time, I was aware of recognising a rapport and mirroring between the client and myself. These are often precursors of engaging an empathetic connection. At times, I would notice and match the pace of their speech, acknowledge and validate their experiences through active and reflective listening.

My process of envisioning their lifepath helps to establish a familiarity with them. This seems to have the ability to enable me to ‘see through their eyes’. As indicated by Rogers’ (1951) description of empathy, I too observed that events and feelings became more tangible ‘as if’ I had experienced them, while at the same time I speculated that they were the experiences of the client. During empathetic engagement, I often noticed that I spoke using the first-person vernacular of “I” instead of “you” and used words and phrases to describe events or feelings, which I sensed belonged to my client. I would ask the client if the descriptions I conveyed, had happened to them, or were feelings they had experienced, or they recognised these people (deceased or still living). Responses such as, “yes this is exactly how I feel”, or “you are so right” encouraged me to recognise that I had established an empathetic connection. The establishment of empathy early in the session was vital to the overall success of the session. Often, I could relate to their life experiences, in that I have been through a troubled marriage, separation and have brought up my children alone. Also, I have had cancer and while I am eighteen years post-diagnosis, both my parents have been diagnosed and died from cancer since then. These are life events which I comprehend and have had a huge effect.
on my ability to bear up, and endure life’s challenges. At times I shared some of this information, if I felt it would help the client.

This empathetic process leads to the development of an intuitive connection which would open a pathway for the subsequent flow of session and would happen in most cases. However, in one consultation it did not happen, and I found myself involved in a game of cat and mouse. No matter what I said or did, the two children who barged their way into the session (to accompany their parents) denied everything I said and walked out in protest. I felt very challenged by their disbelief of the vital pieces of information which I imparted to them and lost my confidence. I sensed their deceased sibling (in spirit) was very upset by their manner, but once they had left, she was relieved and became more animated and comfortable once she was with just her parents and myself. Following the session, I looked up her name on the internet and read an obituary which confirmed that the information I had shared with the family was accurate! Despite this I was very upset by the session and searched for ways of dealing with it, so I could re-engage my self-confidence and continue with my work. This incident led me to use my reflective journal to focus on the event, and as Jones (2014) described, I analysed the material, and this helped me to process things and eventually I was able to find ways to lead to professional development. I resolved that in future if I sensed a contentious challenge which prevented my empathetic engagement, I would state this to my client and consider discontinuing the session.

4. Was I aware of/attend to, any unconscious processes?

A large number of the unconscious processes I perceived were of a visual nature. Visual impressions seemed to open up the pathway to receive other sensory perceptions. Kinaesthetic sensations were the next most commonly experienced. I may perceive these as a physical pressure, for example in the form of a forcefield, or as if being nudged or touched. The type of pressure would convey an intent. So, if the pressure was warm and reassuring I would make an understanding relevant to that and convey it to the client.

These perceptions would mostly occur when my eyes were closed, but not exclusively. Closing my eyes would enable me to concentrate on the inner realms, of both myself and of the client. This process would help to reduce distractions and enable me to facilitate further explorations into the ‘thread’ of a concept. I would find that the
experiences of this thread would ‘come to mind’ rather like experiencing a thought, or as if it was something I had already experienced or learned and I was able to retrieve it from my memory. I needed to still my mind, as if in a meditative state, to achieve this process. Visual impressions seemed to open the pathway to receive other sensory perceptions.

It was in these moments of depth I was also able to become aware of the personalities, emotions, nature or intent of people associated with the client. They may be deceased or alive. At times I was aware of acting as a mediator between the personality of that person and convey this to the client and sometimes I seemed to be acting as a message carrier between them, particularly in when that person was a deceased loved one, or if it was a being who was a being who was acting in the role of a spirit guide who was connected to the client. I may hear sounds, which could become apparent in the form of words or music, and I may also sense movement, or pressure. Sometimes I would be aware of cooking smells, the fragrance of perfume or the smell of pipe smoke, trees and flowers, the smell of cities, industries or agriculture and coastal or inland locations. New Zealand has a distinctive smell to me which is reminiscent of the native bush, while the smells I associate with London may be of the underground rail network, the streets or the river Thames. There was a wide array of aromas associated with events or with significant people connected with my client. Often, when I would convey these to the client, they would have fond memories they would share of, for example, a grandmother who would cook up a batch of scones for afternoon tea, and would bring out the best china especially for family visits.

5. Was I aware of any specific language or images?

When observing the images which I had recorded, I found that was able to remember quickly and directly, the event within the consultation. My senses were associated more acutely, than by reading through the written data alone. The recording of written and illustrative material seemed to enrich the data, and make it more readily available for analysis.

Many devices of language were infused in my verbal communications during a consultation. Such figures of speech included metaphor, parable, irony, paradox, similes. There were occasions when my language would become expressive and poetic utilising alliteration. One such example was when a client asked what their loved one wanted
done with their ashes, and the reply I perceived in was: “it is immaterial.” I explained to my client that the meaning in this context was that ashes belong to the material world, to which their loved no longer belonged, but recommended they base their decision on what was going to be the most convenient.

The table below lists images and words which were apparent to my senses and significant to the session. I conveyed these to the client either by verbally describing them and explaining their metaphoric meaning, drawing images in a sketchbook or a combination of both language and image.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Images</th>
<th>Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic images: Greek frieze, amphora, koru, tokotoko (carved Maori walking stick), Russian dolls, hourglass, heart, balloon, clam shell, bubble, blue vase, bridge, uniforms, eye, gold ring, diamond ring, mirror, colours.</td>
<td>Language of: conversation, Spanish, structured language (lacking metaphors and other figures of speech) instructions, advice, reassurance, reminiscences. Poems, songs, parables, (Return of the prodigal son, Heroes Journey), fables (Hare and the tortoise). Sayings, metaphors: know thyself, sands of time, game of cat and mouse, life’s rich tapestry, light bulb moment, ebb and flow of life, stumbling blocks, the human condition, nature abhors a vacuum, finding a balance in life, able to move on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifepath: represented by a shore line, nautical chart, graph, profile of buildings and mountains, steps, a climbing path up a rock face, bridge, path through the bush, stream, ball of (or unravelled) knitting wool.</td>
<td>My own sayings and expressions: tension at the point of change, bell curve of life, charting life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational devices / diagrams: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, Johari’s Window, bell curve.</td>
<td>Nautical conventions and sayings: in the doldrums, make headway, even keeled, sailing close to the wind, chart your course, set a course, plot your own course, navigate your way through life, plain sailing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nautical: sailing close to the wind, set sail, compass, chart, plot a course, boat, solo navigation, doldrums (Intertropical Convergence Zone where two current systems meet at the equator), high tide line, flotsam.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing living and deceased people: parents, grandparents, other family, relatives, ancestors, babies, friends, pets, historic figures.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locations: countries, oceans, maps, property, houses, beaches, estuary.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 10** Table of images and words
6. When I allowed my mind to engage in a process of free association with any images and language, what observations and insights was I making?

The implications of the images and words which I perceived could be understood as literal or symbolic. I needed to be very discerning to comprehend and convey their meanings accurately to the client. At times, I found that I should have presented a literal meaning for the client. One such occasion was when I perceived a clients’ deceased relative dressed in dirty, tattered clothes. I interpreted this to mean they were a farmer, but my client said this was not correct. However, just before the end of the session, the client clarified that their relative had been killed in an earthquake. I then realised the significance of the appearance of their clothes, as damaged and covered in the debris of the earthquake. However, on another occasion when I saw a bulldozer being driven by a young man, I perceived him to be my clients partner and that he was a bulldozer driver. On this occasion, I was accurate with my seeing this meaning as literal. It is of paramount importance for me to describe accurately what I see. This is something I need to bear in mind in future sessions with clients.

