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**THE FEMINIST ATTRIBUTES OF LEADERSHIP
IN SERVICE TO COMMUNITY:
LIFE HISTORY INTERVIEWS WITH 12 EXEMPLARY
CANADIAN WOMEN AGE 70 PLUS**

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**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate
and Postdoctoral Studies
University of Ottawa
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the Degree of Ph.D in Education.**

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My gratitude also goes to the twelve wonderful women who consented to participate in the study, and to the twelve questionnaire respondents. It was an honour to be allowed to share the recollections of the busy lives the participants led in the process of working to make their communities better places for people to live. I accepted the responses in the interviews, the focus groups, and the questionnaires as threads of vibrant colour and varied texture. I have tried to weave these responses into a tapestry worthy of the exemplary gifts and insight of those who gave them to me in faith, hope, and trust.

ABSTRACT

The Feminist Attributes of Leadership in Service to Community: Life History Interviews with 12 Exemplary Canadian Women Age 70 Plus.

This exploratory study addressed two research questions: What are the perspectives on patterns and themes in the life development of exemplary Canadian women over the age of 70 who have been active in leadership roles in volunteer and/or paid work in their communities? Do these patterns and themes support the concept of the Feminist Attributes of Leadership (caring, courage, collaboration, vision, and intuition) within a relational leadership context as identified by Regan and Brooks (1995)?

Following a qualitative research design with twelve participants who were leading active, exemplary lives in late adulthood, data were collected in three phases:

- 1. Individual interviews designed to elicit recollections of leadership experience and a brief life history.**
- 2. Focus groups in which participants discussed their leadership experience and involvement in pro-social activities.**
- 3. A questionnaire completed by someone selected by the participants and able to offer another perspective on their lives and leadership contribution.**

Analysis revealed that the women were characterized by the descriptors wise, courageous, and action-oriented. Each in her own way, given her varied opportunities and gifts, had lived the well-lived life. Each had made an exemplary contribution to her community over a period of many years. Each was in the process of successfully resolving Erikson's eighth psycho-social crisis, integrity vs. despair (Erikson, 1982). Support was found for Regan & Brooks (1995) Feminist Attributes of Leadership

within a Relational Leadership style.

A new model, The Exemplary Leadership Model, was created to summarize the findings. It presents a perspective on leadership featuring the descriptors wise, courageous, and action-oriented. The “L” of Exemplary Leadership is firmly embedded within the “C” of Caring, and grounded on a three tier foundation. Social conscience, arising out of love, empathy, sympathy, and identity is the upper tier of the model’s foundation. The first tier consists of family, community, culture, and social connectedness.

Results of the study have implications for those who work with the elderly and for those involved in education, leadership, community activism, and volunteerism.

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CHAPTER 1

Wise, Courageous, Action-Oriented

Those who have lived well, meeting the challenges of successes and failures, gains and losses, look back at the work of their lives and feel the satisfaction of having achieved something of significance. This does not imply fame and fortune, but simply the knowledge that the lived life has been of value to family, to community, and to self.

Shakespeare wrote in As You Like It: (Act 2, Scene VII).

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts...
(In Clark and Wright, Eds., 1955, p. 223).

There is, of course, no script for the entrances and exits of real life. The plot twists in ways far too bizarre for respectable fiction. Much has been written about those (especially men) who stood out in each generation as exceptionally successful. History texts and the daily newspapers from various times and places attest to this fact. Biography and autobiography include critical incidents from the lives of their subjects. When such incidents are analyzed, patterns and themes emerge. This adds to our understanding of the lived experience of eminent persons who deployed their gifts in other times and other circumstances. For those about whom no books are written, exploratory studies provide an appropriate means of data gathering.

Rationale for the Study

I believe there is a need for, and a hunger for, the knowledge that comes from reflection upon the well-lived lives of older people, and especially of our wise women. The better we know and understand those who have gone before us, the better we can come to know and understand ourselves. Heilbrun (1997) expressed this concept when she wrote:

Women, I believe, search for fellow beings who have faced similar struggles, conveyed them in ways a reader can transform into her own life, confirmed desires the reader had hardly acknowledged—desires that now seem possible.

Women catch courage from the women whose lives and writings they read, and women call the bearer of that courage, friend (p.138).

It is quite possible that others will “catch courage” from the life experiences related by exemplary older women. Young women in particular may identify with the challenges described and the success achieved. Wise women make great role models.

Research that invites late-adult women to reflect upon the history of their lives can yield a wealth of data about their self-defining memories and their personal constructs. Information about their personalities and their emotional intelligence is embedded in the reflections that result as they consider their responses to the life-history questions in an interview with a sensitive active-listener. Encouraged to recall experiences critical to their development at various stages of their lives, information about their experiences with conflict, with opposing views, and with obstacles to successful achievement of goals can surface from memory and be shared. The ways, in which they make sense out of their experience, enrich our understanding of the coping strategies employed by those who achieve wisewoman status. Their perceptions of incidents related to authority figures, rules, and societal expectations are useful. Did they find kindred spirits, soul mates, and self-understanding, while proceeding along their life paths? Did they recall incidents where they learned from a negative example or

from their own mistakes? Did connections with others support and nourish their particular gifts?

Recognizing the value of researching the stories of the well-lived lives of women in late adulthood, it seemed logical to consider focusing on a particular subset of women who had been instrumental in creating community through their leadership and participation in pro-social activity in the voluntary sector and/or the world of paid employment. What were their motivations as they became involved? What did they hope to achieve, and how did they go about bringing to fruition the visions they had for change in their communities and beyond? Would there be patterns in their leadership behaviour? Would themes be revealed, which would lead to better understanding of how such women become the ones that others count on; become in other words, the ones in every community who hold up more than half the sky?

Assumptions and Presuppositions of the Researcher

I have a special appreciation of (perhaps a bias in favour of) those who have not surfaced as leaders in the larger sphere, but who have found satisfaction and helped create community day after day, on their own smaller stages and in their own more private dramas. My poem called, "Theirstory", expresses my appreciation of those whom history (and society beyond the more local sphere) generally ignores:

THEIRSTORY

You say that you are History
You Giants, Superstars,
Standing dominant in the pages.
I cannot deny that you were great.
But History is also
the mornings, afternoons, and evenings
of millions of other folk who lived,
dreamed their dreams,

and died unlauded.

I salute

the well-lived life

and honour

theirstory.

It was this particular bias that led to my decision to focus on the well-lived life. It also led to the decision to look for a sample of women who stood out as exemplary to those who knew them well, or knew of their work and commitments. I was looking for the women next door, for the largely unlauded heroines. Conversely, I was not concerned with including those who were well known in the larger sphere through extensive public recognition. Other aspects of my personal background, assumptions, and presuppositions are also relevant to the decision-making throughout the study. I hope that outlining these will help to place my decisions and interpretations into a context in which they can be better understood.

My educational background includes an Honours degree in Psychology and a Master's in Canadian Studies. A life long interest in human behaviour and knowledge gained through personal experience, plus the studies I undertook, has culminated in my having a psychological perspective in general. I have a keen interest in Politics and in History as well. This was instrumental in leading me to the choice of Cairine Wilson, Canada's first woman senator, as the subject of the study I did in connection with my Master's degree (Way, 1984). That study also focused on a well-lived life and on a contribution to our Canadian community that does not get as much attention in the History books as it deserves.

Having spent my entire adult life in the field of education, first as a teacher and then as an educational administrator, I had many presuppositions of what constitutes good leadership. In the course of my career, I had been trained as an assessor of

leadership aptitudes and had worked as part of a team of assessors on five NASSP (National Association of Secondary School Principals) assessment centres. These centres offered off site assessment of potential leaders and followed a carefully researched process under which a great deal of data was gathered on each of the participants. Through a complex procedure, leadership performance in twelve dimensions was assessed and reported. Even as I was receiving the training to qualify as an assessor, I felt that something was missing from the assumptions that were the foundation of the assessment process. In the extensive effort to ensure objectivity, something essentially human was lost; and in my opinion, the resultant judgements were somewhat flawed, at least for some individuals. There was more to good leadership than the assessments were able to measure.

In addition to my experience with assessing leadership, I had been a member of the school board staff delivering courses in leadership to potential leaders in the system where I worked as an elementary school principal. Later, I was seconded to work as a project officer in the Board's Research and Evaluation department, where my assignment involved researching leadership and drafting an evaluation procedure for supervising the performance of principals. It was at this time, with my intense focus on trying to understand the essence of good leadership, that the idea of the balance of wisdom, courage, and action-orientation burst into consciousness in my mind. In what I consider a dramatic flash of insight, I came to the realization that good leaders are wise, courageous, and action-oriented. My new understanding became part of my intuitive conceptual framework. It then slipped into the nether regions of my memory. Other responsibilities and commitments pushed the unexamined but promising concept into the background. The secondment ended. My professional life focused again on running a school with all of its day-to-day challenges.

I was very impressed when I read the book Out of Women's Experience: Creating Relational Leadership (Regan and Brooks, 1995). The authors had studied the

experience of women in school leadership, and had concluded that their leadership was characterized by caring, courage, collaboration, vision, and intuition. They designated these attributes as the feminist attributes, as compared to the more traditional attributes that were deemed masculinist. I found myself identifying with the experiences of the women in that study. The language Regan & Brooks used to define the concepts in terms of women's leadership experience was enlightening. There was no suggestion that leadership incorporating those attributes was practiced only by feminists, or even only by women. On the contrary, women's learning experience led to the valuing of and the using of these attributes, but in relational leadership they were seen in combination with the more traditional attributes and deemed to be important for all good leaders. I firmly believe that the attributes, which have been identified by Regan & Brooks as the feminist attributes of leadership, are important for any person's leadership.

Because the title of my study refers to the Feminist Attributes of Leadership, a brief discussion of the assumptions I hold with reference to feminism is appropriate. Reading The Feminine Mystique (Friedan, 1963) was the start of my adult awareness of the need to change the way society limited women's potential for full participation in life beyond the traditional domestic sphere. I consider myself a feminist in that I have been an unrelenting advocate for equal opportunity and affirmative action. In the late 1970's, I prepared a brief that called upon the trustees on the local school Board to create an Affirmative Action committee, and an Affirmative Action Plan, in order to ensure equal opportunity for all of its staff. I chaired the committee once it was set up. Throughout my career, I worked to change attitudes, to address systemic discrimination, to be a role model, and to act as a mentor for potential leaders both male and female who understand the goal of equality for all.

I value the changes that feminist researchers have brought to the more traditional methodologies, and that is why I chose a qualitative methodology. I chose to include

participant feedback at various stages throughout the data gathering and reporting process. Having welcomed the women into my life as a researcher, I looked forward to having ongoing contact for their sake as well as my own. I certainly didn't want them to feel studied and discarded, as so many research "subjects" have felt in the past, especially in some of the research that used a quantitative methodology.

Given the ages of the participants, it is perhaps not surprising to note that only one of them specifically identified herself as a feminist. I did not ask any of them for that information. A couple of the women, on reading the informed consent form and noting that it referred to the feminist attributes of leadership, specified that they were not feminists. I assured them that that was not a concern. The label was irrelevant to my study of this particular group. Each of the women believed in the core value of women's rights to fairness and opportunity. I simply wanted to study their well-lived lives and their leadership experiences. I did not feel a need to analyze their responses in terms of feminist theory. I believed that patterns and themes would emerge and that throughout the process my own feminist perspective would alert me to the extent that feminist theory was required for understanding.

Background Leading to Choice of Topic

The idea for a study of exemplary women over the age of seventy began to take shape during my study of the developmental stages in adulthood, which was part of a class in adult education. In particular, the stages of late and late-late adulthood piqued my interest. I became intrigued with questions of what came next in adult development after midlife. Did people change dramatically in their latter years, or did their lives cycle back to earlier interests, which had been necessarily placed on the "back burner" as the day-to-day demands of family and career took priority? There is not yet a great body of research that focuses on late adulthood and even less research has been done on the lives of older women. There has been very little work specifically focusing on the life histories of exemplary Canadian women over the age of seventy who have been active

in leadership roles in their communities. I wanted to address what I saw as a gap in the knowledge base where women were concerned.

About the Study

The study of the life histories of Canadian women in late adulthood makes a valuable contribution to what is known about late adulthood as far as women's experience is concerned. How do women in this age group view the experiences of a lifetime of making meaning, making memory, and making a life? What dreams do they have for the years still to come and what are their expectations for new learning? Are exemplary Canadian women in late adulthood supported and sustained by a web of relationships, which reflect the priorities and commitments of the decades of the past? Do their leadership experiences in service to their communities show evidence of caring, courage, collaboration, vision, and intuition; the feminist attributes of leadership identified by Regan & Brooks (1995)? Knowledge of their regrets and satisfactions, affiliations and supports, and of their experiences with power, influence, challenge, and conflict could provide insight into how to facilitate for women who are following along in the coming generations.

In choosing the format for the study, care was taken to ensure that it would be geared especially to the perceived needs of the older women participants with reference to the time commitment, pace, location, and need for sensitivity. The questionnaire, which became the life history interview guide, was designed to facilitate reflection on key incidents and experiences from early childhood on throughout the lifetime. Participants could respond with an answer from any time period, which came to mind. I encouraged spontaneity, believing that the memory that surfaced first in response to an inquiry might be a more significant one than one that surfaced after some thought; in other words, a purer, unedited memory. The interviews were conducted in the participant's homes, and ranged in duration from forty-five minutes to almost two hours.

By choosing women over the age of seventy, I was building in the possibility that the participants would have recollections of the Depression, the Second World War, and the changes in societal expectations for women throughout the twentieth century. This cohort of women was not much older than I am, and as an interviewer, I knew that I was unlikely to be perceived as someone who was too young to understand their experience. It is interesting to note that, although several participants were old enough to be of my own mother's generation, I always felt more like a colleague, or a somewhat younger sister, than like a daughter.

As the study proceeded through meeting the participants in the interview phase, to seeing them within a group in the focus group phase, and on through the questionnaire phase, I came to feel that I knew each one well. I saw and heard them with my own eyes, ears, and intuition in the interviews; observed them in the dynamic of the focus group; saw them anew through the eyes of the person they had chosen to respond to the questionnaire. At each point, my respect for them increased. This study is about twelve very interesting women who have set an example for those in their own age group and for anyone younger who hopes to stay on the path for a grounded well-lived life and who hopes, in the end, to achieve a successful resolution of Erikson's eighth psychosocial crisis, integrity vs. despair (Erikson, 1982).

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is organized in seven chapters followed by a reference section and appendices.

Chapter 1 gives the rationale for the study. Some of my assumptions and presuppositions as the researcher are discussed. Background information leading to the choice of the topic is offered. A brief description of the study itself follows. The general organization of the thesis gives an overview of the contents of each chapter.

Chapter 2 reviews the relevant discourse from the fields of psychology, sociology, women's studies and education. Erikson's Epigenetic Scheme and other

developmental perspectives are presented. Discourse on Memory, the Well-Lived Life, and Giftedness follows. Research on Leadership is considered next. The conceptual framework for the study is described, and the two research questions are then specified.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology for the study. It begins with a brief discussion of qualitative inquiry followed by a description of the techniques of interviewing and conducting focus groups. The concept of trustworthiness and the value of triangulation are discussed. The chapter continues with the details of the research design and how the study was conducted. It concludes with a description of how the data were analyzed.

Chapter 4 summarizes and analyzes the information found in the participants' responses. It begins with the demographic details and continues with the results of the question-by-question analysis of the interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires.

Chapter 5 focuses on the major themes that were embedded in the responses collected in the three phases of the study. These themes are discussed and placed in the context of the conceptual frameworks that guided the study. They are organized in two categories; those related to the well-lived life in general and those related to leadership practice.

Chapter 6 describes the Exemplary Leadership Model, which provides a new conceptual framework for understanding the components of exemplary leadership as I came to know them throughout the course of the research. The model builds on earlier knowledge gained through my experience in the field of educational administration and a lifetime of interest in what makes leaders the best that they can be. The Exemplary Leadership Model summarizes what I have learned, and represents what I contribute to the knowledge base as a result of my work on this study.

Chapter 7 revisits the two research questions that guided the study. Pertinent findings related to the questions are summarized and related to earlier research. The

possible limitations of the study are discussed. The educational relevance and implications of the study follow. Contributions to scholarly knowledge are discussed. Recommendations are proposed in order to support the acquisition of social conscience and to facilitate an orientation to engage in service to community. Some suggestions for further research are offered.

The appendices include a general description of the participants, copies of the data collection instruments, the informed consent form, an outline of the preliminary coding categories plus the final codes with sample responses for each, plus other background material relevant to the study.

Summary

This chapter began with an explanation of the rationale for the study. I then described my personal bias in favour of those who do not achieve fame or fortune, but who set a day-to-day example for us all because of their well-lived lives. My thoughts about leadership and some of my other relevant assumptions and presuppositions were discussed. A brief explanation of how the idea for the study evolved from an interest in the stages of adult development was followed by an overview of the study itself, and an outline of how the thesis is organized.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Discourse

This chapter reviews the relevant discourse from the fields of psychology, sociology, women's studies and education. The review begins with a discussion of Erikson's Epigenetic Scheme and continues with other developmental perspectives. The review then looks at some of the work on Memory, the Well-Lived Life, and Giftedness. Discourse on the topic of Leadership begins with leadership in general, and continues with works focusing on women in leadership. Included next are some insights into feminist researchers' thinking about research by, about, and for women. The conceptual framework for the study is presented, and the two research questions, which the study was designed to answer, are then specified.

Life in Late Adulthood

Erikson's Epigenetic Scheme

The work of Erikson (1982) had a profound influence on our evolving understanding of human development. He proposed eight developmental stages that occur from infancy to old age. (See Appendix A). At each stage, Erikson posits that a psychosocial crisis must be resolved before the person can continue the developmental sequence. Throughout the life cycle, there is a constant reintegration of all earlier stages in each new one. At every stage, a person continues to grapple with the earlier crises that were, or were not resolved satisfactorily.

Occurring in what Erikson calls old age, the last psychosocial crisis to be

resolved is integrity versus despair. Erikson characterizes integrity as coherence and wholeness. Achievement of integrity leads to wisdom. A state of despair could include the whole range of unsatisfactorily resolved developmental crises from the entire lifetime. In Erikson's words, this could result in "autonomy weakened, initiative lost, intimacy missed, generativity neglected— not to speak of identity potentials bypassed or, indeed, an all too limiting identity lived."(p. 63-65).

When he first described the developmental stages in his epigenetic scheme, Erikson noted that the term elders referred to the small cohort of "wise men and women who quietly lived up to their stage-appropriate assignment and knew how to die with some dignity in cultures where long survival appeared to be a divine gift to, and a special obligation for, a few. (p. 62). In light of the increasing numbers of individuals reaching late-late adulthood, he wrote that the "role of old age needs to be reobserved, rethought" (p. 62). In conclusion, Erikson reaffirmed his earlier conviction that successful resolution of the last psychosocial crisis leads to wisdom. He made the link back from the eighth stage to the first psychosocial crisis, in which he posited that hope was the outcome of the successful resolution of the trust vs. mistrust crisis. He concluded that the mature version of hope is faith. One begins with trust and proceeds towards integrity. The early childlike hope matures into faith and results in wisdom, as opposed to disdain. Life concludes with integrity for those who successfully resolve the last psychosocial crisis, as opposed to despair, which is the outcome for those who do not.

Erikson's reflections about developmental stages evolved from his observations of patients (most of whom were male) who were undergoing therapy in his clinical practice. His work is not considered empirical and has been criticized especially as it relates to women's experience. In the opinion of some feminist researchers, Erikson's findings do not lead to understanding of the normal pattern of development of women across the life span (Gilligan, 1982; Caffarella and Olson, 1993). These authors

question, for example, how and when women normally resolve the crisis of identity vs. identity confusion. It is important to remember that Erikson was working with patients in the early stages of the practice of psychiatry and psychology. His beautiful poetic language and the concept of his psychosocial crises still strike an intuitive chord. His ideas remain thought provoking, and they have continued to inspire research over time.

Separation vs. Connection

One of the strongest criticisms of life stage models based on men's experience is that adulthood is characterized by the attainment of separation and independence. Women's lives revolve around connection and interdependence (Bateson, 1990; Gilligan, 1982). Gilligan postulated that there is a "line of development missing from current depictions of adult development." She identified, "a failure to describe the progression of relationships toward maturity of interdependence," and noted, "Though the truth of separation is recognized in most developmental texts, the reality of continuing connection is lost." (p. 155). The web of connection characterizes the well-lived lives of women.

Building on Gilligan's understanding of the importance of connection, Hall (1990) described the role of connectedness for women. She noted, "Connectedness characterizes our layers and dimensions of self. Potential is developed through exchanges with others, and relationships allow us to lead meaningful and satisfying lives. We work towards goals and aspire to excellence through our social bonds." (p.15). For older women especially, the connections of a lifetime are part of the successful resolution of the eighth psychosocial crisis.

The importance of connection in the lives of older women who were thriving in late adulthood was apparent in the research of Sheehy (1995). Sheehy used the term *wisewomen* to describe the dynamic, energetic, seniors who were involved in her follow-up study of adulthood reported in New Passages.

Wisewomen

Those women who achieve the state of integrity may well deserve to be called wise women. Using life history questionnaires and interviews, Sheehy discovered patterns in the experience of her oldest subjects. She was impressed with the inspirational lives of the women in late adulthood to whom she gave the name wisewomen. With plans for the future, openness to learning, and a healthy acceptance of their aging, they stand as models of integrity and wisdom. They described their continuing commitment to life and wellness. Sheehy noted that the older woman is free to explore her identity, to enjoy intimacy, and to continue her caring for and caring about.

Sheehy created a new vocabulary for describing the key points along the path to late and late-late adulthood. Her "New Map of Adult Life" is a pictorial depiction of the stages through which, Sheehy proposed, all adults pass. Beginning with the "tryout twenties" and continuing through the "turbulent thirties", the "flourishing forties", the "flaming fifties", and the "serene sixties," she described the primary development themes of each stage and told the stories of the many respondents to her surveys. Sheehy used the term "middlescence" to refer to the passage into "Second Adulthood and the Age of Mastery." She wrote: "A stimulating middlescence can be a transformative passage, leading us through a second adolescence and into coalescence - when all the wisdom we have gathered from fifty years of experience in living begins to come together."(p. 140).

The study showed that women's perspective changes dramatically over time. In their twenties they are most concerned with "independence and romance," but as they age they "place less emphasis on their personal problems" and begin to see "power as a tool for pursuing their more socially connected goals."(p. 186). She found that 70% of the professional women responding to her survey indicated that they were committed to "causes" that went beyond their own self-interest.

Using information from demographers and census data to illuminate her findings from the interviews and questionnaires, Sheehy also included focus groups that she conducted, all across the United States. Although Sheehy did not offer a definition of the term wisewomen, her examples convey her meaning. It is interesting to note Bandura's observation (Bandura, 1997) that there is a need for "criteria for measuring the wisdom of living as well as the wisdom of words."(p.200). Bandura, recognizing the difficulty in defining wisdom, noted that it is present "in degrees in all walks of life" and that "although wisdom is founded on expert knowledge, it encompasses much more."(p. 199).

Sheehy summarized the findings of the research of Hurwich (1993) who studied women in their seventies, eighties, and nineties. The women in the Hurwich study were reported to have been active, as well as creative, throughout their fifties, and on into late adulthood. Hurwich found that the women were very involved in the realities of the present, but were still giving thought to the future. They were involved in their communities and had networks of friends from many generations besides their own. They tended to be interested more with nurturing their souls than their egos, and they were coping well with the physical realities, including diseases of age such as arthritis, loss of hearing, and impaired vision. The women understood that they still had lives to live, and therefore they concentrated on what they could do, rather than on what they had lost.

Sheehy's findings do not contradict Erikson's stages specifically, but simply offer a different set of timelines and more description of what adults at various points actually are doing with their lives. Sheehy's earlier work has been open to criticism, along with other books written for mass appeal, because of the reliance on studies that use sampling procedures that are not systematic. Such studies cannot easily be replicated (Lewittes, 1982). Lewittes does concede, however, that such books have played a role in helping people to understand the options for continued development

throughout the later stages of adulthood. Sheehy's insights contribute by creating new knowledge of the stages in people's lives and the changes in priorities that occur throughout the lifespan.

Focusing on the patterns and themes of women's lives, Bateson (1990) reported a life history study of five outstanding women. As she gathered the stories of her friends' (subjects') life experiences, she shared her own stories and gained new insight into the complex lives of women moving through various stages in the process of composing their lives. Bateson observed that the life course for women is a series of improvisations and meanderings rather than a linear route. Within the network of their friends and loved ones, they create their lives and respond to their own needs and those of other people. The idea of improvisation, as the dramatic art form that best describes the lives of women is well developed. Bateson referred to the fact that women find themselves pulled in many different directions, as they attend to the varied aspects of their roles and responsibilities. Women continually readjust their priorities and remain interruptible and ready to respond as needs arise.

Bateson noted a difference in the way men and women identify their interests. Drawing on her own experience, she concluded that she had identified her interests with those of the college [that employed her], whereas men, she believed, had done the reverse in identifying the college's priorities with their own. Bateson generalized that the identical pattern seems to occur in some marriages. She posited that society expects women to make sacrifices for their marriages, whereas men seem to believe that marriage is designed to meet their needs. Bateson concluded that women are too often hurt by negative experiences, because they are too willing to blame themselves for failures, and they are too hesitant to question whether their feelings of trust are unfounded once they have committed themselves.

In order to make sense out of the "plot twists" and adapt creatively so that the improvisation proceeds healthfully, and not destructively, a woman needs to employ a

constructive strategy for psychological survival. Bateson concluded that, "The central survival skill is surely the capacity to pay attention and respond to changing circumstances, to learn and adapt, to fit into new environments beyond the safety of the temple precincts."(p.231). In this metaphorical way, she refers to life within the real day-to-day environment of women's experience beyond the home and on into the less sheltered and more public sphere.

At every stage in the life of a woman, there are opportunities for new beginnings. The beginnings are connected with role changes, with irrational discontinuities, and with significant events that signal the requirement for new direction. All require the best of a woman's skill set and her most effective problem solving. Bateson observed in the experience of her friends, and it can be generalized to the experience of most women: "We all work too hard, burning too many candles, driven by a sense of how much needs to be done." She noted that this is, "part of a life whose theme is response rather than purpose, response that makes us more broadly attentive, rather than purpose that might narrow our view."(p.237). In addition to "burning their candles", many women tend to assume responsibility for the emotional climate of others within their personal sphere, creating a need for the broadest attentiveness in order to ensure readiness to respond to the needs identified.

Bateson's insights into women's work of composing meaningful and satisfying lives focused on the psychological survival skills, and the creativity involved in bringing the threads of a life into a pleasing tapestry. The women she described are wise women, who know intuitively how and when to alter the priorities for attention, action, and care, as their lives evolve. Their exemplary lives teach us about giftedness in general and women's lives in particular.

As one ages, the need for creativity continues and the skills needed for survival with one's dignity intact, change. The reality of physical decline increasingly becomes a factor. The work of Baltes (1997) focused on understanding the patterns and inter-

relationships of selection, optimization, and compensation, which people use in order to ensure successful coping with life's challenges throughout the stages of human development. His insights into the choices required in late adulthood add to our understanding of this period.

Selection, Optimization and Compensation

The Selection, Optimization, and Compensation (SOC) theory is a metatheory of development (Baltes, 1997). From the beginning of life, the human being is engaged in the processes of selection, optimization, and compensation. Selection involves choices of goals within constraints of capacity, resources, and time. Optimization concerns the task of increasing efficacy and attaining higher levels of functioning. This requires "behaviour-enhancing factors such as cultural knowledge, physical status, goal commitment, practice and effort." (p. 371). Compensation is operant when there is a need to work around the reality of loss (reduced hearing, vision, physical strength) or constraints of time and energy. At each stage of life, including late adulthood, there is evidence of selection, optimization, and compensation. As a person reaches the later developmental stages, there is more evidence of compensation to make up for losses, and selection and optimization contribute to successful compensation and creative coping.

An example that Baltes used to illustrate SOC theory in action is a report of the experience of Arthur Rubinstein, a renowned concert pianist. At the age of eighty, the musician explained how he still was able to perform so well. He reported that he played fewer pieces (selection), practiced those pieces more often (optimization), and in order to disguise his loss of speed, he "used a kind of impression management, such as introducing slower play before fast segments in order to make the latter appear faster," (compensation, p.371).

Although it has not been attempted, Baltes noted that reconstructing Erikson's theory in terms of selection, optimization, and compensation "would be a concrete test

of the generality or metatheoretical usefulness of the SOC approach.” (p.373). It appears that the successful resolution of Erikson’s eighth psychosocial crisis would be facilitated by the judicious use of selection, optimization, and compensation.

The example of Rubenstein’s ingenuity can be considered from the aspect of self-efficacy as well as SOC theory. As an aging pianist, he needed to have a clear understanding of his current capabilities in order to create solutions to the problems he identified. The review continues with the work of Bandura (1997), which contributed to our knowledge of self-efficacy in late adulthood.

Self-efficacy with Advancing Age

Outlining the development of self-efficacy throughout the lifespan, Bandura (1997) described how infants begin to understand that their actions produce effects and how the recognition of personal agency leads to self-efficacy. As the child matures, the ability to engage in realistic self-appraisal is enhanced by the use of appropriate comparisons with similar peers. Issues of self-efficacy in the older adult “centre on reappraisals and misappraisals of their capabilities.” (p. 198). Bandura noted that, “In societies that emphasize the potential for self-development throughout the life span, rather than psychophysical decline with aging, the elderly lead productive and purposeful lives.” (p.211). Just as the positive feedback received by children from their caregivers, families, and teachers supports the developing feelings of self- efficacy, societal feedback to the aging adult can support or limit a senior’s self-appraisal and perceived self-efficacy.

In a study looking for predictors of cognitive change in older persons, Albert, Savage, Blazer, Jones, Berkman, Seeman, and Rowe (1995) noted that there were four factors that emerged as predictors of cognitive functioning from among various sociodemographic, lifestyle, physiological, and psychosocial factors. These were feelings of self-efficacy, being physically active, pulmonary capacity, and the level of education attained. Although the four factors were deemed the most influential

predictors of cognitive functioning, it seems intuitively sound to conclude that the sense of self-efficacy has a disproportionate effect on the experience of successful aging. Educational levels are likely to have been achieved in the distant past. The ongoing commitment to physical activity, which would logically be a major contributor to healthy lung capacity, would be dependent on a current personal belief that a difference could be made, that such activity mattered and should therefore be selected, in order to optimize wellness and to compensate for newly recognized frailties.

The well-lived lives of women in late adulthood are the products of life-long acts of creativity and coping. Throughout the various stages, their lives are “composed” from a collage of experiences that come together into a meaningful, integral whole. There is value and beauty in the well-lived life. Having successfully resolved all of the crises of the various developmental stages, the older adult reaches and resolves Erikson’s eighth developmental crisis, integrity vs. despair. In order to arrive at the point where the successful resolution of the last psychosocial crisis is possible, a woman must be able to reflect on the experiences of the lifetime and make meaning from her memories. Carrying on from the discussion of life in late adulthood, the review now focuses on memory and its role in the evolving self.

Memory

Memory and Recollection

The study of memory is relevant to understanding the responses given when individuals are asked to recall experiences from their lifetime (Fontana and Frey, 2000). According to Tulving (1983), “remembering for the rememberer, is mental time travel, a sort of reliving of something that happened in the past.” (p. 127). Those who participate in life history interviews engage in the mental time travel that Tulving described, as they respond to the various questions. Their focused reflection allows

them to experience selective “reliving.”

Autobiographical Memory

Autobiographical memory serves a variety of purposes. Adler (1931) spoke of the importance of memory in warning, comforting, helping to keep individuals focused on goals, and preparing them to face the future with a style that has been found to be useful in the past. Memory is not simply random. Most researchers consider it adaptive (Bruhn, 1990). Discussing the organization of autobiographical memory, Bruhn noted that the ability to access memory appears to be dependent on the individual’s attitude and mood. Other organizing principles of autobiographical memory are content category (i.e. achievement), time, person, place, and activity. Bruhn posited that a particular memory is selected for recall because it is relevant to the rememberer’s present. When a memory surfaces, it may be followed by similar memories reflecting the same attitude according to the principle of attraction.

Early Memory and Recollection

Psychologists have long recognized the importance of early memory. Adler believed that early memory revealed a person’s style of life. Mosak (1973) explained Adler’s insight into the importance of early recollections by calling them a person’s “most reliable touchstones for growth in accordance with his own unique life style.” (p.287). Mosak noted that Adler believed that early recollections are instrumental in an individual’s being able:

to remain the same person through all the changes and chances of this mortal life, as well as [being] that which guides his striving to exceed himself whether in the direction of the neurotic fiction of personal superiority or in the direction of social interest and self-transcendence (p.287).

Bruhn (1990) explains that early memory is understood in Cognitive-Perceptual Theory, not as factual and historical, but as “fantasies about the past that reveal present perceptions, interests and concerns, as well as unfinished business in process.”(p. 21).

Cognitive-Perceptual theory maintains that autobiographical memory, including early memory, is “an excellent tool for understanding the individual’s unique way of constructing himself, others and the world around him.” (p. 49).

Mayman (1984a) offered some suggestions about how one can determine whether an early memory is a true recollection or the reporting of an experience that was described to the child by an adult. He noted that in a factual recollection, the details would be reported from the point of view of the child; seeing from the child’s eye level, with the child feeling actually present, re-experiencing and not simply reporting about the event as an observer would. An early memory that is based on a report of an experience, or one that is a blend of several experiences, is not considered less important than one in which there is factual recollection.

The Dynamic Aspect of Memory

Coleman (1986) concluded, “Memory is much more than recall of past stimuli. It involves emotion, will, and creativity, in the reconstruction of the past to serve present needs.” (p.2). Many older people spontaneously engage in life review in order to make meaning from their experience. The mind does not store data like a computer. Unlike the simple accessing of a computer file, the process of reflection produces an understanding that is greater than the sum of the parts of the recalled experience.

Adler (1970) observed that recollections are not static but subject to change and reinterpretation in order to reflect a person’s current outlook. In therapy, a person can be helped to see the essence of a memory from a different, more positive point of view, and attitude and behaviour can change as a result.

Neisser (1982) asked about the function of memory and rephrased the question in terms of what use we make of the past. He wrote, “My past defines me, together with my present and the future that the past leads me to expect.” (p. 13). The experiences of a lifetime are the foundation of an individual’s identity. The present is most clearly understood within the larger context of the past and the possibilities

envisioned for the future.

Singer and Salovey (1993) considered reminiscence to be a way of facilitating self-understanding and saw potential for it in guiding future behaviour. They described the role of self-defining memories in revealing patterns and themes, which reoccur and can highlight significant areas of concern and issues that have not yet been resolved. Self-defining memories are characterized by an intensity of feelings and clarity of detail. Singer & Salovey warned that even when memories have been exaggerated, enhanced by the addition of extra details, distorted by input from other people, and are the result of the blending into a single event of several separate events, the memories do not have less power in creating the persons we are. This is so, even when the memories are actually false. Recall of the past is naturally subject to distortions and an individual's reflections are dynamic as they create an evolving understanding that reflects interpretation and meaning making within the personal history. To an extent, we are who we think we are, and the memories that sustain our perceptions of ourselves are very powerful.

Exploring the Deterioration of Memory in Older Adults

Langer (1997) challenged the widely held belief that memory generally can be expected to deteriorate with age. She considered that such a negative assumption on the part of a culture might become a self-fulfilling prophecy. In a study comparing memory in a group of fifteen young people and a group of fifteen senior people who were drawn from three different sample groups: hearing-impaired [deaf]; non-hearing-impaired [those with normal hearing]; and Chinese participants, Langer found that there was no evidence of difference in the memory of the two Chinese age groups. The Chinese and hearing-impaired seniors, however, out-performed the non-hearing-impaired seniors [normal hearing, but not Chinese]. The conclusion was that, when a culture values its aging members, as the Chinese community and the deaf community do, those "cultural beliefs about aging play a role in determining the degree of memory

loss that people experience in old age.” (p. 97). This is a powerful idea at a time when the largest birth cohort in history, the baby boom generation, moves en masse through their fifties and beyond.

Intuitively we understand the value of memory and the role of introspection in making sense out of our experience. One of the most significant aspects of living the well-lived life is making meaning, making memory, and experiencing the now within the framework of the past and our dream of the future. We need to recognize the value of memory as the keeper of the personal history, complete with functional and dysfunctional interpretations and the accumulation of layers of meaning. The stories of the lives of older adults contain a wealth of critical incidents that they are able to recall. Reflecting on these incidents enriches their lives and serves to enlighten us concerning the maturing process, as it relates to the art of living the well-lived life. The review continues with a look at some insights into living well and zestfully.

The Well-Lived Life

Key Concepts of Living Well

McGraw (1999) outlined some key concepts on living well in the face of the challenges that life presents. He emphasized the need to see the truth in a situation, figuring it out, creating one’s own experience, acknowledging what needs to change, and managing one’s life.

