SPIRITUAL SURRENDER -
A PATH TO EVERYWHERE

by
JENNIFER ANNE VAUGHAN

A dissertation
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
PSYCHOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

SPIRITUAL SURRENDER – A PATH TO EVERYWHERE

by

Jennifer Vaughan

Spiritual surrender is a phenomenon associated with spiritual growth and the 12-Step program of Alcoholics Anonymous. This study probed the Research Problem: In what ways does working with the process of spiritual surrender impact imaginal structures related to personal will, freedom, and belonging? The hypothesis was: The practice of surrender will shift imaginal structures regarding personal will, freedom and belonging towards humility, collaboration, and inclusion.

The first section of the literature review describes the Theory-in-Practice in which this dissertation is situated, namely Imaginal Transformation Praxis. The second section approaches the subject of surrender from spiritual, religious, and psychological viewpoints. The third section focuses specifically on addiction. The fourth section covers material about anxiety and obsessive thinking, including studies about the benefits of spiritual surrender in treating these afflictions. In none of the literature reviewed for this study are imaginal structures related to personal will, freedom, and belonging addressed.
The methodology used in this study was Imaginal Inquiry. Experience was evoked in a group setting, using guided meditation and practices of spiritual psychology. Experience was expressed through journaling, art-making, dialogue with the art pieces, and verbal sharing. The research data was interpreted by the researchers using an intuitive approach, which focused on key moments and themes in the data. The researchers included analysis of their own imaginal structures as part of the meaning-making; the data was also interpreted through a mythic lens. The research experience was integrated for the participants through two follow-up meetings and the sharing of the researchers’ conclusions.

The Cumulative Learning for this study, ‘Spiritual Surrender - a Path to Everywhere’, proposes that spiritual surrender can begin to have a transmuting effect on imaginal structures regarding personal will, freedom and belonging in such a way that the individual is able to interface more dynamically with the world, moving from an egocentric individualism to a heart-based, authentic individuality.

Learning One proposes that the imaginal structures related to the constriction of freedom can begin to transmute in the process of spiritual surrender, thus allowing the individual a measure of relief from obsessive thinking, addictive behavior, and the need for over-control of external events and internal emotional responses. Learning Two proposes that spiritual surrender can begin to reverse the vortex of isolation and darkness, common in addiction and alcoholism that leads to ‘jails, institutions, and death’. Learning Three proposes that the humility that comes through surrender involves a ‘right-sizing’ of the individual’s sense of self in both directions - both a downsizing (through acceptance of being out-of-control), and at the same time an increase in the feeling of self-worth and
responsibility for one’s actions. Learning Four proposes that spiritual surrender is an ongoing process rather than a discrete event. Learning Five proposes that in order for spiritual surrender to occur, there needs to be a softening of the boundaries of the individual’s sense of self.

The learnings are expanded in relation to the archetype of the Rainbow and the Native American legend of the Rainbow Warriors. The overarching themes of endings and renewal are explored through the archetype of the apoclypse. And finally, the benefits of the ongoing process of spiritual surrender to the individual and to the world are expanded upon.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Research Topic

This study entails an exploration of spiritual surrender – the surrender of self-will and self-identity that can help people overcome addiction and reduce anxiety. Addiction, as defined by Carlo DiClemente, is, “Any substance use or reinforcing behavior that has an appetitive nature, has a compulsive and repetitive quality, is self-destructive, and is experienced as difficult to modify or stop.” i Gerald May calls addiction, “A state of compulsion, obsession, or preoccupation that enslaves a person’s will and desire.” ii No matter how you describe it, addiction brings misery, both to those who suffer from it and to those who surround the addicted individual.