I became very aware of how, at times, I was sensitive to the words I used during sessions. If a word did not match the mental perception I was trying to express, I would be aware of a jarring feeling within my body, and I would need to search for a more suitable word, phrase or metaphor. I concluded that this was a result of the very sensitive nature of my empathetic state. Sometimes, when words seemed insufficient, I would draw an image in a sketchbook to convey my impressions. Most of the images would be diagrammatic or symbolic. Sometimes after the session, I developed the drawing, and I found this allowed opportunities to comprehend meaning.

Metaphor can be a poetic expression which, during a consultation, may arise from an unconscious process. At times, metaphors may be the expressions of a personality and unique identifiers of a person. Like the blind sea captain of Dylan Thomas’ Under Milk Wood (1954), my eyes are not physically ‘seeing’. I am using the embodied experience (of the client) to survey the client’s world and (frequently) utilising metaphor to convey the impressions which I perceive. As a part of this process, I became aware of images. Symbolic images are like a visual metaphor, and I made use of these to aid my understanding of the client’s world.
Impressions of images became apparent at the outset of the consultation, and indicated to me that I had engaged my perceptions with the unique character of my client. Colours of differing shades and hues merged into images or misty forms and indicated that the information was becoming apparent. After this the sensory impressions became more three dimensional with forms, textures, words or phrases emerged which were unique and specific to the individual. By using the system of the timeline, I perceive issues of a person’s life, and observe a progressive flow from the past, to the present and into the future. This timeline image would develop, and the most commonly perceived images were a curvy line, a path, a graph the profile of skyscraper or a shoreline. If I would notice on the shoreline that the tide was out, I understood this as a metaphoric meaning that their life was at a low ebb. If I sensed the tide would be coming back in quickly, the meaning I draw was that their life was moving from a place of quiet reflection and introspection to a time of great movement. Such images gave me ideas about the potential of forthcoming events and how the person could harness their opportunities and options.

![Figure 11 The shaping of heritage. (own graphic)](image.png)

An image I sensed with a client is seen in figure 11, *the shaping of heritage*. The meaning I drew from this shows lines developing from right of the page (past) denoting the persons heritage, twisting together rather like the double helix of the DNA, intersecting then separating, coming to a definitive line (present) then continuing, to create two solitary lines, and thus forming an opening (future). On one of these, an offshoot has
grown, and a flower has blossomed. The meaning I derived from these symbols were that while qualities and characteristics were inherited from parents, the client’s uniqueness was a creative and powerful action which was shaping the client’s future. The lines and images merged in the centre, which I understood to represent the present, and to the left these lines unfurled into new images, signifying a life transition which like the flower would blossom and become a new phase of life. The flower appeared to be that of a lotus and this has various meanings including; transformation, unfolding wisdom, intelligence, creativity, spiritual flowering. All these interpretations had a relevance during the session.

Some of the underlying concepts which I observed as having an important factor of governing clients’ lives were fundamental ideas such as the pursuit of a sense of agency, the search for self-identity and the human condition. I noticed that these concepts guided the context I utilised to assist my client in their life choices. This enabled me to bear in mind a broad perspective, while attending to the details in the conveying of guidance.

An arbitrary but coincidental occurrence, such as an experience or an event happening concurrently with the reading provided me with opportunities to convey a significant point to the client. I remember a cricket singing outside the caravan just as I was telling the client they need to allow the joy of music in their life. I used the occurrence of the cricket singing to emphasise the significance of the point I was trying to convey, that they to be open and to pay attention to allow the simplicity of beautiful moments to imbue their life. This reminded me of Jung’s (1973) story of the scarab beetle, when his client was describing a nightmare dream she had had of being trapped in an Egyptian sarcophagus, when at the same time a scarab beetle flew through an open window. He came to refer to this type of coincidence as synchronicity. A similar incident happened during a consultation when a daddy long
legs spider appeared down a thread of silk right next to my client. Rather than being frightened, she chose to see this as a symbolic event with a message. I told her how the spider symbolised the essence of her feminine creative energy, of how she was delicately crafting herself a new anchor for her life. My client loved this experience and it provided a wonderful opportunity to convey a personal meaning to her.

B. ‘In action’ reflection: Self-observation, in the moment during consultation

7. How am I feeling?
I asked the question “how am I feeling” so as to identify my personal experiences, any triggers and adjustments which I made, as opposed to those which may arise from an empathetic engagement with the client, where I may be sensing their feelings as my own. I am seeking to deepen my understanding and to look for ways which could enhance my knowledge about how I function within my practice. Feelings which arise from an empathetic engagement, and were experienced implicitly, rather than explicitly, are discussed in question 5. The feelings which are analysed here are those experienced explicitly.

I experienced a range of feelings during consultations. I scrutinized the narrative arising from the twenty-five consultations which were recorded in my diary. I summarised the responses and made a list of the words which related to feelings. I noticed that these feelings were perceived by means of both the physical and mental faculties.

Table of feelings, changes and interventions
I summarised the responses and grouped them in main themed headings. I drew up a table of three columns and two rows. Into the first column I put the list of words and grouped them into two rows. In the first column, I recorded the physical feelings and in the second, the mental feelings. Due to the often-fleeting nature of feelings, this was a difficult task and I was unable to record all of them. Each session was an hour long and I found it problematic to recapture and name all the feelings I sensed during this period of time. It was the memorable and predominant feelings that I managed to capture and record in the diary, and as such this table represents the data to the best of my ability. The number in brackets next to the description of the feeling represents the number of
times this feeling is recorded in the data. The second list signifies any change to, or
development of these feelings during, or by the end of the session. The third list
represents responses to any critical issues which I addressed during the consultation
using Schön’s (1983) method of “reflecting in action”, and the intervention which I
utilised to create any change.

Table of feelings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Feelings</th>
<th>Any change during or by the end of the session</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor health:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unwell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tired</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good health:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comfortable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>energised</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>better</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rejuvenated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Feelings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Issues:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stressed</td>
<td>calmer</td>
<td>Became present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>detached</td>
<td>focused</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agitated</td>
<td>upset</td>
<td>Allowed space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>challenged</td>
<td>tearful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overwhelmed</td>
<td>bereft</td>
<td>Felt responsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confronted</td>
<td>tired</td>
<td>Defended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time-poor</td>
<td>calm</td>
<td>Tried and tried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not-prepared</td>
<td>relieved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concerned (about</td>
<td></td>
<td>Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my competence)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Congruence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concerned for client</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shared my concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>happy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gentle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poised</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comfortable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enthusiastic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>animated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enjoying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>present</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>focused</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


| connected                          |        |        |
| connected                         |        |        |
| compassionate                     |        |        |
| supportive                        |        |        |
| sympathetic                       |        |        |
| empathetic                        |        |        |
| touched (2)                       |        |        |
| moved                             |        |        |
| confident (3)                     |        |        |
| competent                         |        |        |
| prepared                          |        |        |
| engaged (2)                       |        |        |
| positive (2)                      |        |        |

**Figure 13** Table of feelings.

Where physical feelings were noted, there was a subsequent change on each occasion. My physical feelings seem to be prone to greater contrasts and changes over the duration of the session. However, fewer physical responses were evident, compared to the observations of mental responses. Much of the time, I was not paying attention to embodied experience (physical sensations) because I put aside any pre-occupation with the self, to give focus to the client. I was aware that I would often become so attuned to the client that I seemed to be sensing their memories, experiences and dilemmas. When I recounted these, the client would often confirm that these were indeed theirs. Often this would go a step further, and my awareness would extend into those of people known to the client. This assisted me in building on my familiarity with the factors (dilemmas, relationships, situations, choices) associated with the client. Through this process, I was able to provide insightful assistance, and help the client to understand events and, at times I could foresee the consequences of their circumstances more clearly. Through engagement with these factors I was able to give options to the client (for example, with regard to any decision-making and with planning), or to even accept circumstances, and to enable them to move ahead with their life.