Reflecting on the theme of living well, especially in the elder years, Dembe (1995) noted that her own zestful living was facilitated when she finally dealt with childhood issues. She summarized her experience with this comment: “I had to go back to go forward.” Dembe reported, “Experiencing this burst of energy, combined with my research on wellness and longevity, opened the door to passionate and inspired living. The key was the rediscovery of creativity and play, the true fountain of youth.”

(p.161). Dembe focused on the importance of the following in achieving “passionate longevity”: lifelong learning; creative play; creative thinking; creative activity; being outrageous; power lounging (for the relief of stress), and silence. She concluded that the combination of active initiating and appropriate self-care through relaxation and meditation, or quiet reflection, is a major factor in living with health, passion, and integrity.

Flow and the Growth of the Self

Carrying further, the concept of zestful, passionate involvement, Csikszentmihalyi (1993) described flow experience, which contributes to personal growth in an individual. He noted, “To experience flow, we must recognize some opportunity for action, or challenge...to know how to let go of the tried and true, be open to possibilities, seek out novelty, be curious, be willing to take risks, and be experimental.” (p.237). He wrote about memes and how they contribute to the quality of human life. [Richard Dawkins coined the word memes “to describe a unit of cultural information comparable in its effect on society to those of the chemically coded instructions contained in the gene on the human organism.” (p. 120)]. Whereas genes carry and pass on the genetic blueprints for life, memes pass on the social building blocks for an evolving society. Those who experience flow contribute positively to their own growth and to the evolution of society by creating such memes.

Csikszentmihalyi warned that in order to thrive in the societies of the future, people would need to strive for understanding beyond logic. He stressed the importance of fostering intuition, in order to be aware of possibilities before they actually happen, and to facilitate the acquisition of empathy to ensure understanding of feelings and events that cannot be thoroughly explained. He noted the role of wisdom in seeing connections between events, which on the surface do not seem to be related. Csikszentmihalyi concluded that creativity would be required in order to be able to look at problems in new ways and to devise new means of responding in order to be ready

for any eventuality. Successful adaptation to the unanticipated would then be possible.

Would there be evidence of flow experience, intuition, empathy, wisdom, and creativity in the lives of older women who have been active in creating community? Have they, in their leadership roles and in their relationships with family, friends, and colleagues, created memes that have fostered growth for institutions and for people around them? In other words, have they contributed to the social building blocks of the society of the future?

The review now looks beyond individuals and their giving and contributing, and focuses on the very practical reality that the well-lived life is facilitated by relationships. These relationships occur within the family and include others who comprise the social sphere in which aging women thrive.

Support Networks

Research, on the importance of family as a support network for seniors, was reported by Binstock and Shanas (1985). Shanas (1973) found “that in 1961 about 80% of American elderly were in contact with at least one of their children on a regular basis.” (p.319). In follow-up studies conducted in 1975 and 1980, regular contact was also found among the participants. Assistance from family members was especially important in times of illness or health related crises. Shanas (1979) reported “immediate family members, especially the spouse (if present) and children, provided the major social support of the elderly in time of illness.” (p. 322). Troll (1979) found that the seniors gave as well as received support. Parents of both sexes continued to offer help to their adult children in many ways, as long as that was possible. Would these patterns be evident in the lives of the women interviewed in this study?

Burnside (1993) reported on the work of Butler (1991) who explored women’s health from four perspectives of fitness: physical, intellectual, social, and purpose fitness. Purpose fitness is defined as fitness related to self-esteem and perceived control over one’s life. Social fitness in seniors depends on the connections that continue

between older people and their families and on the connections they have with each other. Butler proposed that the professionals concerned with health care for older women should focus on the positive aspects and should emphasize fitness and the individual's response to illness. Burnside concluded, that as far as physical fitness is concerned:

What seems most healthy in older women is their healthy attitude, plus an amazing ability to cope, including substituting other activities for those which are no longer do-able and/or participating in the same activities but learning to do them in a different manner (p.13).

Burnside also stressed the special significance of contact with grandchildren, which is an important aspect of social fitness, for many seniors.

Birren and Zarit (1985) found that although there may be some level of concern over disease or illness from which they are suffering, if people do not "act" ill, they will consider themselves to be healthy. Burnside reiterated the conclusion of Ouslander and Beck (1982) that illness is a combination of one's beliefs and actions in relation to the medical problem and is affected by how the disease influences their psychological sphere. The most significant aspect of wellness in older women is their attitude rather than their actual health.

Moore (1992) speaks of aging and the thoughts of elders. According to Moore, "Aging brings out the flavours of personality. The individual emerges over time, the way fruit matures and ripens." (p. 140). At the time of the Renaissance, the prevailing wisdom on aging was that sadness was a natural part of growing old. Moore noted that, "Melancholy thoughts carve out an interior space where wisdom can take up residence." (p.141). This poetic description of how melancholy or depression can lead to reminiscence and to life review fits well with Dostoyevsky's observation that suffering can lead to "sacred things for the soul." (Salaman, 1982, p. 49). Life with its melancholy and its joy teaches the lessons men and women need to learn.

Insight Gained from Analysis of Data from General Social Surveys

Data from Canada's 1985 and 1990 General Social Surveys were analyzed and reported by McDaniel and McKinnon (1993). The respondents were age sixty-five and older, from the ten provinces, and not living in institutions. The authors noted that the status of the older adult's health "is related to informal supports in that those men and women who are in best health have the most contact" with family and friends (p.80). Most of the help for seniors in the course of coping with their day-to-day lives, comes from women, daughters, and daughters-in-law. Emotional support is the most frequently identified form of support provided to elders and also by elders to their children. Differences in the experience of older men and women were evident in the data in the General Social Surveys. Where men are more likely to be part of an intact marriage at the time of their death, women are often in poorer health and living alone. The authors concluded that "the greater the embeddedness of women in family/friends networks," the greater their capacities for coping with aging (p.95).

One aspect of coping is recognizing how one's point of view changes over time. Within the context of one's social sphere, attitudes and meaning making evolve, and one changes and accommodates to the new realities. This does not imply a lack of continuity. On the contrary, Bateson (1994) observed that although we may believe that our core sense of self is quite stable, coming to understand that the self changes over time is the beginning of "celebrating it as fluid and variable, shaped and reshaped by learning." (p. 64). Writing of her reflections on continuity and discontinuity in her own life, Bateson noted:

Although I had changed my major activity repeatedly, I had always shifted not to something new, but to something prefigured peripherally, an earlier minor theme, so that discontinuity was an illusion created by too narrow a focus and continuity came from a diverse fabric and a broader vision." (p. 84).

Would there be evidence of circling back to earlier themes and a context of continuity

over the varied experiences and commitments identified by the women in this study?

Family Constellation Research

Based on observations of the behaviour of his patients in his clinical practice, Adler (1970) considered family constellation to be an important factor in an individual's personality development and interaction style. He noted, "Children develop in accordance with their unconscious interpretation of the position they occupy in relation to their environment." (p.137). Within the family, it is not only birth order, but also the perceived status of the child that influences behaviour. A child may have the perception that gender conveys status and may feel less valued than opposite sex siblings. A firstborn daughter may perceive a loss of status in favour of a younger brother (Toman, 1993). The youngest in a family, who is six or more years younger than the next older sibling, may have more in common with firstborns than with those who are youngest.

It is within the family that children have their first social and group experiences. Firstborns may feel challenged to reestablish position after the birth of a sibling. They may try to be more accommodating, more cooperative, more responsible, and may become high achievers. They may show a pattern of looking after others. Forer and Still (1976) observed that firstborns may look to father for "acceptance and approval" when the new baby takes mother's attention (p. 41). These authors also stated that the oldest child may be more conservative, obedient, and self-disciplined. They noted that firstborns "generally prefer to avoid conflict but also regard themselves as able to change situations." (p. 43).

Family constellation has been shown to be a factor in children's learning experience, and it may affect how teachers teach (Morawski, 1999). Morawski noted that those who are firstborn and "striving for status in the sibling constellation can transfer to other settings where they tend to seek approval through compliance and academic accomplishments."(p.182). Toman (1993) noted that a firstborn girl with younger brothers and sisters "can act motherly, responsibly, and as a leader with both

boys and girls alike.”(p.20). Toman also found that a firstborn daughter “can work hard for a good cause and sometimes tends to overexert herself.” (p. 168). Mosak (1973) observed that the oldest, youngest, or only child may be “in an atmosphere of excessive warmth” which could provide a “favorable climate for a child’s being overly dependent.” (p. 97). Middle children may resort to aggression and rebellion in order to find the place they seek within the family dynamic.

Given that family constellation has an impact on a child’s identity and on how reality is perceived, it could be a factor in the patterns that emerge in the experience of the women in this study. Toman (1993) warned, however, that a single aspect of family constellation such as being the eldest sister of brothers, or experiencing the early loss of a father, may not account for much of the long term social behaviour or the higher “preference for particular types of social relationships.”(p. 263). Toman posited that considering the family constellation of the parents and even grandparents facilitates analysis of individuals and their relationships. Parents may carry their childhood perceptions related to birth family constellation into the families they create as adults. Mosak noted that a former spoiled child might become an angry wife if her husband fails to pamper her as her own parents did. If this occurs, her child may feel rejected by such a demanding mother and may turn to the father.

Living zestfully in late adulthood, making sense out of experience, and successfully using leadership skills in order to serve one’s community require a variety of personal attributes including intellectual and emotional competence. The discussion continues with some observations contributing to our understanding of intelligence.

Giftedness

In order to focus more on social intelligence, which is different from intellectual potential as identified by standardized tests, the review of the discourse on giftedness is

limited. Gardner, Kornhaber, and Wake (1996) noted that intelligence as a concept, does not yet have a universally accepted definition. For different people, there are different meanings, and the definition is linked to the “methods the respondents use to explore the topic, the level of analysis of their investigation, and the values and beliefs they hold.” (p.4). Clark (1992) urged that rather than limit our understanding of giftedness to the aspect of intellectual potential, there should be a recognition of the fact that intelligence reflects the interconnectedness of all the human systems. She advocated viewing the development of people in terms of their integration of sensation, thinking, feeling, and intuition. Over time, intelligence has come to be recognized as involving more than the ability to think.

Multiple Intelligences

The classical understanding of giftedness had a narrow focus on intellectual potential and relied upon testing to determine an individual’s intelligence quotient. The standardized tests favoured the logical and rational. Abstract reasoning was highly valued. This limited scope of giftedness disregarded exceptional creativity, leadership ability, and outstanding interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. Gardner (1993a; 1993b) facilitated a greater understanding of the many varieties of intelligence that are evident in the lives of gifted people. Within the concept of multiple intelligences, exceptional ability is recognized in the areas of visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical-rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist, as well as verbal-linguistic, and logical mathematical.

It is Gardner’s concept of interpersonal intelligence, which provides insight into the “intelligence” that many community leaders share. In describing what is meant by interpersonal intelligence, Gardner noted that it “makes use of core capacities to recognize and make distinctions among others’ feelings, beliefs, and intentions.... In its most developed forms, interpersonal intelligence manifests itself in the ability to understand, act on, and shape others’ feelings and attitudes for good or otherwise.”

(Gardner, Kornhaber, & Wake, 1996, p.211).

Exceptional ability in the multiple intelligences does not guarantee achievement. Those who are able to use their gifts successfully in their personal lives and in service to their communities also demonstrate competence in social skills, self-discipline, and emotional control. With this in mind, the review continues with the work of Goleman (1995).

Emotional Intelligence

Goleman (1995) heightened awareness of the importance of what he described as emotional intelligence. A person with a high “emotional IQ” would display self-control, self-discipline, and the ability to feel empathy. Goleman’s development of the concept of emotional intelligence offered insight into the problem of those who are unable to maximize the potential of their exceptional ability in the various domains of endeavour. Such underachievement may occur because of poor social skills, lack of self-control, and the inability to make sense out of incidents involving behaviour of self and others. Goleman’s work seems to put Gardner’s understanding of the interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of the Multiple Intelligences into a practical context that makes emotional behaviour understandable. Empathy becomes the key to creating more socially appropriate interaction.

It is likely that older women, who have been instrumental in creating community and enriching lives, have drawn from the multiple intelligences to create the lives they have lived and to do the work they have done. Those who thrive in old age and join the ranks of wise women are likely to possess exemplary emotional intelligence characterized by empathy, self-discipline, and self-control. The review continues with several studies of gifted and exemplary women that provide some insight into how such women see themselves and how they manage their lives.

Eminent, Gifted, and Talented Females

Walker, Reis, and Leonard (1992) conducted a quantitative study using a four-

part, 130-item questionnaire. The subjects were 150 women per decade who graduated from a “highly selective school for gifted females” between 1911 and 1983. When the multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) showed that both personality and attitude factors differed significantly across decade of graduation, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was done for some factors. The results showed that the women who graduated in the 1930’s were significantly less concerned with being gifted than women of the 1940’s and 1950’s. The subjects reported that their abilities were often underestimated by their families. They did not welcome the label of “gifted” for themselves, but were comfortable identifying their children or partners as gifted. Another interesting finding was that they did not believe that they received the support that they needed from families, or from school guidance personnel who should have played a greater role in presenting options. The authors noted that the women in their study had mixed feelings about their exceptional abilities, which both enriched and complicated their lives.

In a qualitative research study collecting data from four sources, Reis (1995) studied twelve eminent older women, ages fifty-five to ninety, who were recognized by awards or special honours for their area of work at the regional or national level. They were nominated by one or more people in their fields, or were invited to participate because of published reports highlighting the quality of their work. Analysis of the data followed the grounded theory procedures of Strauss and Corbin (1990). Reis reported that the women were motivated because of their aspiration “to produce, to leave a mark upon the world, or from the sheer joy of the creative act.” (p.68). They exhibited a zestful enthusiasm for their work and satisfaction in general for their lives and the way those lives were evolving. As children, most did not have high self-esteem and were not outstanding students. As adults, they reported that their successes had given rise to their sense of self-esteem, and they had benefited from the encouragement of family and friends. Only one of the participants showed early evidence of talent. Reis

concluded that talented women may experience the peak of creative endeavour in some fields at a later stage in their lives than talented men who, unlike many women, are often free to explore in early adulthood, opportunities that result in recognition of their achievement at a younger age.

Leroux (1998) explored the variety of coping responses reported by her subjects in a study of forty women who were identified as leaders in the fields of law, business, engineering, the arts, politics, sports, and academics. When confronted with obstacles, they used strategies such as talking with a friend, spirituality, psyching oneself up, being single-minded, deciding on priorities, and organizing for action. Over 75% of the participants spoke of the motivating aspect of the early recognition of their special abilities. They saw themselves as leaders in childhood games and as very able students, learning easily and outperforming others academically. Leroux wrote of their "growing sense of self-agency." (p.12) To depict the importance of self-agency and to represent women's words and actions, Leroux developed The Chandelier Spiral of Female Achievement. This spiral represents lives lived and work accomplished. The prisms of the chandelier reflect potential and incorporate the characteristics of a female model of achievement. In the Chandelier Spiral, resilience, collaboration, autonomy, spirituality, versatility, and femaleness, comprise the interconnected prisms surrounding the central core, which is self-agency.

In a paper presented to the World Congress for Gifted and Talented Children, Leroux (1995) also reported evidence from her research, which found that relationships, role models, and intrinsic motivation were factors contributing to success. The women in her study discovered resilience and personal power as they overcame obstacles enroute to success.

A comparative study by Leroux and Butler-Por (1996) of 27 eminent Canadian and Israeli women found that none of the women felt it necessary to abandon femininity as they worked to achieve professional success. Most mentioned male mentors who

had played important roles in their career development. The study participants involved in careers in the arts were found to be “less confident about their talents and the legitimacy of their investment in creative pursuits.” (p.19). This finding supports the conclusion that creatively gifted girls are more vulnerable to underachievement.

Kerr (1994) described the eminent women she studied. She found that many of them had had “at least one ineffectual, irresponsible, absent or deceased parent.” (p.79). The women were voracious readers, “felt different in both positive and negative ways,” and refused to be limited by gender expectations (p. 80). Would these patterns, identified in the research on eminent women, also be evident in the responses of participants in a study of exemplary Canadian women in late adulthood?

The next section of the review of the discourse considers leadership in general and women’s leadership in particular. Much has been written about leadership. Most of it has focused on the leadership found in corporations and institutions. Although there are many different leadership styles that are appropriate in different situations and with different types of followers, it is increasingly recognized that effective leadership needs to involve knowing and caring for those who follow, as well as for the goals one hopes to achieve.

Leadership

Bennis (1989) described the difference between leaders and managers. He popularized the concept that leaders are people who do the right thing, but managers are people who do things right. Effective leaders are those who are able to both lead and manage well. They manage attention, meaning, trust, and self. Bennis noted that attention is managed through the clarity of the leader’s vision; meaning through the communication of that vision; trust through the creation and maintenance of trust; and self management by recognizing one’s competencies and making good use of them. In

identifying the best qualities that human beings can use in maximizing potential, Bennis focused on integrity (“moral and intellectual honesty on which our conduct is based”), dedication (“passionate belief in something”), magnanimity/humility (“noble, generous, learning from mistakes and not harping on the mistakes of others”), and openness (“tolerance for ambiguity and change, and a rejection of any and all preconceived prejudices, biases, and stereotypes”), plus creativity, (“making the familiar strange and making the strange familiar.”) (p. 118-120). In conclusion, Bennis noted that the role of the leader is to “create not only a climate of ethical probity but a climate that encourages people to learn and grow, prizes their contributions, and cherishes their independence and autonomy.” (p. 146).

Although Bennis studied leaders in the world of paid work, I believe that his findings may also be applicable to the work of volunteer leaders such as the wisewomen who create community with one caring and encouraging act at a time, keeping their vision true and their passionate commitment clear. Moving from the leadership of corporations to leadership for democracy, the review continues with the insight of Havel (1992).

Effective Leadership for Democracy

The Czech writer and political leader, Havel, (1992) concluded “that we will never build a democratic state based on rule of law if we do not at the same time build a state that is...humane, moral, intellectual and spiritual, and cultural.” (p.18). He advocated a new way of doing things that required “the courage to breathe moral and spiritual motivation into everything, to seek the human dimension in all things.” (p.20). This human dimension could be deemed conscience, feeling, or the human spirit. Havel noted that the only “way to strive for decency, reason, responsibility, sincerity, civility, and tolerance” is by leading in a new way, “decently, reasonably, responsibly, sincerely, civilly, and tolerantly.” (p.8). These ideals sustained him as he made his own contribution to the political process, and they provided a context within which to

consider effective leadership in more local, less lofty spheres.

The Influencer

Gardner (1997) was also concerned about leadership for a civilized society. He wrote:

If we are to have a world civilization—and more particularly, one that strives toward fairness and peacefulness—we must understand as much as we can about individuals of unusual promise and achievement. From this understanding may come insight into how better to unite talent and a sense of responsibility (p. 16).

Taking a cognitive view of influence, Gardner saw influence as arising from exchanges between the minds of leaders and followers. He concluded that the “principal vehicle of influence is the story,” and the influencer (a leader like Gandhi) is effective by “embodying in his life or her life the story that he or she relates.” (p. 108). Gardner’s research found that influencers are not discouraged by setbacks. On the contrary, he noted that, “they are unlikely to see a defeat as a failure at all. Rather they are embattled, energized, and poised to throw themselves back into the fray with new force.”(p. 121). In the face of a set back, an influencer will recognize an opportunity to learn.

Gardner (1995) concluded that leaders are able to inspire others “in part because of how they have resolved their own identity issues.” (p.25). This self-understanding is an indicator of competency in the intrapersonal aspect of the multiple intelligences. Gardner noted that leaders are almost always able to speak persuasively and well and that they often write very eloquently, which reflects a high level of competency in the verbal-linguistic area. Considering the relationship between leaders and followers, Gardner also observed that there is an ongoing, active, and dynamic relationship with regular and constant contact. This aspect of leadership depends on effective interpersonal skills.

Since much of women's leadership involves the use of influence as opposed to the wielding of power, Gardner's insight is helpful in understanding women's experience. Those who have been active in volunteer groups know that their success depends on their effectiveness as persuaders and influencers. They are continuously and effectively bringing people on side in order to accomplish the task.

Social Activism

In a grounded theory study of grassroots leadership with eighteen participants, Brant (1995) looked at people who had started non-profit organizations engaged in pro-social activities. The organizations had budgets of \$100,000 or less from government or fund-raising. Brant was interested in the beginning orientation of his subjects. How had they come to do the work they were doing on behalf of others? Identifying his participants as social-entrepreneurs, he noted that their commitment to the projects had begun as either reactive or proactive response.

Those identified as reactive were responding to a threat or personal need to fight back against something. One example of this orientation was a woman who was very upset about her problems fighting with the legal system for child support from her ex-husband. She started a group that worked to change child support law and enforcement and offered support to those in the process of seeking the child support to which they were entitled. Brant noted that those social-entrepreneurs who began in a reactive mode, all changed to proactive over time.

A man who was enjoying the experience of reading to his children was an example of a participant who began his social activism with a proactive orientation. He realized that there were many disadvantaged children in his community who did not have the pleasure of having stories read to them. Starting with reading at schools and homeless shelters, he recruited others and eventually there were 600 adults reading to 15,000 children.

Brant agreed with Hoffman (1989) that people who become social-activists are

motivated by having experienced sympathetic and empathetic distress and empathetic anger. Those with the proactive orientation felt, “a mixture of anger at a social dynamic that deprives or neglects some aspect of society, and empathy for the victim of neglect.” (p. 68). As far as their leadership was concerned, although he had expected to, Brant did not find significant differences in the leadership of his social-entrepreneurs and the leadership of business entrepreneurs. He concluded that the best leaders are the best learners.

The work of Damon (1996) on moral goals and social influence supports the conclusion that empathy and sympathy are critical to pro-social behaviour. Of the two emotions, sympathy is the more critical to the decision to act in a pro-social manner. It may look to empathy, “for its emotional substance and charge,” but it [sympathy] is the “more strongly directed toward helping and not harming the other.” (p. 206). Damon noted that social influences, both positive and negative, could lead to the commitment to activism. Elaborating on how this is accomplished by a negative scenario, Damon explained:

Negative social influences occur when pressure is brought to bear on a person by intense assertions of values that the person rejects. When a social engagement presents values that a person has determined to be illegitimate, the person’s resistance can lead...toward a transformation, elaboration, or strengthening of his or her moral goals (p. 204).

Attempting to account for the depth and the intensity of the moral experience he was studying in his highly committed “moral exemplars,” Damon concluded that their moral identities were very closely connected to their self-identities, perhaps even fused together.

Continuing from the general discourse on leadership, the review looks at what has been written by some researchers who have focused specifically on the leadership experiences of women.

Women and Leadership

The Web of Inclusion

Helgesen (1990) described the web of inclusion as a model for organizations led by women. The leader is in the centre of the web, which is circular. She is reaching outward rather than down towards the others in the organization. The web concept allows for direct and constant communication and for efficient and timely access to information. Helgesen noted that “the female view that one strengthens oneself by strengthening others is finding greater acceptance, and female values of inclusion and connection are emerging as valuable leadership qualities.” (p.233). In the web model, one’s authority comes from drawing others closer and from increasing the strength of the feelings of interconnectedness. Referring to communication, Helgesen noted that women have a greater aptitude for, and skill in, listening.

Waggoner (1998) also supported the need for a more inclusive organizational structure that facilitates interaction and is less hierarchical and therefore more facilitative of interconnectedness. Envisioning communication as a loop, Waggoner emphasized the importance of the leader’s transmitting the central message of the vision and attending to the feedback coming to her from the others. This is essential in order to be cognizant of how the organization is receiving and processing the information being shared. The ideal is meaningful within the context of valuing collaboration and having a perceived and actual interest in the input of all stakeholders concerned.

An in-depth case study of an exemplary leader in the field of music education and community development was conducted by Harris (1998). The work described a woman, gifted in the interpersonal area, who showed exemplary vision and initiative in leadership in school and community.

Leadership in School and Community

Starting with interviews and using a wide variety of secondary sources such as

government reports, film footage, newspapers etc., Harris (1998) compiled a history of Elizabeth Murray's career as a music teacher and community activist. This study of grassroots leadership enriches our understanding of women's lives and service to community, and it offers a model for thorough life history research using a case study format.

Harris noted that Murray was raised in a loving family that nurtured social conscience and service to others. The following quotation summarized how Murray defined leadership: "This is the thing about leadership, to find out what people's interests are and let them go to it." (p.85). Her leadership style involved listening to others. Her natural humility kept her from claiming a centre stage role or seeking credit for her efforts. Believing in her projects, Murray did not hesitate to be proactive in recruiting people to participate. She was persuasive and convincing. Her approach was collaborative and invitational, and everyone's input was welcome. Each person's participation was valued. Murray and her colleagues considered leadership to be an evolving trait. Ready to support others in developing talents that had not yet been recognized, but could blossom within the climate of encouragement, their thinking was that "leadership could be taught, and could benefit, always from fine-tuning." (p.63). They chose to create a climate conducive to growth of the individual and the group.

Leadership in the Women's Movement

The twentieth century saw many stereotypes concerning women's lives come under the critical scrutiny of people who knew that change must occur in society's expectations and its laws, in order to ensure the full participation of women. Friedan (2000) documented the struggle for "women's liberation," and the creation of a strong women's movement in order to bring about the required changes. A visionary leader, very creative in her approach, Friedan worked to build a network of like-minded women and to thwart the considerable opposition that challenged the movement at every turn. Friedan reported that Indira Gandhi was a role model who helped her to recognize

“that women did not have to become like men, or assume a male political style to be effective leaders.” (p.195). What was needed was a new definition of “feminine” that could encompass the wielding of power and claiming of authority. Friedan, on seeing Gandhi’s example, concluded that “There could be plenty of authority and autonomy within feminine definition when women really began to assume leadership roles [that] they were entitled to assume as 51% of the population.”(p.195).

In her eighties, Friedan looked back at her life and the work she did to dispel the “feminine mystique,” and she reported feeling a great deal of satisfaction. She had encountered stiff opposition from the power structure of patriarchal society, and had suffered betrayal at the hands of the more radical feminists who eventually alienated many women with their strident anti-male stance. Throughout the decades-long struggle, Friedan did not let herself be discouraged. She committed her intellect and her energy to the cause and, even at the age of eighty plus, continued to lecture and to do what she could to share her vision. Friedan summarized the gains achieved by women, noting that what was once a radical agenda is now reality. She stated, “The personhood of women, which is what it was all about as far as I’m concerned...is here today.” (p. 375).

The Broken Pyramid

McIntosh (1983) conceptualized a broken pyramid as a metaphor for our society, in which some people live and learn above the fault line, and others are confined below the fault line, subsequently acquiring a very different repertoire of skills for survival. Above the fault line, the privileged in our society (mainly white males) compete with one another and function in an either/or mode. Regan & Brooks (1995) were influenced by the McIntosh metaphor and described life below the fault line in the following way:

Below the fault line lies a whole different world, inhabited primarily by women, people of color, and low status white males. Its organization is horizontal and

collaborative; it is cyclical and repetitive.... This is where caring, nurturing, relationship, and community building happen. It's a both/and world (p.14). Regan & Brooks posited that when one is able to use the "either/or" plus the "both/and" competencies, one is able to move across the otherwise limiting reality of the fault line towards the higher levels of the pyramid.

The Feminist Attributes of Leadership

Reflecting on conversations and group discussions of eleven women (including themselves) who shared their stories of leadership experience in school administration, over many years, Regan & Brooks came to understand that their experience in leadership roles in a variety of elementary and secondary schools was characterized by the following attributes: caring, collaboration, courage, vision, and intuition. The authors had identified what they believed to be the five feminist attributes of leadership. These attributes were defined with reference to women's experience.

Regan & Brooks noted, "Gender is a category of experience." (p. 42). To explain what they meant by this statement, it is necessary to understand how they defined feminist attributes in order to distinguish them from feminine attributes. They believed that "feminine attributes are received from culture," whereas "feminist attributes emanate from the active experience of women." (p.5.). These attributes of leadership exist within the context of an ethic of care, in which consideration for each other's dignity is a central concern. The authors agreed with Gilligan (1982) and Belenky, Clinchy, Goldburger, and Tarule (1986) that caring and connectedness are "central to women's psychological development and learning." (p. 27). They observed that the ethic of care "propels them into action on behalf of others." (p. 42).

The other attributes are also defined from their understanding of women's experience. Courage relates to standing up for what one believes and challenging assumptions, rather than referring to action within a more macho sense of bravery. This courage is concerned with "moving into the unknown, risk taking, hanging in, and

leaving oneself vulnerable.” (p. 30). Collaboration refers to the consultative style of women, in which contributions to decision-making are invited from all concerned. It reflects connectedness. Vision, as the authors understand it, involves seeing the kind of difference one hopes to produce in the quality of life and “enabling others to consider options in new and different ways.” (p. 36). Being able to effectively articulate a vision and ultimately being able to motivate others to become involved in bringing one’s vision to fruition is also closely linked to connectedness. Caring for others and for firmly held values and beliefs is a key component in the conceiving of a vision of how things can improve. Intuition is a valued source of knowing that contributes to interpretation of experience, and to planning and timing activities. Regan & Brooks described their understanding of intuition as “listening to our hearts”, and thereby coming “into contact with many things that are important but that our reason unaided by intuition, would miss initially.”(p. 34).

Regan & Brooks recognized that the ideal leadership style called upon both the feminist attributes of leadership and the more traditional masculinist attributes. They called this ideal combination of leadership attributes relational leadership. Using the metaphor of the double helix of the DNA model to illustrate the essential interconnectedness of the masculine (traditional) leadership skill sets observed in the experience of male leaders and the feminine attributes (grounded in the experience of women), they continued to develop the idea of “both/and” as well as “either/or.” They considered that “both/and” reflected the feminist value of inclusiveness and the necessity of collaboration, whereas “either/or” represented the more traditional masculinist values, including the necessity of choice, the rule of law, decisiveness, and judgement. As with the DNA model itself, neither strand of the double helix is superior to the other; both are essential and equally important. Both are required for a completely human functioning. Regan & Brooks posited that in certain circumstances a leader may find that one strand or the other may be temporarily dominant, but guided by intuition

and with the overall vision in mind, the decision-making of the ideal leader would be done within the context of caring. The two strands are linked by a process of communication that the authors call relational knowing.

They observed that both “either/or” and “both/and” were necessary options and noted that worded in this way, the phrasing begins with both, and ends with and; a linguistic indication of relational leadership being embedded within the “both/and” orientation. They concluded that, “The result of the feminist perspective will lead to a synthesis transcending both the male and female knowledge bases.” (p.3). The new “whole” would be greater than the sum of its parts.

Looking back over a period of many years, Regan & Brooks reported that they gained new insight into the importance of the conversations of the eleven women as a network of school administrators. They recognized the role that the group’s collaborative reflection had played in understanding their professional lives and in their meaning making.

In articulating their vision of making the knowledge of women’s experience accessible to all, Regan & Brooks understood that they were “valuing, articulating, recovering, and disseminating the experience of women so that it becomes a resource for all, not only in the relatively narrow field of school leadership but in all aspects of the human condition.” (p.18). Bargerhuff (1998) completed a study based on the work of Regan & Brooks. The review continues with her findings.

Creating a Supportive Climate for Inclusion

In a qualitative research study of elementary school principals (two female and one male) who had been identified as exemplary in their efforts to create a supportive climate for inclusion [of high needs students requiring special education], Bargerhuff looked for evidence of relational leadership and the feminist attributes described by Regan & Brooks. Gathering data through semi-structured interviews with the three principals and with twenty-seven teachers, plus observations, shadowing of principals,

and document review, Bargerhuff's analysis led to the conclusion that the leadership was characterized by a commitment to a relational leadership style. Bargerhuff noted that these leaders recognized the need to encompass both the masculinist and the feminist orientation in the course of their decision-making. Their decisions were based on caring and were made through the "blending of moral and rational/technical considerations." (p.227). She stressed that the development of caring and collaborative relationships within the staff and the school community was particularly important in creating the appropriate climate for inclusion. Each principal's vision of the value of inclusion for the special needs students as well as for the regular students was also crucial to the success of the initiative.

Relational Leadership in a Chicana/Latino Community

Mendez-Negrete (1995) reported on her inductive study of the leadership of exemplar activists/leaders in a Chicana/Latino community. Qualitative data analysis of twenty-six life histories and ethnographic accounts led to the conclusion that the leaders in the study were using relational leadership as they engaged in their activism on behalf of the Chicano/Latino community. Mendez-Negrete's understanding of relational leadership, although similar, was not based on the work of Regan & Brooks (1995)). She concluded that relational leaders are "conscious actors who are aware of their interests and vision", and that they "use themselves to gauge the energy of the group, understand the interests and the emotional climate of the interactions among individuals and groups, and make an effort to isolate, understand, and bring out the myriad of agendas...." (p. 318). She noted that the Chicana/Latino leaders were able to use effective collaboration in achieving their goals. Their concern was with "getting things done that will benefit the greatest number of people." (p. 314).

These leaders also had a clear understanding of power and inequality. Mendez-Negrete concluded that it is this understanding that "compels relational leaders to improve the human condition." (p. 322). Although Mendez-Negrete did not refer to the

feminist attributes of leadership as identified by Regan & Brooks, she noted through her own observations, the importance of caring, collaboration, courage, vision, and intuition in the experience of her participants. This appears to validate the understanding that the feminist attributes of leadership, which according to Regan & Brooks derive from the experience of women who acquire their life skills “below the fault line”, are the same competencies that serve other socially and politically disadvantaged people as well. It also supports the idea that successful difference-making, for those raised below the fault line, depends on the ability to operate efficaciously, both above and below the fault line, maintaining the connections to the people one serves, while advocating strongly and effectively with those who live and learn above the fault line at the power wielding top of the pyramid.

If the five attributes of leadership, which Regan & Brooks identified as feminist attributes, are reflected in the experience of exemplary older women who have been active in leadership roles in their communities, the conception of administrative practice they called relational leadership will be shown to apply beyond the experience of women in educational administration and within the lives of women in more general and varied leadership experiences. When wise women reflect upon the critical incidents of their lives and their leadership roles in community, will they demonstrate that they have relied on caring, collaboration, courage, vision, and intuition as they worked in their various groups to achieve the goals they had set for their organizations and for themselves?

Insights on Research from a Feminist Perspective

All aspects of this study, including the review of the discourse, were planned and carried out within an awareness of the feminist need to document and understand the experience of women. As well, there was a conscious effort to employ strategies that are advocated by women researchers. As Kirby and McKenna (1989) posited:

There is no requirement that hypotheses come from previous research. Rather,

if information is considered useful, it can be added into the general analytical framework although it has no more (or less) analytical value than any other information. It is, however, important to remember that secondary sources (i.e., the literature review) are no substitute for active research. If you have explored the research topic thoroughly, your data will speak with its own authority (p.123).

The review of the discourse was selective and limited at the start. It expanded as the need evolved and the results of data analyses dictated further reading of additional relevant material (Burt and Code, 1995). The techniques of feminist research are evolving as more research is conducted by women who seek to add to the knowledge base of what is known of women's experience. Reinharz (1992) noted that feminist researchers have three frequently mentioned goals: "(1) to document the lives and activities of women, (2) to understand the experience of women from their own point of view, and (3) to conceptualize women's behaviour as an expression of social contexts." (p.51). The research questions, which are the focus of this study, are all in keeping with these goals.

Feminist research seeks to honour the experience of women. It aims to make that experience, and the women themselves, visible (Burt & Code, 1995). These authors warned that careful interpretation is often required in order to understand the mediating circumstances that provide the context within which women's experience occurs. The concept of positionality, as understood by post modern and other feminists, is a potentially useful starting point from which to interpret women's experience. Understanding the impact of many factors such as class, economic conditions, cultural and historical realities may be significant. Maher and Tetreault (1996) noted that, "An individual's position, as opposed to... 'identity' or even 'standpoint,' is relational and evolving...." (p. 160).

The Conceptual Framework

Miles and Huberman (1994) considered a conceptual framework to be the “current version of the researcher’s map of the territory being investigated” (p.20). They advised researchers to represent their conceptual frameworks graphically and to include the “bins” into which the data might fall. Figure 2.1 depicts the emergent conceptual framework and includes the most influential concepts derived from the review of the discourse and my own assumptions and presuppositions.