Anxiety disorders are also tortuous to live with and affect millions of people around the globe. The National Institute of Mental Health states that in the U.S. alone over 40 million people suffer from anxiety disorders. iii Joseph Chilton Pearce describes anxiety as, “Fear without a target…a condition of disorder.” iv An obsession is described in Stedman’s Medical Dictionary as, “A recurrent and persistent idea, thought, or impulse to carry out an act that is ego dystonic, that is experienced as senseless or repugnant, and that the person cannot voluntarily suppress.” v

In both addiction and anxiety disorder, one’s actions and/or cognitions seem to be out of the control of one’s individual will. Nietsche describes will as, “The command of something within himself that renders obedience, or that he believes
renders obedience.” In the throes of both addition and anxiety the suffering individual seems unable to make the change himself to relieve the psychological malady. Furthermore, often in active addiction the denial is so strong that the individual does not acknowledge that a problem exists at all.

Spiritual surrender can be a way out of the suffering caused by addiction, anxiety, and obsessive worry. The movement of spiritual surrender is summed up by the statement: “Thy will be done, not mine.” According to Christopher Dyslin, spiritual surrender reflects an, “Increasing acceptance of the truth about human power and control, and a growing recognition of reality regarding the ultimate source of power.” It is also part of the 3rd Step Prayer of Alcoholics Anonymous: “…I offer myself to thee to build with me and to do with me as thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do thy will…” The phrase, “Relieve me of the bondage of self,” is crucial. What is this ‘bondage of self’? And why/how does the surrender of it result in the freedom from obsessive thinking and addictive behaviors? In the religious literature, this process can involve the bestowal of grace. Joseph Chilton Pearce describes grace as, “Insight or beneficial events that seem freely given, not of our making and not clearly deserved.”

Spiritual surrender is harder to describe in psychological and scientific terms.

This research study has focused on the ‘spiritual surrender’ experienced by eight individuals who had abstained from alcohol and drugs for at least two years using the 12-Step program of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is hoped that sharing their experience through this study will benefit others struggling with addiction or anxiety.
Relationship to the Topic

I am an alcoholic in recovery. I began a life free of alcohol and drugs in a residential rehab facility where I spent six months, after drinking daily and doing cocaine occasionally for over twenty years.

While my immediate family of origin was very loving and high functioning, I did have an aunt who was an active alcoholic until a stroke left her handicapped for the last years of her life. My parents enjoyed alcohol daily and did not seem to be adversely affected by it. However, I believe that their daily consumption allowed my alcohol use and abuse at an early age to be tolerated to a large extent. ‘Normal’, in our household, was drinking some amount of alcohol daily, usually before and during dinner.

I began drinking regularly, and sometimes snorting cocaine, when I was a teenager. At that time it seemed very ‘cool’, and partying was mostly fun. I liked letting go of my inhibitions and relaxing the driven, focused way I approached my life when sober. I was pretty much a daily drinker and a binge cocaine-user by the time I was twenty. For a long time my partying seemed like a big game to me, and I liked ‘living on the edge’. I was very successful in other areas of my life, worked hard, and had no major adverse consequences early on. While the cocaine binges were sometimes scary, for about twenty years I didn’t think I had a drinking problem. Twice I temporarily alleviated the cocaine problem by moving overseas, where drugs were not in my environment.

As time went on I became depressed, and the problems associated with my drinking and drug use grew. By the time I was in my early 40’s, I was a mess. I was an unemployed, single mom, an active alcoholic and a drug addict. I was in trouble
with the law. Eventually I got into enough trouble that I landed at a rehab center with enough motivation to really want to get sober. Somehow the combination of motivation, situation and education brought about some kind of ‘spiritual surrender’ for me. I got sober and have stayed that way with the help of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) and the 12-Step program of recovery. Today my life is expansive and full of healthy challenges; I am happy, and living a reasonably ‘normal’ life.