The mental feelings encompassed an array of cognitive senses and responses. Some of these mental processes gave rise to emotions and view-points. Of the twenty-three different responses observed, there were seven recorded changes and developments. As aforementioned in the discussion on feelings, there were times when the mental
feelings were also validated by the client as feelings which they were, or had been, experiencing.

Challenging events which were addressed “in action” utilising interventions as noted in the third column. Some of these interventions were productive, while others were not. These are discussed in further detail throughout the feedback.

I seem to be more aware of my own feelings at the commencement of the session, but as the session develops, I become more aware of the client and then less aware of myself. My engagement of an empathetic stance seems to play a part in this, as well as the requirement of focusing on the issues of the client for the duration of the session, which provides a distraction from a pre-occupation of self. There is a requirement of my discernment, whereby I need to separate information, sensations and experiences which are about me and those which are for the client. It seems that the exercise of gaining a sense of detachment from my own subjective energy and harnessing an empathetic stance is beneficial for me, as well as helpful for the process of the reading the client. My efforts to create a warm and accepting environment for the client, seems to not only uplift them, but also has a positive effect for me as well. The objective of achieving an inspired engagement with the client, and creation of a harmonious atmosphere seems to influence my well-being and imbues me with tranquillity and calmness.

However, there was an incident of not being able to achieve this during one of the sessions, and upon reflection, I realised that I did not achieve an empathetic stance. This may have been due to there being too many clients (four people) and each of them were in a different process of grief for the loss of a close family member (about whom they had sought the consultation). Elizabeth Kubler-Ross (1969) identified that denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance are manifest in the stages of grief. Each of my clients seemed to be at different stages of processing their grief, and I found this difficult to accommodate as a group consultation. They seemed to be transferring these emotions out towards me. There was a general feeling of discomfort and I found it very difficult to create a warm environment from which a harmonious dialogue could ensue. Part of the difficulty for me was also created by the proximity of the seating arrangements. One person was seated next to me and the others sat in front of me, this made it difficult to engage with them simultaneously as a group. I found that the two
younger ones who were sitting opposite me were acting as ‘gate-keepers’ to the session, and I noticed how their facial expressions oscillated between guarded and hostile. It seemed that no matter what I said was correct, and although the messages from their relative in spirit were flowing to me clearly, their denials of these messages being accurate were upsetting to their loved one. This apparent resistance was making it very difficult for me as the person in the middle (the medium) to develop the session. Eventually one of the clients got up and left, and not long after another followed suit. At this point I also perceived that their spirit loved one had also left, as she was so upset by their behaviour. She conveyed to me that this is what it had been like for her when she was in the physical plane, in that her siblings were often hostile and impulsive. Not long after this another member of the group (the one who had booked the session) left and appeared to be consoling them. Eventually the two left, but the other client returned and wanted the session to resume. However, their person in spirit was fed up with the dynamic and did not return until the session was nearing the end and conveyed that there was a more comfortable atmosphere and wanted to continue. I felt very upset about the disruptions which had interrupted the flow of messages and prevented my ability to communicate messages which could have brought some comfort to the group. I also felt very challenged and personally confronted. It was very upsetting for me and I felt exhausted by the end of the session. It had shaken me, and I felt my confidence had taken a knock. I did not take any payment. After they left I looked up the deceased person on google and learned through reading a newspaper obituary that the factors about the person’s life which I had conveyed, and they denied as accurate, were in fact a precise description of their loved one.

Sometimes at the end of a session the client will ask if I feel drained. Perhaps this is because they can see my deep engagement and sustained concentration. I witness events, emotions, interactions, and the interplay of relationships with family, friends, community and society. I also see this in relation to a flow of time and the actual, and the potential, changes which may take place given their choices juxtaposed alongside external events. This is indeed an epic task which requires my deep and undivided concentration. To achieve this, I need to be organised, prepared and poised. I may feel exhausted if the client is not willing to interact or participate in the session, and instead sits and listens without making comments or asking questions, and only wants to be told
information by me. This feels as if I am delivering a monologue, and that the client is a spectator, and as such this inhibits a natural and easy flow of communication. Under such conditions, I do feel drained. Sometimes the client may start to participate just as their appointment is nearing the end, which results in the session going over time. They may show me momentoes and photos a loved one who has been contacted, or give me affirming feedback about the content of my dialogue. Very often these form a part of the developmental process of the session and if they are not confirmed as accurate it stunts the potential of the session and inhibits its development into a fruitful and productive engagement. However, when there is an easy engagement between the client and I, I do not feel that my energy is drained. In fact, I find quite the opposite in that I often feel uplifted, alert, and invigorated. Giving a psychic life coaching session, at times, has a healing effect on me.

8. What methods and modalities am I implementing?
I am empathetically engaged during much of the time when I am with the client, and to a certain degree, I am unaware of exactly what processes I am employing. This question was formulated to gain data which, through analysis, could lead to a greater understanding of the systems I employ during my sessions with clients. The immediacy of journaling following the session helped with my recall, and so too did the use of the various approaches which I used to help me break down the data which arose from thematic analysis. These approaches included sketches, diagrams and the development of the pie chart, which is discussed later in the section.

The major modalities I utilised were: intuitive, NLP, counselling and pragmatic. While the intuitive modality was always used to commence and conclude sessions, it was often used during the session as well. I reflected ‘in action’ to decide when was appropriate to switch between the modalities. A description of the features of the major components follows:

The opening involved intuitive processes, whereby I quietened my mind from any distractions, focused on the client and drew my attention to the impressions which became apparent to me. I familiarised myself empathetically with current life conditions affecting them, any past issues which have contributed to their present life experiences, and then I turned my focus to their future potentials. At this juncture I conveyed my
understandings of symbolic images I perceived, their meanings and how they could have an effect on the future course of their life.

The NLP methods involved sensing their lifepath which may have expressed images such as a sea shore, a curved line, a graph, a building or a path up a rock face. This lifepath image conveyed a meaning to me of the pathway of their life, showing a direction from their past, to their present and into their future.

Counselling processes included establishing rapport, active and silent listening and checking for possible re-engagement of empathy throughout the process. I employed reflective listening to help clients gain clarity around their issues, and to acknowledge difficulties or even triumphs. There were times when this process was not appropriate, such as when the client wanted answers to specific questions. This emphasised to me the contrast of my roles, and skills embraced within my approach to life coaching.

The pragmatic stage is where I offered practical information and advice. I gave instructions on how to develop life skills, recommendations on how to manage stress, guidelines to help utilise their intuition, outlined how to meditate and described ways to deal assertively with conflict. There were times that I recommended they seek specialist medical help, obtain financial advice, develop their education and

![Figure 14 Clock face pie chart (own graphic)](image)
qualifications, seek out support groups or read appropriate literature to develop self-esteem and engage in activities to increase their social circle or physical fitness.

By utilising the format of a pie chart, I was able to identify the modality, sequential progress and timed proportion of each of my processes. Each consultation is an hour, and this pie chart diagram also represents a clock face with the session commencing at twelve o’clock, and progressing (clockwise) to the conclusion of the session at the twelve o’clock position. In the session demonstrated by the pie chart diagram (above), intuitive processes represented the largest portion of the session, counselling was the second, pragmatic was next and the smallest segment involved NLP.

The following represents the individual methods of each modality, utilised over the research period. These individual aspects are detailed within each of their respective main operative mode.

A = Counselling. Reflective listening, silent listening (allowing time for the client to speak, paying attention but not interrupting), paraphrasing, empathy, congruently conveying what I perceive, providing a respectfulness and unconditional regard for the client, being centred on the client. At times I am also aware of utilising these processes in order to ‘mediate’ communication between my client and their deceased loved ones.