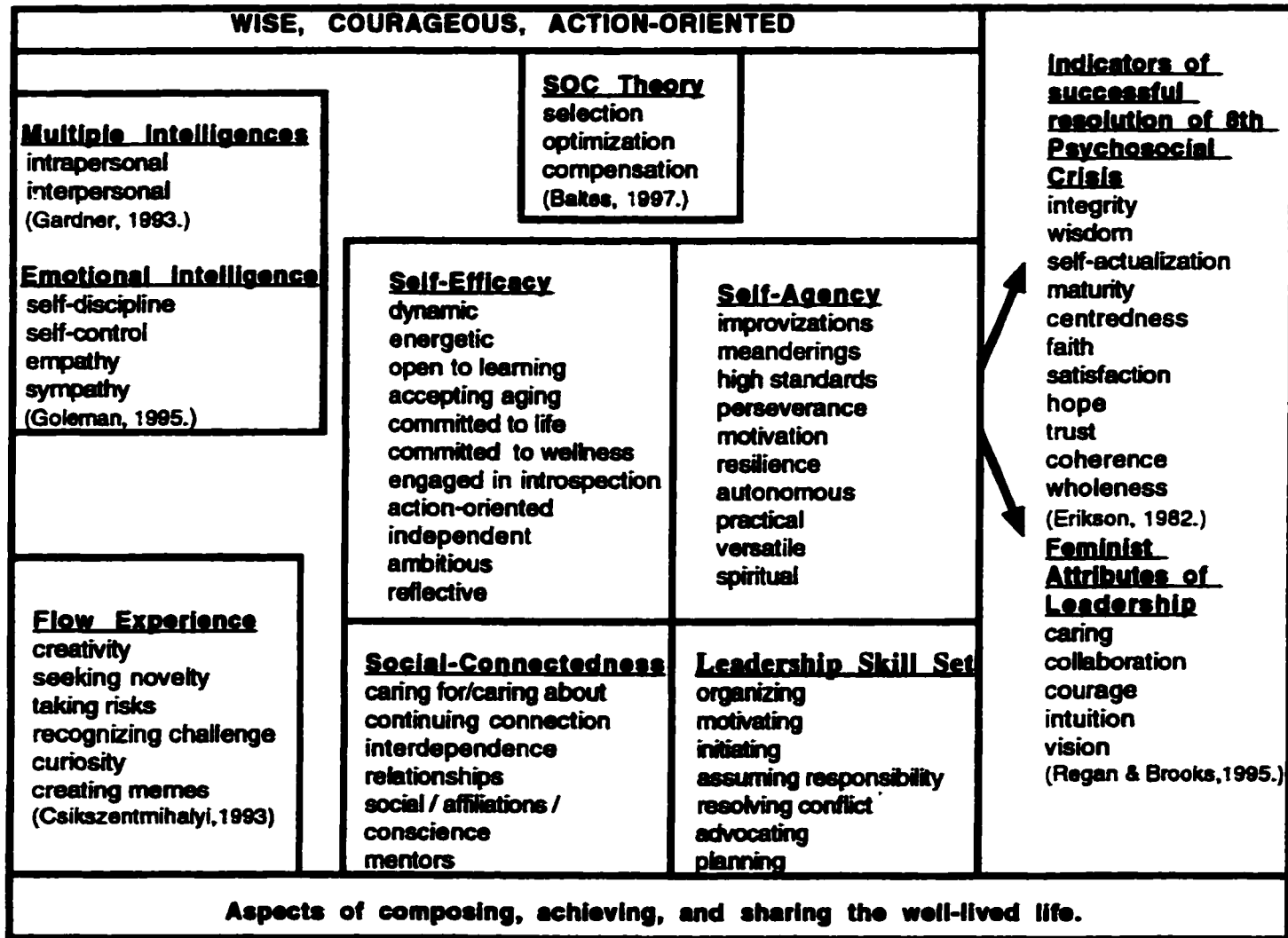


Figure 2.1

Emergent Conceptual Framework

The Emergent Conceptual Framework Explained

The large square contains seven smaller boxes that are “labeled bins.” These contain aspects of the underlined heading, which represents a category of data that I anticipated finding. At the top of the large square are the three descriptors, Wise, Courageous, and Action-Oriented. These descriptors became increasingly important aspects of my conceptual framework as the study progressed. Beside the large square is a rectangle, which contains the salient aspects of successfully resolving Erikson’s (1982) eighth psychosocial crisis, Integrity vs. Despair. Beneath that, the Feminist Attributes of Leadership posited by Regan & Brooks (1995) are shown. The whole graphic refers to aspects of composing, achieving, and sharing the well-lived life.

The arrows linking the large square to the rectangle beside it, show that everything in the smaller boxes contributes to the well-lived life and combines to produce integrity, wisdom, etc., and in the case of leadership to produce a better quality of leadership encompassing the feminist attributes.

The Multiple and Emotional Intelligence categories are together in the same box to indicate that both are required in order to maximize the intellectual potential of a person and to ensure that the special gifts of intelligence will be used for social good and in a responsible way. Below that, is the box related to the special category of experience likely to result in passing on memes (cultural DNA) to the next generation. The box in the centre at the top shows the SOC theory, which is especially relevant to late and late-late adulthood, as compensation for lost competencies becomes increasingly important.

The four boxes in the centre of the graphic are linked in different ways. These bins are relational. They are all connected. Self Agency represents the idea that a person knows that she can make a difference. This leads to Self-Efficacy, which is the understanding that she can do things well. Self-Efficacy is directly linked to Social-Connectedness, which is directly linked to Leadership Skill Set.

These categories contain some, not all, of the probable dimensions. No doubt, some of the dimensions could be part of other categories than the ones into which they were quite arbitrarily placed. It is important to recognize that the conceptual framework is just an attempt to create a provisional map, which is useful as a tool to clarify a researcher's evolving perception of the territory of the study.

The principal conceptual framework, which guided the research, is the relational leadership concept of Regan & Brooks (1995). Regan & Brooks noted, "Men and women experience and interpret the world differently as a function of their different genders." (p.17). This led the authors to conclude that men's and women's interpretation of effective leadership might be different and served as the impetus to identify differences through analysis of the leadership experiences of the women in their network of school administrators. They recognized that the leadership style of the women was relational rather than controlling and that their practice rejected the more traditional understandings of leadership as "organizational position and managerial control." (p. XI). Having the benefit of the review of the discourse and considering the emergent conceptual framework, the following research questions were formulated:

Research Questions

Question 1

What are the perspectives on patterns and themes in the life development of exemplary Canadian women over the age of seventy who have been active in leadership roles in volunteer and/or paid work in their communities?

Question 2

Do these patterns and themes support the concept of the Feminist Attributes of Leadership (caring, courage, collaboration, vision, and intuition) within a relational leadership context as identified by Regan & Brooks (1995)?

Summary

This chapter reviewed the relevant discourse from the fields of psychology, sociology, women's studies, and education. It began with a discussion of Erikson's Epigenetic Scheme and continued with developmental perspectives from Gilligan, Sheehy, Bateson, Baltes, and Bandura. The review then looked at some insights into memory, the well-lived life, and giftedness as described by various experts in their fields of psychology, cognitive science, education, sociology, and the health care field. A discussion of autobiographical memory and early recollection is included in the discourse on memory. Reflecting on living well, some findings of McGraw, Dembe, and Csikszentmihalyi were included. This section ended with reports of research on support networks and family constellation.

From the discourse on giftedness, Gardner's work on Multiple Intelligences and Goleman's on Emotional Intelligence were highlighted as well as research on gifted women. In the section on Leadership, Bennis' description of effective leaders was followed by the insight of Havel on leadership for democracy and Gardner's work on the Influencer. Some discussion of grass roots leadership and social activism followed. The chapter continued with works focusing on women in leadership. Helgesen's Web of Inclusion was followed by Harris's study of an exemplary school and community leader. This section concluded with Friedan's reflections on her leadership role in the feminist movement.

The feminist attributes of leadership as identified by Regan & Brooks were described and the concept of relational leadership was presented. A study by Bargerhuff, was discussed next, followed by Mendez-Negrete's study of leadership in a Chicana/Latino community. The final section focused on some insights into feminist researchers' thinking on research by, about, and for women. A graphic representation of the emergent conceptual framework for the study was described. The two research questions, which the study was designed to answer, concluded the chapter.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Qualitative Research

This chapter outlines the methodology for the study. It begins with a brief discussion of qualitative inquiry followed by a description of the techniques of interviewing and conducting focus groups. The concept of trustworthiness and the value of triangulation are discussed in relation to ensuring validity in qualitative research. The chapter continues with the details of the research design and how the study was conducted. In conclusion, an overview is presented to show how the data were analyzed.

Qualitative Research

Much has been written about the topic of qualitative research as this form of inquiry becomes increasingly popular in the social sciences. Recognized authorities, Miles & Huberman (1994) noted that since the first edition of their sourcebook in 1984, “the expansion of qualitative inquiry... has been phenomenal.” (p.1). Schwandt (2000) noted that, “the qualitative inquiry movement is built on a profound concern with understanding what other human beings are doing or saying.” (p.200). The researcher looks for patterns and themes in the data collected.

Wolcott (1992) posited that three types of ideas guide qualitative research. He identifies these idea types as theory-driven, concept-driven, and reform or “problem-focused” This study would fall into the category of concept-driven research. Recognizing that theory-driven research seems to have greater prestige, Wolcott

acknowledged that, “Those of us attracted to and satisfied with concepts for orienting our research must suffer accusations that we lack precision, like hunters who carry shotguns rather than rifles, or shoppers who are ‘just looking’.” (p. 11). Wolcott goes on to commend concept-driven ideas “as an attractive level at which to begin.”

Life History Interviews

The individual interview is one of the most frequently chosen techniques of qualitative inquiry. There is a great deal of advice available to the researcher who wishes to understand the requirements for conducting effective interviews. Kirby & McKenna (1989) wrote, “For quality interviewing, there must exist a sense of equality between the person gathering the information and the person whose knowledge is sought.” (p. 66).

It is very important to establish good rapport, and to create a climate that is conducive to reflection on the part of the respondent. Beginning the interview with a demographic questionnaire is considered one way of putting a person at ease. Working with an interview guide is a popular choice of beginning researchers because it helps them to gain experience and confidence in the interviewing skills. Interviews are usually taped and later transcribed (Merriam, 1998).

Focus Groups

Focus groups, which are sometimes referred to as group interviews, are extensively used by researchers in marketing, and increasingly in social science inquiry. Thorough outlines, of what is required in order to ensure the success of focus groups in generating good data, are available to the novice and experienced researcher (Knodel, 1993; Madriz, 2000; Morgan and Krueger, 1993).

One advantage of the focus group is that people can hear the responses of others, and the result may be to allow greater insight into their own experience, and perhaps to validate that experience. Memory cues may come from the incidents reported by other focus group participants, and recollections may surface that would not

otherwise have come to mind.

If the group is conducted with sensitivity, all participants feel that their input is valued and that they have their fair share of time to contribute as the discussion proceeds. The focus group moderator usually has a set of questions prepared in advance, in order to guide the discussion. When an informal, but task-oriented climate is created, the moderator role is facilitating rather than directive, and the group dynamic is characterized by spontaneity and openness (Krueger, 1993).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the term used by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to refer to the quality of a piece of research. For some qualitative researchers, trustworthiness replaces the older terminology of validity and reliability, which were terms primarily associated with quantitative research. According to Lincoln & Guba, aspects of trustworthiness include the following: truth value, (accuracy of the findings); applicability, (the likelihood that the findings will apply beyond the specific sample studied); consistency (reliability) ; and neutrality, (objectivity).

Miles & Huberman (1994) believe that the researcher's skills and background are significant contributors to the overall trustworthiness of qualitative research. They note that the researcher's familiarity with the phenomenon of the study, and the setting in which it is studied, help to ensure validity. They also stress the importance of "strong conceptual interests"; "a multi-disciplinary approach"; "good investigative skills, doggedness, the ability to draw people out, and the ability to ward off premature closure."(p.38). Discussing internal validity, Miles & Huberman question whether the findings of a study make sense and whether triangulation produced "generally converging conclusions." With reference to external validity, they are concerned with how far the conclusions can be generalized to other samples or other circumstances (p. 278).

Eisenhart and Howe (1992) outline five standards for validity: cogent design;

competent application; connection to previous work; value constraints; and comprehensiveness. These authors stress the importance of the “the fit between research questions, data collection procedures, and analysis techniques” (p.657). Comprehensiveness “balances design quality and importance against risks and permits the robustness of conclusions to be assessed.” (p.663).

Kirby & McKenna (1989) maintain that validity depends on the research participants recognizing that what we say as researchers is in fact so. This requires that the participants give feedback on the findings and the interpretation. Confirmation, through feedback from participants, is advocated as well by Miles & Huberman (1994). They also noted that, “validity is enhanced when they (findings) are confirmed by more than one ‘instrument’ measuring the same thing.”(p.273).

Triangulation

The advantage of triangulation is to allow for different data collection methods or sources, in order to provide an element of corroboration of the findings. Seeing the same patterns or themes in data gathered from several sources and through a variety of methods is like replicating the finding (Miles & Huberman, 1990). Wolff, Knodel, and Sittitrai (1993) noted that there is value in having two different sources. They noted that when “similar conclusions [are] derived from different methodological approaches [they] are stronger” (p.129). Pitman and Maxwell (1992) consider triangulation to be “an essential validation technique” (p.763).

Guided by the expertise of these authors, decisions concerning methodology were made. A qualitative research methodology using the Life History Interview technique and focus groups plus a questionnaire was selected for this study. This format offered the opportunity to collect data in three different ways in order to include the benefits of triangulation and therefore strengthen the likelihood of identifying patterns and drawing valid conclusions about themes.

Research Design

The study followed a qualitative research design looking for patterns and themes in the life histories of twelve Canadian women over the age of seventy. For the purposes of the study, themes were defined as strong threads that weave their way through the life span, providing a continuity of focus throughout various experiences. The themes were identified by considering how the various patterns related to one another and how they combined to become part of a larger entity that accounted for significant amounts of data. Following a strategy suggested by Miles & Huberman (1994), all of the “bins” into which the data might fall were anticipated. More general categories for conceptualizing the salient aspects of the well-lived life were then considered. The many and varied experiences, motivations, and connections of the lifetime create the story of a life. Creating a provisional conceptual framework and revising it throughout the process of conducting the study helped to guide the decision-making through the questionnaire creation, the analysis of the data, and the writing of the report.

Sample

The sample consisted of twelve Canadian women, over the age of seventy. The decision to limit the number of participants to twelve was influenced by the Lincoln & Guba (1985) conclusion that when properly selected, twelve interviews will usually uncover most of the information available.

The twelve women were living independently (not in seniors’ residences) and leading relatively active lives in late adulthood. Each had a history of leadership and influence in the community and was known as someone who had committed to the goals of at least one organization with which she worked as a volunteer. The women were involved in the following types of organizations: educational institutions, church groups, Women’s Institutes, special interest groups, political parties, home and school associations, federations or unions, service clubs, library boards, charities, recreational

associations, neighbourhood groups like community associations, and seniors' groups.

In order to include as much varied life experience as possible, the sample included diversity in educational level, mother tongue, ethnicity, religious affiliation, socio-economic, and marital status. The participants lived in urban and rural communities; were native born or naturalized Canadians; and one was a woman of colour. Each lived in her own space and none was planning a move to a seniors' residence at the time of the study.

The participants were referred by friends, by family members, or identified from my own acquaintance with their work through newspaper articles and/or inservice sessions I had attended. Several were found through inquiries in the community. Two of the twelve women were referred by members of my family; six were referred by friends; and three were people whose work over time was known to me, although they were not known personally. One woman was identified after input from Women's Institute members.

Each of the participants was telephoned and invited to be part of the study. Some were initially reluctant and I had to convince them that they were indeed the kind of women I wanted to interview. Their humility was apparent in all cases, and some took for granted that what they had done in their communities was just what anyone else could or did do. One participant consented only after consulting her daughter, who reassured her mother that she had indeed made a special contribution to her community through her various leadership roles. I felt honored by the women's acceptance of the invitation to participate, and appreciated the trust they placed in me and in the project.

Procedure

The study was planned to focus attention on aspects of the lives of older women that had not been extensively researched (the role of connection, spirituality, feminist attributes of leadership). Data were collected in three distinct phases including interviews, focus groups, and a questionnaire. Gathering data in the three different

ways allowed for triangulation and made the analysis more meaningful.

Phase 1. The first phase of the study involved an individual interview with each of the twelve participants. The data collection instruments of Phase 1 included a demographic questionnaire and life history interview guide that evolved from the beginning conceptual framework. See Appendix B for copies of the demographic questionnaire and the interview guide.

Motivation, openness to learning, relationships, and leadership activities, were deemed likely to be instrumental in the life experiences of the participants. Emotional Intelligence, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence were expected to play a significant role in personal choices and individual decision-making. Social bonds and affiliations contribute to who we are and how we interact with others in our personal and public lives. Activities reflect how we spend our time and follow personal priorities. Drawing on ideas from the focused review of the discourse, advice from colleagues and advisors, and personal brainstorming, the model evolved, and the interview guide was created. The resultant life history questionnaire was used as a semi-structured interview guide for a single interview session.

Although the study had been discussed with each participant in the initial telephone contact during which they had first agreed to participate, the informed consent form was carefully explained to each one at the beginning of the actual interview session. The form was signed when the women were sure they understood and had no further questions, and a copy was left with them for their future reference. Two of the women had needed reassurance that they could indeed drop out of the study at any time, but none of them actually felt a need or wished to withdraw as the study proceeded. See Appendix C for a copy of the informed consent form.

The questions in the Life History Interview Guide were designed to elicit recollections of experience with leadership as well as reflections on critical incidents from the participants' life histories. The women were interviewed in their own homes

with the exception of one whose home was some considerable distance away. She was interviewed at her daughter's home during an extended visit. The semi-structured interviews took from forty-five minutes to two hours. Interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed. In gathering the data, every effort was made to establish a secure climate for disclosure by the participants.

The interview was designed as the primary means of data collection. Each interview began with the demographic questionnaire. Merriam (1998) suggested that, "factual sociodemographic-type questions can be asked to get the interview started...." She also recommended asking "for relatively neutral, descriptive information at the beginning of an interview." (p.82). In order to be certain that information pertaining to each area of inquiry would be obtained, the interview guide was followed for each participant. Questions were asked in a different order where that seemed logical, considering the participant's responses and the detail involved. This was sometimes necessary, for example, because a response partially answered a question that was due to come up later. Where it seemed natural or necessary to do so, questions were rephrased, repeated, or left out. The latter occurred only when the particular question seemed redundant due to an earlier response. When more information was sought or a new line of inquiry surfaced, probing and follow-up questions were asked. Merriam (1998) noted that, at the beginning of the data gathering, the interview guide is especially important for most interviewers. As they gain confidence, however, they become less dependent on it. This occurred, in my case. The interviews also became more natural as they progressed.

During the interviews, attention was paid to the participants' needs for rest and appropriate pacing. There was some self-disclosure on occasion, but this was kept to a minimum in order to maintain the focus on the participant's responses, and to ensure that the interview would not take longer than planned. The interviews were characterized by sensitive, active, and empathetic listening. Feedback from several of

the participants indicated that they had enjoyed the interview experience, welcoming the chance to think about things they had not thought about in a long while. One mentioned that she really appreciated someone taking time to listen to her and that she had enjoyed the attention very much. Every interview included at least some laughter and some fun. The women shared their stories willingly, and I very much valued their gift of telling. I continue to honour and appreciate the experience of their lives.

Follow-up telephone calls were made when necessary to add details missed in the original interview. An example of this was birth order, which had not been asked in the first interviews, but had proved to be an interesting piece of information.

Phase 2. At this point in the study, two focus groups were conducted. Because of the difficulty of scheduling the focus groups to fit the busy schedules of the participants, only eight of the participants were able to take part. The focus groups, which had been planned for groups of four to six women, were conducted in a private home for the participants from one area, and at the local Public Library for the women from the other area. Missing from the first group were two women; one who was out of town visiting her daughter and family, and another who was in the process of moving out of her home and relocating to another city. When this participant agreed to respond to the focus group questions in a special interview at her home, that was arranged and careful notes were taken of her responses. One of those who were unable to participate in the second focus group was out of town on the business of her particular volunteer association, and the other was the woman from afar who was not planning another trip to visit her daughter until a few months later.

A few weeks before the focus group, each participant received a letter giving her a progress update on the study and information on the upcoming Phases 2 and 3. They also received most of the focus group questions in advance in order to reduce any stress that might have been caused by not knowing what to expect in the group session itself. These questions related to the participants' experiences in church and community

groups, etc., and focused on their reflections on group decision-making and achieving designated goals. They were also asked about their initial motivation to become involved and whether they had been criticized for their involvement.

The questions, which they had not seen in advance, called for recollections of their early experiences of themselves as leaders and organizers, and of their mothers, aunts, grandmothers etc. helping in their communities. These questions were included as a means of gathering more information related to their backgrounds and possible role models. This was necessary in order to shed more light on the building blocks of social conscience, which had surfaced as so strong a theme in the individual interviews of Phase 1.

The value of sharing their stories in the group was that new insights were gained into their own lives and the lives of others who had been active in their communities. Hearing the recollections of the others prompted the recall of similar or contradictory experiences of their own. See Appendix D for the focus group questions and the letter sent to each participant. In both focus groups, I acted as facilitator using the open ended questions to guide the discussion. The focus group sessions were tape-recorded and later transcribed.

Phase 3. In the final stage of data gathering, a questionnaire with items designed to supplement the Life History data was completed by someone close to each of the participants. This allowed data to be gathered about the life history and the participant's experience from another point of view. The participants chose this person from among friends, relatives, colleagues in community work etc. Three of the twelve chose their daughters, one her spouse, one a co-worker, and the remaining women chose a long-time friend or colleague in community work.

The questionnaire for this stage was not finalized until data from the interviews and focus groups had been gathered. Drafting the questionnaire at this point provided a means to collect data to confirm or challenge some of the preliminary findings of

Phases 1 and 2. It also allowed for the inclusion of questions that could fill in gaps in the individual profiles, which were not apparent until this stage in the study. For example, the question relating to sense of humour was included in order to fill in a perceived gap. Input on the participants' experience related specifically to the attributes of caring, courage, collaboration, vision, and intuition was included in order to supplement what had been learned about this aspect of their experience from the participants themselves.

The draft questionnaire for Phase 3 was shared with the participants and their suggestions for revisions were welcomed, although none were actually suggested. See Appendix E for the questionnaire and covering letter sent to respondents.

Memos to Self

Memos were written after each interview and focus group and as the analysis proceeded in order to document the evolution of my thinking and understanding. This material has been used to supplement the data and to clarify evolving insight.

Overview of the Analysis of the Data

Coding of the Interview and Focus Group Transcripts

The transcripts of the interviews and focus groups were analyzed to discover patterns and themes within each participant's life history and across the group of participants. Coding is part of conceptualizing the data and is considered the first step in analysis. Miles & Huberman (1994) go so far, as to say, "Coding is analysis." (p.56). It is quite probable, however, that with some participants' interviews the coding may have begun in an intuitive way as early as the active listening phase of the interview itself.

The coding categories evolved as the analysis of the data proceeded. The initial coding categories, which were anticipated as likely to evolve from the beginning

conceptual framework, are included as Appendix F. In order to be completely open to the meanings embedded in the data, the early coding scheme was considered provisional in nature, and effort was made to keep assumptions to a minimum. As the coding continued, it became necessary to add many more codes. The final set of codes is included as Appendix G. Examples of sample responses are included for clarification:

Coding was done systematically and thoroughly line by line. Every possible unit of meaning was given a name, i.e. a code. The frequency of the occurrence of codes was tallied for each individual interview and focus group to facilitate the identification of patterns and themes. Composites of these frequencies were completed for the entire group in order to highlight the differences and commonalities within the group of participants as a whole.

The decision to use a word processor and hand coding on “coding copies” of the interview and focus group transcripts, rather than use a commercial software programme for the analysis, was reached after reading Charmaz (2000) and Weitzman (2000). These authors looked at the pros and cons of available software, and the benefits to the relatively novice computer user. In making the decision, I considered the sample size and the very inviting possibility of being totally immersed in the data. I was not afraid that it would become unmanageable. Also considered were my assessment of the level of computer skills that would be required in order to master the software, plus concerns about cost and available time.

In order to track and illuminate evolving insights and to explore codes and connections as themes emerged, notes and lists were written. Various charts, summaries, and graphic depictions were made as well. These evolved as the analysis proceeded and became especially important as the writing of the report began. Ryan and Bernard (2000) noted that themes could be identified “before, during, and after data collection”, but that they are usually induced from the transcribed text (p. 780).

Constant comparison was another key aspect of the analysis. Strauss & Corbin (1990) outlined several techniques of comparison that they recommended for helping to identify and categorize concepts. Although this was not a grounded theory study, the techniques of Strauss & Corbin were useful for countering assumptions and identifying dimensions as the coding proceeded.

The Phase 3 data (the questionnaire completed by someone named by the participants as a person who knew them well) were analyzed as a “free list”, and within the context of constant comparison. Ryan & Bernard (2000) noted that survey questions that are open-ended and short can be treated as free lists, and “the frequency of mention and the order in which items are mentioned in the lists as indicators of [the] items’ salience” (p. 770). A composite chart of responses was created, and each response was analyzed giving weight to frequency and order of the descriptors, or examples the respondents offered in response to the call for “words to describe”, “character traits admired”, “significant achievements”, and “specific examples” pertaining to the study participants.

Once the coding was complete, all of the transcripts were reread in order to select certain responses that were especially illustrative quotations, and therefore possible inclusions in the final report. Draft copies of the Results and Analysis chapter and The Themes chapter were shared with the participants, and their input was welcomed as clarification and as recommendations for revisions in preparation for completing the final report.

All of the feedback from the participants was positive, and no major concerns were expressed. Most of the suggestions involved minor editing. The recommendations were followed unless they would have meant tidying up the phrasing of a response and consequently compromising the spontaneity and muting the voice. I valued the women’s unique and natural ways of expressing themselves, and did not wish to interfere with any of the less than eloquent aspects of authentic oral communication in

favour of edited prose. Direct quotations were used extensively throughout the report in order to reflect the voices of the women as authentically, and as completely as possible.

Understanding that a transcript of a tape-recorded interview can never fully reflect the passion and intensity of a respondent, and also understanding that pauses can speak more eloquently than words on occasion, every effort was made to be true to those nuances in the description surrounding quotations. Out of respect for the women who included "um" and other verbal discontinuities in their responses, these were not included in the quotations. Repetitions, however, which often indicated the importance of certain reflections, or signified the passion associated with strong belief, were always included.

Data were pooled to maintain anonymity. Where names or initials were used to identify a participant, they are fictitious and used only to facilitate readability and the general flow of the report. When the analysis revealed interesting "outlier" concepts, these were included with the results even if they did not fit into a pattern or theme. As the study took on a life of its own, I was guided by the data and by intuition as well as by the ongoing review of the discourse.

During the analysis of the data and writing the report of findings, further review of relevant material provided a context that facilitated interpretation and description. For example, as the study evolved, it became advisable to review relevant material from the work done on the development of social conscience, on volunteerism, and on wisdom. In addition, it was helpful to use relevant literature from other disciplines to provide a context for findings and to make connections with the work of other researchers. Reinharz (1992) noted that "reaching beyond a single discipline" is a characteristic of much feminist research (p.217).

Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology for the study. After a brief discussion of

qualitative inquiry in general, followed by a description of the techniques of interviewing and of conducting focus groups, the chapter continued with sections on trustworthiness and triangulation. The next section focused on the details of the research design and how the study was conducted. Information about the selection of the sample and the invitation to participate was followed by a discussion of the informed consent process. The data gathering of Phase 1, the individual interview; Phase 2, the focus groups; and Phase 3, the questionnaire; was described in detail. The chapter concluded with an overview of the analysis of the data. The rationale for choosing to use a word processor and hand coding rather than software designed for the coding of research was explained.

CHAPTER 4

Results and Analysis

This chapter focuses on the responses from the three phases of the study. It begins with a summary of the demographic details and continues with summaries and analysis of the responses given in the interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires. In order to ensure that the voices of the women are heard and their realities understood, direct quotations are used extensively. The responses are rich and varied and reflect the participants' personalities and their lived experience. Altogether, the responses present a picture of a group of women who have been actively engaged in the serious and satisfying business of helping to create better communities. Some of the data are simply summarized and reported. In other instances where detailed analysis is given, connections are made to relevant work of earlier researchers including psychologists and others who focused on findings related to early recollection and family constellation.

Phase 1

General Demographic Summary

Chronological Age.

The women ranged in age from seventy to ninety-two. Their ages are given as of their birthdays in the year 2000. Four of the women were over eighty; five were between seventy-five and seventy-nine; and the three youngest were between seventy and seventy-four years of age.

Place of Birth.

Three of the participants were born outside of Canada (South Africa, Lithuania, and Jamaica) and became citizens over twenty years ago. The nine who were born in Canada were born in small towns or on farms in Ontario (six), small towns in Saskatchewan and Quebec (two), and one in a large cosmopolitan city in Quebec. Two of the three who were not born in Canada lived their early years on farms, as did four of those who were born in Canada. Another spent part of her youth on her grandparents' farm. Only two had never lived in a big city. One had lived her entire life within a few miles of her birthplace and had never travelled farther afield.

Family Size and Birth Order.

The families, into which the women were born, included from three to fourteen children, and of the twelve women, eight were firstborn. The four who were not the eldest were the second of three, the fourth of six, the seventh of nine, and one was the youngest and only daughter in a family with three children. Three of the four who were not firstborn perceived themselves to have been very special in their family constellation, and seem to have shared many of the characteristics typical of firstborns such as feeling responsible for others and having the perception of special status. The woman who was the youngest in her family was over six years younger than her next older brother. Toman (1993) suggests that such an age difference creates a family dynamic similar to that shared by firstborns. She remembers, as a young child, participating in adult conversation with the perception that her opinions on various topics, including politics, were taken seriously. The woman who was fourth of six perceived herself to have always been the one that the others came to when they needed advice or someone to make decisions. The participant who was seventh of nine achieved special status in her family constellation by going to school, learning easily, and teaching her older siblings who had not had the opportunity to attend school with other children because of restrictions in place for their ethnic group.

The participant who was a middle child was one of the most socially outgoing of all of the participants. She seemed to have a pattern of actively seeking attention and social satisfaction outside the family and was a social star in the community constellation as well as within her own extended family. Another couple of participants who could also be described as very outgoing compared to the others in the study were not the eldest in their families. The fourth woman in the set of those who were not firstborn was less inclined to behave in an obviously outgoing way, but she had a great sense of adventure and had moved far beyond her initial circumstances finding great satisfaction as well as welcome and unwelcome attention in the wide world far from her birth family.

All of the participants reported having good relationships with their siblings. Many told of caring for their younger siblings, reading to them, and generally looking out for them. One was counted upon to speak in their defense against very strict parents, and although it did not change how the parents responded, it at least assured the children that their older sister was understanding their crises and trying to help. One of the participants became responsible for raising her younger brothers after the deaths of their parents when she was twenty -one, had just finished teacher training, and was about to get her first job.

Socio-Economic Level.

The twelve participants were born into working class or middle class families. All but one had lived her adult life solidly in the middle class. Several were enjoying the lifestyle of the upper middle class. They reported having summer cottages, enjoying travel, and thriving in an intellectually stimulating environment.

Religious Affiliation.

Four of the participants were Roman Catholic, six were Protestant, and two were Atheist/Humanists. One of the women had a Jewish mother, but had been raised as an Anglican. Another was committed to the teachings of the Rosicrucians as well as

professing faith in Christianity. Both of the Atheist/Humanists had arrived in a very thoughtful way, at the decision to reject organized religion. One based her decision on the perceived hypocrisy of Christians who righteously espoused Christian principles in church on Sunday, but felt no cognitive dissonance in behaving contrary to those principles throughout the rest of the week. The other had made an intellectual decision early in life that reflected her scientific way of perceiving reality; she concluded that the Bible stories were fantasies. Although it took a few more years to be clear about it, she rejected what the church had been teaching. Only four of the women gave indication of very strong faith, but two of these had questioned the teachings of the church and rejected what did not fit into their personal understanding of Christian ideals. Six of the participants had a rather mechanical commitment to their churches and participating in church activities seemed to be a lifestyle choice rather than a faith-based choice.

Educational Level.

Nine of the twelve graduated from University. Educational levels ranged from school leaving after grade eight (one); graduating from post secondary programmes, but not at the university level, (two participants who earned qualifications in nursing and secretarial science); through B.A.'s, a B.N.Sc., an M.S.W., and two Ph.D.'s.

Employment.

After finishing school they worked in nursing (two); teaching at one or more of these levels: elementary, secondary, and university (six); as a psychologist and professor, social worker, and executive secretary (one in each of these careers). Another worked in a variety of jobs such as wallpapering, painting, and other work, including outdoor work at her husband's side. Two of the teachers also worked alongside their husbands in business ventures. One had tried her hand at raising cattle in an effort with her sister to raise enough money to pay the taxes on a piece of land they owned. Another participant, whose husband was a minister, collaborated extensively with him as they shared responsibility for meeting the needs of their

congregation.

Marital Status.

Three of the women never married and had no regrets about that decision; a fourth did not intend to marry, but changed her mind when she met a widower and opted for marriage at the age of thirty-eight. One divorced after twenty-five years of marriage, four were widows, and four still lived with their spouses. At least two marriages had involved more than their share of anguish and concern. Three of the marriages appeared to have been especially strong with the partners described as supportive and the relationship as between soul mates. Of those who married, the youngest bride was seventeen at the time of her wedding and the oldest thirty-eight. The average age for marriage for the nine was twenty-five.

Children.

All but one of the women who married had children. Two families included an adopted child. The one who married a widower became the mother of two teenaged stepchildren. The families had between two and five children with an average of 3.33 in the nine homes.

Location of Current Home and Living Arrangements.

Only four of the women were currently living near their birthplace. Five of the participants were living in or near a large city, and six were in or near a medium-sized city. One lived in a small town in the north. None was in a nursing home or seniors' residence. Five of the women lived alone, and one was in an apartment in her daughter's home. Four lived with spouses, one with her sister and mother, and another with a friend.

Health Concerns.

Although there was no specific question about health, it was not surprising that such concerns came out in the responses to the interview questions or in the demographic questionnaire. Most of the women expressed some concerns about current

health problems and all were aware of the need to pace themselves and were planning on cutting back selectively on their activities.

All but two of the participants expressed at least moderate concern for their current state of health. Heart trouble was a concern for three. Osteoporosis and arthritis were concerns for two others. Two had recently broken their hips and three had lung problems. One had recently been diagnosed with a rare cancer and another was dealing with leukemia. All were upbeat, accepting, and matter-of-fact about their health. They were making various adjustments to their lifestyles in order to manage their medical problems. The types of management described by the participants support the SOC (Selection, Optimization, Compensation) theory of Baltes (1997). One who had coped with many major illnesses was committed to a positive attitude and trusting of her doctors. Amy explained it this way:

I think I have got through some very severe illnesses, quite, I don't know if you would say the word was bravely, but I suppose some people would.... But I have never been scared, I think, to fight. I have had confidence in doctors....

Leadership Roles in the Community.

The various organizations and groups, with which the women were associated over the decades of their service to their communities, are categorized in connection to faith groups, education, and community organizations. Many of them were ongoing commitments; others were no longer part of their work, having been replaced by other things that “need being done.”

The twelve women in the study were involved in a large number of volunteer activities, some of which were related to their faith groups with their various councils and committees. Examples of these commitments included Community Ministries Board, Dioceses Council, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Catholic Women's League, United Church Women, Elders' Council, Daughters of Isabella, Women's Christian Temperance Union, Children's Church Magazine, and the Humanist Association.

Other groups, with which the participants were involved, were related to education in some way. Examples of this involvement were 4H Clubs, Home and School Association, Citizens' Committee on Children, Principals' Association, pre-school programmes, child study centre, a private school, Teachers' Federation, and Curriculum initiatives (anti-smoking, Education for Peace, and anti-racist education).

The largest group of organizations was related to service to the community at large. These included programmes geared to seniors such as the Foot Care Programme, Meals on Wheels, and Seniors Association; or geared to Health such as the Cancer Society, support for those suffering from mental illness, Hospital Auxiliary, and Recreation Committee.

Other community-based commitments were to the Library Board, Recycling Programme, Historical Society, Community Fair Committees, and Community Resource Centres. Focusing on particular interests of women were such organizations as Women's Institute, Wheel Women, Regional Coordinating Committee on Violence Against Women, and Canadian Abortion Rights Action League.

Some commitments were to organizations dedicated to reducing the difficulties associated with poverty such as The Snowsuit Fund, homeless shelters, and public housing. Still other organizations to which the women had given time/energy/leadership were those working towards human rights, equity, and anti-racism. These groups were Amnesty International, Jamaican Association, Institute for Race Relations, and The Black Sash. One participant had been very involved politically as a member of the local riding association and as a candidate in provincial and regional elections.

This outline of the organizations, with which the participants were involved over the years, is by no means complete. It was not unusual for a woman to say toward the end of the interview that she had forgotten to mention that she had started, or participated in, a major undertaking that she had not referred to up until then. There may have been other commitments that did not come up at all. A previously unincluded

commitment to an organization was added as a result of one participant's feedback on the draft chapters. It was clear that the participants had been very busy people carrying more than a fair share of responsibility for making their communities better places to live.

General Description of Participants.

See Appendix H for a brief general description of the individual participants. These descriptions were approved by the women themselves. The names are fictitious in order to maintain confidentiality when quoted. Various awards and commendations, which many received in appreciation of their efforts on behalf of their communities, are included.

The next section of the chapter focuses on the responses from the individual interviews. This material is reported under different headings that are taken from the questions of the interview guide. The presentation of the information does not follow the exact order of the questions from the guide. Related inquiries are grouped together and the reporting follows a chronological order to the extent that it is possible to do so.