As ‘getting sober’ involves physically detoxing from alcohol and/or drugs, it follows that there is some ‘body’ element to spiritual surrender as well. Maurice Merleau-Ponty states, “I am conscious of the world through the medium of my body.” ix Merleau-Ponty further reflects:

In the same way we shall need to reawaken our experience of the world as it appears to us in so far as we are in the world through our body, and in so far as we perceive the world with our body. But by thus remaking contact with the body and with the world, we shall also rediscover ourself, since, perceiving as we do with our body, the body is a natural self and, as it were, the subject of perception. x

The importance of being able to perceive the world around us clearly, in order to know ourselves, is reflected in Robert Sardello’s statement, “Self-knowledge…actually means knowing, experiencing, feeling, sensing the world fully. We know ourselves through the world, and the world is enhanced with our every act of self-knowledge.” xi

My experience of spiritual surrender in early sobriety came about 7-10 days after I had arrived at the rehab center where I would spend the next six months. One day I had a very strange feeling, which in hindsight might have been the actual physicality of my spiritual surrender. I think perhaps it was when my body ceased looking for an immediate alcoholic or pharmaceutical fix to what ‘ailed’ me; and I was left in a very blank spot.
For years I had experienced my ‘self’ through a chemical fog. My body did not know itself any more; I hadn’t sensed myself through a clear consciousness for a long, long time. In fact, I felt like nothing at all. I felt like a bag of skin with nothing inside, a balloon with no air, or the hole in the donut. I could not feel my ‘self’ at all.

A.H. Almaas explains:

. . . The sense of the entity of the self is actually a result of holding different things together with some sort of glue. The glue is the concept of entity, giving the illusion of entitihood. When this holding is relaxed, then nothing remains; there does not remain even a sense of being. In other words, when we realize our deepest nature we realize it is pure and absolute selflessness. We have nothing inside, even though we are the source and ground of all existence.” xii

Since beginning a new life in sobriety and returning to graduate school, I have wondered, “How does the 12-Step program really work?” While it is perhaps not possible to know the exact mechanism of spiritual enlightenment or identity transformation, I have been interested in existential and philosophical questions – questions that lead to a worldview. I did not grow up in an organized religion, and have not become ‘religious’ since I got sober; however I am interested in the reality of human existence and human experience on earth. This quest for knowledge is a large part of why I returned to school to pursue a graduate degree.

Having gotten sober myself with the help of the 12-Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, my journey in this dissertation process has been driven in part by a desire to investigate why the 12-Step program is so effective with many people. Alcoholics Anonymous is a ‘fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism’. xiii
A 12-Step program is a set of guiding principles outlining a course of action for recovery from addiction, compulsion, or other behavioral problems. As summarized by the American Psychological Association, the 12-Step process involves the following:

- admitting that one cannot control one's addiction or compulsion;
- recognizing a greater power that can give strength;
- examining past errors with the help of a sponsor (experienced member);
- making amends for these errors;
- learning to live a new life with a new code of behavior;
- helping others that suffer from the same addictions or compulsions. xiv

I have found that the 12-Step program of A.A. really has worked for me. I have stayed sober and have not wanted to drink or to do drugs for some years now. I have been through some stressful times and still have had no inclination to drink. Probably the most amazing thing I have found is that I don’t miss the substances that I used to spend my days mentally consumed with, even as I was physically consuming them. I do not spend my time thinking about drinking – or even about not drinking. I really am able to just go about my business and do other, ‘regular-people’ stuff. This is very different from the later stages of my active addiction, when I would spend all my time either becoming intoxicated or thinking about when I would next be able to do so. There was really not much time left for other thoughts, for caring about others, or for any positive action in the world.
My dissertation study used the theory known as Imaginal Tranformation Praxis (ITP), developed by Aftab Omer. Five key concepts in ITP are: *The Friend, Imaginal Structures, Adaptive Identity, Gatekeepers*, and *Reflexive Participation*. According to Omer, “The Friend refers to those deep potentials of the soul which guide us to act with passionate objectivity and encourage us to align with the creative will of the cosmos.”

Imaginal Structures are, “Assemblies of sensory, affective, and cognitive aspects of experience constellated into images; they both mediate and constitute experience. The specifics of an imaginal structure are determined by an interaction of personal, cultural, and archetypal influences. These influences may be teased apart by attention to the stories that form personal character and the myths that shape cultural life. During the individuation process, imaginal structures are transmuted into emergent and enhanced capacities as well as a transformed identity. Any enduring and substantive change in individual or group behavior requires a transmuting of imaginal structures. According to Omer, “This transmutation depends upon an affirmative turn toward the passionate nature of the soul.”