B = Intuitive. Unconscious processes including impressions received via the five senses, prayer, following a flow of consciousness, sensing personalities (of client and of those connected with them both in the physical and spirit realms), prophet, clairvoyant, providing inspiration, facilitating transcendence.

C = NLP. Sensing the ‘timeline’ of the client and gaining insight into their lifepath, allegorical story-telling, reframing (expressing a concept in an alternative way).

D = Pragmatic. Advisor, sharing of information, educator, referring to specialists, recommending structure, and strategies.

Some of these processes may appear in several modalities. Allegorical story-telling is utilised in NLP, and counselling while its inspiration may come from intuitive processes. Advice sharing and practical guidance may be situated in counselling and arise also from intuitive processes. However, some counsellors, such as those who use a person-

---

19 Pertaining to supernatural dimensions beyond the physical
20 Surpassing physical boundaries, an experience beyond normal limits

83
centred approach, may avoid giving recommendations to their client on what type of actions to take given certain situations. Whereas, a client may seek out an intuitive coach because they want them to foresee certain future events and outcomes and give advice accordingly.

The pie chart diagram depicts one consultation only. The proportion of each segment is different in each session. The beginning and ending of each session is always intuitive, the second stage always utilises the NLP approach of visualising a person’s timeline. Counselling and pragmatic approaches take up varying amounts of time in different sessions, and sometimes may not even be part of the content. The quantity of time spent on each modality varies. I need to be responsive to the client’s needs within the session, while simultaneously facilitating a fluidity of the processes. This can be mentally demanding. To facilitate this, I need to retain a balance of being aware enough to still be engaged in every-day reality of mental perceptions via the five senses, while simultaneously being able to enter and attend to a heightened state of awareness. This enables me to be sensitive to an otherworldliness.

There are times when the client will ask me a direct question, for example when I am in the counselling phase, and I will need to gauge my readiness, ability and the appropriateness of giving a direct answer. I need to give a valued service to my client, so I may need to be sensitive and choose wisely how I respond to direct questions. In order to achieve this, may require me to come out of one modality and enter another. This required an unbroken reflexive response, while bearing in mind my ethical principles (see appendix 2.) and maintaining my dedicated service to the client. Sometimes I was asked to disclose information which could be of a sensitive nature, for example if a partner was being unfaithful. I needed to be very careful in my responses. Often, I found myself sharing information in a way which would put the onus back on the client to seek external validation in response to my impressions.

Each consultation had a different balance of talking time. Sometimes I noticed that a client expected me to do most of the talking, while other clients seemed to want to spend a great deal of their session time talking. Time would be spent prior to the session where I would invite the client to talk about the circumstances which brought them to make the appointment, and what they hoped the session would achieve. After this I would ‘set the scene’

---

21 Concerned with a different world, one that is not associated with the ‘here and now’.
by describing the process of the consultation and then detail what they could expect from the session. Many clients seemed to get a great deal out of the pre-session discussion, and at times I would adopt a counselling process and give them space to talk, and engage active or silent listening. This would often assist me to facilitate rapport and help me to initiate an empathetic engagement. However, at times I found that due to the preamble, and engaging the intuitive late, the session often went over the one hour. This often meant that I was spending much longer with some clients and that I was not using time effectively.

During the session, a flow of conversation may ensue between the client and myself. The encounter has a dialogical and narrative process, with many layers and processes unfolding, or even folding in on themselves. There would be times of silence, or times of very animated conversation, times for tears and times for laughter. I often found that with my engagement of empathy, I was able to recount elements and events of my client’s life experiences. In so doing, I found that I was taking the role of a narrator of their life story. This method enabled me to connect with the energy and flow of their life story and engaged at various intervals as significant for their session. I saw these junctures as signposts or trigger points which, by my retelling and giving a description of the various factors associated with the phenomena, my clients gained a perspective to help them to move ahead with their lives, make decisions or even to just acknowledge an event as significant. Through this narrative exchange a space was provided for the client to recall and experience a range of feelings and responses from happiness and elation through to pathos, sorrow and confusion. In this way, the narrative space can be beneficial to clients when dealing with the challenges of life. Dinesen (as cited in Riessman, 2008) suggests “All sorrows can be borne if you can put them in a story...tell a story about them” (p. 10).
The tempo and pace of the narrative was crucial and at times there would be a poetic, lyrical and inspirational quality to the dialogue. Often the client would actively participate in this and it would become a mutually created and harmoniously composed, interactive engagement. Sometimes a client would express that they had undergone a transformative experience.

I have become more aware of the different roles I harness in order to assist my clients. These range from advisor, friend, familiar, interpreter, listener, confidante, life-story witness, on-call helper, encourager, educator and philosopher. The session may offer the client hope, solace, comfort, and transcendence. The illustration (above) describes aspects which were operating between the client and I during one session. On the left are features which I perceived which the client was experiencing, or seeking while on the right are the various components with which I am responding and utilising. The mutuality of this session seemed to me like a piece of music which was carefully orchestrated by the client and me, where different instruments and tempos merged and created a tonal, narrative interplay. This affirmed Brennan, Drake, and Gortz’ (2008) notion of life coaching as a co-created exchange between client and coach.

Sometimes clients would engage in a process of waiting for me to disclose information to provide validation before they would engage in the session. The metaphor, ‘a game
of cat and mouse’ came to mind during one particularly challenging session (which has been discussed previously). Although the appointment had been booked by a man (just for himself), he arrived with his wife and two adult daughters. Their inter-family banter had a strong presence in the flow of the dialogue between me and the clients, and theirs ultimately overtook the session. The forceful way both daughters asserted their sense of their being correct, and to try and prove me wrong, seemed to be a bigger need for them, than to gain any assistance from the session. Upon subsequent investigation of this challenging phenomena, I learned that similar scenarios are often present in patient/doctor, and client/counsellor consultations, where the client wants to be dominant, and assert their own superiority as being the expert on their life.

I found it very challenging to experience this. There were many layers of emotionality within each person, and within the family as a group. It seemed like I was trying to mediate between those in the group, extend a welcoming space for their departed sister/daughter, assert my authenticity as a psychic, maintain my professional composure, and engage an effective session. I had trouble establishing rapport and empathy simultaneously, with four people. I found that I could concentrate and provide a focus on one or two people at a time, but not on the whole group, who were in crisis and suffering grief (in different stages).

This concludes the section which has discussed the findings of the data gathered from the ‘on action’ and ‘in action’ questions. Next, we move to reflect on findings and identify what has been learned, and any factors for new development.

Figure 16 Game of Cat and Mouse (own graphic)
C. ‘Critical reflection’: Learnings and development

I found this reflexive stage of my research very revealing, and consequently, I implemented various developmental modifications. Some issues which arose I acted upon immediately, others I plan to apply in subsequent consultations, while others will involve further investigation, strategic planning or financial investment. Reflecting on the data helped me to uncover factors about my practice about which I had been previously unaware.

9. Did I learn anything new?

I addressed the problem of clients not showing up for their appointment by sending out text reminders one hour prior to their session. This also served as an effective way of checking they had all the details correct, such as the address and the cost.

I found that keeping a visual journal for recording research data was a useful tool not only for analysis, but it also provided a way of elaborating on written or spoken communication. It inspired me to use a sketch book during my sessions to illustrate ideas or convey concepts to clients. I used it to make quick diagrams, sketches of my mental perceptions, and write words and phrases which I wanted to emphasise to my client. Due to time constraints, these notes and sketches needed to be executed quickly, so as to minimise any interference with the flow of the session.