From the Interviews

Childhood.

All of the women reported strong family relationships with immediate and extended family. Eleven of the participants had great relationships with their mothers, considering them strong women and excellent role models. The woman whose relationship with her mother was not a close one, mentioned that her mother had been sickly and that she had spent part of her childhood living with her grandmother whom she adored and considered a great role model. One participant, as a young adult, lost her mother soon after her father's death. It is interesting to note that all of these strong women had strong women as role models. In addition to mothers, there were aunts and grandmothers who were excellent examples of confident, caring, capable adult females.

One example is from a response by Frances. She reported:

My great aunt was one of the first graduates of the (local hospital) and she had gone overseas during the First World War and got the Royal Red Cross awarded. And she was quite a religious person. She was very forceful in encouraging me.

Six of the participants had great relationships with their fathers and at least two of these considered themselves to have been a "Daddy's Girl." Forer & Still (1976) concluded from their family constellation observations that a healthy personality can develop if the firstborn can "turn to father for acceptance and approval while mother's treasured love is focused elsewhere." (p. 41). Both women, who spoke of being Daddy's girl, were firstborn daughters who identified more closely with their fathers after the birth of a sibling. In one case, the new baby was a very sickly boy and the mother's attention was focused on him to a great extent because of his poor health. In the other case, the younger sister was perceived as the mother's favourite and the participant did not feel valued. Even as an adult, she did not look to her mother for support in times of personal crisis.

Of those who did not indicate an especially close relationship with their fathers, one spoke of a domineering father who had very definite plans for her as far as education was concerned. Another woman had a difficult relationship with her stepfather after her parents' divorce. Another recalled her father's mental illness and the financial stress on the family because of her father's inability to hold a job. Although there was some stigma associated with mental illness at the time, it was a minor concern compared with the hardship associated with her mother having to find work and being poorly paid. She explained the effect her father's condition had on her family in this response:

He started to have this terrible manic depression, and he lost his job, and eventually mother had to get work.... There was a lot of worry. She had a lot of

worry, and I was very conscious of that.

Concern for a parent's health was part of the childhood of six of the participants. Two of the women had fathers who died when they were nine years old and one lost her father when she was nineteen. Over half of the participants (seven) had an absent, deceased, or ill parent. Kerr (1994) and Gardner (1997) found this same pattern to be evident in the exemplary individuals they studied.

The Depression and Second World War.

The Depression and Second World War had been somewhat significant factors in the early lives of several, but none appeared to carry serious scars from their experiences related to these historic periods. Three reported having had concerns about poverty and security at the time. Catherine remembered the impact of the Depression years in this way:

If anything, the food was extremely poor. That I have to admit. Clothing was very modest. But I don't think that I myself personally suffered.... I couldn't ever forget how hard we used to work on the farm, for example, and there was no way. Some of my family members for example, the girls didn't get married, you know, because there was no dowry.... That was very depressing.

Growing up on a farm in Canada, Tina spoke of the lack of variety in food but not shortages. She remembered the clothing concern as well:

I remember in public school having only one outfit to wear to school, and then, it was a knitted top and bottom, and mother would have to wash that on the weekend. I had only one outfit.... Nobody told us we were poor so we didn't know. And everybody else was poor anyway so what difference did it make? Olivia felt compassion for other children who were not as fortunate as she was. Her recollection of the depression years is reflected in this comment:

I was only a child, and we were lucky because my Dad was an ex veteran. So

he was allowed to go to this place to get us some clothes, and he got clothing, new clothing. But Mom, I guess she made eternal soup. I think it was the same soup bone. But apart from that it wasn't too too bad. There were a lot that were worse than we were. I remember feeling sorry at some of the other children, and happy that I had this new coat, and they just had the same old thing. And I felt sorry for them.

There was a wide variety of responses when the women referred to their experiences during the war. One recalled recognizing in a parade of departing platoons, someone she had known from school days. They corresponded throughout the war and married as soon as they were able to do so. Another spoke of a pupil who enlisted because he had been expelled from school for playing hooky. The participant had tried to intervene on his behalf but to no avail. Before he left for the front, he came to thank her for trying to help him. He was killed in action. Some of the younger women spoke of popular teachers being killed and of cousins and the older brothers of friends who died overseas. One woman lost a brother.

The women spoke of rationing and being unable to buy items such as silk stockings and tapioca. For two participants, the war had given their mothers the chance to get jobs and to provide the family with greater financial security. One got her own first job at the age of fifteen because of the shortage of personnel. Another spoke of her brother benefiting from the educational opportunities offered to veterans after the war. As a teenager, one woman had helped her father check their neighbourhood for compliance with the rules of blackout. Another was caught up in the danger of war torn Europe and barely escaped with her life.

The memories of the Depression and the Second World War were shared matter-of-factly and without evidence of sadness or pain. One value, which resulted from their experiences with scarcity, was that they all were careful to avoid wasting things. The women had accepted whatever had occurred during those traumatic times

and carried on in most cases without significant change to their day-to-day lives.

Earliest Memory.

When asked to share their earliest memory, the participants recalled something that had occurred between the ages of two and six years old. They were free to choose an early memory from any age. If they happened to respond by describing several different incidents, I chose to consider the earliest recollection. The women seemed to enjoy this opportunity to remember something from early in their childhoods. In giving their responses, they recalled in vivid detail, events that they had not thought of for decades. They spoke animatedly and with pleasure about a wide variety of incidents. The early recollection material is considered in the light of Cognitive-Perceptual Theory (Bruhn, 1990).

There was a positive attitude apparent in each of the recollections. Many of the women indicated a trusting attitude, describing trust in themselves and often trust in others. Learning was a factor in most of the memories, and relationships figured in many. Only three of the women were not with an adult in the recollection they shared. It is interesting that none of those who were alone was a firstborn child. The adults who were involved in the recollections were teaching, helping, holding onto, and supporting with attention. All but three memories recalled something that took place in the home or outside and near the house where the child lived. Novelty was a factor in six of the memories. The locus of control was internal for seven; external for five. Achievement was a factor in six of the seven recollections, in which there was internal locus of control.

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 summarize the participants' responses to the earliest memory question. Terminology in the charts derives from the Glossary of Needs (Bruhn, 1990, p. 147-148) and from Mayman's Interpersonal Themes in Early Memories (Table 2.1) and Clinically Meaningful Aspects of the Analysis of a Set of Early Recollections (Table 2.2) (in Bruhn, 1990, p. 35-39).

Attitude	Mood	Cont. Cat	Age	Person	Place	Activity	Loc. of C.	Theme	Coping Style
positive venturesome autonomous trusting in self	curious happy focused	achievement learning exploring	< 3	self	outdoors	following a worm	internal	pleasure in novelty pleasure in wider world love of learning love of nature	active initiating independent observing
positive committed trusting in others	proud confident focused	achievement learning	< 6	self mother	home	chasing mother to learn words/letters	internal	pleasure in mastery love of learning supportive relationship	active assertive persistent challenging self
positive autonomous creative	happy proud focused	achievement play	< 6	self	outdoors	making cookies out of mud	internal	pleasure in proof of competence turning manip skills to creative accomplishm't	active challenging self independent
positive autonomous putting s forward	proud confident	achievement learning	6	self teacher	school	reading gr. 2 work on 1st day of sch.	internal	pleasure in mastery love of learning supportive relationship pleasure in wider world	active assertive independent challenging self
positive trusting	curious happy focused	achievement learning	< 3	self mother	home	learning names of things on tea cart	internal	pleasure in mastery love of learning supportive relationship	active assertive persistent challenging self
positive self sufficient creative	playful happy focused	achievement constructing play	< 4	self	home	making things out of boxes	internal	pleasure in proof of competence turning manip skills to creative accomplishm't	active challenging self independent

Attitude	Mood	Cont. Cat	Age	Person	Place	Activity	Loc. of C.	Theme	Coping Style
positive trusting	emotional crying	succorance unexpected	< 6	self mother sister	home	watching fire	external	security basic trust others help you	passive accepting feeling, watching rather than doing
positive trusting	curious expectant focused	learning succorance	< 3	self grandma	station	waiting for mother and baby brother. hearing/seeing train arrival	external	mastery of fear pleasure in novelty passive form of pleasure supportive relationship pleasure in wider world	passive accepting feeling, watching rather than doing
positive trusting	surprised	succorance unexpected	3	self milker	barn	picked up by cow's horn	external	security basic trust others help you	passive accepting feeling, watching rather than doing
positive loving routine	happy	succorance farewell greeting	< 5	self father	home	waving goodbye greeting	internal	close comforting attention rituals and routine	active surrounded by family
positive love of rural life	happy vigilant	succorance worry	6	self father others?	outdoors	sleigh ride to town	external	pleasure in wider world passive form of pleasure needing reassurance	passive feeling, watching rather than doing
positive trusting	attentive cared for	succorance relationship	< 3	self father	outdoors	falling off the wagon	external	security basic trust others help you	passive accepting feeling, watching rather than doing

Table 4.2 EARLIEST MEMORY SUMMARY CHART 2 Relationship/Togetherness

The responses are clustered in categories described as discovery/learning/active play, and relationship/togetherness. The six participants describing a memory from the first of these categories (discovery/learning/active play) told about: following a worm, learning to read (2), trying to remember the names of things on the tea cart, making mud pies, and playing with boxes/making things. Each of these memories involved curiosity, creativity, love of learning, initiating, and being active. Locus of control was internal. All six were acting independently in the memory and did not involve other people except for the one experience where the mother acted as a source of information. Each self was in a starring role in the experience. The memories involved pride and an awareness of self-efficacy. They were self-esteem enhancing.

Catherine recalled, from around the age of two, "I remember on my knees walking to see a bug, not a bug, the worm move, and I followed this worm for quite awhile." In what is called an "afterthought" (Bruhn, 1990), Catherine concluded this reflected her love of nature. It is also an indication of an early interest in learning.

Also describing an early interest in learning, Veronique shared her memory with this response, "I kept looking at books and reading books, but I couldn't read so I was chasing my mother all over and 'What is this word? What is this letter?'... When I arrived at school I knew how to read." This comment, offered as an afterthought, is indicative of how much Veronique takes pride in her accomplishments and in being well prepared.

Delia's memory is another example of the love of learning. She described her experience in these words:

I think I must have been about two and a half and...my mother had one of the classic tea tables you know with great big wheels and you put everything on it in the kitchen, and you brought it to the living room. My mother had put on the cups and the saucers and the spoons and the teapot and little cookies and whatever it was, and the plates, and my memory is that I am standing beside

this thing and I can't really see over the top.... I know there is stuff up there, but not really seeing, but I am asking her the names like saucer, or milk jug, or something like that and trying to remember it. All the new words that were coming along. I knew some of them well, like spoon, but there were new things on that tray, whatever they were, that I didn't know.

The six women describing a memory from the second category (relationship/togetherness) spoke of; grandmother's house on fire, being lifted up by a cow's horns, falling off the seat of a wagon, the noisy arrival of a train, waving goodbye to father, and riding to the village in a sleigh. These experiences all took place with family. Even the train memory had the participant holding her grandmother's hand and waiting for the return of her mother and baby brother who were about to arrive on the train.

Most of these recollections involved an aspect of danger that was either not perceived or simply not acknowledged. Four were not experiences involving the participants taking initiative, but were, on the contrary, experiences involving reacting to something that was happening to them. Locus of control in five of these memories was external to the participant. The one who was waving may have been initiating, or she may have been co-creating the experience. Since she indicated that waving and greeting were part of her well-loved routine, I have categorized her report as internal locus of control. None of the recollections in the relationship/togetherness set, indicated feelings of independence. In none of them was the participant the perceived "star" of the activity.

In the more frightening scenarios, the women were not worried at all. They simply took it in their stride. They had confidence that their caregivers would handle the problem. They may not have been learning about their self-efficacy, but they were learning to have confidence in others and learning to be sensitive to the behaviour of others. For example, Frances, the woman who reported falling off the seat of the wagon, remembered her father going out to be with the horses after she was safely

inside the house. He was feeding the horses sugar and expressing his gratitude that they had not moved while he rushed to get his little daughter out of the danger of their hooves. She seemed to have found his response more memorable than what had actually happened to her. In fact, her afterthought minimized the danger and reframed the experience in these words, "I had so many clothes on I'm sure I wouldn't have been hurt anyway."

In these recollections, they were also learning about themselves and the kinds of things that can happen in the world beyond the safety of their homes. While the other category of experience was more active compared to the element of passivity in this latter group of experiences, these women were being sensitive to others and learning to place trust in their caregivers, in themselves, and in life itself.

Although most early recollections are not followed by an afterthought, those that are, can be deemed to have been reflected upon over time. Conclusions drawn by the rememberer may be very strong indicators of current constructs that have implications for behaviour and thinking (Bruhn, 1990). Eight of the participants expressed an afterthought in connection with their earliest memory response.

Catherine's, Veronique's, and Frances's afterthoughts have already been mentioned. Including Frances's example, six of the afterthoughts come from the set of the six identified as relationship/togetherness. A description and interpretation is offered in order to provide insight into the personal constructs that are indicated in the afterthoughts of these participants.

After telling about waving to her father, Olivia said, "He was a nice man. My father was a good man." Her voice in this afterthought was filled with the knowledge of farewell, as well as with love and acceptance. Her state of mind was indicative of the impact of her recent widowhood and her efforts in facing the reality of her life since the loss of her husband. Remembering that she had been loved by a good father and a good husband was an important aspect of her wholesome grieving. After describing the

arrival of the train, Lucille added that, after that experience, trains never seemed quite so big again. She laughed heartily. Her humorous comment could be interpreted as indicating that fears having been overcome, as this one was, can leave one empowered by knowledge and experience and ultimately more able to face other unknowns. There was a pattern in Lucille's responses of initially having concerns or fear, but carrying on nevertheless and handling things successfully.

The afterthoughts of two of the other women indicated that they had reflected on their early memory in terms of being able to trust that others are there to help and take care of you when you need them. Nora concluded her report of the fire across the street, at her grandmother's house, with this afterthought: "I guess we cried while mother stood there at the front door and screamed, 'Fire! Fire!' until the neighbours heard it and came." For Amy, the afterthought was the result of a follow-up question about whether she had been frightened on finding herself being lifted up by the cow's horn. She replied, "I don't think I was desperately frightened. There were people there." In the face of huge challenges throughout life, Amy has consistently trusted that people are there and they can help.

The final afterthought is one that appears to have been somewhat related to the early memory, but is very strongly associated with current needs and issues. Here is Tina's early recollection and her poignant afterthought:

One of the early ones would be riding in the sleigh to the village. Saturday night was a big night you know. Everybody went to the village on Saturday night. In those great big robes, you know. Dad would always hitch up the horses and have bells on and riding along country roads and quiet and you know, just the bells. But I was always a worried person. I was always afraid when we came home the house was going to be on fire or something. I guess when you have all these wood stoves that is a fear and as a child having no one to dispel that fear.

Tina moved from the positive description of her sleigh ride to indications of her fears and current need for reassurance. At the time of the interview, she was newly diagnosed with a serious chronic illness and was feeling fearful about her future. She was looking to her doctors and her husband for reassurance that she would be all right and that her fears for unwelcome changes to her active lifestyle were not well founded.

Multiple Intelligences.

Most of the participants reported primarily loving and doing well in subjects calling upon ability in the verbal-linguistic realm of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1993b). Three were more inclined towards the logical-mathematical area. One was very high in visual-spatial intelligence. Although they did not mention it among the other academic foci, (physical education not being considered a "subject" perhaps) two of the participants indicated in their responses to other questions that they had considerable ability in the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. One became a Physical Education teacher at the secondary school level. Another declared that she really loved sport at school, and she had continued with demanding physical activity in her recreational choices throughout adulthood. Only seven reported that they disliked certain subjects; two disliking Math, another two disliking Art, and the remainder naming Latin, Cooking, and Geography.

The participants spoke with pride and with passion about their school experiences. Only one mentioned having been bored some of the time in school. That boredom occurred mostly in Math and in other classes where the teacher "had to repeat things." In spite of this perception, however, she was excited by what interested her and pursued it to the Ph.D. level. Identified by the initial letter/letters of their fictitious names, these are some of the things they said:

N.P. "I really liked Math and it's been one of the things that I've carried through my life. I don't know that there was anything I didn't like. I really loved to study."

O.M. “ I liked being told what to do. What I had to achieve and then trying to beat that.”

F.V. “ The multiplication tables. They couldn’t stick me on the multiplication tables.”

C.V. “In high school I fell in love with the sciences, particularly physics. Even today I am just devouring physics.”

One other aspect of the Multiple Intelligences was very important in the responses in general, for all of the participants. The women gave indication of considerable ability in the interpersonal area, which is an important competency for those involved in leadership. A high level of ability was also associated with the intrapersonal for seven of the women who engaged in self-appraisal and realistic meaning making as they reflected on their experiences and made sense out of their realities. This ability to look within is an important aspect of self-knowledge and contributes to learning in general and personal growth in particular. The following responses illustrate ability in the area of intrapersonal intelligence:

A.T. “I nearly died... I am learning to say no because one gets involved in committees and I get very enthralled and put my name forward to do this and that and the other and do it 100% if I can.”

L.G. “When the meeting ended and we went home, I really felt ill at ease with that. But then I thought to myself, well now, that I didn’t even have the strength to get up and say, ‘I can’t accept.’”

Current Learning Interests.

The kinds of things the women would choose, if they could study or learn something, now, at this stage in their lives, indicated a lifelong love of learning and a strong desire to improve and grow. Four stated they would choose to learn how to do better what they were already well able to do. This search for excellence and the desire to be more effective and to maximize their skills and abilities characterized the

responses. In some, it indicated humility and the recognition that if they just knew more, they would be able to make greater differences on behalf of others. They would be a more knowledgeable resource for those in need. Their choices were: to learn more about raising a family; to read more about what is going on in the world; to study psychology and psychiatry to fill in some gaps in her nurses' training; and to learn more about how to help troubled young people. Four of the participants had more academic interests, which included studying physics, reading autobiography, exploring history and genealogy, and learning computer skills. The interests of another four were more personal and recreational, such as quilting and knitting, playing the piano, learning to act, and music.

One of the most interesting things about this question was that all of the participants responded relatively quickly, as if the most natural thing in the world was to be interested in learning new and challenging things at this time in their lives. Their responses were indicative of their ongoing curiosity and zest for life as well as the love of learning and the willingness to try new things.

Role Models.

The role models of the participants included a bishop, teachers, mothers, grandmothers, sisters, aunts, father, grandmother, inspirational leaders, brothers, friends, husband, sister-in-law, daughter, and colleagues from work or groups in the community.

Nora spoke of how her mother and grandmother influenced, "by their love and by instruction." She noted that her mother "did splendidly in everything she did." Drawing from her experience in the volunteer and activist sphere, Delia described the woman she considered a role model:

She was so good about, when I watched her, just everything. Conduct a meeting, focus the group when they were scattering, bring them back to the topics and everything. I really admired her ability and she had been in the NDP

(a political party) and they get quite a bit of practice and experience, and I liked her whole set of values and her approach to education and everything.... In a sort of unstated way, she influenced me.

In one instance, another role model had facilitated a woman's career by being an ambitious successful example and by encouraging professional growth, as well as advising on career changes that offered further opportunity for advancement.

A Dream.

Those who reported having a dream of how their lives would be, dreamed of teaching, nursing, or social work; the "helping professions" that were the primary career options for women of their generation. Amy put it this way: "I had no other ambition in my life than to be a teacher." Five did not have a dream, but simply responded to opportunities as they presented themselves. Olivia was the only one who had a dream and was not able to follow it. She explained it in this way:

I was very good at Art, at drawing, and charcoal drawing and all that, and I had had a scholarship offered to me.... Of course, it would have taken more money. And I often wonder what would have happened to me if I had been able to follow that dream.

Of those who did not have a dream, several seemed almost apologetic about it, perhaps realizing that many people in school guidance roles believe that one should have a dream and be working towards it. One spoke of a dream, which was "not that clear," and another of not being "extremely directed." One, who felt she had not had a dream, was clear about what she did not want her life to be like, and later in the interview saw how her current life was a version of an earlier unclear dream, but expressed in a different way and in a different place. Only one had a detailed dream of how she wished her life to be, with detailed plans for children and the type of career experience she wanted to have. Although having had unfocused dreams, or in some cases having no recollection of a dream at all, the women had all been positive and open

to new experience as their lives evolved. Their life stories seemed in keeping with Bateson's observation that women's paths "meander" rather than follow a linear route (Bateson, 1990).

Play, Playfulness, Fun.

The most frequently mentioned activities were sports, games, and outdoor activities such as walking and gardening. Reading was mentioned by nine of the participants. There were six mentions of creative activities like needlework and knitting. Six referred to fun with friends, family, and children. For some, the favourite activities were an escape from the responsibilities of their daily lives, but for others they were centred on their relationships with friends and family, and on their need for fitness.

Leisure Time.

When asked if they had enough leisure time, most felt they did currently, but it had not always been so. Delia's response was "No, but that is my fault. It is up to me how I spend my time, you know." One of the most interesting points of view concerning leisure and fun was this one that Clara offered:

Going to a meeting could be leisure time for me. Especially when I was very involved with the anti-racism and multi-cultural equity and those are fun for me. Getting involved in community and getting people aware of what is going on, and advocacy is one of my, - is fun for me.

It is quite likely that all of the participants could identify with Clara's perspective on the fun aspect of the work they were engaged in as they gave their time and energy in service to their communities.

Relationships with Family.

All of the participants reported close relationships with family. One spoke of large family dinners and the joy of such get-togethers. This comment by Veronique, describes that aspect of connectedness well:

Like tonight I'm having the family for dinner, like my granddaughter with her

new husband and my daughters, and my daughter-in-law, the whole bunch. And we have had three suppers since I've been here. One was with family on my side, and my sister came from Montreal and my sister is here and her husband came, and my niece came with her husband. We were fifteen for supper on Sunday night. We had a great big dinner and it was lots of fun.

Those who had grandchildren were very proud of them and worried about them if they had medical problems. One had been very involved with supporting her nieces as they were going through school. One participant, whose children and grandchildren were far away, counted on the internet for regular communication and was able to feel "close" even though the geographical distance and her own health made visits next to impossible.

Friendships.

When asked about close friends, all of the participants indicated their friendships were very important to them. They were highly valued and appreciated. Many spoke of relationships going back to school days, early in their careers, or with volunteer organizations and groups. Frances said, "I think I have been fortunate in my relationships." Jean spoke of appreciating "the richness of friendships" and of the many experiences she and her friends had shared from recreational activities, travel, intellectual discussions, advocacy groups, and just plain fun. Sometimes the friends were relatives, sisters, sisters-in-law, daughters, and spouses; sometimes they were role models and mentors; sometimes they were far away and the relationship depended on letters and telephone calls. Some of the friends, whom the participants identified, were significantly older or younger than they themselves were. Based on the interests and commitments that they had in common, the age differences were not a factor in the quality of the relationship.

Identifying a Problem.

The problems identified by the participants were all very different. Some

problems came to mind because of their awareness of the particular injustices of their own circumstances or from the recognition of racist inequities and unjust laws. The women saw a need to make changes within their professions, within institutions, in their communities, and in the world at large. Guided by their social consciences, they committed themselves to do what they could to make things better for people. All of the participants showed a high level of emotional intelligence as they responded with empathy and healthy groundedness arising from confidence and self-esteem (Goleman, 1995). This report by Florence demonstrates her confident assertiveness as she responded to the emergency call for help from a seriously ill friend:

I said, "J., I'll be right there." He was the worst looking man I've ever seen in my life. He was still sitting in his chair but he was gasping for his breath. I called the ambulance first, and then I called the doctor. He said, "If you have called the ambulance, there is no need me coming." I said, "That is not the point. I want you here, now. Because," I said, "J. is in a bad shape." And I said, "I don't want to be here [alone] with him if he passes on quick." So I said, "You get out here right now."

Working sometimes as individuals, but most often within advocacy groups consisting of others of like mind, they began to address the issues. The problems identified by three of the women led to their career choices. Seven worked to change attitudes. Three of these wanted laws to change. Four were concerned with international issues. For three others, the problems identified were personal ones leading to individual solutions. Three identified needs of children. One could not think of a specific problem, but was concerned about young people in general and how to guide them to healthy life styles.

For three of the women, the commitment occurred within the last twenty-five years. Nine had recognized many decades ago, the problems they had then worked to solve. With all of the participants, recognition of a problem was followed by

assumption of the responsibility to work pro-actively to find solutions; to bring about change in an unsatisfactory status quo. There were no indications of feelings of powerlessness as they began the caring for and caring about: the children, the women, the families, the community, and the world in need of change.

The problems categorized as social included education issues related to curriculum and to methodology. Other social issues mentioned were poverty, the need for recycling, racism, and a woman's right to choose to have a safe, legal abortion. Other problems related to the family, the church, young people in general, and illnesses of family and friends. These comments reveal the passion of the commitments the participants made. Frances described how she came to recognize the problem that led to her career in nursing:

We didn't suffer too much ourselves, but we saw it in other people. My sister developed terrible earaches. She had to have surgery done when she was about five years of age.... That was when I became interested in nursing because I used to go and stay with her overnight. I think I was only 13 years of age and you couldn't go into training until you were 18, and I went and saw the director of nursing, called the matron at that time, and put in my application right there and then. That was the earliest, I would say, that I probably noticed things. Throughout my life, I have noticed all kinds of things that need being done. I'm an activist; I guess you would call me, of some type.

Without specifying the need she had recognized, Amy's words clearly state her commitment to helping those who are disadvantaged and needing of support:

I think that I have always realized that there are people who should be helped, and that one has got to do something about it. And if you commit yourself, you have got to do it thoroughly, which is perhaps what I have done. I have thrown myself into these organizations.

For Clara, the recognition of the need for activism also began early in her life. It

was her father who helped her to see the need to counter the continuing self-interest of the imperial power of England. She understood how her people suffered still, even though slavery had ended many years ago. She explained it this way:

When I was quite young, we were still a British colony and there was a lot of social unrest in the island. One of the great leaders...started to enlighten the people about the government and...I started to listen to my Dad and these other great leaders with a social conscience, and realized that I had to be strong in the progress movement, in order to help to emancipate us from the British. Not shackled slavery any more, but economic slavery. And I became a member of the young people's group and I haven't stopped since that. I used to go to meetings with my father.... I was eager to go.

The problem Tina identified was the need to introduce a recycling program to her county. With some friends from the Women's Institute, she coordinated the initiative. Here is part of her description of the commitment she and her friends made: "I suppose that recycling really got a grip on us. You know, we were absolutely determined."

The awareness that women had no legal option when dealing with an unwanted pregnancy and that male politicians (who had no understanding of the issue) held the power to determine whether there would ever be safe legal abortions available to Canadian women was what propelled Delia into action. She worked first on her own, but then she joined with the group CARAL (Canadian Abortion Rights Action League). CARAL was working to increase awareness in the general population and to ultimately legalize women's right to choose. Speaking of her awareness of the problem that she had identified along with other women, she said, "And I realized how strongly women need to be able to make their own decisions, how very strongly. I had just taken it for granted until then."

Six of the participants took individual initiative on behalf of others or in

response to their own problem. Two of these drew others to her, to help with the work. The other six participants worked from the beginning with special interest groups and institutions already dedicated to solving the problems they had identified. All became proactive.

Skilled or Knowledgeable.

The women had a clear understanding of their skills and discussed how and where they used them. These responses show their confidence in those skills, at home (four), at work (seven), and within the various volunteer organizations with which they were involved (six). The totals here are beyond twelve because some participants spoke of two skills or areas of knowledge. When asked about the skill she used in her volunteer work, Lucille noted the following:

I feel comfortable in organizing things. Because, as I said, in the (group), we have to organize a lot of things. We organize, you know, parochial dinners, or to raise money. We have bazaars; we have penny sales. You have to get the women together and get them to work. I feel comfortable in organizing things. I can see how it should be organized, and I feel that I can get people to do things, to share the responsibility. I can do that reasonably enough. I can see people, and give them the responsibility. They'll accept that, some of them reluctantly, but they will accept it, if you know how to ask them.

Amy also spoke of her skill in organizing when she said:

I'm an organizer. Perhaps that is one of my greatest skills. I can organize. In fact my husband laughs. He says that people cannot say no to me because I can persuade anyone to do anything. So, there you are. That's my skill.

Jean described her skills in this way:

I'm politically astute in that I see connections. I see the small "p" political and

my analysis of where I'm coming from, clear about where I'm coming from.... I have learned how to strategize and so that is my role now with organizations...rather than doing a lot of the legwork any more. And developing partnerships, and working in a collaborative way, very feminist way, and bringing other women along, the younger women.... I don't get defeated.... I feel I'm realistic....

Proud of her homemaking skills, Nora had learned from her mother's excellent example and had added her own creativity. Here she speaks of her skill and joy in redecorating her various homes:

I loved to decorate a home and all the parsonages we went to. We used to say that when we left the parsonages, we left them in much better condition than when we went. I loved to do it. I enjoyed it.

In their responses to this question concerning being skilled and knowledgeable, the women all gave evidence of a strong sense of self-efficacy. They had a clear understanding of their special skills and often backed that up by reporting feedback from colleagues and others who had validated their understanding of their expertise in these particular areas.

Feeling Strong or Powerful.

The idea of feeling strong or powerful presented a problem to the two oldest of the participants. They seemed reluctant to consider that they might have felt or been powerful. Of the ten who described a time when they had felt that they were strong or powerful, two spoke of a personal experience; three of a time at work; and five of something that occurred when they were in a volunteer capacity. Here are some examples of how they responded. Delia noted: "You feel you have something useful to offer.... And it feels good when you write a good report to the government for example." Veronique thought of herself as powerful in front of a class. She answered with pride: "When it was time for discipline, I felt I was powerful. It is because some

people have it and others don't. And I had it."

Lucille had a great deal of experience with her local group as well as with the higher levels of the organization on up to the International executive group. She recalled how she felt as she chaired meetings of her organization:

Well, as regent of a circle you know, you do feel a certain strength. You know that you control the meeting and you have a certain influence on the decisions that will be made if you know how.... And you have to lead the meeting so that it covers what you want to cover, and you reach the decisions that you would like to reach.

In contrast to these responses, Olivia's report of feeling strong and powerful was a personal one. She recalled the feeling with pleasure in these words:

When we paid off our first mortgage. Yes, I remember that, the feeling that I was on top of the world. We had been saving for it, my husband and I, and I said, "Oh my isn't this a grand feeling. I don't think we'll ever feel so good again."

Florence's response was also a personal one and related to the difficult relationship she had with her stepfather. She sounded strong, determined, and very stubborn when she said, "Only when he [stepfather] would tell me something. I would determine that I wouldn't have done it if he had gone and laced me good. I wouldn't give in to him. Yes, I felt strong."

Tina showed her no-nonsense assertiveness, as she told of her experience at work. Here is her description of feeling strong and powerful:

I'd fight like a tiger... against some of the Phys. Ed. men with whom I had to share gym space and with a lot of the other coaches, because we used to have students referee, you know. And I knew the rule book really well, and they would come and argue and I would put up a fight.

Jean described her experience this way:

Well, when I have addressed political bodies, and when I have run into resistance, and I feel strong when I have dealt with those in a way that was constructive, and true to what I wanted, and yet I didn't get carried away. I felt centred and in control of the situation. That is when you feel powerful.

Clara recalled the details of a particularly contentious election for the Presidency of her Association. She won this election. It was one of many. She explained:

I recall being strong when I have been challenged... I was running the election, running for the presidency, and there were these men who ran against me. And then I realized that I had to be strong and I have to use every single thing that I have, to make sure that I won the election. I wanted to win, not because I just wanted it personally, but because I knew that any of those people,... if they had come first, it would be disastrous for the organization. And I had more the interests of the organization at heart, than my own personal interest.

Nora was one of those who did not identify herself as either strong or powerful. She seemed to be surprised by the question, as if such a thing had never even occurred to her. She replied, "No, I don't know. I don't think I ever felt that way. I didn't feel weak and helpless, but I didn't feel powerful. I had a strong will to do the right thing. But not powerful and strong."

There are, of course, many different ways to define both strong and powerful. In the context of the individual interview with its open-ended questions, I encouraged the participants' spontaneity by asking them to respond with the first thing that came to mind. The resultant variety of responses attests to the fact that although their experiences were very different, there are commonalities in how they felt and how they acted under the circumstances. Their confidence and healthy self-esteem ring through the responses, whether they are speaking of being strong in a conflict, or simply using their skills effectively to benefit the group. Feeling strong, for these women, meant

feeling happy, being effective, and having things go the way they wanted them to go.

Having Power and/or Influence.

When asked, later in the interview, to consider their experiences with power and/or influence, the idea of claiming to have had power and even claiming influence seemed problematic again for the eldest and one other of the participants. Most did acknowledge that they had had considerable influence throughout the years of hard work on behalf of others. Influence probably was the better descriptor of most of the leadership activity, in which they were engaged. Five of the participants reported having had power or influence with their students, and two of these added “and with my own children.” Five had felt power or influence within their groups, having an impact on a decision, changing the way things were done, and hearing positive feedback from their colleagues in the work of their various associations. One participant also mentioned that she knew she had influence as a mentor and role model.

Nora, with humility, and in the context of her religious faith, explained how she thought about her influence. She said, “I’m afraid that is something I don’t know. I don’t know where. I just filled in wherever the door opened for me. I guess we’ll have to wait for eternity to know that.”

Also troubled by the aspect of power, Catherine replied, “But power, I don’t know. Influence, yes. At the university, the students who were with me, at least that was a very, you know, very obvious that I left my influence, but I never obtained power.”

For Veronique, the label of power was acceptable, and she replied with reference to influence, “I would say with my students, but then also with my children. Not an influence where you say, ‘Do this or else.’ No, but by counselling them. Helping them make their decisions, stopping a rash decision.”

It was apparent that the women had never sought power for their own advantage, or in order to gain status, respect, or attention from others. On the contrary,

their opportunities to have influence evolved over time and were in the context of making things better for others.

Experiences Giving Great Satisfaction.

Fifteen satisfactions were described with several people naming the same thing and others naming more than one. Three things identified as satisfying were gardening, accompanying her husband on pastoral visits, and seeing the government “do the right thing.” Four of the participants reported satisfaction from an innovation that they introduced into their professions as social worker, nurse, psychologist/educator, and as a well organized volunteer. Three described the pleasure of getting great feedback on their performance in teaching, from colleagues, parents, or former students; and for two, the general pleasure of working with students. Another three referred to the satisfaction of delivering babies and caring for new mothers. One of these also spoke of the satisfaction of helping seriously ill patients get well. One mentioned the satisfaction of giving birth, and another spoke of the pleasure she felt in her family. Olivia was one who recalled with joy, a special family time:

And I remember when we were up in the country, my husband and I, growing things, not knowing if we could, and then getting these big juicy strawberries, and they were like this, and as sweet as could be. And the grandchildren coming. They’d plunk themselves in the row with this berry juice all over their faces.

Jean felt great satisfaction over her work on a committee for which she received the Meritorious Service Cross from the Governor-General. She also felt satisfaction having worked very hard over many years to make conditions better for those living in poverty. One of the projects that she was involved with was the creation of affordable housing. She shared her satisfaction in these words: “I really enjoy the people there and I have been able to bring in people from different stripes to work on that Board and we

have never had a serious conflict.”

Delia revealed the passion of her commitment in this response:

I get satisfaction when governments move in the right direction. When something good happens.... there was this marvelous decision, the Morgentaler decision on the abortion issue in 1988, and that was just a real thrill for all of us. It was hard to believe, that after working twenty years, that this had happened. But it didn't mean the struggle was over. And Mulroney [then Prime Minister] brought in a new law, in about 1990, and so we had to go through the same old procedures, writing briefs, writing de de de deda (the same arguments) all over again.... So it went to the Senate and we were all there in the Senate (gallery).... The vote came through. It was 43 to 43. We thought, “Oh, my God. We have lost it. Oh, how awful!”, because the speaker hadn't voted, and we thought he would be able to decide it. And it turned out that, no, if the speaker wanted to vote in the Senate he had to vote with all the others. He couldn't come in afterwards. It was lost on a tie. We all started cheering and the ushers came to get us out. I can tell you what an incredible relief it was.... I think what pleases me is when governments do the right thing for the people.

In these responses, the women shared some of their joy in reflecting on the things they had done. The quotations reveal creativity, commitment, perseverance; and whatever the activity, satisfaction in work well done.

Feeling Beautiful.

This proved to be another disconcerting question for many of the participants. Most of them had never thought of themselves as beautiful. Most of them were quite shy in replying. Perhaps it was part of their upbringing as their mothers sought to eliminate the sin of pride. Could they have been trying to prevent an unhealthy obsession with “looks” or “self?” Whatever the reason, eight of the women were

certain that they had never felt beautiful. Some were even convinced that they were unattractive, which was certainly not the case. The four who could recall a time when they felt beautiful put it in a social or family context including: in happy moments when things were going well; when married; at her graduation, and with her grandchild; and dressed as a bride acting in a skit. Considering these affirmative responses, one thing is clear. Being happy and probably feeling proud of oneself were significant aspects of the context within which the “feeling beautiful” had occurred.

Regrets.

A significant aspect of the successful resolution of Erikson’s (1982) eighth psychosocial crisis in favour of integrity vs. despair is being able to deal with regrets in a positive way, and coming ultimately to accept them, to find meaning in them, as well as in other life experiences, or to proactively let them go. The participants had few regrets, but those who did have them described them within the context of having compensations, which meant the regret was conditional.

Four did not mention anything that they regretted. Of the eight who specified a regret, five were concerned about an aspect of their marriages or families. Although two indicated that they had reason to think of their marriages, as a source of some regret, both believed that having their children was more than adequate compensation for the problems they had faced in their marriages. Another regretted not standing up for herself in early marriage, and another knew that her marriage had limited how far she might have gone in her career. One mother expressed some regret about the behaviour of some of her children. Several of the participants had regrets for things they didn’t do, like not continuing in University to earn a Ph.D. degree, not learning music, and not learning earlier about her allergies and the importance of nutrition. Two expressed regret that they had not been able to do more. One of these regretted not having a greater impact with regard to the social issues with which she had concerned herself. Another woman’s regret was that she had not been more kind and helpful. She

explained it this way: “The times I haven’t been as friendly as I should have been. Because my life had been built on hurry. You know. Hurry. Hurry. Hurry. I waste no time.”

One, who reported that she had no regrets, expressed her thinking on the question in the context of her personal philosophy:

No I don’t. My philosophy was never to regret anything. It was always of my own choosing. What I didn’t do, either it was because I didn’t find the time to do it, or I procrastinated and it was too late afterwards. But the main decisions of life I made. So I say to myself, “I don’t regret anything.” (Lucille)

One of the “conditional regrets” was the following:

Probably the only thing I regret is that I didn’t go farther with my profession. I was, what I was planning on, was being a full time career person, never marrying. But that changed, and I don’t regret it really,... in looking back, I like to think I could have done what (my mentor) did, if I had kept on, because she asked me to go out west with her too, and I could have been a real career person. (Frances)

All of the participants owned the responsibility for the decisions they had made. There was no attempt to blame anyone else for anything that had occurred as a consequence of those decisions to do or not do. The examples of rationalization, or post decisional justification, were in keeping with healthy strategies for coping with life’s contingencies. Each woman made the best of her situation and had made peace with herself, by accepting or successfully rationalizing what could not be changed. This sums up what was the general feeling of all of the participants: “I think I’m pretty well satisfied with my life.”

Being a Woman.

All of the participants were happy to be women. They expressed satisfaction in the changes in society that have resulted in women: “coming into their own”, “having

her place in the sun”, “gaining ground”, “getting into their own and asserting themselves,” and “having greater acceptance (in the professions).” Amy had some early reservations about being a woman when she saw, as a child, how it limited what she was allowed to do. She describes those feelings and how they changed as she matured:

As a little girl, I hated being a girl. I had three brothers, and they were allowed to go out onto the farm wherever they liked, whenever they liked, and as a girl I was kept at home. So at the beginning part of life, I didn't like being a female at all. I would dress in boys' clothes. I suppose later in life I had lots of boyfriends, parties, and things were good, and I've never regretted being a woman. I was lucky to get a nice husband and I hope to have been a good wife, you know. I haven't regretted being a woman.

In her answer, Catherine explains how she made a conscious decision not to marry based on what life was like for women as she was growing up:

When I was young you see, and I had this kind of sense that females' role is very determined and so on. I'm a Catholic, you see, so I remember that even some priests would say, “well you know, that is the nature, so you just have to give in.” “Oh, no”, I said, “I don't.” And it was a very conscious choice. I wanted to be independent. I fell in love with studies, with science anyway. And I couldn't figure out that I would, you know, in family, find a way, because that, imagine, was eighty years back.... I visualized myself, if I marry, I will have in those days, you know, five, six, eight children.

Lucille's response focused on her recognition that progress is being made for women in the search for equality, but there was also a sense of the frustration and anger that thoughtful women feel, that the goal of true equality is taking so long to achieve:

What it means to me is, I am at ease with being a woman. I am glad I am a woman. I think that women are gaining ground. I consider myself lucky in a sense that when I was teaching there was no difference between the men

teachers and the women teachers. This is not always the case in the world, and so I didn't have this experience of being harassed. But I feel for those people who are, and I feel I'm sometimes, not only annoyed, I'm angry, at the fact that women are treated that way. And I'm glad that a lot of the women are coming out and taking their place as equals. I don't like the injustice that is being done in some areas, but I'm happy that, and I appreciate the fact, that I wasn't in that situation.

Jean also spoke of the progress being made by women and of how she appreciated having grown up able to see the world from the point of view of a female. She said:

Oh, having a way of being able to look at life from the vantage point of having been raised as a woman.... I am glad I am living in this age. I think I am living in an age where we are expanding as women, and the kind of relationships, and the way in which we are trying to advance right across the world of women. I think it is exciting to be a woman now.... I associate myself with organizations that are moving that forward.... and I just like being a woman, and I like my friendships....I don't think I want to be a man. As long as I can do all of the things that men can do in this society.

In her response, Delia focused on the special caring nature of woman, as she understands it to be:

It is a special,-- I would say that in all the women I have known who have been active in stuff, social stuff, it is kind of a caring for, not just your own family and your own children, but for the world, for all people, all the women of the world, and all their families. I think there is a very strong underpinning of that. Very strong. And I think it is recognition of the fact that we are all together in this. We are all sort of brothers and sister stuff. The world runs on a lot of things like ambition and greed, and so forth, and so forth, and that doesn't

please. That is not the program of the women I know who are involved.

Describing it in a different way from the point of view of the multi-faceted role of many women, Olivia used the hat metaphor. This response explains her thinking about being a woman:

Oh, Lord. It means having to wear about six different kinds of hats every day, especially when you are with the family. Your motherly hat, your disciplinary hat, your cooking hat, your housewife hat, and then putting on and getting to school, another kind of hat. Oh, yes, it means not being yourself really at times. It means being pulled in many ways.

All of the women were confident in their understanding of womanhood in general and their own particular lives as women in the family, in the world of work, and in the community. They were sensitive to the fact that the way their lives were evolving was not the reality for other women in the rest of the world and even in other situations in their own communities. Their independence and high self-esteem were very evident in all the responses.

Spirituality, Faith, and Prayer.

The responses to this question ranged all the way from Nora's assertion that faith for her is "everything," and as for prayer, "that is my life," through to the beliefs of the Atheist/Humanists who placed their faith in human beings and did not believe in God or prayer. It was a surprise to discover that the Atheist/Humanists were not the only ones who did not believe in the God of traditional interpretation in the scriptures. Others did not accept the virgin birth, the divinity of Christ, or the concept of prayer, as it is commonly understood by those who profess Christianity. Even those who were practicing Roman Catholics, and professed strong faith, had limits. There were some of the church's doctrines and practices that they criticized or rejected altogether. Whatever they shared of their personal understanding of this enquiry, they all believe in the power and importance of love and the necessity of positive thinking. All of the

participants had strong faith in themselves and in human beings in general.

It is indicative of the independence of the women that they were comfortable with defining and describing their faith in their own terms. This was also true for the Protestant participants as well. Only two had a simple childlike faith, having been born into it and never questioning to any extent thereafter. Jean, on the contrary, had given a lot of thought to the question of faith and spirituality. She responded:

Spiritual..., yes. But not in a close religious sense necessarily. But that being a dimension of life that is intangible...the level of the imagination, which you can call spirituality, whatever. But it is, above cognitive thinking... spiritual, yeh, I guess I am moving in that direction.... Faith means belief in certain values... I mean there is some mysterious force, who knows? I mean who can answer? So I don't have that kind of faith. But I have faith in people. That doesn't mean that I am not recognizing evil.... I actually think in terms of the struggle of good and evil.... I believe in the life force. I am not a prayerful person and I don't explicitly pray. I think hard and concentrate and wish for something, but not prayer in the traditional sense. Although I'm fascinated by when people do pray and concentrate, because I think there is a telepathic connection that we don't understand yet. That is a phenomenon that we don't fully understand.

Earlier on in her life, in the face of incredible stress, Clara had temporarily lost her faith in people and in God. Resilient in her ability to bounce back and to find meaning in her experience, she had been open to a new philosophy and had found her way back to faith. She explained her beliefs in this way:

You have to have faith. Faith means belief, strong belief. Powerful belief that there is something, a supreme being somewhere. Someone there, stronger than I am. Mightier than I am. I feel that prayer can be answered. I pray. You pray and you sort of get satisfaction, and you get a relief.

Although she is very involved in her church and committed to daily prayer, Lucille did not consider herself to be a very spiritual person. She explained her thinking in this comment:

I do like to meditate occasionally, but not on a regular basis. I think it is necessary for us to take time to assess what are your values and where you are going. But I don't consider myself really as a very spiritual person. Well it (faith) means a lot. It means a lot. It helps me to accept, and especially in the experience that we have had recently [death of her sister].... Why? There is no answer to that, but your faith helps you to accept it, and to stop asking why. Well, I feel that I need to pray. And I do pray every day, morning and night, and sometimes during the day. I'm not falling on my knees or anything, but if I have any difficulty or a decision to make...

Catherine had stood up for her faith when she was a young school girl, in a communist society where her Roman Catholic faith was not acceptable. In defiance of the school authorities, she had continued to wear her Christian cross and she had no intention of renouncing her faith. She described her experience:

I was very independent, and in our country there was persecution of kids who openly were Christian. And I was warned. I was warned, and I didn't give up, so I was thrown out of the school for that. And what I remember, because again, if I'd renounced I would have (been able to stay).... They used to say, "but you.... why are you doing it?", and I remember this, my telling (them), "Do what you want. I will not give up."

Catherine explained how she feels about prayer:

I pray every day. You know, you have to review your life and you make a little conscious vision of the day. And I still analyze my own up's and down's. So. I am practicing Catholic, you know, and I go to church on Sundays.

Delia explained the humanist understanding in this way:

We've got mind and we've got consciousness, and it is what is going on in our brain... It is only part of human consciousness. To me there is absolutely no religious side to it.... If someone wanted to call me a spiritual person, it would mean to me that you are interested in life, being alive, and (interested) in people, and the world. There is no life after death, as far as I am concerned. Nobody really knows, but as far as I am concerned, or many of us are concerned, it ends. Meanwhile one wants to get the best out of it that we can, the most out of ourselves. (I have) faith in human potential that we can do better if we try. If we can figure out how to get enough people caring, we can make things better...It all starts at the individual level,...

Most of the participants reported that they had faith in themselves and in human beings, and most rejected or reinterpreted a formal church's teachings in personal ways that better suited their own individual beliefs. Some of the commitment to their churches and the congregations was based on habit, social expectations of their birth families, or of their community; a lifestyle choice. Many believed strongly that "doing something" was a better strategy than "praying that something would happen." They accepted the responsibility for their lives and for making good choices. Once again, they indicated that they were independent, practical, thoughtful, and resourceful.

A memo, which I wrote while considering implications of the data gathered in the interview phase of the study, but before the actual coding began, reveals my thought process as I tried to make connections between the threads of pattern and theme that were emerging:

My thinking is coalescing around the idea of social conscience. Where does it come from? How does it evolve? Does the church or religion help or hinder it, or perhaps not affect it at all, or even have a negative inspiration aspect? Amy, Jean, Delia, Clara, Nora, and Catherine have a very highly evolved social

conscience. Three lost their fathers early on in their lives, to death or mental illness. Two are Atheists. Two expressed a strong spiritual connection and commitment to their churches. The strictest religious upbringing was Nora's, and her social conscience is highly evolved, but not so much a conscious choice as something sine qua non, as unthought of as breathing.

Meaning of Morality.

For many of the participants, this question on morality gave an opportunity to vent about much they perceived as wrong with human behaviour. In particular, they were concerned with lower standards in language and dress and with the lack of respect for parents and seniors. Honesty was identified as a very important value. The following two responses focused on the need for common sense and at times for situational decision-making concerning right and wrong. One woman said:

You have to look at a case, look at an example and apply a law not rigidly, but taking into account the circumstances.... Our society has got to do better, and equally share its good things. So you hear it called situational ethics sometimes. Yes, that is probably the most humane approach to morality.

For one of the other participants, morality was a matter of consideration of the other. It meant reining in one's ego, and eliminating self-centredness. She called for "measured steps" in all things. She said:

The first thing is egocentricity and egoism. Now, that is the most hateful thing in the world. And that's where parents make mistakes ruining children....

Morality means discovery of other, and controlling your own appetites, because you are not an animal.... We are not animals. We are above biology.

The women were very aware of the changing morality in today's society. Several had changed their own early attitudes towards divorce and abortion for example, and towards homosexuality, even though their Roman Catholic Church had

not. Most believed their basic understanding of morality, which they believed originated in the home, was essentially unchanged. Noting the changes in society seemed to make some of them aware of their age and seemed to highlight the fact that they had no real power to deal with the looser standards in speech and dress. One said, "Well, you are not shocked, but it is not appropriate.... I say to myself, the world is changing. It is not the same world at all."

Self-Descriptions.

In response to the request to describe themselves, the participants were obviously aware of their strengths and shortcomings. They knew themselves well and had a great deal of self-respect and confidence. Although there was a sense of humility, in some more than others, the responses were within the context of realistic and sincere self-appraisal. After years of reflection on their experiences and learning from them in a very healthy way, they had no difficulty coming up with good self-descriptions. There was clear evidence of strength in the intrapersonal area of the Multiple Intelligences (Gardner 1993 b). They said such things as:

I'm a tolerant person, and I'm a patient person. I'm a good listener, and I like to have things done well. Perhaps not a perfectionist, in a sense that everything has to fall into place. I've learned that it is very seldom that everything falls into place. But I used to be (a perfectionist). (Lucille)

Independent, bull-headed, stubborn. Not nice qualities to have. I guess I have a certain sense of humour, but I'm not frivolous. And I can't always let go you know. This thing of going out, and letting your hair down. My hair is sort of the same down or up. I'm just not that kind of a person. I'm more conservative.(Tina)

The responses of all of the participants were indicative of such characteristics as caring, independence, self-efficacy, personal confidence, resilience, appreciating

opportunity, a practical orientation, and self-acceptance. They gave every indication that the eighth psychosocial crisis was being well resolved in favour of integrity vs. despair (Erikson, 1982).

Intuition.

Only one of the women claimed that intuition had not played a part in her life. Two indicated that it may have, but they were not really sure. For the other nine, intuition was definitely a factor in how they perceived reality. It had been a significant asset as they did their work, in the work force, as well as in the voluntary sector. They spoke of intuition being useful in conducting interviews and hiring, in understanding children and their needs, in sizing up people, and in recognizing the genuine and the insincere. Several reported having known about people who were in need of their help, although they couldn't explain how they had known other than by intuition. They valued their intuition and trusted it to be reliable in helping them to understand a situation more clearly.

Several examples typify the responses. Florence reported: "Something just seemed to say to me, well, Florence, you'd better go and check on Helen. So that's what I did, and that's what I found." (Her friend had fallen and could not get up.) Amy said, "I can sort of see, I think, what people are, if they are genuine or if they are frauds." This next response from Jean links the question of intuition back to the question related to being a woman. She said:

Yes, I think that comes with experience.... Oh I think that intuition is in relationships, of course, and counselling, and also in part, going back to seizing opportunities and all of that kind of thing. Some of it is intuitive. And I am very—whether it is intuition or what it is, but I can really know where my kids are at emotionally at any given time. I pick it up. Especially through their voices on the telephone. I can pick up when, you know, if something is wrong.

In all the responses where intuition was acknowledged, it was counted upon to

help someone, to perceive a truth or a need, or to allow for good decision-making. It all involved practical, “all in a day’s work” perception with nothing highly dramatic or particularly unusual.

The three women who did not claim to have benefited, to any extent from intuition, reported some experiences, nevertheless, which others might have deemed to be examples of intuitive knowing. During a strike, one participant who was a vice-principal, had known, without having been told of any problem and without having seen the teacher for awhile, that a teacher on her staff was in serious trouble. She had shared her concern with the principal and convinced him that they needed to follow through with a house call in order to check on the young woman. The visit had led to an important intervention on the teacher’s behalf and resulted in a positive outcome in a situation that easily could have had tragic consequences.

It is possible to conclude that some of the reluctance to attribute such knowing to intuition may have been the result of having experienced the trivializing of the concept of intuitive knowing. In the man’s world of educational administration, at that time, there was not much appreciation of intuition. It did not enhance one’s image, in the work place, to be deemed to be relying on “women’s intuition.” In their efforts to ensure that they would be perceived as able in the male-dominated work world, perhaps some women chose to ignore, or rename their intuitive feelings.

Courage.

There were eighteen different aspects of courage reported in the interviews. They fell into three categories: physical risk/personal threat; standing up for their vision or for themselves; and extending beyond their perceived capacities. Only one response referred to actual physical courage. All of the rest were acts of psychological courage related to strength of personality such as Regan & Brooks (1995) described. Many of the reports in the first category were of courageously coping with serious illness or being strong and responsible during the illness of a loved one. In the second category

were reports of standing up against injustice and standing strong in support of their vision of how things should be. In the third category, the women spoke of doing something they had never done before. In some instances this involved assuming new responsibilities or addressing an audience for the first time. If there was nervousness, or if feelings of inadequacy were involved, it never stopped any of them. The women seemed to associate the concept of courage with the idea of overcoming fear and doing bravely whatever was necessary. In each case, it was a matter of doing what the situation required. Catherine's response helps explain the courage with which she faced certain experiences in her life. She explains the source of that courage:

Before Russians, you see, we had... to have courage to stand against authority, or the school, or the country. So, you know, it is hard for me to say that I was courageous. I simply say that I faced the reality, as it was, and I didn't succumb. I had my inner strength, inner vision, and it doesn't matter what you want to do. The same thing when they were battling me in the university here, you know. Some people say compromise. I said, "No." Why? Because I cannot do what I don't feel that is right.

Conflicts.

Although most of the women reported that they had needed to stand up for themselves or their opinions and values in various conflicts over the years, it was apparent that they had all chosen at one time or another to let go, withdraw, or move away. The conflicts occurred at work, in the family, or in an organization where they had a difference of opinion with someone. Invariably they would try their best to convince the person to see things their way, but given that, if they were not successful, they then gave themselves the psychological permission to let it go. In explanation, they said things like: "One gave me sleepless nights; we don't talk anymore." "Just leave them if you can't convince them.", and "I don't push the issue." At other times they had "stood up, no compromise on principles", "dealt with things head on", and "found

consensus.”

None was afraid of conflict, but none sought it either. In making the decision about how to handle a conflict, the importance of the issue to them or to the organization, as they perceived it, was an important factor. They seemed to understand, perhaps intuitively, when it was appropriate to give up. When they made that decision, there were no regrets. In a practical sense, they did not waste their energy any more. Not prevailing 100% of the time was simply an unpleasant fact. Being resilient, they did not take a loss personally; they moved on.

Delia’s response seems to sum up the thinking of the others very well. She said:

You can’t always resolve conflicts. You just have to walk away from some. It depends on what the conflict is in, whether it matters to resolve it or not. It is fine to disagree with somebody on an issue. That is no problem, unless it is going to have a serious effect on you personally, or say some project you are on, or something. Don’t waste your time on fights you just don’t need. As far as resolving ideally, and maybe it does apply at the political level as well as the personal, ideally, if the thing matters you will try to find a reasonable compromise.

Major Stresses.

Of the major stresses, which had concerned the women over the years, the ones I categorized as betrayals caused the most grief. One woman had suffered from being made a scapegoat at work. An incident occurred, which was beyond her ability to control, and she was held responsible. The betrayal was by her supervisor, her union, and the institution that was her employer. There is every reason to believe that it was based on racism, and as she also claimed, on the assumption that she would go away quietly and not stand up for her right to justice. With the help of her lawyer, she was vindicated, but it took a long time. The experience had hurt her deeply.

Another betrayal concerned what we would now label “theft of intellectual property.” The participant, who suffered this betrayal, had written a book. A colleague added his name to hers as if he was a co-author. He later arranged to publish her book in another language with his name alone as author. She was shocked at the betrayal, and although she went on with her life, this incident, and a similar one with another colleague, made her very reluctant to write for publication again.

Two of the betrayals related to husbands. One participant experienced a betrayal in which her husband was the victim. She was concerned for him as he and she faced the consequences for their family. Another betrayal involved the stressful situation of the woman whose husband left her. She found herself responsible for his debts, and she had to sell her home. She divorced him and raised her children as a single mother.

Some reported such stresses as losses and absences of loved ones, concerns for the health of the participants themselves, or of loved ones including parents, spouses, and grandchildren. In several cases the women were somewhat stressed by the responsibility when they were required to help raise their younger siblings. Another woman had found it very difficult to leave her community and longtime friends when she and her husband bought a new home. Although it was not very far from her old home, it was still stressful for her because of the inconvenience and the loss of easy access to the friends she had surrounded herself with over the years. Other stresses included losing a beloved pet and failing to qualify for a drivers’ licence at the age of eighty. One participant had an ongoing hassle over her father’s will and was anxious to see it finally resolved after years of legal challenges.

Considering all of the stresses that were reported, I was impressed by all the participants’ ability to cope, to bounce back, and to get zestfully on with their lives. For example, I knew that the woman who had lost her dog was quite depressed. The dog was very old and had gone blind and it was certainly no surprise when he died. The worry was that the loss might make her vulnerable to illness since she was so

obviously grieving. It was a relief to hear the happiness in her voice when we next spoke on the phone. She sounded strong and enthusiastic, and I knew she was definitely in good spirits. A friend had known how upset she was and, after a suitable amount of time, had gone out to find her another dog. She had a companion again and was back to being needed by her puppy. She was caring for, and caring about the little dog, as it found its place in her heart.

One woman, who suffered from a broken hip, had been required to sell her home and move into her daughter's home. She had initially seemed very frail, resigned to her new reality, but not really all right. When next we spoke, however, she had sounded strong, happy, and excited about the future.

These two examples were not the exception to the rule, but were typical of the response to the stresses or betrayals experienced by the others. All of the women were confident, strong-willed, and determined to carry on as well as possible. One example concerns carrying on after serious illness. Amy shared this up-beat response. She had come to Canada in her late fifties. She noted:

Here in Canada, I have been beset by various illnesses so that one doesn't take up things like ice hockey or things, especially at that age. But we did learn to ski, cross-country ski when we got here. We love the different climates, the different stages of the year.

In speaking of all of these stressful situations, each of the women showed that they had coped with great courage as they faced the consequences and began to take positive steps forward with their lives. None had felt helplessness except as a temporary experience during the initial awareness, before they had time to think of a coping strategy, or to accept a reality they could not change. They had fought for their own health, for their dignity, and for justice. They had provided support for loved ones. They had recovered from losses, learned from set backs, and knew when it was time to assess the situation and let go. They were survivors and continued to live

confidently and zestfully.

Decision-Making.

The decision-making the participants described was systematic and cautious, with consideration of pros and cons, consulting with others, and getting the information required. Some reported that they made decisions quickly. Others gave a lot of thought and then “slept on it” and did not voice their decisions immediately. All were comfortable with decision-making and experienced with taking responsibility for their decisions. They spoke of finding consensus, weighing all things, making tradeoffs, and praying about it. One woman mentioned worrying. Another said, “You talk about it and come to reasonable conclusions.” She added that she has found that, “women are better at groups naturally because they are more willing to try and find a consensus.” If this is a fact about women in groups, it could be because there is less ego involvement. Maybe women are simply trying to solve problems, and it is all about doing that successfully, without the complications of damaged egos and perceptions of status. For them, successful resolution means both sides perceived benefits.

Attempts to Control Decision-Making.

Of the eight who answered “yes” to this question concerning attempts to control their decision-making, five were referring to family members who tried to pressure them into doing or not doing something. The other three were under pressure from colleagues. All stood firm in their decisions and carried on as they had intended. Clara noted, “All the time. Men especially. I’m very strong willed and especially when you are in an organization with men in there, you have to just fight to stand your ground.” Tina, who had also experienced pressure as she stood up to the men in the Physical Education department when she advocated on behalf of the girls’ program, echoed this sentiment.

Leadership Style.

In discussing their leadership style the participants were all very serious about

the way they did things in order to further the goals of the organization. They noted that they tried to be democratic and considerate of the others in the group, especially when there were differences of opinion. They spoke of the need to give clear explanations about what was being proposed and what the pros and cons might be. Many also mentioned listening to the members' opinions and not pushing their own too much. They were aware of the need to spread the work around in order to keep everyone involved.

Frances recognized some aspects of her leadership style that she was trying to change. She explained:

I think I am very domineering in some cases. Because when it comes to seeking officers for different associations they always want me to be the one, you know...I have always been in supervisory positions and I find it very difficult to delegate because in my day, if you were the supervisor, you were the one to go to, you were the one to make decisions. And there wasn't the same conference with other people to make decisions. Now I find that I am gradually changing, I think, and I'm able to delegate more, but I still, I think down deep I have that, oh what would you say--that deep down sensitivity that I need to still be in charge...As I said I'm kind of an authoritarian and sort of a pushy person when it comes to making decisions and everything else. As far as leadership, I do try to give them some idea of why I'm doing things a certain way and discussing the situation with them as much as possible.

This leadership style reflects a firstborn daughter's pattern of taking care of things, giving orders, wanting people to report to her, and wanting to be up to date and in control (Toman, 1993).

A committed feminist, Jean's leadership style is informed by her feminist philosophy and has a strong commitment to collaboration. She explained:

Oh, quite facilitative. Bringing people in and they joke at me you know.

Because I, they say oh, don't look up or Jean will get you to do something... I know that if you give tasks to people they are much more committed to what you are doing... I guess I hang in there. I have tenacity. And people appreciate that when they get discouraged.... I can get really focused when I organize a strategy, making sure we get all our ducks in order. I'm very planful that way. So, yes. I am tenacious.

Lucille also spoke of involving people and maximizing the contributions of the members. She described her leadership style in this way:

I'm a very understanding person, as I said. I can listen to them and I can explain well, why we are doing something.... I'm rather calm. I will not get overly excited about anything, although I may be very nervous inside. It doesn't show.... I think I do have the ability not to judge a person but to figure out what kind of a person it is, and therefore the approach I should do with that person. Some people want to be congratulated all the time...the least little thing they do, they want it to be mentioned at the meeting. So I can size them up a little that way, and people who—I can feel for people who lack confidence in themselves because I knew that I did at the very beginning. And so I will try to show them that they have the ability to do certain things, or to take the responsibility for this committee, and then I can always help them.... You've got to use everybody that you have because you need them.

Having an egalitarian group was the ideal for Delia who noted:

I have always wanted it to be democratic, and more of a collective, and try to have consensus.... [Style?] It is relatively laid back, I would say. I don't try and push things very hard on people. If I don't think a group wants to work on an issue, I guess I have tried sometimes to pick a couple of people who might like to.... Whenever I was president of things, I was not a great bundle of

energy trying to do a million things, but just keep things going and try and pick the ones we could, the issues we could, and keep things going in the right direction. That is more my thing.

The responses of the participants to this question of leadership style were supportive of Regan & Brooks (1995). Some participants, who were not as collaborative as others, were trying to be more so. In many examples, intuition was the guide to reading people, choosing strategies, delegating, and encouraging. Under the umbrella of caring, for people and for the goals of the organization, they initiated, organized, and carried out their work. Their commitments stemmed from a vision of how things could and should be improved. All of the participants demonstrated high ability in the type of leadership that Gardner (1995) described as “the influencer”, and humane would be an apt descriptor of their overall leadership style.

By the end of Phase 1, and before the actual line-by-line coding had begun, certain themes such as social conscience, social-connectedness, self-efficacy, caring, and orientation to action were already apparent. Although I had obtained a wealth of data, which covered all of the aspects of developmental and leadership experience that I had anticipated finding, I was uncertain whether there would be enough data to draw conclusions about the attributes of feminist leadership. It was for this reason that I decided to ask specifically about caring, collaboration, courage, vision, and intuition in the questionnaire of Phase 3.

When the interview responses were analyzed, the codes most frequently assigned were the ones identifying the following: commitment, self-efficacy, social-connectedness, caring, action orientation, and reflection. See Appendix I, Summary of Codes Most Salient for Each Individual, for more information on the analysis of the interview data and a summary chart of the codes that were the most salient at the end of Phase 1.

Phase 2

The report of the question-by-question analysis continues now, with a discussion of the findings from the focus groups that were conducted in Phase 2 of the study.

From the Focus Groups

The focus groups were planned in order to allow for the dynamic of the group and a specific focus on the leadership experiences of the participants. They were the second part of the triangulation strategy. The analysis of the transcripts from those groups follows.

Initial Awareness of Self as Leader.

When asked about when they were first aware of themselves as leaders, organizers, or people who took charge, all but one recognized these characteristics in childhood. Many reported having been “bossy” and playing school, or taking charge of siblings. One had been in charge of organizing flowers in the chapel at her school. Another was in charge of threading needles for the quilters. One woman, who was in early adulthood when she recognized her interest in working on social issues, had become involved in the Home and School Association of her children’s school and wanted to become more proactive.

This was Catherine’s response to her recognition that she had leadership traits. She reported, “I was probably twelve, organizing my brothers and sisters, and my mother said, ‘And who appointed you?’ And then I remember through high school where I was kind of putting my nose in.”

Olivia’s early experience in the helping role was a means of meeting her emotional needs. She describes it this way:

Well I think it was when I was in school. And I had to stay from September to June, which was a real penance, and you know you didn’t see your parents for

a year. But they used to give you little jobs at organizing things. I found myself usually with a group of four or five working like that. Somebody had to be the leader. How to organize doing the flowers in the chapel or things like that. Nothing very much. I guess it was about that time. Not before though. I was very passive before. But once you get away from your family you have to do something to help yourself out a little bit emotionally.

In sharp contrast to Olivia, who was lonely and lacking confidence when she found herself assuming leadership responsibility, Clara actively sought responsibility. From an early age, she saw herself as someone to whom others looked for help and advice. She described it this way:

I was always a leader in school even when I was small.... The teacher would say, "Who will take the class?" I used to volunteer to take the class. Even though I was always the smallest one.... I was always the leader for House. And I used to find opportunities to get points.... If people forgot [to do their tasks] I didn't mind. I used to take it on.... I was fourth in the family but I was sort of the one who was always helping out my Mom and taking charge...Even now everybody looks although we are not living in the same country, they seem to make me the leader somehow. I didn't notice it but then all of a sudden I said, "Wait, they always consulted me over family matters and I'm always saying, just do this, do that, do that for the family."

In each instance, the women were aware of feedback from others, which validated that they were in charge and doing something that others valued. The experience encouraged them and enhanced their sense of self-efficacy.

Models for the Helping Role.

The participants had models for the helping role in their mothers, aunts, and grandmothers. Several of the mothers and one grandmother were midwives, for example. Other mothers were active in the Women's Institute and the church. Several

of the women mentioned that their mothers had been so occupied with their own responsibilities within the family because of either their own ill health, the illness of others, or the family financial situation that they had not been involved with volunteer work.

Motivation.

On the question of what motivated them to become involved, Florence said simply, "Love." Other responses included being recruited by the parish priest, parental example, a desire to do something, to meet people in a new community after a move, and specific issues such as education and activism for peace, and the politics of anti-apartheid. One woman was motivated by the serious mental illness of a friend.

Olivia explained how she came to be recruited into an organization in her parish when the priest approached her about getting involved:

I went because I was pushed in by my Parish Priest, and he said they needed someone to get it organized. Get it started. But once you get into it, and you get it organized, you're stuck there. Even if you are not willing. But then, certain parts of it were rewarding. But it wasn't a commitment that I would make again.

The example of a volunteer reluctantly participating, in reaction to pressure from someone she felt a duty to support, is in complete contrast to the experience that Delia shared. Her involvement had always been proactive and passionate. She said:

When I think of the various groups that I have been involved with, it has always been an issue that I cared about. And that applies in every instance. It has just been an issue that the world needs some work on, and desperately needs work on... there were things that I cared about absolutely.

Decision-making.

Decision-making within the groups was a matter of working towards consensus. In some groups, the members were so like-minded that consensus came

very easily, but in other groups, it was more difficult to achieve. One noted that it was easiest to achieve consensus in small groups. In most cases, the local group operated under the guidance of a provincial or national assembly, and although they exercised local autonomy, the main goals were set for them at least to some extent.

Being Criticized.

In the discussion on whether they had ever been criticized for their participation, the women had a variety of responses. Some referred to being criticized for the way they did things like running strict meetings or for trying to do everything herself and not delegating. One spoke of the criticism she received as one of only two female school principals fighting in the male-dominated principals' association to achieve her goal regarding the curriculum. Another had been criticized ideologically.

Criticism, where it had occurred, was handled well. It had not stopped any of the participants from carrying on, or caused them to seriously question their own thinking on the matter. An example of this is Amy's description of her experience of being criticized. She shared her attitude toward that criticism:

I was brought up to have rather strict meetings with the chair speaking, and everyone else listening. You take your turn at proposing something instead of chatting around, and shouting out, and changing the subject. So, I think when I was president of the (group) I ruffled some feathers, but I didn't really care because there is a correct way to do things, and maybe even today it is run slightly better than it was. Correct minutes and correct reading. There was criticism. But you have got to be fairly tough if you take on a position of responsibility. And sure you get hurt sometimes.

Although she was not specifically speaking of having been criticized for her participation, Jean recalled her involvement with the anti-war movement and how it was the beginning of her understanding of the link between feminism and activism. She reported:

but the place where I learned a lot, I was involved with the anti-nuclear and eventually the anti-Vietnam group. I learned a lot about how to organize...and being very clear, and having courage about standing out when it was not the mainstream. Eventually we were vindicated mind you. So it was actually when I got involved with, (the anti-war movement) it was a coming together for me...with those kinds of peace issues with feminism. And seeing the links between the two, and being involved. Not giving up one for the other, but the kind of strategies you need both ways.

Advice.

The participants had a lot of advice to offer to young women who wish to become involved and to offer leadership in their communities. They suggested starting small and “learning the ropes,” choosing a group one is comfortable with, letting others teach you what they know, and pairing off with a friend. One spoke of the need to check out your own strengths and to assess yourself. Another recommended Toastmasters for those who are nervous speaking in front of groups. Most of the participants recognized a need to involve young people in the volunteer sector and advised young women to start early and to find a group where their children are welcome. They understood that people, who are nervous about taking on certain responsibilities, have a need to know that others have done it before and will be very helpful and ready with advice. Other advice involved needing to feel committed and being clear about why you are there. One explained, “If you lose track of why you are there, you might as well stay home.” Several of the women suggested that groups need to talk about their goals in order to ensure that everyone understands. Unless this clarifying of goals and values takes place, the group’s cohesion is at risk.

Asked about what might have helped their groups to better achieve their goals, the women had very similar responses. They spoke of needing more people, especially young people. Reaching people, getting the message out, and educating people was a strong need as well. One participant believed that more money would allow for

publicity and would help counter the power of the conservative media that is often in opposition to the goals of the social activists. Another participant felt strongly that there needs to be a community development approach and that, “you need to have a team behind you.”

The data from the focus groups served the purpose of clarifying and supporting the data from the interviews with reference to the participants’ thinking on the leadership aspect of their work in the various volunteer organizations. In several cases, the references were to their leadership in the paid work force as well. For some questions, the responses contained a repeat of information obtained in the interviews, but it was expressed in a slightly different way and served to confirm that the information offered was indeed salient to their perceptions of themselves and their experience. Although there was not a great deal of participant to participant dialogue, the women listened intently to one another and showed support and understanding of what was being said by nodding and interjecting brief comments in a sensitive, genuinely interested way. In each of the focus groups an incident occurred, which elicited a sensitive response from the others. I was touched by how caring they were when one participant was obviously in pain and needing to get up and move around the room. In the other group, when one participant went off on a tangent and had difficulty getting back on track even with my help as the moderator, there was compassionate support and understanding.

From the analysis of the focus group coding, the following appeared to be the strongest aspects of the responses: self-appraisal, reflection, vision, action-orientation, recognizing need, courage, self-efficacy, caring, organizing, assuming responsibility, recognizing opportunity, social-connectedness, resolving conflict, initiating, and perseverance. This confirmed the strength of the emerging themes of social conscience and social-connectedness as well as reflection and self-efficacy, which had been apparent in the interview data. There was more evidence also of three of the feminist attributes of leadership: caring, vision, and courage. The picture of the participants’

motivation to become involved was becoming clearer as well.

Phase 3

The final section of this chapter focuses on the question-by-question analysis of the responses from the questionnaires of Phase 3.

From the Questionnaires

The questionnaires were completed by people who had known the participants for from twenty-nine to sixty-two years. They were family members (three daughters and one husband), two colleagues in volunteer work, four colleagues from the church or church organizations, one colleague from work, and one a long time friend.

Words to Describe.