A few moments of reflection prior to the session helped me become calm and centred. It was a good way to bring my attention to my work, and enabled me to put aside any internal chatter and to become focused on my client. Sometimes this inspired me to sketch, write quick notes, or brainstorm ideas which I perceived may have been relevant to the client. Sometimes I would give these to the client to take away, however I don’t think they had as much meaning for them as they did for me. Perhaps this may be due to the great interest I have in my work, and the curiosity with which I approach the phenomena which may arise from moments of inspiration. Sometimes the content and philosophic views which manifest from the session fascinate me. I hope the client will want to explore these in more depth, but often they are coming for specific answers or details about their life. They may want guidance on how they should locate themselves
within the flow of life-events, and consequences which may challenge them in the future (or the present), and not be interested in factors beyond their preoccupations.

After the sessions, I needed to recall mental images which I had experienced, but it was difficult to hold these in my mind for the subsequent analysis. I discovered that by going back into a state of deep relaxation, after the client left, helped me to recall the images. I learned that the language of symbolic thinking was recapitulated by quiet reflection, much like a meditative state, and this helped me to remember the phenomena which had emerged during the session. As in dreams, symbols seem to have a meaning which is relevant (and understood) in a specific context. As an inner theatre of imagery, symbols are the language of the unconscious and don't require analysis or translation while in the unconscious state. It is only upon awakening and re-engaging with everyday life, that recall and making meaning of these experiences can prove to be challenging.

Like symbols, metaphor is also a language of the unconscious, and I am aware of being sensitive to these faculties of my perceptions during consultations. The clock face pie chart I developed gave me a system with which to recall and identify my modalities and methods within the consultation; the majority of which were unconscious processes. Furthermore, sketching images which I perceived erupting from the unconscious aided my comprehension of such.

It can be quite difficult to maintain a concentrated focus throughout the sixty-minute session during which I am engaged in a mental process of stimulus, cognizance and expression. The information I perceive incubates through a creative process and comes to maturity through a combination of structured systems. At times, it was quite difficult to maintain a constant focus and to be able to process, and then present meaningful information to client, particularly when the client did not respond back to me. This became, in essence, a monologue. Having a rapport with the client seemed to help the process of an in-person engagement. Sensitivity to the needs of the client was used to judgement gauge when to switch to different approaches during the consultation. Switching from a state of deep empathy, to that of ‘everyday cognitive processing’ and to ensure the continuity of the session was, at times demanding for me. Becoming conscious of the systems of my methods and modalities I employ, has given me an extremely helpful insight into my practice. Knowing how I retrieve information means
that I can, in the future, be more deliberate about knowing when to apply these approaches during sessions.

Something quite significant which was revealed from the pie chart, was that I was not including the conversation at the start and end as a part of the consultation time, and as a result I invariably went over the hour session time. I decided thus to inform clients that there would be an additional charge if they wished to have more time. Adhering to this new policy is difficult, as am accustomed to commencing the one hour at the start of the intuitive engagement. However, upon reviewing the pie-chart, I realised that I was not including this time which started as soon as the client arrived. Interactions and processes would occur during these ‘conversations’, which included elements of counselling and coaching and as such, of value to the client. Important information was being shared by the client which would be an integral part of their session. Rapport and empathy would often be initiated, and this too was a part of the coaching process. I was undervaluing my professional services by not recognising these as an integral part of the session time for which they had not been paying and were also causing timing problems with my work schedule.

Often, I become aware of the element of irony which may be active in that person’s life circumstances. Irony and paradox are important literary devices, and I often observe these elements playing an active role as part of the consultation process. Sometimes I encouraged my client to accept this as part of life, rather than struggling against. I found myself using examples such as in Shakespeare’s tragic play ‘Romeo and Juliet’. A note from my reflective journal, which was a comment to a client reads, ‘Isn’t it interesting that the theme of the star-crossed lovers in Romeo and Juliet is as true today as it was in Shakespeare’s time’. Use of this kind of rhetorical question seems to have an effect of helping a client to see how this may be part of the timeless, human condition. The theme of hopeless love situations where two people are destined to not be together due to societal or family or moral conflicts, I also found this to be a recurrent archetypal theme. Being able to explain this to my clients, when they have a similar life situation, conveys a sense of connection to a larger life-drama as part of the human condition to which we are all connected.

Sometimes, I see that aspects of my clients’ lives are quite different to how they appear on the surface to the client’s perception of their situation. They may seek a consultation
with me because they have an expectation that I have an ability to uncover truths, but what I find may have an ironic twist. People may be looking for something beneath the surface, something that may not be obvious to them, and their purpose for coming to me is because they want me to utilise my skills for locating ‘the truth’. Perhaps in this role I am like a ‘mother of irony’ (as in the Greek tradition of drama where the truth is clear to the audience, but not to the character), and the people coming to me are those who are wishing to consult a wise elder who may know details which are not known to them. In one consultation, an impression appeared in my mind that I am part of a ‘collective of grandmothers’. This in itself is ironic because in my family, I am a grandmother, and the matriarch of the family. The notion came to me during a coaching session, when I felt spoken to by my own grandmother as I was simultaneously being addressed by my clients deceased grandmother. I often saw my clients being guided through life by grandparents who appeared as benevolent spiritual beings who participate in the physical conditions of life from their spirit realms, to communicate wisdom, love, laughter and support their loved ones.

The sessions are a collaborative and creative process between the client, who brings ‘the material’ for the engagement, and me as the facilitator of the approach. The session takes on a life of its own. Through the careful selection of language and by expressing images and sensory impressions, I found that I conveyed meanings and provided creative inspiration and insights for the client. This offered them an opportunity to perceive their life through a different lens. The consultations are a narrative encounter in which I seem to act as the narrator of the person’s life story.

My process works within the transformative paradigm, as referred to by Jung. It has an alchemical function on many levels, including the procedure whereby I combine counselling, art, coaching and intuition to enable a process which clients have told me has been for them, a transformative experience. Through combining my conscious and unconscious processes in the delivery of the session, I realized it is akin to that of Jung’s transcendent function of individuation (as discussed in the “Jungian Centre for Spiritual Sciences”, 2016).

---

22 I have searched to the best of my ability, to find out if this is a term which has been used before. However, it appears that it is something which I have coined myself, and has not been used elsewhere.

23 I refer to this in the context of a transformation occurring as a result of a combination of different elements.
The understanding I have developed from my experiences, as a life story narrator and communicator of messages from the spirit realms, is that I receive these via implicit sensory impressions, the languaging of such involves a great deal of metaphoric statements and requires me to harness abstract thinking and employ my understanding of metaphoric devices of the unconscious, and convey concepts coherently to the client. A surprise for me was to learn the power, healing, and a variety of benefits of the narrative exchange which takes place during a consultation. A space is provided for the client to experience a range of emotions during the construction and delivery of story. I noticed that most of the time, I would feel uplifted and healthier after a psychic life coaching session. The few occasions where I would feel drained after a problematic session where I would find it difficult to establish a rapport or empathise with the client.

10. What new knowledge could I explore to improve my practice?

The critical reflections gave me ideas to not only to improve my coaching, but also identified ways to develop my business. I gained valuable insights through this study and identified several ways I can improve my practice by exploring and utilising different aspects of storytelling including language and literary devices which are valuable ways to convey meaning. I want to become more familiar and actively conscious that my contributions to the narrative processes are done with an awareness to the crafting of a beautiful interplay of the poetry of language. I will endeavour to go beyond conversational cliched language and actively use imagery in the flow of my narrative and create a dialogue which is crafted with words and artistry to uplift and inspire my clients. As in the case of the client with the relative who died in an earthquake, I need to remember in future to tell the client what I am seeing, and to be sensitive about applying any interpretation to my perception. The use of metaphor may be helpful in certain cases where a meaning could be implicit rather than explicit.