Fifty-six different descriptors were supplied in the responses to the question requesting “words to describe her.” They were analyzed as a free list with the order of adjectives being weighted so that the first one in the response counted as five points, with the second counting as four, and on down to the fifth and any after that, which were counted as one. The five with the highest individually weighted totals were the following: caring, hardworking, intelligent, sensitive, and committed. The descriptors were then clustered into four categories that I entitled: aspects of being; aspects of doing; aspects of multiple intelligences; and aspects of values. The weighted totals for each of the clusters were added together and divided by the number of descriptors for each category in order to identify the most salient category. This calculation showed that the category called aspects of doing had the greatest strength. Next came aspects of being, followed by aspects of multiple intelligences, and aspects of values. The final calculation was to determine the most salient of the subgroups within each of the four categories. The strongest result here was from the aspects of being category, which saw the sub group including the descriptors caring, compassionate, sensitive, and

loving as the highest total of all. This data further clarified the picture of caring and social-connectedness that had emerged so strongly in Phases 1 and 2.

A Trait Admired.

Some examples of situations that demonstrated a character trait, which the respondent admired about the participant, were incidents where courage was evident. Others referred to reviving the organization in the face of significant opposition, rebounding after setbacks, willingly sharing knowledge and skill, and being persistent. One respondent wrote the following: “When women’s shelters were riddled with conflict, struggling to survive, [her] courage, commitment and skills were invaluable. She hangs in, constructively and imaginatively at the best and worst of times.” Another respondent also referred to courage in this example:

After rising to the position of assistant to the Rector of her university... and achieving professional prominence, she realized that she would not be able to be true to herself under the protection and sphere of influence of this very powerful and prominent person. She immigrated to Canada as a refugee, and started over as a domestic and then a nursing assistant.... For the second time in eight years, she had to leave a much loved home, and set out on her own,- no money, no family, no prospects.

The responses to this question added support to the earlier findings related to resilience, commitment, action-orientation, and perseverance.

Significant Achievements.

The significant achievements that the questionnaire respondents reported were; within an organization (nine); a personal achievement (two); and within the family (one). One participant’s significant achievement was summed up in these words, “forty years of volunteer work aimed at raising social conscience and quality of life.” Others were described as: “building important working relationships between feminists and social workers”; “singlehandedly coach[ing] every female team at [local high school] - that included volleyball, basketball, badminton, track, and gymnastics for many years

while either pregnant or raising a family.”; and “returned to obtain her university degree on a part time basis and as single mother of four....”

Responses from this section of the questionnaire provided further evidence of collaboration, commitment, social conscience, courage, and perseverance.

Sense of Humour.

The question on sense of humour had six responses that described an active sense of humour. Three respondents noted more passive humour such as appreciating but not initiating humorous activity. The remaining respondents reported, “not her long suit” or gave no comment. One example of the active sense of humour saw the participant sending the respondent a newspaper clipping about a notorious woman whom she claimed was her aunt. He swallowed the bluff, and she mischievously kept up the ruse for a while. Another participant with an active outgoing sense of humour had delighted her friends for years by dressing up as Father Time on New Year’s Eve and going up and down the street crashing parties. Another was described as having a wicked wit. The passive sense of humour reports mentioned that the person enjoyed being teased and enjoyed a good story but did not initiate humour.

Most Admired Characteristics.

The most admired characteristics were social conscience (four), work ethic (four), and personal ones related to family and friends (four). Some of the things the respondents specified were remarkable organization skills, ability to persuade people to do good things, overcoming all the obstacles, the passion of her beliefs, unswerving social conscience, and her generosity. All of these responses confirmed findings from the first two phases of the study.

The Feminist Attributes of Leadership.

The final question of the questionnaire asked for some details related to the five attributes of feminist leadership, caring, collaboration, courage, vision, and intuition. The respondents reported many different aspects of caring behaviour. There was social conscience as an example of caring as well as concern for the less fortunate and interest

in people in general. Examples of caring for friends, children, ailing parents, and family were reported. One mentioned empathy for anyone who is suffering. Another wrote of interest in everything and everybody and another noted caring about prisoners of conscience and Blacks in South Africa.

There was also strong evidence of the participants' collaboration. Some of the responses were: "involves all stakeholders"; "collaboration with other associations"; "getting women to work together"; "listens to others' point of view"; and "collaborative effort in a major project". The examples of collaboration included: gathering input; making decisions; and bringing in other stakeholders into a coalition in order to achieve a goal.

There were many examples of courage that the respondents reported. One noted that the participant had never walked away from a difficult situation. Another said that the person she was reporting about "will take on the devil if necessary" to do what she has to do. Another example of courage and how it manifests itself was the comment that the person being described was not in need of outside approval but directed by what she feels is right and just.

An especially moving example of courage was the woman who worked actively to help end apartheid at a time when it seemed an impossible dream in South Africa. She had been a member and then President of the non-partisan women's group called the Black Sash. Never breaking the law, never being violent, the women protested against government officials and their policies whenever they had an opportunity to do so. Their protest was called Haunting. The group of women, all dressed in black, stood in silence with their heads bowed. There would be two lines of silent women and the officials would have to walk through the line feeling very embarrassed and probably shamed. It put pressure on the government in a quiet, courageous, non-violent way. This very creative and very feminine strategy for protesting against an unjust government is a fine example of the courage of women who are determined to bring about change. Eventually the Hauntings were banned, but not until after the Black Sash

members were harassed by police photographers and the tapping of telephones.

The responses with reference to the participants' courage contained powerful evidence of this attribute and supported the earlier findings with rich detail. The picture of the women standing up for their strongly held beliefs was definitely enriched by the Phase three data. Support for the emerging themes of social conscience and commitment was very strong.

The visions, with which the women were identified, had to do with health related issues such as anti-smoking, anti-alcohol, and pro choice. Other causes were community issues such as improvements in the park, a new library, and an effective recycling programme. Visions of social programmes and social justice were identified. Others mentioned visions for stronger, financially stable, and more effective organizations.

Fewer people (only five) were able to comment on intuition as it related to the participants for whom they were responding. Consequently, the only reliable data on this aspect of the feminist attributes of leadership comes from the participants themselves in the interviews. The inability of some of the questionnaire respondents to respond with reference to intuition is understandable since intuition is invisible to those who are watching and is only perceived as a factor when someone talks about it or responds to questions about it. Four of those who did comment had glowing reports such as, "her intuition underlies everything that she has achieved." A fifth respondent did not believe that intuition played a role in her participant's life.

The questionnaire responses confirmed many of the findings from the interviews and focus groups. It was clear that the people who were responding knew the participants very well. Only one response (to one part of a question) slightly contradicted the participant's own perception of herself. Having the questionnaire as the final data collection instrument was useful in providing triangulation and in making the identification of the most significant themes more reliable.

Summary

This chapter summarized and analyzed the information found in the participants' responses. It began with a summary of the demographic details and continued with the results of the question-by-question analysis of the interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires. In cases where certain aspects of the participants' responses were similar to the findings of other researchers whose work was discussed in the review of the discourse, this was noted. The material on the early recollections was considered in light of Cognitive-Perceptual Theory (Bruhn, 1990). Throughout the chapter, in order to allow the women's authentic voices to be heard and to honour the richness of the detail in their responses, many direct quotations were included.

CHAPTER 5

Themes

In this chapter, the major themes, which were revealed in the study are described and placed in the context of the conceptual frameworks that guided the research. The first set of themes includes those related in general to the well-lived life. Beginning with Social-Connectedness through which the women grounded themselves in their relationships, the next themes are Reflection/Self-Appraisal, through which the women came to know themselves and Self-Efficacy, which resulted from their awareness of their various competencies. The description continues with Social Conscience, Commitment, and Action-Orientedness, which are all themes related to sharing oneself. The last theme in this section is Integrity, which embodies aspects of satisfaction, coherence, and wholeness as indicators of the successful resolution of the psychosocial crisis integrity vs. despair (Erikson, 1982). Of course, there are many other factors that contribute to the likelihood of composing, achieving, and sharing a well-lived life. These themes, however, were ones that were most evident in this sample of exemplary women.

The chapter proceeds with themes related specifically to leadership practice. Continuing the metaphor of the double helix of Relational Leadership, these themes are identified under the headings of Leadership Skill Set: Strand 1 (the masculine half of the double helix) and Completing the Double Helix: Strand 2 (the feminine contribution). The findings of this study strongly support the work of Regan & Brooks (1995). The participants demonstrated that they were engaged in Relational Leadership characterized by competency in both the masculinist and the feminist attributes of leadership.

Related to the Well-Lived Life

The themes related to the well-lived life will be considered in this first grouping, which includes Social-Connectedness, Reflection/Self-Appraisal, Self-Efficacy, Social Conscience, Commitment, Action-Orientedness, and Integrity. These are the themes related to knowing and sharing oneself. Because it is one of the feminist attributes of leadership (Regan & Brooks, 1995), the major theme of Caring will be discussed in connection with the themes related to leadership rather than as part of this first section. This was a decision made to facilitate the logical organization of the content of this chapter while recognizing the attribute of caring as an essential component of the feminist attributes of leadership. Caring was, of course, a strong theme in the life development of the participants and certainly related to their experience in living the well-lived life.

Social-Connectedness

The theme of social-connectedness was very strongly indicated in the responses of all of the participants, as well as in the input from the questionnaire respondents. The early connections established in the birth families with parents, siblings, and extended family were the beginnings from which the women acquired the ability to develop and maintain longstanding and supportive relationships with others. Having learned within the family that they could have faith in others as caregivers, they were able to learn to have faith in themselves and ultimately to have faith in humanity at large. Social-connectedness, beyond the sphere of the family, included friendships maintained in the world of work, within the faith groups, within the community with its various institutions and governing bodies, and in the world at large. Caring for people and for causes was a way of life. The women's skills in the interpersonal area, having been nurtured in their early lives, continued to develop throughout adulthood, and continued to serve them well, as they cared for others and cared about finding solutions to the

problems they perceived.

The following quotations give a flavour of the strength and the perceived importance of the social-connectedness that characterized the participants. Tina spoke of her close connection to her family and the distress she felt in separation from a daughter who lived far away. She responded to the inquiry about favourite activities in this way, "Family I guess. Associating with the family and having my daughter close. My family close. One of the stresses in my life is, big stresses, is my daughter being out west."

This comment of Veronique shows the importance of friendships maintained over time and the support such friendships offer in the present. Meeting with an old friend was anticipated as offering both women a chance to enjoy their shared history and to relive some pleasurable times from the past. She commented, "I am anxious to meet her, and she is anxious to meet me, because we are going to have fun just thinking back about those things we did together and the fun we had together."

Some of the women reported on recent events that had been clear indications of their social-connectedness. Florence reported, "I got over fifty cards when I was sick with my hip and the most beautiful baskets of flowers, and the fruit."

For Jean it was her birthday party. She described it this way:

I keep in touch with friends from way back, you know, even my high school days. And as a matter of fact, my children gave me a bang up 70th birthday party at which we had seventy-five people, and just in March. And some of those old friends came to town.

In a similar example, Clara enjoyed being the guest of honour at a gala held to recognize and appreciate her as the winner of a prestigious award, which had been given in recognition of her work within her community over a lifetime of commitment. She recalled:

I have lots and lots of very good friends. I was surprised when they had a gala for me, and they didn't tell me much, and when I turned up there were two

hundred and fifty people there. And people calling afterwards to say that they didn't hear about it, and they weren't invited, but they would have been happy to come.

The strength and the significance of the social-connectedness, which was apparent in this population of older women supports earlier research on connection (Gilligan, 1982; Hall, 1990). The relationships involved giving and receiving care and were characterized by interdependence rather than dependence. The supportive networks of family, friends, and colleagues, which surrounded the women, allowed them to continue to thrive, and to be able to access expertise and advice, as well as emotional and other kinds of support of many people.

Reflection/Self-Appraisal

The theme of reflection with self-appraisal was very apparent in the responses of the participants. The interview experience in particular invited them to reflect upon the critical incidents of their many years, in both the public and private spheres of their lives. It was apparent that, for most of the women, engaging in careful and systematic reflection in order to understand what was happening in their lives was a habit of a lifetime. They said such things as, "To think deeply is very important.", and "I think it is necessary for us to take time to assess what are your values and where you are going?"

When considering what is necessary for young women hoping to offer their leadership to the community, Catherine offered this advice concerning the value of reflection and self-appraisal:

What is important is, the woman who wants to have influence, first has to check out her own strengths. Strength you know to take the blows, as well as strengths for enthusiasm, for whatever one embraces because (if) it's just go because of a flare of enthusiasm for an idea, it is not sufficient. You know you have to weigh yourself and then question if necessary, the process why and

how you are going about it. It has to be, if not daily, at least some contemplation. One has to assess oneself.

In discussing the failure of her marriage, Veronique had thought about what that traumatic experience had meant for her as far as changes to her development as an individual and the subsequent taking on of new commitments. She noted:

It took me a long time, but now I think it was the best thing that could happen to me. Because I am a person who makes decisions. I don't have to ask anyone's opinion to make a decision when I have thought about it very very coolly and clearly, and for some time to solve a problem. I see now, that if this hadn't happened, I would not have gone back to school. I would not have studied any more. I was not a joiner of clubs or did any volunteer work.

It was typical of the women to be able to put their experiences, both positive and negative, into a context that allowed them to increase their feelings of self-efficacy. Having faced a variety of challenges throughout their eventful lives, they were skilled at making meaning through reflection and responding appropriately using their new knowledge of themselves and their circumstances.

The participants who did not give as much evidence of an orientation to reflect, nevertheless, gave every indication that they were able to let go of any negativity and to face their challenges with a strong sense of self-efficacy. These women had strong, largely unquestioned religious faith. One dealt with challenges through practical solutions that seemed to arise out of her action-orientation rather than from serious reflection. Very much a doer, and with strong faith that the universe is unfolding as it should, she seemed adept at simply being. She took everything in her stride, responding with love and common sense, and making decisions that clearly indicated her confidence and self-efficacy. Realistic in her self-appraisal, she accepted the loss of her driver's licence after satisfying herself that she had tried her best to requalify (on two occasions). In reporting this, she did not give any indication of having reflected on her situation. Instead, she had quickly accepted the fact of this loss of independence

and immediately made plans to sell her car and arrange for others to help her to get to the places she needed to go. This example shows Baltes (1997) SOC theory in action, but in this participant's case, with minimal reflection required in order to put a plan into action.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy was a very strong theme in the experience of the women in the study. They had been involved in a huge variety of organizations and their repertoire of activities on behalf of others was most impressive. Each participant gave clear indications of a sense of self-efficacy. For some it was described within the context of humility, for others it was a more self-confident assertion. They all knew that they were very capable of doing whatever they had been engaged in doing. There was no doubt about that in any of the experiences they recalled in their responses. Naturally, they were not always successful to the extent they would have wished, but there was never any question about whether they believed they were up to the challenge. They knew that they could make differences. They had done so, over many years and in many places. Examples of indicators of the sense of self-efficacy follow:

Nora noted in connection with her role as a valued partner, sharing in the responsibilities of her husband's ministry, "And I loved to entertain. I used to say that I felt sorry for ministers' wives who didn't enjoy that kind of work, because it was a pleasure for me. And it was so hard for some of them."

With the sense of self-efficacy came a strong independent streak. Tina described how she had come by some of her feelings of self-efficacy through successfully standing up to her domineering father. She was proud of her independence and unapologetic about any inconvenience or discomfort that trait might cause. She noted:

But I wouldn't stand there and take it without standing up for myself. It got me in a lot of trouble. But, you know, I guess that is why I've got an independent nature. I've always had an independent nature.

The findings of this study support the conclusions of Bandura (1997) with regard to self-efficacy in the older adult being linked to realistic self-appraisal. Almost all of the women indicated that they regularly engaged in reflection on their experiences and this was strongly linked to self-appraisal. The majority of the women appeared to have a high degree of ability in intrapersonal intelligence (Gardner, 1993), and all demonstrated competence in the aspects of emotional intelligence involved in making sense out of experience that were described by Goleman (1995).

Social Conscience

Social Conscience, the strongest motivating factor leading to years of commitment to improving the quality of life for individuals in their communities was a very significant theme. Based on social-connectedness and characterized by empathy and sympathy, the social consciences of the women guided their decision-making. They cared deeply and committed totally to their causes.

The participants' life histories revealed that they had acquired their social consciences in a variety of ways. They were influenced to take initiative on behalf of others by their family example, their churches, their professional commitments, by recognizing injustices, by intellectual or philosophical inquiry, and by love.

Nora's very religious family inculcated Christian values that nurtured her social conscience. After a long life of service through her church, she wished she could have done more. She explained, "There is such a need out there. I'd like to know if I had the strength and the time I would like to do more to help those who are in need." Nora also described her family's example of sharing the practice and teachings of Christianity:

Both of my parents were Christians. My father had family worship three times a day. No matter how busy he was, he took time. When there were threshings and sowings and things like that, he would say to the men, "We are accustomed to having family worship, and you may stay, or you may leave while we have it.", and mostly they stayed.

Clara's family experience also created the climate conducive to the development of social conscience in a child. She described how she came to understand how her parents were deliberately structuring her experience in order to help her see the value, and feel the satisfaction, in a life of service:

So I was very active from a child, and my mother kept us involved in everything in the community life, and sent us to do chores for older people who needed help. Although we had people helping us in our home, we had to go and help other people out. I couldn't understand why we had somebody carry our water, but we had to get water for different people, and do errands for them, and people were doing our errands. But then, now I realize my parents were preparing me for a full life of enjoyment, and to be kind, and be our brothers' and sisters' keeper. And you get a great deal of satisfaction from doing that.

Full of energy and love for her friends and neighbours, Florence described how she felt about helping others. The source of her social conscience seemed to be simply social-connectedness and love:

I've often thought that I would just like to be just like Florence Nightingale to help everybody. My hands are ready for to give anybody a hand. I'm willin' to help. If any of them in the community, no matter where, the phone would ring and say, "Florence, I need help. Would you come down?" I would try my best. If I can't get down, well somebody would come and get me, and I'll be down. I want to be out doing something for somebody.

It was the social conscience-nurturing environment, in which she found herself as a young adult, that was instrumental in the development of Catherine's strong sense of social obligation. Although she was a devout Catholic, she credits the general dynamic social climate for her commitment to working for love of humanity, rather than for personal gain:

Probably I was more influenced by the enthusiasm... a lot of idealism, so not necessarily one person, but you know, the whole environment was really so effervescent. So that is what gave me more (the) sense of work, not for money, work for love.

For several women, the factor that ignited their social consciences and impelled them to take on the commitments they assumed was the recognition of an injustice that cried out for change. Whether stemming from personal experience, the result of sensitive observation of the status quo, or hearing about critical events they were too young to remember, their social consciences became very strong.

Jean was especially sensitive to the needs of those who have been marginalized by society. Her mother was a strong influence, as were her older brothers who were advocates for social responsibility in their professions. Speaking of her mother, Jean said:

She was a woman who was generous. Okay. And one of the images that I have of childhood is during, (the depression) and we didn't have much. We were on relief in those, that is what it was called in those days, and I always remember men coming to the back door, and this was very common, asking if, could they do a bit of work for.... and so my mother always fed those men at the back door...so all I am saying is that she was, she was very strong.

This strong woman told her daughter about an unfortunate thing that had happened when Jean was a baby. Naturally, the story had an impact on her attitudes towards those in need, especially the poor. Jean recalled:

My father went bankrupt and in those days there was very little protection in bankruptcy, and my mother had to watch all the household goods being auctioned off, and she had to beg them to keep from, not to do it with my crib.

The consciousness-raising experience, which ignited Delia's social conscience,

was a personal one. Once she was aware of the implications of women's lack of choice, she committed her best efforts to the cause. This was how she described it:

I was so lucky in the end, but I had walked in the shoes for two or three months. I always felt women were equal, but when I started to come up against this, it really brought home women's needs and rights to me.

Amy reported the beginning of the recognition of the injustice created by apartheid in her homeland, South Africa:

I can remember, almost to the minute, the day that I realized that, as a white South African, I wasn't any better than anybody else. It was a tremendous change in my life. That came to me just out of thinking it out....I think, until then I had just enjoyed life, and hadn't really become involved. But from then onwards, and then of course children occupy one's time a lot, and when they grew up, I then became deeply involved in charitable work. I think in South Africa you can, because you have servants who run the home for you, and you can get out and do a lot of things. And so I was out of the house a lot working for charity.

Jean also recognized that her ability to participate in volunteer work was a result of her secure socio-economic situation and the fact that she was not struggling with survival issues herself. She noted:

I was very fortunate to be able to pursue all this, because different from when my mother was having to deal with issues of survival and income, we were stable with (her husband in a secure job) etc and so I was able to pursue that. I wasn't preoccupied worrying about where the next meal would come from. So I was fortunate that way, and I have always acknowledged that.

The women, impelled by their social consciences, worked in churches, schools, the nursing profession, community initiatives, and advocacy groups. They were involved in political activism, writing, and public speaking. Support including spouses,

family, special interest groups, philosophy, church teachings, and other societal expectations sustained them. The economic reality of their lives, as financially independent single women, or women whose spouses provided enough financial support for them to feel sufficiently secure, allowed them to participate actively in making their communities better places to live.

There is support for the idea that social conscience may be either achieved or received. An achieved social conscience would be developed over time, through introspection and reflection, perhaps beginning with an attitude change, or consciousness raising experience, which triggers the empathetic and sympathetic response. It could result in an immediate life changing commitment that is passionate and strong. The social conscience that is received may be as strong and may result in the same continuity of commitment, but it appears to involve a quieter, less passionate expression. Perhaps, having been received (through family, church, work ethic at large) it is unquestioned, even taken for granted, as if it is a common rather than a special thing. There is no reason to believe that an achieved social conscience is preferable to one that is received. Positive social change requires the best of social conscience, and it does not matter how it comes to be part of the individual's profile.

In an interpretation somewhat different from Brant (1989) who categorized his social-entrepreneurs as having begun with a proactive or a reactive response, I found evidence to confirm that all of the response of my study participants was in fact proactive. This was apparent even in the examples where the initial awareness of the problem was the result of recognizing a need to change something that was salient for them personally. There was an action-oriented responding, which followed awareness, and that responding was proactive. Whether the social conscience was achieved or received, it came into full bloom and impelled each woman to engage in proactive behaviour.

Commitment

Although the participants had been active in an impressive number of initiatives, and their commitments had evolved and changed over time, there was a strong pattern of continuity in the commitments that they had made. The commitments themselves were passionate and life focusing in many cases. Often beginning in their early thirties, the commitments of many had been firmly in place for decades.

If change had occurred in the specifics of the activism, the new projects were often an expression of the earlier commitment in a new setting or situation. Amy's commitment to human rights was the motivation for her involvement in fighting apartheid in South Africa, and in Canada, the same commitment translated into work on behalf of Amnesty International. For Catherine, the life focusing commitment to at risk children evolved through many stages, but always centred on freeing the children to become the best they could be. A strong commitment to quality of life for rural families led Tina to many of her projects such as 4H Clubs and Fairs, as well as Women's Institute, and Recreation committees. Florence's commitment to family and friends saw her involved in Foot Care, Seniors Groups, and Meals on Wheels as she entered late adulthood. Clara's lifetime commitment to the elimination of racism saw her giving workshops to police officers, presentations to immigrants, as well as playing an active role in anti-racist education through the school board. Delia's commitments to democracy, to peace and justice issues, and to education for social responsibility, were strong themes throughout her years as an activist. Veronique's commitment to quality of life in her community led to years of work on behalf of the Library as well as her work on the anti-smoking education programmes in the schools. A committed feminist, Jean had worked tirelessly for a more just society with a grassroots community approach to problem solving. Frances maintained her commitment to excellence in health care long past her retirement, and she remains a resource to her friends as they face the challenges of medical emergencies and health related decisions. Their strong

commitments to the teachings and work of their churches focused the efforts of Nora, Lucille, and Olivia. Both the strength of these many commitments and the continuity over time are very impressive findings in this sample of women.

Action-Orientation

Most of the women in the study shared in an early orientation towards being physically active. They had been active children, participating in outdoor play and sport. As adults, many continued to be involved in recreational activities that were physically demanding and that saw them enjoying the fresh air and the outdoors. The orientation towards action was also evident in the volunteer work they did.

Tina told how she took up skiing and how she chose to participate in Women's Institute because it was more physically demanding than some other volunteer groups she had joined before that time. She reported, "I learned to ski when I was 47 years old, and I have had a marvelous time. And I still skied last year a few runs even though I wasn't feeling well. I've enjoyed that a lot." Referring to her commitment to Women's Institute, she said, "I like Women's Institute where you are going to go out and do something physical. That's the kind of volunteer work that turns me on." Florence also loved the active aspect of helping others. She said, "Love. Friendship. Helping one another. It just seems as though I'd rather be doing something."

There is an echo of the protestant work ethic in Clara's comment on how she was encouraged to be active as a child. She said:

So my father always tried for excellence and always did instil that in us. "What is worth doing at all, is worth doing well," my grandmother always told us.

And she always said that we must always keep busy, because Satan finds work for idle hands to do. My father and his mother were great role models for us.

Some of the participants recalled being especially high-energy people. Not only did they enjoy physical activity but also they had abundant energy for all of their other initiatives. Veronique is an example. She recalled her energy level as a younger woman

and was proud that she could see that energy reflected in her daughters' activities. She reported:

First of all, I did not have too much leisure time when I was younger, but I had so much energy I didn't miss it. I never stopped. I don't know where I got it. I look at my daughters now, and I say, "Where do they get their energy?" And I answer back, "It is you."

The action-orientation was also very apparent in all of the participants as they made choices of strategies for bringing about societal change. Each believed in the power of doing something. They regularly confronted the status quo and pushed for change. Accepting injustice was not an option. They mobilized their resources and expected change to occur as a result of their effort. Whether they were advocating for organ donor programmes or conflict resolution in the curriculum, it was an action-oriented approach. They did not want to miss opportunities to advance their cause.

Although the women were cognizant of the need to cut back on certain activities and commitments as concerns for their health increased, most were still very much involved in the causes they had espoused over the years. Jean saw her continued activity in the area of social activism as very important to her health. It is understandable that after years of active participation in social causes, continued involvement may be as necessary to overall fitness as continued physical exercise is known to be. She reported:

My continuing activity is very important to my health as well as, I mean it's incidentally good for my health. But I want to do it because you don't stop doing things that have meaning for you. [It is your life?] Exactly! But it also,--I am trying to maintain a balance, because I have to watch my health a bit. But it is important to my health to have those kinds of satisfaction.

In these findings on the orientation to be active, there is support for the conclusions of Dembe (1995) that living zestfully in late adulthood involves active

initiation and appropriate self-care.

Integrity

The last theme to be discussed in the well-lived life category is integrity. As Erikson (1982) described it, integrity included aspects of coherence and wholeness. An example of wholeness, as opposed to fragmentation, is Jean's report of how her commitment to feminism permeates her every experience. She reported, "But as a feminist, I always declare myself a feminist. And dear me, I can't just say I am involved in a feminist organization, I just bring the feminist analysis perspective to everything I do."

Among other attributes, integrity also included satisfaction. All of the women reported feeling satisfaction when they reflected back to the choices they had made and the commitments they had given. Olivia said, "The last ten years here have been really wonderful....I think I'm pretty well satisfied with my life." Florence echoed this feeling of satisfaction when she said, "I think my goals have all been met. What I really wanted to do, I've done. And I just loved it."

Catherine summed up her thinking about her experience in a clear expression of overall satisfaction with her life. She said:

Well, I always say, I'm [a] liberal girl who has been favoured by events and nature. There I lost a lot, but I being led and have been favoured in many other ways. When I think, you see, you know, child without wealth, without anything, to get out of the little country, unknown, to speak five languages, to reach people, to know my kids. You know that is just an overwhelming gift.

The feeling of satisfaction is apparent also in this statement of Clara's. As she reflected on her experience of travelling in England as a young woman, she declared passionately that she had enjoyed her life:

I am very happy that I was able to travel.... Those historic places...to be able to go to see them, to really experience it.... Everywhere I went, I wrote to my

Dad....All those places I had read about.... “My God, I’m here.” And I could be a barefoot girl from up the hills of Jamaica. And you are right walking in his palace....It was magic....Oh, I am telling you lady, I have lived.... So, I have lived. Believe you me, I have really enjoyed life.

In summary, the theme of integrity, as Erikson understood it in reference to the successful resolution of the psychosocial crisis of integrity vs. despair, was very strongly represented in the study. There were no responses indicating anything remotely related to a state of despair.

Leadership Skill Set: Strand 1

Various themes related to leadership, which would be found on strand one of the metaphorical double helix representing relational leadership, were strong threads throughout the study. They will be discussed under the following six subheadings: Recognizing Need/Recognizing Opportunity; Assuming Responsibility; Initiating/Motivating/Advocating; Organizing/Planning; Resolving Conflict; and Persevering.

Recognizing Need and Recognizing Opportunity

The strong social consciences of the women provided them with the ability to recognize needs and to recognize opportunities to address those needs. Empowered by their feelings of self-efficacy and guided by their commitments to social activism, they made their decisions and worked towards the goals of the organizations they created or joined. Jean described how she helped create Interval House in response to her recognition of the need for a safe place for victims of abuse. She noted:

Early in the 70’s, I was very much aware of the abuse against women, and a lot of people in my case load and etc, and I was one of the co-founders of Interval House, and so that has been a major part of work that I have done. If you group

them, there is violence against women, poverty issues, and lots of things associated with that.

In response to the recognition of the need for readers in her community to have access to a good collection of books, Veronique became a very strong advocate for a Public Library. She has spent many years on the Library Board, and in the process, she has enriched her own life, while making a great contribution to the quality of life for others. She described how she became involved initially:

But now I don't have as much energy, but I have lots of leisure time, and my leisure time, the most important thing to me in my leisure time is reading. And that is why I have all kinds of interest in the public library in my town. I wanted to keep on growing. Since you see the light at the end of the tunnel, you want the others to see it too.

Clara spoke about her understanding of the obligation to help those who are in need. She was alert to the opportunities to create awareness of the requirements of new immigrants for assistance in understanding the customs and laws of Canada. She also worked tirelessly to eliminate racism through her commitment to anti-racist education. She explained her thoughts about recognizing one's talents and finding ways to work together to make things better:

If we have a little talent, God gave us all a talent, and if we can't use some of that talent for the benefit of all humankind, we are leading a useless life. So you think of that. Why we are here? Why are we here? Are we here to help, or are we here to hinder? If we are here to help, let's get along with the job together.

The findings strongly suggest that the participants in this study had a clear understanding of the areas where their help was required. They were adept at recognizing needs and maximizing opportunities for addressing those needs.

Assuming Responsibility

Once a need is apparent and an opportunity has been recognized or created, the

next step, for an action-oriented person with a strong social conscience, is to assume the responsibility for making a difference. Assuming responsibility was a very frequent behaviour of the women in the study. In assuming the responsibility to right the wrongs they identified, the women were impelled by their social consciences and guided by their caring natures. Sometimes they worked with the support of the majority of their colleagues, but sometimes they found themselves standing without support for their decisions. The ability to assume responsibility for their own actions was also strongly indicated in many responses.

Initiating, Motivating, and Advocating

One of the most frequent leadership behaviours reported by the participants was initiating. The women had been instrumental in starting many projects from scratch as well as taking initiative to further the causes of organizations that they had joined. Along with initiating, went commitments to motivating others and advocating on behalf of change.

Tina reported on her initiative in writing about her group. "I did a History of 100 years of Women's Institutes. They wanted me to speak at Seniors' Outreach. And then it just kept on. I went and spoke to the Rotary."

In connection with her work at a major hospital, Frances took the initiative to study new ways of improving the practice in maternity wards. Her proposals for change were well received. Other hospitals were motivated to follow the example of the programme she introduced after her observations at a renowned American hospital.

Frances described her experience and the results of her initiative:

So they were starting where the father was very much involved. He was with the mother in labour, and went to Lamaze classes with the mother, and he was there for the delivery, frocked up and everything. So I opted to go there for my course, and to observe this sort of thing, and bring it back to my home hospital. And my friend, who was the director of nursing, encouraged me to do that. She

thought it was a wonderful idea. So I went down there all of July and August. And you know, just participated in the program, and brought it back to the teaching hospital where I was employed, and set up the program there. And from there it just grew and grew like Topsy. And over time was introduced in most hospitals. That was back in the early 60's.

The ability to persuade and to motivate others was a skill very apparent in the responses of the women and the questionnaire respondents. They were well aware of the need to encourage the participation of others and assumed responsibility for identifying and developing leadership potential in members who showed promise in their groups. Lucille described how she recognized someone who needed to be encouraged to assume greater responsibility in the organization:

I know that she, although, it was the first time that I had met her, but I know that she is good material, good leadership material. She has some qualities there. Just the way she acted during the meeting, and what not, you know. I thought, well, this one has to move up.

Always a strong advocate for social activism, Delia explained her thinking about motivating others to become involved. She said, "But I do feel that you start with, as you say, individual people, nurse the basic sort of fundamental interest in a good society and so forth and how to achieve it."

The simple force of personality should not be underestimated as a motivating factor. The women were aware of the effect they had on others when they called upon them at meetings and persuaded them to take on additional responsibilities in the organization. Several commented that they had reputations for being able to get people to do more than they would have initially been prepared to do. The women did not bully others into becoming involved, but they were well aware of the value of the timely suggestion, the encouraging word, or the gentle push in the right direction in order to get things rolling.

Organizing and Planning

The participants were proud of their skills as organizers and planners. Many examples were shared. This response of Jean's illustrated what she values in organizing the groups with whom she works. She noted:

We went through a very good feminist process because we wanted to have a feminist organization that behaved, and we had done some work around a community framework for agencies. And so what we have now is a structure with a steering committee, with proper reporting, and semi autonomous working groups etc. etc.

Olivia recognized that one of her leadership skills was in organizing others to get the job done, whether in the church activities or in her professional life. She said:

I've learned over the years how to run things, to organize. When you are organizing a big parish bazaar, and when you are organizing thirty-two teachers working for you, schedules and that. A lot of organizational skills, I think that I have picked up.

For Jean, planning always included the grassroots approach, which while empowering others also ensured that the solutions were appropriate for the problems, as the people involved perceived them. She believed strongly that:

Individuals give leadership. Individuals articulate the goals and the issues, the social justice issues whatever it is, but you have to have a community development approach, and have a team, and have people behind you. One person doesn't really—they stand out because they are the ones who articulate it. If you are working in your community you really have to have a community development approach as well as a policy approach. In other words, bring people along.

The skills of organizing and planning had been honed over many years of participation in the various groups. For some of the women, the initial experiences with

these skills had come through projects of the Home and School Association, the Women's Institute, or the church group. The scope of such groups as training grounds for women with leadership potential should not be underestimated.

Resolving Conflict

The theme of conflict resolution was a very significant one for the participants both in their personal lives, in the volunteer sphere, and in the work world. All recognized the importance of resolving conflict, but their approaches were generally persuasive, consensus seeking rather than arbitrary or blatantly challenging. Nora's description of how she dealt with conflict is representative of the style of most of the women. She said:

But if it's in conflict with somebody else, I don't push the issue. I try to find some way to solve the problem.... I would try to work with those that it was necessary to work with. And if they didn't agree, then we would take some other method. I didn't have to have my own way. My way wasn't the only way. I would listen to the other people and think about what they had in mind, and then work it out with what was best, keeping it in the proper stance not just what I thought about it.

Veronique spoke of how she felt when consensus did not occur. She was ready to accept that one cannot expect to always please everyone who is involved. She knew that when others cannot be persuaded to support a decision it is not usually a serious problem in the end. People can agree to disagree after all, and the goals of the organization are not jeopardized in the process. She reported:

I will think about it, see the good side and the bad side, and say that is the way I think we should do it. Some people will say I am too definite in my opinion. If I take an opinion, I will want to follow it. But you can't please everybody. It is not a decision to get married, so why should we break our hearts over it.

Naturally if you are at the top, the higher you are, the more stones you get. So,

I think if you make a decision, after thinking about it very carefully, asking opinions, then you come out with a decision, I think you should stick with it. That is the way I am.

In this next comment, Clara described how she felt when she was standing by decisions that were not well accepted by some of the others in the group:

Sometimes in groups, I find myself standing alone, but I didn't care because I saw my Dad went through it, and I know in the long run, and I know that even when I had to take decisions not popular with some people, when I get the job done, they will come to compliment me and say, "You were right. You did a very good job." Because I would not compromise on principles.

Most of the women seemed to follow a similar approach when facing opposition. They would work very hard at resolving conflicts, even anticipating them and proactively heading off a possible conflict situation. If, however, the conflict persisted, after all the efforts to resolve it, life went on. Decisions were taken; action occurred. If fences could not be mended, most of the women preferred to move on to other things and to avoid contact with the people who had been at the centre of the unresolved conflict. Although they did not shrink from conflict, and in fact worked effectively at conflict resolution in most reported situations, they were alike in never seeking conflict, or deliberately provoking it.

Persevering

Their persistence in the pursuit of their goals was one of the character traits that all of the women had in common. They abandoned an initiative only after all effort had been made to have things go as they planned. If they believed that something was worthwhile and they committed to it, they were consistently stubborn in their continued support. An example is found in Tina's work on the recycling project. She shared this experience, "Now we ceased to get any money for that operation. We kept going anyway. The only money we got was for Canadian beer cans and I hate beer, but I

became an expert on our Canadian beer cans.”

Jean spoke of the experience of being a voice in the wilderness and the satisfaction of finding that she and the others who persevered in support of an unpopular cause were eventually vindicated:

Even at a time when you were a voice in the wilderness. And it is very important to keep at it, because if silence means acquiescence and I am very convinced (that it does).... I have always maintained an historical perspective has been very beneficial to me, because it helps you to hang in. And so you keep at it until some sources, and things happen that come in confluence, and then if you feel that you are on the right path, then at some point you are going to be, hopefully, vindicated.

Further to the point of persevering, Jean commented, “I don’t get defeated. That is interesting you know, and I don’t know exactly where that comes from. I feel I’m realistic, in fact I, but I never become a cynic.” The tendency to persevere is closely linked to the concepts of commitment and continuity over time. The women were able to report many examples of how their perseverance had paid off in good results and how on some occasions they had served as role models for others who were discouraged and needed their example of perseverance and tenacity.

Completing the Double Helix: Strand 2

The themes of Caring; Collaboration; Courage; Intuition; and Vision will be discussed in this next section. First identified by Regan & Brooks (1995) as the feminist attributes of leadership, they were deemed very significant factors in Relational Leadership, which is a combination of the masculinist and the feminist attributes. This study clearly demonstrated the importance of the five feminist attributes in the leadership of the participants. Although the women incorporated the more traditional

(masculinist) leadership attributes some of which were discussed in the section before this one, the feminist attributes were all very much in evidence in their leadership experiences.

Caring

The leadership attribute that stood out as the most significant of all, in the experiences of the women in this study, was that of caring. It was caring that was involved with the social-connectedness and the social conscience of the participants, both in their personal lives and in their lives in the public domain. Having had the experience of being cared for, the women were committed to caring for, and caring about the people and the issues that were important to them.

The women, consequently, cared deeply about social issues, and most expressed the belief that everyone should. This is Amy's comment about an information meeting she planned to attend concerning an issue of interest to those living in her community. "Now, tonight there is a meeting, this anti-dump thing. I don't intend to talk or anything, but I want to go to be informed. Why not? Why isn't everybody interested? I don't understand."

The causes to which they devoted themselves were causes about which they cared deeply. That deep caring impelled them into action. As a result of their caring, things were improved. The women were able to feel a great sense of satisfaction, although there always seemed to be the wish that they could have been more effective, that the outcome could have been even better, and that more people should have become involved. Here is how Delia summed it up:

It is a mixture of enjoyable and frustrating, but it is more enjoyable than frustrating working on all these issues. And I still feel that these are all things that matter very much to me, matter to the world, in my opinion. So, I think that is all to the good. If I could wish anything, I wish I could have been more effective.

The women demonstrated their caring in compassion and concern. The results of the caring were various actions; assuming responsibility; giving time, energy and money; and advocating. Throughout the study, the participants and those who responded on their behalf to the questionnaire, all reiterated the importance of caring and the commitment of these women to caring. It was expressed in many different ways and in response to many different inquiries. There is no doubt that it was the key attribute in their leadership and in their personal decision-making.

Collaboration

Collaboration, as a feminist attribute of leadership, involves a commitment not only to be open to the input of others who have a stake in the outcome of a possible decision, but also to actively seek relevant input. That input comes from staff, colleagues, friends, relatives, resource people, those who will benefit or face consequences etc. The collaboration creates effective partnerships. It involves giving and receiving support. The collaborative team becomes greater than the sum of its parts.

In her role as a minister's wife, Nora was a collaborative partner in the ministry that was the couple's life work. She described one of the ways she was able to support her husband:

Ministers' wives don't do it now very much, but I visited (parishioners) with my husband. He had a struggle with meeting people for the first time, and if anybody was sick or in trouble I just loved to help any way I could. So I went with him when he did his pastoral visiting, and then I really enjoyed it because I was able to help.

One of the most committed to the collaborative way, Jean saw it as a way of bringing other women into the support network. She valued, "developing partnerships and working in a collaborative way, very feminist way and bringing other women along." In this response, she described how she came to understand the importance of the collaborative mode, and how she put it into practice:

But then in the 80's, it became obvious to me, now this is a very important piece, it became obvious, that to have any kind of political power on this issue, you had to have a community structure, which would pull together your constituency, a constituency. You had to have that structure to be able to have small "p" political influence. Now, meanwhile, I had developed some relationships and had some good relationships, and I have always believed in working with the people inside the system, those who were elected. And there were a number of people in those early, in that system now, who worked with me at (a social agency) and so we have a trusted relationship because we move things along. So I was able to utilize all that...so the point was to develop a collaborative model with some of the institutions who we felt needed to improve their response, like the police of course. And we are still at it.

The model of creating coalitions, networks, and partnerships was significant for most of the participants. Those who did not think of themselves as naturally collaborative in their leadership style were aware of the practical advantages of collaboration and were trying to work towards that model to a greater extent.

Courage

A high level of courage was apparent in this population of women. It often involved dealing with their own fears and being determined to stay strong in the face of a challenge. Courage was evident in different situations that I categorized as follows: in defense of principle; in challenging assumptions; in response to betrayal; in conflict; in care of others; in facing new challenges; in face of health problems; in facing physical risk and danger.

Many examples of courageous behaviour were reported. For the purpose of further illustration, three examples that are related to leadership are included in this section. The first is Lucille's recollection of her first experience chairing a meeting. She had prepared very thoroughly, but was nevertheless very anxious about facing the

challenge of being in charge of the group. She recalled:

I know that I must have been nervous, but I can hide my nervousness. I can be very calm and you know it doesn't show, and from then on, after the first one, I knew it was ok. That I could do it, you know.

This report of the experience of creating a new type of educational experience, for children who had not been as successful in the regular school programmes of the day, is a good example of several of the categories of courage that were required of Catherine in order to prevail against the opposition of her critics:

It was very criticized and everybody used to come and say, now give us the research to support those ideas. I said well, on what is based the research? On what is already known previously, but you know somebody has to throw in (new questions) and probably even be stubborn enough to go without extra particular support, you know. And then you look at your own results. And we started with very little, and then it became very nice institution with up to seventy to seventy-five children, and a lot of people went through it.

All of the women had relied on their courage to get them through difficulties in their leadership roles as well as in their personal spheres. Their courage was quiet and unassuming, but very strong. They faced their challenges and challengers with stubbornness and tenacity. They were empowered by the knowledge that they were standing up for what they believed, and that what they believed was good for others, as well as for themselves.

Intuition

Most of the women had learned to value and appreciate their intuition. They reported finding it useful in assessing people and their motives, in making plans, and anticipating outcomes. This description of intuition is from Delia:

I guess I think intuition is really the result of your life's experience, which helps you to make these decisions. You can kind of see, which way things are going,

so you know you can put extra over there. I mean open. You have to be open. In science you know that you have to be open, and that carries over into social areas as well.

When asked whether intuition had played a part in her work, Nora responded, "Well, I would think perhaps a major part. It's been helpful in all of our work." It is interesting to note also, that when Nora referred to "our work," she was indicating the strength of the collaboration she and her husband enjoyed as they worked to meet the needs of the parishioners in their church. She saw herself as a full partner in that work.

Frances explained how she had relied on her intuition over many years in leadership roles. She noted:

When I meet somebody, immediately I make sort of an assessment you know, which is probably not good, but I usually am right. I used to interview a lot of people, you know students and so on, and I think sometimes I made snap judgements, but they usually turned out right so that I think I am quite intuitive.

Tina echoed Frances's sentiments, expressing confidence in her intuition. She reported, "Yes. Unfortunately, I judge people very quickly, and I usually feel very accurately. Yes, I think my intuition is pretty good."

There is some support for the idea that intuitive knowing and feeling may have been more of a factor in the women's experience than some of them were prepared to acknowledge. Perhaps there was reluctance to apply the label to knowings that were simply taken for granted as accompanying careful observation and sensitivity.

Intuition could also be deemed a product of their experiences. With a history of serious consideration of their rich and varied experiences, they had achieved an educated intuition, which enabled them to predict and anticipate outcomes in other situations. They were able to respond quickly without a great deal of thought and perhaps without having all of the facts that someone with less intuitiveness might have required. Perhaps some of their characteristic decisiveness could be attributed to their

confidence in the intuitive knowing that informed their decisions.

Vision

Being visionary in one's outlook means being able to see new and different options and to envision a change for the better. The participants in the study had clear visions of how they wanted things to be. I have chosen four excerpts from the transcripts to illustrate the quality of those visions. The women's voices in these quotations are so powerful that I do not feel any additional description is required in order to demonstrate what is meant by vision as a feminist attribute of leadership. The power of these visions in guiding behaviour is clear:

I chose to go to the voluntary sector because I wanted to be engaged in some kind of social change. I did not want to be sandwiched into some kind of large agency, a corporation where I didn't have enough authority to make decisions of change, and wasn't close enough to the people and have that kind of stimulation. And so I chose to work for a smaller agency at much less, much less salary of course. But still much more satisfying. And I made a decision at that time, as a kind of plan of life.... And then I thought, well, when I reach the ripe old age of seventy, which I am now, I want to be able to look back to know that I made some kind of difference. So both socially and individually, and to have had a satisfying kind of career, because I feel enriched by all the people whom I have worked with in partnerships in the community. And my vision is much more than just agency focused. It was very much community focused, because that is my belief about the health of a community, where people can live and others give a damn about what happens to you, and to build those kinds of resources and healthy communities.(Jean).

Now, what influenced me, I guess, is probably my deep religion. I am not church mouse. I have a lot of criticism to organized church but I am definitely

living not for this world. And my faith you see, I have to admit you see, I never doubted it. We are not, be dust and nothing else but dust.... I stood very harsh attacks against my approach in Psychology when I was at the University. But I was so deeply convinced that nothing could move me away (Catherine).

I have a vision for the public library. We have an old library with not too much space. We have a very nice collection of books, and now we need a library very much.... They decided a library is necessary in a place especially like (her town). It is culture. You need culture.... Well I think we have made some progress. They said a few years ago, there is no way you'll get a library. We will. The only thing I hope is that I get it before I die. To be able to dedicate it (Veronique).

Actually out of all these groups you get left with how difficult it is to make change. Change for the better. But then there is some slight consolation that it is just as difficult to make change for the worse.... and so it is just a constant struggle. I think you have to stand up for democracy every day. I mean, every day it needs defending. We slowly move (Delia).

Vision as a feminist attribute of leadership is under the overall guidance of caring. It reflects intuitive knowing. Such a vision would never be pushed on someone, because the needs and feelings of the other would be considered, and strategies for action would evolve from the collaborative process of decision-making. Courage would be required in the framing of the vision and the articulating of it as well.

Aspects of Composing, Achieving, and Sharing the Well-Lived Life

In the introduction to this chapter, the idea of the well-lived life was considered from the perspectives of groundedness, of knowing oneself, and of sharing oneself.

The themes discussed with reference to the participants' leadership experiences are also strongly connected to groundedness, knowing oneself, and sharing oneself. Social-connectedness holds the women firmly in the social space that is each one's place to be, the place where each feels the sense of belonging. It is from within this space that they come to know who they are and what they are well able to do. The awareness of self-efficacy grows. Essential knowledge comes to each one via reflection on the lived experience and through self-appraisal. The challenge of composing and achieving the life they choose to lead is well under way. Confident and trusting in their skills and abilities, they are free to share themselves wherever their social consciences lead them. Consequently, they are able to make commitments and take action. With caring as an overall guiding attribute, they have recognized needs and opportunities, assumed responsibility etc. Drawing on the attributes of courage and intuition, they have taken initiative, made plans, motivated others, and persevered in the work that needed to be done. When they were facing conflicts and setbacks, the visions they were working to bring into being sustained them and assured them that the effort was worthwhile; the cause was important. The well-lived life is shown to be active, interesting, satisfying, and characterized by integrity throughout the lifespan.

While exploring the essence of outstanding leadership from the vantage point of having seen the patterns and themes in the lives and experiences of the women in the study, a different conceptual framework evolved. It considers the essential elements of effective leadership, while also recognizing the key component of social conscience. The Exemplary Leadership Model, which summarizes some of the findings of this study and brings together earlier understandings of outstanding leadership, will be described in detail in the next chapter.

Summary

This chapter outlined the major themes, which were found within the data

collected and analyzed in the study. Organized in two categories for discussion, the themes related to the well-lived life and to leadership. The themes of the well-lived life were: Social-Connectedness; Reflection/Self-Appraisal; Self-Efficacy; Social Conscience; Commitment; Action-Orientedness; and Integrity. The following leadership themes were considered in the discussion of Strand 1: Recognizing Need/Recognizing Opportunity; Assuming Responsibility; Initiating/Motivating/Advocating; Organizing/Planning; Resolving Conflict; and Persevering. The discussion of strand 2 included the themes of Caring; Collaboration; Courage; Intuition; and Vision. All of the reported experience and reflective insight of the participants was considered in the context of meaning making and as aspects of composing, achieving, and sharing a well-lived life. The themes were considered with reference to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that were discussed in the review of the discourse.

CHAPTER 6

The Exemplary Leadership Model

The Exemplary Leadership Model is the result of many years of experiential and theoretical learning about leadership. This study provided an opportunity for me to rethink earlier understandings and to incorporate new knowledge into my cognitive map of the leadership territory. I am indebted to all of those whose work on the subject reached me, over the decades of my interest in the topic. I am also appreciative of the experience I gained from being exposed to both exemplary leaders, and their regrettable opposites, throughout my career as an educator and educational administrator, as well as throughout my years of interest in psychology, history, politics, and current events, in Canada and elsewhere in the world.

The Preliminary Concept

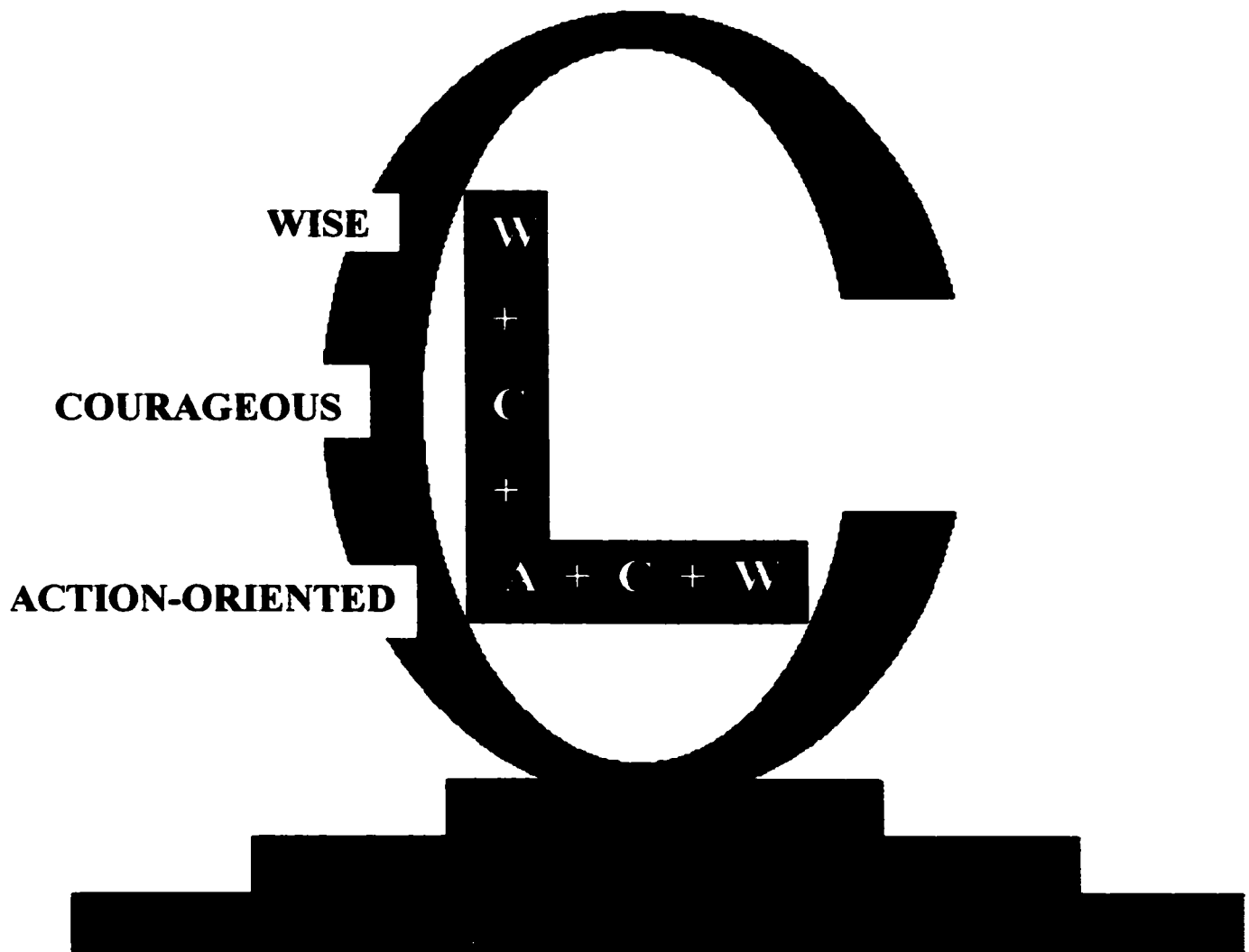
The history of the preliminary concept for this model is an unusual and personal one. Many years ago, while a project officer working in the Research and Evaluation department of a large public school board, I had been totally focused on reading and thinking about leadership in the course of an assignment. The exemplary leadership concept came to me as an intuitive flash of insight, while driving along the river to a meeting. It was a creative, eureka-aha experience, which allowed me to understand that the essence of exemplary leadership consists of the appropriate balance between wisdom, courage, and action. Excellent leadership, I concluded, is wise, courageous, and action-oriented. Although very excited about the insight at the time, I did not follow through with developing the concept. I shared it with a few colleagues, but I did not give it a name, or go into much detail. Over the many intervening years, the concept of

the exemplary leadership model remained unrecalled in memory.

During this study, with my intense focus on the meaning and mechanics of leadership and the experiences of the participants, the memory of that intuitive flash and the powerful insight concerning leadership surfaced again. I was able to recognize its importance in the context of the findings of my study. That initial understanding of the essence of exemplary leadership has now evolved into a model, which may be helpful in accounting for the requirements of outstanding leadership in the face of challenges and in more routine situations.

The model is the product of my work of putting into a larger context the intuitive meaning making of a lifetime of learning opportunities, culminating in my perspective on the findings of my study of these very special women. The women all provided leadership to their communities throughout years of work in the volunteer sector and in the world of work outside the home, but what they shared with me of their varied experiences sheds light on the origins and manifestations of social conscience and leadership wherever they are found. The Exemplary Leadership Model is shown as Figure 6.1 on the following page.

Figure 6.1 **THE EXEMPLARY LEADERSHIP MODEL**



The Foundation

The model, with its solid brick base, presents a strong three-tiered foundation that has as its upper level the essential component of social conscience. The first level of bricks consists of family, community, culture, and social-connectedness. Arising out of this level, love, empathy, sympathy, and identity become the building blocks that support social conscience.

The first level of bricks begins with the FAMILY. Within the realm of the family, personal constructs and attachments are formed, memories are made, and meaning making begins.

COMMUNITY and CULTURE play increasingly significant roles as the child grows up, attending school, being part of church and community activities etc. Extended family may play a greater role. The community can help meet needs that have been unmet within the family. Ideally, the community will support the family in creating the climate for trust and the sense of personal groundedness and belonging. Competence is demonstrated. Self-efficacy becomes an aspect at this point if not before. An action-orientation is present.

SOCIAL-CONNECTEDNESS, which was a very strong theme in my study, is the fourth brick in the first level of the foundation of the Exemplary Leadership Model. As a result of having experienced positive social interaction within caring families and/or caring communities and/or caring cultures, social-connectedness becomes a strong foundational element; and the base is prepared to support the second level consisting of love, empathy, sympathy, and identity.

I have long believed that LOVE is the strongest force in the universe. Life-affirming love grows or is constrained within the first tier parameters of the model. EMPATHY and SYMPATHY appear here, in the second tier because of the influence of the work of Goleman (1995) and Damon (1996). Empathy and sympathy are requirements for the type of pro-social orientation that becomes a basic component of social conscience. Empathy involves respect for the personhood of the other. There is understanding of the concept of dignity for all. One can feel the injustice or the need for change, heartfelt from the point of view of the other. Sympathy means that there is a recognition that it matters, and something should be done to right the wrong. According to Damon, it is sympathy that “is the one (of these two emotions) more strongly directed toward helping and not harming the other.” (p.206). Although through

empathy there is understanding of the “problem”, without sympathy there is no impetus to act.

IDENTITY is one of the bricks of the second tier in recognition of the intuitive understanding that one needs to know who one is in order to have the essential component of groundedness, which supports SOCIAL CONSCIENCE. Acting in accord with one’s social conscience implies acting with care, and most likely doing something that contributes to the future by making something better for others who are following along.

The base of the model is green, signifying that exemplary leadership relies on groundedness, healthy growth, and development. The green also represents wholesomeness, wellness, and healing.

The Capital “C” of Caring

The importance of Caring and its strategic placement in the model follows the concept of Regan & Brooks (1995) in their work with the feminist attributes of leadership. CARING is the overall guiding attribute of exemplary leadership. Collaboration, connectedness, and commitment are also part of the capital C. These were all strong themes found in the lives of the participants in my study. Caring is centred on the solid brick foundation. It is stable, firmly grounded, and ready to sustain, support, and envelop the L of leadership. The C for caring rests on the green base and is blue to symbolize the sky and water, which are essential elements of healthy growth.

“L” is for Leadership

Leadership, the L, is situated solidly within the context of caring. The L for LEADERSHIP is thus embedded within the C of caring and is connected at three points signifying the three critical descriptors of exemplary leaders; specifically that they are wise, courageous, and action-oriented. Their leadership is characterized by an appropriate balance between wisdom, courage, and action. At the crux of the L is an A

for ACTION-ORIENTED, a mindset or aspect of temperament, without which the status quo remains unchallenged and unchanged. At both extremes of the L, is a W for WISE. This symbolizes that exemplary leadership begins and ends with wisdom. The C's, at the mid point of each line of the L, represent the descriptor, COURAGEOUS. Although courage is not always a factor in a leadership activity, it remains strategically situated between wisdom and action in order to enable wise action or wise inaction to occur. The exemplary leader always has the potential to behave courageously.

Wisdom depends on absorbing society's values and understanding the common sense knowledge base inherent in the culture with which one is associated (Staudinger, 1996). This knowing facilitates the ability to move successfully within the culture. Staudinger noted that researchers who have studied wisdom have concluded that, "Supportive interpersonal relationships are crucial for the development and maintenance of wisdom." (p. 284). The wise person has been nurtured by a combination of family, school, and the community at large. Both positive and negative experiences are instructive. Being open to learning and adept at meaning making are key elements of successfully integrating life experiences into a personal environment conducive to the maintenance of wholeness, groundedness, and wisdom. The exemplary leader is wise in the ways of the world. A high level of expertise is acquired. Competency in the multiple intelligences of interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist is apparent. Reflection on the reality of his or her experience and the perceived experience of others leads to the knowledge base with regard to people, processes, and means. Creativity flourishes. The exemplary leader is characterized by strong social conscience and integrity.

In the developmental stages of Erikson, the last stage calls for resolution of the psychosocial crisis of integrity vs. despair. Erikson posited that this crisis occurs in old age. As with all of the other crises, however, the balancing between integrity and despair also occurs throughout the lifespan. The outcome of the eighth crisis is wisdom

as opposed to disdain. The wisdom of exemplary leaders is the result of all of the learning opportunities that have occurred throughout their lives. By being open to learning, they welcome the new and the challenging, and they habitually reflect on their own experience as well as the experience of others. They continue to mature, remain centred, and face the new day with faith, hope, and trust. They are wise in the ways of resilience and continue to become the persons they are becoming.

Those with exceptional skill in the areas of interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence, as well as emotional intelligence, are well equipped to recognize needs and opportunities, and to choose an appropriate course of action or temporary inaction. Intuition, vision, and spirituality are contributors to wisdom as well as outcomes of wisdom.

The courage of this exemplary leadership model includes the concept of courage identified by Regan & Brooks in the feminist attributes of leadership. It involves standing firm on principles, tenaciously holding onto what is important, and being strong in the face of opposition. Resolving conflict is an important component. Courage facilitates perseverance against all odds; but also through the overall guidance of wisdom, provides psychological permission to withdraw when necessary in order to regroup, access other support, or re-strategize without loss of integrity. It takes courage to choose to define a setback not as a failure, but as a learning opportunity, and a chance to regroup. Courage is part of being resilient and bouncing back, more ready than ever, to overcome obstacles.

The action component of the model represents the ideas of action and of strategic inaction. It is understood that there are times when the only appropriate response to a situation is inaction, in order to ensure the success of the ultimate goal. The exemplary leader must have an action-oriented personality. This would be sustained by a very healthy sense of self-efficacy based on self-agency. The knowledge that change is possible and necessary is an important component in motivation to

action. Impelled by caring, wisdom creates the action plan. Wisdom, with its emotional intelligence including empathy, sympathy, and self-discipline is a key factor in all action decisions. Wisdom dictates the how, who, what, when, where, and why of the action. It is wisdom that monitors the result in order to plan the next steps. It is wisdom that recognizes the need for social ingenuity and accepts the responsibility to address inequities (Homer-Dixon, 2001).

In summary, the most important attribute of the exemplary leadership model is wisdom, and wisdom is always informed by caring. Without wisdom, action can be impulsive and inappropriate. Charm can be insincere and contribute to shallow charisma. Passion can be undisciplined and destructive. Courage can be foolhardy, dangerous, and wasteful of effort. What distinguishes exemplary leadership from other types of leadership is the dynamic integration of the attributes of wisdom, courage, and action-orientation. Being very wise, but lacking courage or an action-orientation is a recipe for unrealized potential. The leader with more courage than wisdom can be self-destructive and can bring the best opportunity to nothing. As for the importance of being action-oriented, it is understood that all of the wisdom and courage in the world would result only in unrealized potential without the action-orientation of effective leadership.

In the model, the colour purple is used for the L of leadership. Purple was chosen because it has an historical connection with royalty and power. When civilization as we know it, was in its infancy, purple was very rare and highly valued, available only to the Emperors of Rome who were the leaders of the world at that time. Purple is a strong vibrant colour evolving out of red, which represents love and passion.

Dynamic Balance

Different situations require a different balance between the descriptors wise, courageous, and action-oriented. The following summary, Table 6.1, shows some

combinations of the descriptors, and outlines typical leadership situations with possible outcomes of the various combinations. The minus sign in the chart can be deemed to be an indication of less or none of a particular descriptor.

Table 6.1 **Wise, Courageous, Action-Oriented: Dynamic Balance**

W+C+A	Appropriate for all leadership contexts. Balance among the components shifts according to the situational requirements.
W+A-C	Appropriate for contexts without risk, challenge, opposition, and unknowns. Courage is not required.
W-C-A	Hypothetical, academic situations. Unrealized potential.
W+C-A	Thoughtful, brave, but no action. This may be the wisest response in a particular context. It may also indicate insufficient caring.
C+A-W	Impulsive without thought or knowledge. May be foolhardy. Appropriate as a singular act of bravery but even then is probably governed by intuition and therefore wisdom is represented.
C-W-A	Courage untempered by wisdom. No action. Unrealized potential.
A-W-C	Automatic for routine, risk-free follow through. No need to consider actions. May be impulsive without thought for consequences. Appropriate for flight/fight survival context.

Building on the relational leadership concept of Regan & Brooks (1995) including the feminist attributes of leadership (caring, courage, collaboration, vision, and intuition), I have incorporated many of the themes revealed in the analysis of the data from the three phases of my study of the lives, and leadership experiences of twelve exemplary women. The resultant model, which derives from my reading, thinking, and experiencing related to leadership and pro-social behaviour, is a clear and straightforward summary of what I have learned. I hope the Exemplary Leadership

Model and the narrative description of what it symbolizes will be useful to others who are interested in considering a different perspective on what constitutes the essence of exemplary leadership. I believe that the model is applicable to the best leadership of men and women of all ages, as they engage in decision-making and action on behalf of individuals, institutions, or nations.

Summary

This chapter described the Exemplary Leadership Model, which was created to incorporate the findings of the study and to provide a framework for understanding outstanding leadership in general. The model consists of a three-tiered foundation supporting the “C” of Caring, which envelops the “L” of Leadership. At the base of the foundation, there are bricks representing family, community, culture, and social-connectedness. The second tier represents love, empathy, sympathy, and identity. At the top of the foundation is social conscience. The descriptors wise, courageous, and action-oriented are represented within the L by the letters W + C + A. The Exemplary Leader is always guided by wisdom within the context of caring.

CHAPTER 7

Completing the Tapestry

In introducing this final chapter, I refer again to the idea of the tapestry that was first mentioned in the Acknowledgements section in the preliminary pages. I reported that I considered the responses given in the interviews, in the focus groups, and in the questionnaires, to be threads of vibrant colour and varied texture. Through the writing of this report, I have attempted to weave those responses into a pleasing tapestry that tells the story of the well-lived lives of twelve exemplary women. It was my aim to honour their experiences and insights, and to place the information they shared into a context where the accumulated data would come together to create new knowledge-- knowledge of the lives of women in late adulthood, and knowledge of the leadership processes used in helping to create better, more caring communities.

This chapter is organized in seven sections. It begins by revisiting the two research questions that guided the study. This is followed by a discussion of the possible limitations of the study, and the educational relevance and implications of the findings. The section describing the contribution to scholarly knowledge looks at the potential of the Exemplary Leadership Model to expand our thinking on leadership, as well as highlighting the importance of social conscience and caring. Recommendations for improving schools and communities are offered along with suggestions for further research. The conclusion leaves the last word to the participants who provided the threads for the tapestry, which depicts their well-lived lives and the story of their service to their communities.

The Research Questions Revisited

Question 1

What are the perspectives on patterns and themes in the life development of exemplary Canadian women over the age of seventy who have been active in leadership roles in volunteer and/or paid work in their communities?

The perspective of the well-lived life provides an appropriate context for understanding the themes that were revealed in the analysis of the data. All of the themes can be considered from the point of view of composing, achieving, and sharing the well-lived life. Reflecting back over the lifespan allows for feelings of satisfaction, coherence, and wholeness, and leads to the wholesomeness of integrity.

Social-Connectedness

The theme of social-connectedness was very significant in the responses of the twelve women who were the participants in this study (Gilligan, 1982; Hall, 1990). In late adulthood, they continued to benefit from the connections to family and friends that had been established long ago and nurtured over time. The relationships were characterized by giving and receiving, and were part of the women's self-concepts and identities.

Social Conscience

One of the most significant findings in the study was that the participants all had strong social consciences, which evolved out of their social-connectedness. The study raised questions about how social conscience develops. The roles of the family, the church, the community, professional commitment, and personal experience with injustice were noted. The importance of empathy and sympathy in the creation of social conscience and pro-social behaviour was clear (Damon, 1996). All of the women had a high level of competency in the area of Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, 1995). Self-

agency and self-efficacy were significant factors in the women's ability to maximize opportunities, and to act in pro-social ways in order to bring about change.

Memes

Each of the women, in her own way, contributed to the future of her community via memes, which have the potential to advance the quality of society. Each played a part in passing on the social-cultural heritage (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993). The type of leadership they offered was social and educational leadership. Although several worked to change the attitudes of politicians, only one was a candidate for office and part of the policy-making of her political party. Leading by example, many showed others the strength of grass roots community based activism and collaboration. There were examples of the generous love of a Christian women and the Good Samaritan. Several women were challengers of unjust laws and practices. Others made differences in education by focusing on child-centred approaches and curriculum change. Some were instrumental in improving the quality of practice in their professions. Even as their more active involvements came to an end, many continued vigilant in the observer role, ensuring that the progress, which they had worked to bring about, would not be lost. They continued their lifelong habit of caring for and caring about.

Integrity vs. Despair

There was clear evidence that all of the women were in the process of successfully resolving the eighth psychosocial crisis involving integrity vs. despair (Erikson, 1982). Very few regrets were identified. Those regrets that were shared had been accepted (often long ago) and had been integrated into the overall picture of satisfaction with their lives that each one described. This supports the findings of Vaillant (2002). The theme of integrity was a very strong one. Erikson included the following attributes as indicators of successful resolution of the eighth psychosocial crisis: integrity, wisdom, self-actualization, maturity, centredness, faith, satisfaction, hope, trust, coherence, and wholeness. There was strong evidence of these attributes.

Selection, Optimization, Compensation

Reflection was an important component of the meaning making of the participants. Their responses contained many reflective comments as well as references to the need to look at their experiences and take regular stock of themselves in realistic self-appraisal. This aspect of their information gathering supports the SOC theory research (Baltes, 1997). Reflection appeared to be an aspect of introspection that was especially useful in order to know how they were doing and how they might need to change. When they faced obstacles related to their new physical realities, or other circumstances, their responses were characterized by self-efficacy and confidence. Over the years, they had shown themselves to be resilient (Leroux, 1998) bouncing back and carrying on valiantly and zestfully (Dembe, 1995).

Multiple Intelligences/Lifelong Learning

All of the participants demonstrated giftedness in the interpersonal category of the Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1993). Most were very strong in the verbal-linguistic area, as well as the intrapersonal. Several had high ability in the logical-mathematical category. At least two were very able in the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. All reported being active, in sport or other outdoor activity, during an earlier period, or throughout their lives. One had been recognized as having special ability in the visual-spatial area. There was evidence of a high level of ability in the leadership competencies, and some were especially strong in the spiritual sense.

The women loved learning and set high standards for themselves and for the organizations with which they worked. They looked forward to learning and doing new things. They were actively involved in the present, but giving thought to the future as Sheehy (1995) and Hurwich (1993) found in their studies of women in late adulthood.

Circling Back

There was evidence that the lives of most of the women had taken twists and turns in a meandering, rather than linear route, to the physical and personal places

where they now found themselves (Bateson, 1990). Interests and commitments changed over time, but continuity was evident in the choices and motivations that linked earlier volunteer or paid work with later work and with their current activities on behalf of others (Bateson, 1994).

Question 2

Do these patterns and themes support the concept of the Feminist Attributes of Leadership (caring, courage, collaboration, vision, and intuition) within a relational leadership context as identified by Regan & Brooks (1995)?

Relational Leadership

There was clear evidence that the women engaged in relational leadership. In all their plans and activities, the priority was people, and the guiding principle was caring. The leadership skills, which the women identified most often, were the skills of resolving conflict, initiating, assuming responsibility, motivating, and organizing. Less frequently mentioned were planning and advocating. All of the participants had a history of recognizing needs and committing to help resolve problems. Each woman was action-oriented and had a strong sense of self-efficacy. The masculinist and feminist attributes of their leadership were part of a relational leadership style described in the DNA double helix analogy of Regan & Brooks. A brief overview of each of the feminist attributes follows.

Caring

With clear evidence of love, empathy, and sympathy, the women articulated the importance of caring in all of their activities (Gilligan, 1982; Bateson, 1990; Harris, 1998). Many had very strong commitments that had been priorities in their lives for decades. In their leadership experience, caring was always a guiding attribute in any decision-making and action (Regan & Brooks, 1995).

Courage

All participants had demonstrated courage of the sort described by Regan & Brooks, in that they stood up for what they believed, and defended their principles against those who opposed them or sought to prevent them from achieving their goals. Their courage also included extending beyond their earlier limits, as they faced new challenges and assumed new responsibilities in areas where they had no prior experience. As they grew older, their courage was needed in the face of medical problems experienced by themselves or their loved ones.

Collaboration

Evidence of a commitment to collaboration was also very strong in most of the women. They had coordinated efforts among various community partners in order to ensure the success of their projects. They spoke of bringing in others, arranging tradeoffs, and getting input from knowledgeable resource people. For a few participants, the attribute of collaboration did not come as naturally; but it was nevertheless recognized as an important concept, and these women indicated that they were trying to include others to a greater extent as they carried out their leadership responsibilities.

Vision

Vision played a role in keeping their goals clear and in motivating them to continue their efforts to bring about social change or to improve the quality of life in their communities. Whether it was clearly articulated, specifically as a vision, or was simply an unstated underlying principle guiding their overall actions, all of the women had lifelong commitments, which resulted from the visions they subscribed to, in support of their communities. Democracy, anti-racist education, feminist philosophy of equality and choice, Christian ideals, quality of life etc. were all visions of the ideal on which to build a lifetime of service.

Intuition

Intuition was also recognized as an important factor by most of the participants. They relied on their intuition in recognizing opportunities and in getting to know other people's strengths and weaknesses. As women with special ability in interpersonal intelligence, their intuition allowed them to accurately read the social dynamics of situations, and to use this knowledge to plan and carry out activities that would facilitate the achieving of their various organizations' goals. For several of the women, intuition was so fundamental in their knowledge accessing process that it was taken for granted, in the same way that hearing and sight are taken for granted by those who have never experienced impaired vision or hearing loss.

Possible Limitations of the Study

In their recommendations to researchers who are engaged in qualitative inquiry using interviews, Marshall and Rossman (1989) advocated that the perceived limitations of a study be part of the final report. With this in mind, I have considered the seven possible limitations to interviewing that they identified (p. 104) plus two others, and have attempted to offer some insight into how these possible limitations may, or may not be, relevant to my study.