Analysis of the clock face pie chart revealed that I was not including the pre-ambles as part of the session time. This often made me run over the one hour allocated time. Although I introduced an extra payment facility if the client wanted extra time, this only went some way to counter the problem. A way to manage this could be by ensuring that I only allow a ten-minute preamble prior to commencing the allocated session time. There were often incidents of synchronicity when external events had a meaning within the session content. Clients seemed to find such occurrences gave an extra validation
to their psychic life coaching session. Becoming more cognizant of these could bring more authenticity (or even interest) to the consultation process and may serve to elaborate the narrative.

Some of the sketches and illustrations which I make during consultations could be developed. I could use them for teaching, advertising, or purely aesthetic purposes and convey implicit and explicit meanings about my practice.

Domestic and health issues featured in my data analysis. The need for a healthy work/life balance was highlighted to address factors of ill health and the high demands of domestic responsibilities. Completion of this study will release some of my time constraints which will go some way to address these factors. However, I am soon to be a grandmother again. With the impending arrival of another addition to my family at home, I will need to be careful not to allow the time I have to address myself to my work, to be consumed by any additional demands. I have gained new knowledge and identified strategies for my practice and need to apply myself to these.

During the study period there were occasions when I experienced confrontation from clients, such as discussed in case of ‘the game of cat and mouse’. On this occasion I was asked in a most confrontation manner to explain my qualifications and experience. In future I need to pay attention to any sense of unease around similar situations and make boundaries clear to clients. Such boundaries would include limiting numbers of people attending one session and acknowledging when I notice a lack of rapport or empathy.

The data revealed that I often received perceptions regarding the client through my kinaesthetic senses, (physical feelings) such as a pressure, agitation or heat. There were times when I ignored these because I believed they were to do with me and not with my client. Similarly, there were occasions when I discounted some of my perceptions, when I noticed that the clients’ circumstances were similar to my own. However, upon reflection, despite any similarity, I usually recognised that these were associated with my client and not me. Being aware of the ways with which synchronicity was a factor of influence in my work, could help me to be more cognizant of my sensory perceptions.

Empathy has a similar trait in its “as if” quality of sensing, as discussed earlier in Rogers (1951). To acknowledge these factors (to myself and/or to the client) could be constructive to the enhancement of my sensory acuity.
Awareness of geographic proximities (areas) in my brain became a recurrent theme which was apparent through the analysis of data. There seemed to be a correlation between perceiving certain information and particular areas of my brain. Similarly, there were identifiable external locations adjacent to the client which were associated with specific generations, paternal/maternal relatives, and with time. It may be helpful to me in the future to map these out with a chart to show the relevant locations in the brain and the meanings which I make from them.

Discussion of research questions

How does reflective practice journaling inform my practice?

The use of a journal to document responses via language and illustrations, has enabled me to record my reflections and thus provide a rich data source for subsequent analysis. The structured set of open-ended questions enabled me to delve beneath the surface of my approach to practice, to search out new meanings and as such has afforded me a more in-depth knowledge of the practice of a psychic life coach. Review of the data has afforded me a broader knowledge of my practice, which has therefore helped me to increase my overall understanding and to communicate this to others. It has enabled me a richness of language and extended my vocabulary with which to articulate a more descriptive and specific knowledge about the characteristics of my approach to life coaching sessions. As a narrative practitioner, this is particularly advantageous. When dealing with interesting or difficult issues, the keeping of a reflective journal has given me a place to write it out, stand back, assess, scrutinise, draw meaning and take action accordingly.

Reflective writing, is like having a friend or a counsellor in that it has helped with my professional problems by reflecting back to me, and in so doing I have gained a different perspective. This has helped me to understand issues of life, gain clarity, and make evaluations.

How can reflective analysis before, during and after a consultation enhance a coach’s practice?

Reflective practice analysis has afforded me a greater depth of knowledge from which to make deliberate changes and improve my practice. I have become more cognizant of
the processes I utilise within my practice and this has helped me to develop self-awareness and to be more deliberate in my methods. Being able to provide and keep records of self-feedback generates documentation which can be reviewed for further and deeper reflection. This can assist the practitioner to modify, adapt, plan, and improve practice. Being a sole practitioner, can be quite isolating. Reflective analysis provides a method to increase understanding which in turn provides opportunities to become a more competent and conscious practitioner.

**Before**

Analysis of the material which I recorded from the perspective of before consultations has enabled me to review my practice and make appropriate adjustments.

**During**

I thought deeply about the temporal dilemma of reflecting-in-action. How can you pay attention to ‘how you are doing’ at the same time as ‘doing of your doing’? In other words, how can you reflect at the same time as paying attention to your client? By paying attention to the analogy of the “hawk in your mind constantly circling over your head watching and advising…” (Bolton, 2001, p. 15), I was more able to be cognizant of my processes and attend to any changes which I deemed to be necessary to attend to situations as they arose.

**After**

This process has given me a reflexive stance from which to critically assess my practice. I have identified some developmental points from which I can attend to in order to develop, and expand. I am now also more cognizant of my processes, and this has enabled me to be more deliberate in my decisions around which strategies to apply in future sessions.
Reflecting on the research method

The purpose of this study was for professional development, and to achieve this by deepening my understanding of practice.

This note (above) from my reflective journal shows my engagement in pondering the aims and questions of my research; even though I had a clear definition of the objectives, I sensed there was still more to come, which would be revealed through the discipline of research.

This was undertaken through recording and analysing my reflections. I developed three tools to aid my study. The first was the worksheet of questions (see appendix 1.), the second was a system of journaling (see data analysis methods in chapter four), and the third was an approach to reflective practice which opened pathways to new knowledge, (as shown in the following two figures).
Initially I bought several blank sketchbooks to use as journals. I did not really know where to start because my only knowledge of journaling encompassed the rambling narrative of daily occurrences and associated thoughts and emotions. As I researched this medium I was taken on an insightful journey of the accounts of authors lives and experiences and learned how this knowledge could aid a richness of understanding to one’s own life. It was by investigating the theory of reflective practice, that I was able to combine journaling with narrative thematic analysis that I was able to extend the scope of application to my research and realise a practical outcome for my specific need. Figure 18 shows the range of journals I used during my studies. At the top right is the journal I used to record responses to the worksheet questions after sessions with clients. Bottom right shows an open page of the small sketch book I used during sessions, on which I would illustrate images and ideas which I wanted to convey to the clients. Further discussion of this image was detailed in figure 11. The journal at the bottom left of figure 18 is the study journal I used throughout my research to record notes on my daily work. At the top left is the journal I used for thematic analysis of the data. During the initial phase of research development, I reviewed at a number of models of reflective practice. None were suitable for this study, so I developed my own. I learned that reflective practice opens up elements of learning stages, to create opportunities for
the discovery of new knowledge. Figure 19 depicts how I developed this notion, and figure 20 is the diagrammatic model which I refer to as Goodliffe’s model of learning through open reflection.

Figure 19 Identifying my approach to reflective practice (own graphic)
Research Challenges

“One needs to stand in one’s own vulnerability in order for it to become a strength” (Larsen, 2007, p. 173).

The very nature of self-led, reflective inquiry has intrinsic dilemmas for the researcher. Being the subject of my own research is indeed a challenging conundrum. Self-analysis of the subject of the self within an academic format, was unfamiliar and uncharted territory for me. Reflection is a process which is introspective by nature, but is often the compass of absorbed contemplation and private journaling, rather than a declaration via the rigors of a scholarly domain. To be able to overcome these constraints called for me to have a structure, determination and copious self-discipline. Moral fibre was needed to support myself through the lows and highs of self-scrutiny. Gaining constructive self-feedback as an outcome of this method was an insightful and rewarding endeavour. Indeed, it reaped a fulfilment of a lifetime of dedication to service as a social practitioner, which by its nature, is a calling which some believe provides intrinsic rewards of itself. The nature of my lifetime career in social practice has at times been a solitary one, so it is in keeping that this research has a self-reflective approach. At times, I harked back to Sartre’s (1963) existential novel, “Nausea” which I referred to at the beginning of chapter four. His character became so involved with his own thinking and reflections, that he became detached from the world around him.
occasions, I noticed that I was becoming preoccupied with deep self-reflections, particularly about the implications of my study. This concern, along with the action of critically observing my own practice, the act of reflecting, trying to maintain a healthy life-balance, keeping in touch with my clients, as well as concentrating on maintaining my practice were issues which I continually needed to keep in a balanced perspective. Self-study has its own dilemmas, and I found that bringing my attention back to the business of concentrating ‘in the moment’ was very helpful, and allayed the tendency to observe the self. Therefore, the method of self-observation ‘in action’ is useful not only as a research approach, but also as a way of becoming fully present with the task at hand; whether it be that of being present with the client, or with the self.

Elements of my approach were experimental. The rubric template of questions and feedback which I designed which was based on a projected outcome of providing material for self-analysis, to deepen self-knowledge and lead to further development to enhance and inform my practice. However, when I started to collect the data, I found that some of the questions were eliciting ambiguous responses which necessitated reworking several questions. I went on to collect rich, clear and succinct data. During my search for a style of journal keeping, I had learned that reflective journals kept by health and educational professionals would often be to record critical incidents and may be unstructured to allow a free-flow of feelings. For me this was difficult as it did not provide a structure and gleaned only random material. It seemed as if I was waiting for a problem to arise, so that I could analyse and solve it and would leave exploration of my practice to chance. The development of a structured strategy of specific questions from which to gain data, and for subsequent systematic analysis, gave rise to data which in turn provided a rich harvest of information from which I was able to gain insight and make subsequent meaning.

Trying to uncover the realms of unconscious processes has required my engagement of abstract thinking, from an embodied perspective. Abstract thinking is concerned with thinking about objects and ideas which are not physically present and calls for an understanding of the association of verbal and non-verbal ideas and draws on an understanding of the use of analogies and metaphors. This is similar to the requirements of uncovering the processes of empathetic strategies of the self as therapist and necessitates a great deal of mental dexterity. Indeed, it is more than just
the application of the concept of thinking about thinking, it calls for an open perspective and intuitive engagement to be able to apply a rather unfamiliar method of research and retrieval. It was vital to record the data gathering notes immediately following the session while the narrative flow and associated memories were fresh in my mind. If too much time lapsed it became difficult to mentally associate with (and to remember) the unconscious state.

Summary

The data which I had recorded in the journal was collated and scrutinized. Themes were drawn out and these observations were noted and further collated. Consequential understandings were drawn out of the data. Findings based on analysis of narrative self-reflections and responses to structured questions were discussed. Literature from chapter three was contrasted and reflected in relation to these findings. Discussion was categorised into relevant sections to aid coherence.
CHAPTER SIX: Conclusion

Introduction

This qualitative research project utilized a reflective practice approach to explore my practice as a psychic life coach. It was undertaken by examining reflective material gathered through reflective journaling which was then analyzed through thematic analysis of the narrative and images which arose from the responses to a worksheet of questions.

The aims of the research were to:

- Reflect on my own practice before, during and after psychic life coaching consultations
- Explore any insights which emerge from the language and illustrations recorded in a reflective journal.

To accomplish this, the following research questions were identified:

How does reflective-practice journaling inform my practice?

How can reflective analysis before during and after psychic life coaching consultations enhance a coach’s practice?

The research aims were accomplished and the questions answered. The key findings are identified and outlined as follows:

**How does reflective-practice journaling inform my practice?**

Journaling has allowed an immediacy of self feedback, and the documentation of such provided a record from which reflection has taken place. Record keeping through this process provided a place to document data which may otherwise have been forgotten. The data gathered in this project is a useful resource for my practice as it has allowed a constructive approach to compilation, and subsequent analysis. This has led to development of my practice through comprehension (analytical processing) of my findings. These records may provide opportunities through further analysis with different attention to different features of the data.
How can reflective analysis before, during and after psychic life coaching consultations enhance a coach’s practice?

The diagrams and illustrations were a fundamental and vital process for drawing out the meaning of the journal reflections. Providing a template of different temporal perspectives enables an engagement of multiple views of my practice with which to contrast and increase my perspective and give rise to a deeper comprehension of my methods and understanding of my processes. These insights thereof have enabled me to become more informed and professional in the undertakings of my practice.

The process of analysing my journal, to summarise and write up these findings, made me more deeply aware of the potentials to improve my practice afforded by active reflection. I will carry on keeping a reflective journal so that I can continue to assess the value of my work, increase my understandings, apply them to my practice and therefore afford greater value to my clients. It is a very useful tool for me as a sole practitioner, who does not have the feedback and support of workplace peers. Journaling helped me during the study period to write it out.

This system of understanding self-practice is an engaging and effective process. It would be very useful for other sole-practitioners to apply this method of self-reflection to their practice. It has afforded me gift of insight into my work and simultaneously provided a supportive platform of self-supervision. Not only have I been able to identify and develop my understanding of my practice and processes, but it has also helped me to develop my business and identify plans for my future personal and professional growth. Many people have questions about my work and with some re-working, this thesis could lend itself to dissemination to the general public, and thereby help answer some of these questions. This could be in the form of a book, lectures via video or in-person. The action of reflection can be a formative and developmental practice. It may be facilitated by the self, or interactions with friends and family, a counsellor or coach, a journal or even via meditation. Like a mirror, this function aids to increase the scope of insight of the reflective surfaces.

Implications for practice

Journaling has revealed a depth of information of which I was not previously aware. To continue this would be a real advantage so as to provide material to deepen
understandings about my practice. So much of my work is done in an automatic way it becomes second nature. A great deal of my consultation time necessitates my being in a meditative/light trance state. This affords me perceptions which may not be ordinarily available when in a conscious state and allows me to engage a deeper sensitivity which affords revealing insights that I convey to the client. Such insights may be of a nature which are not be obvious to them. However, this process means that I am not necessarily conscious of my methods. Reflective practice journaling immediately after a consultation has given me a way to bring my processes into conscious attention, which allows me a method of deliberation, analysis and development. To further support the benefits of such, a review and creation of a brief summary of the outstanding learnings of this thesis would help to readily identify, comprehend and embrace these factors within my practice. This thesis serves as a mechanism to gain insights from reflective practice not only for the author, but also as a means to communicate the learnings to others.

This study was innovative not only in its subject matter, but also in its developmental approach to the research. The worksheet of questions, style of journaling, clock face pie chart, and approach to reflective practice as exemplified in ‘Goodliffe’s model of learning through open reflection’ which I have developed for this study, is something I will take forward into future practice. These could be applied to other learning and developmental approaches for students, other practitioners, and in particular for sole practitioners.

**Limitations of study**

It was difficult to quickly capture, a multiplicity of affective responses in the moment. It is particularly challenging to undertake this using the written word. This is partly due to the time it takes to conceptualise these experiences, then to capture these fleeting moments and to transcribe these with language. Making drawings of mental images seems to form a closer connection with such perceptions. Feelings are something which are perceived in an implicit or subjective manner. My language of feelings and expression of such would be different to that of others, and therefore this research carries with it a personal stamp, and has an agenda which is responsive to my needs as a practitioner.

The worksheet of questions I developed were specifically for this research. Any other practitioner who wishes to employ this method would need to adapt their own
accordingly. I spent a great deal of time identifying the wording for each question which was suitable to illicit the data which I was wanting to investigate. Initially, I found the responses were vague, or producing data which was a duplication of that which was retrieved by other questions. I felt thwarted because this was due to some questions being poorly phrased. Construction of each question was a time consuming and exacting endeavour. I noticed by checking and comparing the data which was emerging was unclear, and I had to go back and re-work the questions. Well-structured questions were vital to obtain rich data suitable for the building of a strong knowledge base from which to draw productive learnings.