Firstly, Marshall & Rossman noted that cultural differences might result in misinterpretations of the data. Cultural differences could include such factors as race, educational level, mother tongue, and class. In this study, one of the participants had a very strong accent and a vocabulary specific to the academic fields of psychology and philosophy. Special care was required in transcribing her interview responses in order to capture accurately her meaning and unique phrasing. Two other participants spoke with French accents but this did not present a challenge, nor did the South African accent of another woman, or the Jamaican accent and phraseology of another. There is perhaps a culture-based concern with reference to the participant who had the least

formal education. She may have had some difficulty with the level of vocabulary in the interview questions. In order to facilitate her understanding, some questions were rephrased. Because her background and experience was least like my own, I was especially conscious of the need to avoid leading her into a response. I also took special care with the interpretation of her responses, trying not to either overvalue or undervalue them. With one of the French-speaking participants and with the woman of colour, I was aware of an initial reticence to freely respond to questions at the start of the interview, but this changed once rapport was established and a more relaxed climate prevailed. I am confident that none of these possible limitations affected the quality of the data gathered, or the interpretation.

Secondly, a study such as this one depends on the contributions of a small group. Although other researchers have claimed that twelve interviews should be sufficient to generate enough data from which to extract themes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), it is possible that a larger number of participants might have provided additional data, which could have impacted on the findings. Considering the wealth of data collected, however, and the considerable overlap in the content of the responses, it is not likely that interviewing additional participants would have changed the findings significantly.

Thirdly, a study may be difficult to replicate because either the procedures may not be precisely described, or the data gathered may depend on specific opportunities or characteristics of the researcher. More likely in this case, the twelve participants in the sample may have been so unique and their life experiences so unusual that the essence of their responses could be difficult to replicate. I do not believe that this would be so. A limitation affecting replication might be a logical consequence of an exploratory study that aims to discover something on the topic of leadership in a population that has not been widely researched.

Fourthly, according to Marshall & Rossman, the data may be subject to

observer effects; obtrusive and reactive. This may be a factor if those who were persuaded to participate were significantly different from those who declined to participate. During the interviews, I was careful to remember that there is an aspect of co-creating the experience when one is interviewing. That possibility may have an impact on the data collected. The fact that the respondents in Phase 3 were not specifically asked to respond to the questionnaire without input from the participants may also be a limitation. It is possible that consultation occurred, which could affect the quality of the data collected in Phase 3 of the study. Considering the laws related to freedom of information and protection of privacy, there was nothing that could have been done in this situation to discourage sharing of the responses during or after the completion of the questionnaire. I made the decision that it was worthwhile to include Phase 3, for the sake of triangulation, even if some of the information might have been partially co-created by the respondent and the participant. By specifying that the participant was to choose a person who knew them well, I recognized that an automatic positive bias was likely. I did not believe it would present a significant concern.

The fifth possible limitation concerns the possibility of danger or discomfort for the interviewer and the impact that would have on data collection or interpretation. This concern was not a factor in my study.

The sixth concern relates to the fact that the study depends on the honesty of the respondents. The participants in this study would have had no reason to reply dishonestly, and I do not believe that any of them did. There may have been inaccuracies in recollection, however, as they tried to remember details from the past. The literature on memory was reassuring with reference to the consequences of this (Singer & Salovey, 1993). I am not concerned about possible distortions of memory affecting the main ideas, or my interpretation. I made the assumption that what people told me about their experiences and their feelings was a true representation of the facts of their lives, as they themselves perceived them. This is in keeping with a social

constructivist perspective. I believe that the critical incidents reported and the meaning making shared were indicative of the individual respondent's reality. If this was not the case, or if some participants deliberately exaggerated or embellished in order to create a better impression, I do not believe the possible impact on the overall findings could be considered significant.

The final limitation noted by Marshall & Rossman of interview type studies is that the study is highly dependent on the researchers to be resourceful, systematic, and honest in controlling bias. In anticipation of this, I tried to become as aware as possible concerning my personal biases, which could affect the study. I was careful to guard against the possibility of overvaluing the responses of the participants who reported the kinds of things I expected to hear, or of neglecting to give enough attention to the responses that were unexpected or contrary to what was anticipated. In order to lower the risk of missing important meanings, I totally immersed myself in the data and became as familiar as possible with the responses by listening to the tapes several times and making notes before attempting to transcribe the interviews.

The fact that four of the women were not able to participate in the focus groups may also be a limitation. The dynamic of a group of four is quite different from that of a group of six, which I had hoped to arrange in each of the two areas. The disadvantage of not being able to include all of the women is that some potential for bringing forth the memories of the others was lost, as well as some of the input the absent women might have provided. One of the advantages of a smaller group, however, is that it is more intimate and the participants are able to sit closer to one another thus allowing their voices to carry better. This is helpful for those who have hearing loss. A smaller group also allows each of the participants more time to speak within the one-hour period. There was an element of shyness at the beginning of both sessions, but the women may have felt less shy in the smaller group than they would have felt in a larger group. It is quite possible that three groups of four participants would have been a

better plan. That hindsight may be useful for planning future studies, but it does not change the possible limitation, which may be in effect for data collection and analysis in this study.

In conclusion, I acknowledge another possible limitation that may be an even greater concern than those noted above. Brant (1995), in his study of the leadership styles of social entrepreneurs, noted that he had depended on the participants' self-reports of their leadership skills. There was no opportunity for direct observation of them in the leadership roles. This is true of my study. When someone reported, for example, that she was a good organizer, I relied on my own observations of her actions and manner of speaking in the interview or focus group, or the respondent to the Phase 3 questionnaire, to confirm the validity of that perception. There was no attempt to verify with actual observations of the participants in leadership situations. I believe this possible limitation has been countered effectively by the fact that the participants were selected based on recommendations from informed persons who considered them to have been exemplary leaders in their communities.

Educational Relevance and Implications

Discovering the patterns and themes in the life histories of these exemplary older Canadian women expands our understanding of adult development and adjustment to aging as it relates to women. This knowledge is useful for those who work with seniors, and has implications for programmes planned for education and recreation as well as other support initiatives for this population. They need opportunities to learn, and they need appropriate fitness activities. They look forward to maintaining relationships with their family members and their friends, and to continuing to make a meaningful contribution to the life of the community.

The findings may also be useful for those who work with the gifted and with high ability students. Clark (1992) outlined the needs of youngsters who are “growing

up gifted.” Although there is greater understanding of how to identify and facilitate for the gifted at this stage in our history than there was in the past, there are still several cadres of gifted individuals who are not as well understood, or as well served in our schools. In general, the high ability students and female students receive less attention, and have less support in the development of their potential. Those whose gifts are in the interpersonal and leadership sphere also may not receive the encouragement and the opportunities they require in order to expand their horizons and grow towards their full potential. It is for these groups of gifted and talented students especially, that multi-aged groupings including adult wisewomen could make a significant contribution. The blend of late-adult wisdom with youthful thirst for knowledge helps to create a new, more varied community of learners in the classroom (Bateson, 2000). Older women who have used their talents in service to their communities could be inspirational role models for the young across all ability levels. Gifted women in late adulthood especially need to have intellectual stimulation and challenges in order to maintain confidence in their ability to think deeply about things that concern them. Their particular insights into aspects of aging will be especially valuable in order to help solve problems related to their own changing realities and the circumstances of others. They need to have opportunities to share their wisdom.

The work of Regan & Brooks (1995) was based on the experience of a small sample of women in educational leadership roles in the United States. This study has demonstrated that the Feminist Attributes of Leadership, which they identified, were also evident in the relational leadership experience of older Canadian women who had been active in service to their communities. The findings of Regan & Brooks have thus been shown to be more generally applicable to the experience of women in a variety of leadership roles. This would be of special interest to those who are concerned with leadership and followership and with maximizing the effort of volunteers.

Contribution to Scholarly Knowledge

The Exemplary Leadership Model, with its focus on the building blocks of social conscience supporting the enveloping “C” of Caring, provides a new conceptual framework for assessing the quality of leadership in terms of appropriate balance among the attributes of wisdom, courage, and action-orientation. New questions, which relate to wisdom and the importance of the emotional intelligence component, as well as the intuitive and spiritual components, come to mind.

The Exemplary Leadership Model contributes to the wealth of insight currently available in the published discourse on the topic of leaders and their leadership. For example, the practical insights of Bennis (1989), the poetic description of Havel (1992), and the psychological perspective of Gardner (1995) all deal with aspects of the meaning of leadership to which the model subscribes. The significance of social-connectedness as noted by Helgesen (1990) and Harris (1998) is a key feature of the model’s foundation as well as being a crucial aspect of the wisdom required for exemplary leadership. The “C” of Caring, which illustrates the overall context within which exemplary leadership flourishes, provides a graphic depiction of the insight of Regan & Brooks (1995). The leadership envisioned by the new model is relational in nature, and to a great extent is characterized by a collaborative interaction style. Implicit in the model is the understanding that wisdom goes well beyond knowledge and the ability to do things well. Wisdom is informed by intuition, creativity, faith, and the life-affirming power of love.

The model is simple and very easy to understand. Even young children could use it as a way of making sense out of the behaviour of others and making informed choices about who to follow or how to lead. Extending this concept further, the model could be useful for anyone trying to lead and manage himself or herself in a self-disciplined and caring way as they go about the decision-making of everyday life. Parents, schools, and communities could benefit from reflection on the model and from

being able to consider their leadership in terms of the guiding principle of caring and the overall requirement of wisdom.

The Exemplary Leadership Model could provide a framework for assessing the quality of Leadership, wherever it is found. The model could also be helpful by highlighting the importance of ensuring that the building blocks for the foundation, which supports social conscience, are in place and receiving priority attention from all concerned.

Recommendations

A social conscience, which guides the life work of an individual, is something to be especially valued and well understood. Given that pro-social orientation is an essential aspect of a caring society, social conscience is far too important to be left to surface on its own, haphazardly here and there, with pockets of support from families and random support from schools and communities. At a time when our world cries out for exemplary leadership, we cannot afford to waste the potential of any of our children who may be gifted in this increasingly essential area. With this in mind, the following recommendations are proposed:

There should be programmes of inservice demonstrating the practical strategies that educators and community recreation providers can use in order to facilitate the maximization of empathy and empathetic response in youngsters. The need for specific, systematic learning opportunities is obvious, and the creation of empathy facilitating instruction should be a priority component of the curriculum. Every effort should be made to capitalize as well, on the learning opportunities (the teachable moments) that result from children's experience in the life of the classroom, in the schoolyard, and in community programmes. Timely and sensitive discussions of the day-to-day moral dilemmas and interpersonal decision-making should be regular occurrences, in order to broaden the children's horizons and present strategies for conflict resolution within the

context of caring and compassion.

Opportunities should be created for children to do social service projects in their communities. Such projects could be organized through their schools, churches, or community service groups. In Ontario, such initiatives are already part of the curriculum expectations for adolescents, and many elementary schools participate in community service to some extent as well. The experience of helping others in a volunteer capacity would be an appropriate way of nurturing the social conscience of young people. They would begin to develop a volunteer identity at an early age, and this might develop into a way of life that would be satisfying for them as well as useful for their communities. Even the youngest of children can learn to bring joy to others by visiting seniors, and helping in various ways. The experience would also lead to feelings of self-efficacy and increased confidence in the ability to make a difference.

Every school should offer training in the peacemaking skills of conflict resolution. Such instruction should begin in elementary school. Children who have problems with anger management should be identified early and given the support they need, in order to help them recognize their strong feelings and learn new responses that are more appropriate.

Opportunities for young people to develop their leadership skills should be available in every community. The identification and encouragement of those who have special gifts in this area should become a greater priority of schools and communities. At this time in our history on planet earth, we cannot afford to ignore the potential for exemplary leadership wherever it might occur.

In order to ensure that parents are able to do the best possible job of child rearing, they should be encouraged to enrol in parenting classes with a focus on facilitating self-discipline, and all of the other aspects of emotional intelligence. As well, a course designed to explore family dynamics, which would focus on improving communication skills, role playing to practice anger management strategies, and helping

people to assume responsibility for their actions, would be a useful community resource. Such courses should be tax deductible. The value of parenting courses should be publicized in order to create awareness among the parents who have the greatest need.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study may provoke interest in the well-lived lives of other exemplary people in late adulthood who are successfully resolving the eighth psychosocial crisis (Erikson 1982). There are exemplary role models in the Arts, in Business, in the Sciences, in the Political sphere, in Sport, as well as in many other areas of life. Further research on the general concept of the well-lived life in other areas of human endeavour would be worthwhile in providing role models for others.

There may also be increased interest in the lives of those who do not appear to be successfully resolving this psychosocial crisis. These individuals seem to reflect upon their experience with disdain and negativity, rather than with integrity and wisdom. What patterns and themes would be apparent in the lives of this population? What strategies for intervention might be developed as a result of greater understanding of how they perceive their reality?

All of the women in this study were leading active lives and living independently in their communities. Even the oldest of the participants, although unable to live completely on her own, was responsible for her own apartment in her daughter's home and retained her privacy and independence to a great degree. Would the findings with reference to the successful resolution of the eighth psychosocial crisis be different with a population drawn from those living in nursing or retirement homes for seniors?

Studies that use the Exemplary Leadership Model as a conceptual framework for understanding the performance of current leaders, or that would compare leaders whose work is known through the study of history, would be welcome and timely in

this particularly challenging period in which we find ourselves.

Conclusion

Although I hope this work will give rise to new questions about social conscience, about leadership, and about living the well-lived life, I believe that the most profound insights have always been known at least at some level of understanding in every society. We simply have to take good care of each other. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers in the sense of having great ongoing responsibility for others. The reality of the global village is such that we ignore this basic truth at our peril. The stories of the participants in this study illustrate the value to the individual of a life filled with caring and doing for others. The benefits that were conferred on their communities and on their professions were apparent to everyone who knew of their work. The women expressed their satisfaction in the work of their lives with these comments:

“I find I get a great deal of comfort in helping people.”

“I can't keep out of it you see.”

“My hands are ready for to give anybody a hand.”

“It was a great experience!”

“It was a joy!”

“It was marvelous.”

The undeniable truth of this next comment is an appropriate conclusion to my thesis. It represents the challenge faced by all those who see the many things that cry out for attention. “If we can figure out how to get enough people caring, we can make things better.”

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PSYCHOSOCIAL CRISES & BASIC STRENGTHS/BASIC ANTIPTATHIES

Adapted from Erikson (1982, Chart 1, p.32-33 & Chart 2, p.56-57)

Stage and Age	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
VIII Old Age								Integrity vs Despair Wisdom vs Disdain

VII Adulthood							Generativity vs Stagnation Care vs Rejectivity
------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	---

VI Young Adulthood						Intimacy vs Isolation Love vs Exclusivity
-----------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

V Adolescence					Identity vs Identity Confusion Fidelity vs Repudiation
------------------	--	--	--	--	--

IV School Age				Industry vs Inferiority Competence vs Inertia
------------------	--	--	--	--

III Play Age			Initiative vs Guilt Purpose vs Inhibition
-----------------	--	--	--

II Early Childhood		Autonomy vs Shame, doubt Will vs Compulsion
-----------------------	--	--

I Infancy	Basic Trust vs Basic Mistrust Hope vs Withdrawal
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Demographics Questionnaire

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Place of birth _____

Date of birth _____

Education: Highest degree, diploma, certification

Career History _____

Marital History _____

Children _____

Grandchildren _____

Religion _____

Community Involvement /Recreation and other Activities

A

1. Describe your childhood and relationships in your family, with siblings, with parents, and with extended family.
2. Do you have close friends? What role have they played in your life?
3. Describe your current relationships with spouse, friends, children, grandchildren, and colleagues/neighbours in the community.
4. Do you recall anyone who acted as a role model? How were you influenced by that person?

B

1. Can you describe a time when you identified a problem and had a clear understanding of how things needed to change in order to solve the problem?
2. Think about play, playfulness, and fun. What activities have been fun for you? What recreational activities have you enjoyed?
3. Do you (did you) have enough leisure time?
4. If you could study or learn anything you wanted to, what would you choose? Why?

C

1. What is your earliest memory?
2. Did you have a dream of how you wanted your life to be? Were there obstacles to achieving your dream? How did your dream change? Is there something you are looking forward to doing now?
3. Did others attempt to control your decision-making? How?

D

1. Describe yourself as a student. What did you like best about school? Least?
2. In what areas do you feel skilled or knowledgeable?
3. Can you recall feeling strong or powerful? What were the circumstances?
4. Has the church or religion played a significant role in your life?

E

1. What are your favourite activities?
2. What are some experiences that gave you great satisfaction?
3. Where do/did you have your most power? Most influence?

F

1. Think of a time when you thought of yourself as especially beautiful. Describe the circumstances.
2. Are there things you regret?
3. What does being a woman mean to you?
4. Do you consider yourself a spiritual person? What does faith mean to you? What are your thoughts on/experiences with prayer?
5. What does the word morality mean to you? Have your views on morality changed over time?
6. How would you describe yourself to yourself?

G

1. What leadership roles have you had in your community?
2. Do you think you have good intuition? What role has intuition played in your life?
3. Describe a time when you showed great courage. Can you think of any leadership experiences when your courage played a role?
4. Did you ever find yourself in conflict with someone? How was it resolved?
5. When you have decisions to make, how do you proceed?
6. How would you describe your leadership style? Would others agree with this?

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF PROJECT: Life Histories of Exemplary Canadian Women Age 70+: The Feminist Attributes of Leadership in Service to Community

RESEARCHER: xxxxxxxx xxx, Address xxxxxx Phone number xxxxxxxx.
When a research project involving individuals is undertaken by researchers at the University of Ottawa, the Ethics committee of the University requires the written consent of the participants. This does not imply that the project is risky in any way; the intention is simply to assure the respect and confidentiality of the individuals concerned.

The purpose of this research is to gather information on the lives of exemplary Canadian women age 70 who have been active in their communities and who have demonstrated leadership over the life span. The research will look for patterns and themes and determine whether there is evidence to support the concept of the Feminist Attributes of Leadership (Regan & Brooks, 1995). (i.e. caring, collaboration, courage, vision, and intuition). The study is under the supervision of Janice Leroux, Ph.D., major advisor.

Phase 1 of the study will consist of Life History Interviews with up to 12 Canadian women over the age of 70. The interviews will last approximately 90 minutes and will be tape-recorded. If a participant decides not to complete the interview as scheduled, a follow-up interview may be arranged. The interviews will be transcribed and analyzed. Participants may refuse to answer any of the questions, may stop the interview, and may withdraw completely at any time throughout all phases of the study without any fear of adverse consequences.

Phase 2 will involve focus groups with the participants of Phase 1 in groups of 4 to 6 discussing their experiences in organized community groups and reflecting on leadership and influence. The focus group will be held in a location near the participants' homes.

Phase 3 will consist of a questionnaire completed by someone close to the participants who is chosen by the participant herself, for example: daughter, friend, etc. The purpose of this questionnaire will be to gather data from another source to supplement the data gathered in the life history interview and the focus group. All data will be pooled to maintain anonymity. Follow-up interviews may be arranged to clarify emerging patterns and themes. Filling in the questionnaire will take approximately forty minutes.

Participants will not be named in any publication resulting from this research. When direct quotation or paraphrasing is used, fictitious names will be consistently used. The draft analysis will be shared with each participant to ensure accuracy of interpretation of the data and to allow for the participants' involvement in the report writing decisions.

This research has been approved by the Faculty of Education Human Research Ethics Committee (EDHREC). Enquiries or any questions dealing with ethical conduct of this research can be addressed to the Chair of EDHREC at the University of Ottawa, phone xxxxxxxx ext. xxxx, Room xxx, Lamoureux Hall.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have read and understood its contents and agree to participate in the study.

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

(With narrower margins, this informed consent form was all on one page. A copy was left with the participants and the signed consent was kept for the file.)

Letter to Participants re Phases 2 and 3

Dear

Thank you for your participation in the interview for my doctoral study. It was a pleasure to meet with you and to get to know you as you responded to the questions and shared your life history with me.

The interviews of Phase 1 are now complete and I am ready to arrange for the Focus Groups of Phase 2. I realize that it will be a challenge to find a time when such busy people are all available to get together. I will be phoning soon to set a time and place. In the meantime, I thought it would be useful to send a copy of the Focus Group questions. It is not my intention that you would give any time now to consider how you would answer. Rather I thought you might appreciate the advance notice of what will come up in the group discussion. It may not be possible to touch on all the questions in an hour, but I hope the discussion will be interesting for all those involved. One advantage of a focus group is that as you hear the recollections of the others, it may prompt recall of similar or contradictory experiences from your own past.

Phase 3 is planned to begin soon after the Focus Groups are done. This Phase involves your naming someone who knows you well and who will be willing to respond to a questionnaire that will fill in the gaps in the data collected thus far, and hopefully round out the picture of your work in your community. I will need some time to finalize the questionnaire after the Focus Group. I would appreciate your giving me the name and address of the person you are choosing so I can mail the questionnaires to them as soon as they are ready. The questionnaire will not take much more than half an hour to complete.

Soon I will be writing a description of you as a participant in the study. It will be quite general and will not identify you by name. When I have the initial draft ready, I will share it with you and I will welcome your suggestions about what should be added or deleted or rephrased to ensure the commitment to confidentiality and to protect your anonymity.

I thank you for your support so far and look forward to the next Phases of the study.

Sincerely

Phone

Focus Group Discussion Questions

1. What motivated you to work with the various groups in your community?
2. How did your group make decisions about what to do and how to do it?
3. Were you ever criticized for your participation in a group? How did you deal with it?
4. Were there goals you wish your group had been able to accomplish? What would have helped your group to succeed with those goals?
5. What advice would you give to women who want to have influence on, or to offer leadership to, groups in their communities?

Depending on how the discussion goes, we may add other questions that arise from the responses to these. We also may leave some questions out if we seem to be pressed for time.

Note: The following questions were drafted and in readiness for use in the focus groups if time allowed:

- A. Do you remember when you first knew you were a leader, an organizer, or someone who took charge etc.?
- B. How old were you when you first were part of a group helping in your community?
- C. Did you see your mother, aunts, grandmothers helping in their community?

There was time in each group for these extra questions.

Address

Dear _____

_____ has identified you as a person who knows her well, and would be able to respond to this questionnaire, which is Phase 3 of the data gathering for the Ph.D study being conducted by xxxxxxxx xxx. In Phase 1, interviews were taped with twelve women participants over the age of 70. Each one has been active in various ways in her community. Phase 2 consisted of two focus groups, one in _____ and one in _____, in which some of the women discussed their leadership experiences with certain groups with which they have been involved.

Please respond to the following questions based on your knowledge of _____ and her activities. Specific examples of things you admire and appreciate about her would be ideal. The purpose of the questionnaire is to round out the picture of her life and work and to allow for another point of view from someone in addition to the participant herself.

When you have completed the questionnaire, please mail it back in the self-addressed envelope enclosed. Your name will not appear in the report. A general description of the questionnaire respondents in Phase 3 will not include specific information on individuals. The questionnaire responses will be pooled and will not be identified with the individual participant. Please call me at (phone) if you have any questions.

Thank you for your help. It is much appreciated.

Sincerely,

**QUESTIONNAIRE
PHASE 3**

Respondent: Name
Address:

Phone:

1. How long have you known _____?

2. How did you come to know her?

3. What words would you use to describe her?

4. Please describe her involvement in a situation that illustrates a character trait you admire in her.

Initial Coding Categories Reflecting the Beginning Conceptual Framework

MI	Multiple Intelligences
EI	Emotional Intelligence
F	Flow
SE	Self-Efficacy
SOC	Selection/Optimization/Compensation
SA	Self Agency
SC	Social-Connectedness
C1	Caring
C2	Collaboration
C3	Courage
I	Intuition
V	Vision
Int	Integrity
Des	Despair

Final Set of Codes With Sample Statements

- M.I.** Multiple Intelligences: It was a mixture of grades being skipped. French being combined with English.
- EI** Emotional Intelligence: If anyone has said anything unkind or anything unhappy has happened, there is no good dwelling on it.
- L of L** Love of Learning: In high school I fell in love with the sciences, particularly physics. Even today I am just devouring physics.
- F** Flow & Memes: To have any kind of political power on this issue, you had to have a community structure, which would pull together your constituency, a constituency.
- SE** Self-Efficacy: I'm politically astute in that I see connections.
- SOC** Selection/Optimization/Compensation: We started golf lessons because I can't play tennis anymore, because I have heart disease and some angina.
- SA** Self Agency: We had our part to do.
- SC** Social-Connectedness: You feel good to feel that you have friends. I think a person who hasn't got friends is not complete.
- C1** Caring: (Caring for and caring about) They're all precious to me.
- C2** Collaboration: (Involving others in work and decision-making) I used my sister as a sounding board.
- C3** Courage: (Standing up for what you believe) And I fought and fought and fought for two, three years.... I went to every meeting and put it off. I put it off.
- I** Intuition: I have a feeling about people. I can see through them I think, mostly. I am not always right, but one can feel the genuine.
- V** Vision: I had my inner strength, inner vision...

- Int Integrity:** (Erikson's last psychosocial crisis) Oh, I am telling you lady, I have lived. I have lived. Believe you me; I have really enjoyed life.
- Des Despair:** No example was found.
- A Action-Oriented:** We did not stop until every township in our county had a recycling program of some kind.
- Indep Independent:** I always had a question to ask.... I don't do anything unless I know what I'm doing.
- Pr Practical:** You have to sort of drop so much.
- S Con Social Conscience:** But then, now I realize my parents were preparing me for a full life of enjoyment, and to be kind, and be our brothers' and sisters' keeper.
- L1 Organizing:** I feel comfortable in organizing things.
- L2 Bossing, Persuading, Controlling, Motivating:** I feel that I can get people to do things, to share the responsibility.
- L3 Initiating:** So I started by writing letters to M.P.'s
- L4 Assuming Responsibility:** So my job has been to get these letters sent out to all of our members.
- L5 Resolving Conflict:** But yet, I never said nothin' but I stood my grounds when he said somethin' to me. I stood my grounds.
- L6 Advocating:** I remember advocating for parents.
- L7 Planning:** I can get really focused when I organize a strategy, making sure we get all our ducks in order. I'm very planful that way....
- High High Standards:** I like to have things done well.
- P Perseverance:** Now we ceased to get any money for that operation. We kept going anyway.
- RO Recognizing Opportunity:** She didn't encourage me to go to Montreal with her, but I wanted to.

- RN** Recognizing Need: They were bright kids, mixed up, with handicaps, mentally retarded, miserable.
- Sappr** Self-Appraisal: I guess I am the research type of person. I'm the one who can go and dig up stuff and write reports for some of our groups.
- Reg** Regret: Probably the only thing I regret is that I didn't go farther with my profession.
- H** Humility: I wish I could have been more effective.
- Com** Commitment: And I became a member of the young people's group and I haven't stopped since that.
- R** Reflection: I never remember worrying about anything.
- Amb** Ambitious: I wanted to keep on growing.
- Cont** Continuity: And if you look, you see me working here after sixty years, exactly in the same direction.

The Participants

In keeping with the commitment to confidentiality and anonymity, the twelve participants have been assigned new initials and each has been given a fictitious first name. Although six of the actual names are names parents still might give to their newborn daughters, the other six names are more unusual and speak of a different time and in some cases a different culture from the typical Canadian English and French families. One of the participants was named after goddesses from mythology, others after saints of the Catholic Church, and one name means white flower in the language of her ancestors. The original names, which the following fictitious names replace, are much more interesting and suit the individuals far better than these replacements chosen for the purpose of ensuring confidentiality. All of the ages of the participants are as of the birthday that occurred in the year 2000. The average age was 79.

Nora, N.P., is the oldest of the participants at 92. Born on a farm and part of a large very religious family, Nora went to the city to Business College and later worked as a secretary in Toronto, where she met her husband. She has been very active in the church, worked at the local, provincial, and national level of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and edited a children's magazine for her church. Nora loved Math and she found her accounting skills to be an asset in her bookkeeping for the church. She was recognized as a role model and offered practical support to the younger ministers' wives in her district. She lives in an apartment in the home of one of her daughters and has extended visits with her other daughter. She is close to her grandchildren and speaks of them with pride.

Catherine, C.V., is 86. Born on a farm in a small country in Eastern Europe, Catherine was an eager student for whom learning was an ongoing priority. She appreciated the support and encouragement of her sisters and teachers as she worked to

complete her studies. Catherine earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology in Italy. Arriving in Canada after the war, she first worked as a domestic and eventually re-established herself as a respected psychologist whose work with troubled children, and those with learning problems, has been a labour of love. She remains very involved with children and their education and is an ongoing inspiration to the people with whom she works.

Veronique, V.V., is 84. The oldest child in a large Franco-Ontarian family in Northern Ontario, Veronique became a teacher who was known for her very high expectations of behaviour and achievement. She has been active in volunteer work in her community. Her work on the Library Board is an ongoing commitment and she continues to advocate for her vision of the library, which she believes her community deserves. Veronique has also been active with the Public Health Department, and the Cancer Society and has participated in anti-smoking education in the schools. She was recently honoured with an award presented by the Lt. Governor of Ontario. Nominated by her city, she was one of only twenty recipients of the Ontario Senior Achievement Award.

Florence, F.V., is 80. Recently honoured as Senior Citizen of the Year, by the town council of her rural community, Florence is an out-going social dynamo. Full of energy and love for her family and friends, she thinks of herself as a Florence Nightingale, on call to help by giving care and support to all. When she broke her hip and required hospitalization, she received fifty get-well cards. She has a practical approach and a simple trusting faith. She is a doer rather than a thinker, and lives on her own, in a comfortable home on the main street of her town. She enjoys her garden and loves having her children and grandchildren nearby. Florence has been active in the church, UCW-(United Church Women), seniors' groups, Women's Institute and a

community foot care programme. She worked as a painter and wall paperer and loves to make quilts.

Olivia, O.M., is 79. As a young girl, Olivia showed talent in the Visual Arts. If finances had not been a consideration, she would have accepted a scholarship and studied Art. She became a teacher and retired as an elementary school principal. Olivia has been active in the Catholic Women's League and the St. Vincent de Paul Society. She was secretary of the Diocesan Council at one time. One of only two women in the principalship of her large school board, she recalls many challenges as she tried to influence the decisions of the principals' group, which was dominated by the men's point of view. Living now, near one of her daughters, she enjoys frequent contact with her grandchildren.

Amy, A.T., is 79. Born on a sugar cane farm in South Africa, and becoming an elementary school teacher, Amy, as a young adult, was very active in the political struggle against apartheid. She worked with The Black Sash, a non-party political women's branch of volunteers. Since coming to Canada, she has been involved with Amnesty International, The Historical Society, and The Hospital Auxiliary for her local hospital. With a son in South Africa and a daughter in Australia, Amy is very appreciative of e-mail as a means of keeping in touch. The Rotary Club in her community recently honoured her with an award for her extensive volunteer work in their city and her activist role in South Africa.

Frances, F.N., is 78. A nurse who held various supervisory positions and taught at the School of Nursing in a large teaching hospital, Frances continues to see people and events from the perspective of a health care professional. She has been an elder in her church and a member of the Board. Very active in her local Women's

Institute, the members can't imagine how they will manage without her now that she has moved to another district. Her last project before moving was to lobby the local town council for a proper recognition of the Women's Institute's role in creating the town's lakefront park. She hopes to see some of the Millennium Project Funds allocated to provide a commemorative marker outlining the park's proper name and history from its purchase by the Women's Institute to its subsequent sale to the municipality.

Lucille, L.G., is 76. The eldest in a large, religiously devout, Franco-Ontarian family in Northern Ontario, Lucille grew up caring for her younger brothers and sisters. She loved to read and often read from her school text books to her younger siblings, carefully explaining the meanings of words they didn't understand. Teaching in several different centres, over a period of forty years, she finished her career as a Secondary School Department Head. She participated in Curriculum development projects for the Ministry of Education in French as a Second Language. During most of her adult life, she has been very actively involved in the Roman Catholic organization, The Daughters of Isabella, and recently served as International Regent. She is now Past Regent.

Clara, C.N., is 75. She was born in the Caribbean and earned her nursing certification in England, where she also did post graduate study in midwifery. She has provided strong leadership in the ethnic Community Association and has been active in The Immigrant Services Organization. She worked in anti-racist education with the school Board and was part of the Race Relations Unit of the Police Department. Clara's exemplary contribution, through her many volunteer associations, has been recognized as follows: The Black Business and Professional Association presented her with The Distinction Through Service Medal in recognition of Exemplary Community Service;

The government of her birth country, awarded her The Order of Distinction for her contribution to members of their community in Canada and in London, England; The Canadian Centre for Police Race Relations gave her The Award of Excellence; The ethnic Community Association honoured her with the National Heroes Day Award for Political and Community development.

Delia, D.S., is 74. Earning a Ph.D. in Physics, Delia did research until her children were born and then did some part-time teaching in the labs at the University. She has worked consistently and tirelessly for the causes to which she is passionately committed. Her first leadership role was in the local Home and School Association, and then on the Education Section of the Citizens' Committee on Children. A strong supporter of CARAL (Canadian Abortion Rights Action League), she recalls with satisfaction being in the gallery when the controversial and regressive Bill restricting abortion lost on a tie vote in the Senate. Delia has been active in the local Humanist Association, working for many years on the Humanist magazine and writing briefs for presentation to political decision-makers. She has been a strong advocate for Peace Education in the schools.

Tina, T.U., is 72. She was born on a farm and has a very strong connection to the land. Although it was unusual in her day, Tina returned to teaching in a large secondary school after each of her children was born. She did this because she loved to teach. On retirement, she helped create one of the first recycling projects in the area. She has been a very involved member of the Women's Institute, serving on local executives and the provincial Advisory Council. Tina has been a popular presenter at Women's Institute information and inservice sessions. She has been active in church groups, UCW-(United Church Women), the 4H Club and served in the Recreation Committee for the Township.

Jean, J.L., age 70, is the youngest of the twelve participants. She has an Honours B.A. degree and a Masters in Social Work. Although she has retired from her position as a social worker, Jean remains extremely involved in her many projects. The most politically involved of the group, she ran as a candidate for the New Democratic Party in three elections, and ran for a seat in municipal government in one election. She is most articulate in expressing her personal philosophy and is a committed feminist with an especially strong social conscience. Last year she received the Governor General's Meritorious Service Cross for her work in creating the Regional Coordinating Committee to End Violence against Women. This year the NDP awarded her the Agnes Macphail award. In the 1960's, she worked in the Anti-War and Nuclear Disarmament Movement. Jean has been involved in setting up a Head Start nursery school, and has worked with other social advocacy groups dealing with poverty issues such as shelter, food, clothing, and support networks. She has continuously demonstrated leadership in building affordable housing and organizing community resource centres.

Summary of Codes Most Salient for Each Individual

After the interview transcripts had been coded, a summary sheet that identified the frequency of the notation of each code was created for each participant. Note was taken of exemplary responses illustrating certain codes that appeared to be highly representative of the individual participants. The five codes, which had been most frequently noted in their responses, were deemed likely to be at least among the most salient for them, and were used to create an individual profile summary. When each profile was complete, a composite of the twelve profiles was created. This was used to help identify the strongest themes that appeared to be embedded within the responses of the group as a whole.

Of the thirty-seven coding categories that had been used in the analysis of the interview transcripts, eighteen were identified as among the five most frequently noted for the individuals. Again, by considering the frequency of notation, the five codes most often assigned for the whole group were identified. The following table indicates the number of participants for whom a code was among their most frequently noted five and therefore likely to be among the most salient for them.

It is important to understand that these tabulations were used only for highlighting some of the significant aspects of the responses. They were not intended to be indications of the weighting of the importance of one code over another. The fact that a code was not among the most frequently noted five does not mean that that particular code was unimportant in the profiles of the participants as individuals or as a group. For example, the fact that love of learning was among the top five codes found in only one participant's responses does not in any way indicate that love of learning was not a significant factor for others. In actuality, it was an important aspect of almost all of the participants' personal development. Another example, which helps to clarify this understanding of the tabulation process, is that the code standing for Integrity was

rarely assigned to a passage of interview content, but it was certainly a significant factor for every participant. The passages that were exemplary of the integrity code were all rich in meaning and passionate in their expression of that indicator of successful resolution of the psychosocial crisis integrity vs. despair.

Summary of Codes Most Salient for Each Individual

<u>Codes</u>	<u># of Participants including code among their most salient five</u>
L of L Love of Learning:	1
SE Self-Efficacy:	8
SC Social-Connectedness:	7
C1 Caring: (Caring for and caring about)	6
C2 Collaboration: (Involving others in work and decision-making)	1
V Vision:	1
A Action-oriented:	5
Pr Practical:	2
S Con Social Conscience:	2
L2 Bossing, Persuading, Controlling, Motivating:	3
L3 Initiating:	2
L4 Assuming Responsibility:	1
L5 Resolving Conflict:	4
RN Recognizing Need:	2
Sappr. Self-Appraisal:	2
H Humility:	1
Com Commitment:	8
R Reflection:	5