Reflecting in action is almost like adaptation and evolution in a split second. I found that this fast-action pace inherently challenging to record. Initially the order of the questions was; in action, on action and then critical reflection. However, when I came to respond to the questions after the consultation, it was very difficult to engage the in-action reflection first. The temporal sequence did not flow easily, and I found it difficult to remember what was, and what had, been happening. Trying to associate myself in the moment was problematic, and I suspected the sequence was in the wrong order. I tried reversing the system, so that I was reflecting on action (what was happening) first, and then flowing into reflecting in action (what is happening). This enabled a smoother transition. I found that I could engage more easily using this sequence, and this method consequently strengthened the authenticity of the data.

This study helped me to identify and develop research approaches. However, I felt that I could have been more rigorous in identifying further strategies for developing my business.

**Suggestions for further research**

Reflective practice allows for personal, and therefore subjective, responses. This process elicits data according to self-perceptions. It does not encompass the viewpoint of the client. A reflective component to allow for any feedback from the perspective of the recipient (client) would engage a potential for professional development from the viewpoint of the respondent.

This study has a great deal of focus on the research approach, and the processes of my practice. A review of the data, and development of an appropriate tool from a business analysis perspective, could reveal additional areas for development of my business.
A re-working of my research questions could reap additional benefits for my work through further reflective study. Perhaps, “what career goals can I identify and achieve through reflective practice?” could help me to enhance my practice in a broader, economic sense.

This research has uncovered and developed understandings of certain aspects of the function and processes some of the unconscious, however there is potential more investigation. Research utilizing scientific tools such as MRI scanning for unconscious brain activity, combined with a reflective practice approach, could add to the understanding about the workings of intuitive and unconscious perceptions.

I wonder to what extent do subjective experiences influence the unconscious. My intuitive cognition seems to have a relationship with my life experiences, and as such, may ‘shape’ how I process and convey information to the client. Further examination of this could reveal interesting data. Perhaps this could be studied by contrasting information shared by two different psychic life coaches to the same client.

Further research on the structural systems of cognitive processing and the complementary process of creativity, and consequential application thereof, may reveal information which could lead to some useful outcomes.

**Final reflection**

Reflection is not merely a looking back to the past, but it is also an observation and surveying of the inner landscape of the mind. I took my six-year-old grandson to the Auckland art gallery to see an exhibition on the effects of light. He stood observing one of the exhibits where the viewer was asked to work out how a light bulb which was switched on, and in front of a mirror, had a reflection of a light bulb which was switched off. My grandson immediately responded with "it's not a mirror, it only looks like it. There are two light bulbs and one isn't switched on ". In my study of reflecting on my work as a social practitioner, I was looking for a similar epiphany. I have been cognizant that it is possible to gain clarity through engaging the unclouded mind of a 6-year-old whose perceptions were so sharp that he worked out something that no other observers who were gazing at the 'assumed' mirror reflection of the light bulb had realised. They walked away disregarding an opportunity to engage curiosity and continued their Sunday afternoon stroll through the gallery. But when one engages an unclouded mind
and utilises critical observation, structured and sequential analysis, possibilities can become available through joyous observation, beauty and logic insisting away the anomalous perspective of what we should think, what we should see, and what we should expect to understand. I have applied my open mind to this work and my conclusion is that it is vital to be able to see what exists with an open mind and then, perhaps, the obvious is inevitable.

Figure 21 Lightbulb moment (own graphic)
References


Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information, 22*, 63-75 retrieved from https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/452e/3393e3ecc34f913e8c49d8faf19b9f89b75d.pdf


Appendix 1: Worksheet of Self Reflective Questions

A. Reflection on-action: Retrospective self-observation after consultation

1. What was I paying attention to before the session?
2. What were my cognitive processes and how did I utilise them?
3. How did I engage an empathetic process?
4. Was I aware of, and attend to, any unconscious processes?
5. Was I aware of any specific images or language?
6. When I allowed my mind to engage in a process of free association with any images or language, what observations and insights was I making?

B. Reflection in-action: Self-observation, in the moment during consultation

7. How am I feeling?
8. What methods and modalities am I implementing?

C. Critical reflection: Appraisal/Summary

9. Did I learn anything new?
10. What new knowledge could I explore to improve my practice?

Appendix 2: Code of Ethics

Goodliffe, (2018)

(On following page)
Providing ethical psychic readings. I work within the principles of integrity, compassion and personal safety. I believe that it is important to work with an ethical code of conduct in my profession. I have developed these principles to ensure that my practice is of the highest standard.

Supportive and practical. We live in a challenging age. My method is designed to give assistance with a common-sense approach to the problems of life. Positive solutions to fit into the realities of today.

You are important. My client’s needs are the priority. My role is to give support and direction to secure life’s fullest opportunities.

Comprehensive, integrated approach combining psychic insights, counselling and realising spiritual connections.

Happiness. My psychic knowledge enables a beneficial and uplifting spiritual experience which releases the tensions of life to achieve a state of happiness.

Insightful, inspiring and in-depth exploration of knowledge which I glean beyond the five senses to help you achieve a fulfilment of life.

Caring. Attending to problems in a gentle, compassionate and respectful manner.

Empathy. I achieve a deep sense of walking in your world to facilitate an understanding of your life. Through this method I gain insight into your lifepath, so I can see past, present and future; to look at formative experiences and events which have shaped your current reality and sense choices which will create your future opportunities.

Trustworthy. Accurate and dependable insights conveyed in a positive way. I act as a communicator to pass on information to you in a positive manner and nothing is withheld.

Healing. Enabling you to move forward, with hope and encouragement from spiritual essence.

Intuitive. I perceive information beyond normal, conscious sensitivity.

Confidential. Personal disclosures respected, and privacy assured. During the process of a reading, issues of a sensitive and personal nature may be shared. These are kept private. An exception may be made in order to reduce risk.

Spiritual. Feel the touch of divine intervention. I start and conclude each reading with an appropriate prayer to ensure the spiritual contact is of the highest level and thus afford safety and protection.
Full name of author: Rosamund Goodcliffe

ORCID number (Optional): ..................................................

Full title of thesis/dissertation/research project ('the work'):
- Moments, Meaning and Metaphor:
- Self-Reflections of a Psychic Life Coach
- and Social Practitioner

Practice Pathway: Social Practice

Degree: Master of Social Practice

Year of presentation: 2018

Principal Supervisor: Dr A Cameron

Associate Supervisor: D Kenkel

Permission to make open access
I agree to a digital copy of my final thesis/work being uploaded to the Unitec Institutional repository and being made viewable worldwide.

Copyright Rights:
Unless otherwise stated this work is protected by copyright with all rights reserved.
I provide this copy in the expectation that due acknowledgement of its use is made.

AND

Copyright Compliance:
I confirm that I either used no substantial portions of third party copyright material, including charts, diagrams, graphs, photographs or maps in my thesis/work or I have obtained permission for such material to be made accessible worldwide via the Internet.

Signature of author: ...........................................

Date: 21/03/2018
Declaration

Name of candidate:


Principal Supervisor: Dr H Connor

Associate Supervisor/s: D Kenkel

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I confirm that:

- This Thesis/Dissertation/Research Project represents my own work;
- The contribution of supervisors and others to this work was consistent with the Unitec Regulations and Policies.
- Research for this work has been conducted in accordance with the Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures, and has fulfilled any requirements set for this project by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee.

Research Ethics Committee Approval Number:

Candidate Signature: ........................................ Date: 29/03/2018

Student number: 1417713