Omer defines the process by which an ‘Adaptive Identity’ emerges: “In the course of coping with environmental impingement, as well as overwhelming events, the developing soul constellates self images associated with adaptive patterns of reactivity. These self images persist as an adaptive identity into subsequent contexts where they are maladaptive and barriers to the unfolding of being.” ‘Gatekeeping’ refers to, “The individual and collective dynamics that resist and restrict experience. The term
‘Gatekeepers’ refers to the personification of these dynamics. Cultural gatekeepers restrict experience; cultural leaders catalyze the deepening and diversification of experience.” xviii ‘Reflexive Participation’ is “The practice of surrendering through creative action to the necessities, meanings, and possibilities inherent in the present moment.” xix

Five major principles of the Imaginal Transformational Praxis theory are as follows:

1. Adaptive identity transmutes into reflexivity. xx

2. The affects of shame, anger, grief, and fear can transmute into the capacities of autonomy, fierceness, compassion and courage. xxi

3. The soul has a transformative imperative. The soul is harmed when expression is suppressed. The expression of experience “facilitates the re-engagement of the soul’s imperative.” xxii

4. Reflexive participation is the practice of surrendering with awareness to the necessities, meanings, and potentials in the present moment. xxiii

5. The intentional making of a container for the ritual work of partializing and gathering parts of the individual facilitates growth. xxiv

Research Problem and Hypothesis

The gaps in existing research concerning spiritual surrender, in conjunction with my personal experience, are foundational to this study. While there have been some quantitative studies in the past regarding the effectiveness of 12-Step programs, there is a lack of in-depth qualitative research about the nature of ‘spiritual surrender’. This
dissertation explores the ways in which working with practices of spiritual surrender allow imaginal structures to loosen, catalyzing new, creative experience, new knowledge, and spiritual growth. Out of these themes and interests emerged the Research Problem that has guided this dissertation: In what ways does working with the process of spiritual surrender impact imaginal structures related to personal will, freedom, and belonging? The hypothesis of this study was: The practice of surrender will shift imaginal structures regarding personal will, freedom and belonging towards humility, collaboration, and inclusion.

**Methodology and Research Design**

The research design for this study has used the participatory methodology of Imaginal Inquiry, part of Imaginal Transformation Praxis theory (ITP). Imaginal Inquiry is based on the idea that a human being’s true nature rests in a participative consciousness; and that acting from this nature inspires collective action, and assists psychological transformation at both personal and cultural levels. Imaginal Inquiry accesses knowledge ordinarily restricted by dominant ideologies and by psychic structures (‘imaginal structures’) that support normative personal identities; it also facilitates the flow of new knowledge and experience through creative imagination.

Through the Imaginal Inquiry research process, knowledge was accessed and created in four inquiry phases. These phases included Evoking Experience, Expressing Experience, Interpreting Experience, and Integrating Experience. In the Evoking Experience phase, participants began the research day by participating in two meditations that brought past experience of spiritual surrender into the present moment. There was
one exercise focusing on the period before the spiritual surrender, and one exercise focusing on the period after. In the afternoon there was an exercise that focused on the letting go of anxiety or obsession held around a currently unresolved situation. There was one meditation focused on the part of the individual that does not want to surrender; a second meditation focused on the part that was ready to surrender. There was also an opportunity to participate in a group prayer designed to facilitate spiritual surrender.

In the second phase, Expressing Experience, participants expressed their evoked experiences in image through artwork, and in verbal form through journaling and written dialogue. Each participant’s expression was gathered as data through their dialogue with their artwork, journaling in response to questions, and the transcription of their verbal sharing.

The third phase, Interpreting Experience, consisted of analyzing the data collected on the research day. My co-researcher and I looked at the data and determined key moments and themes. We also studied key moments identified by the participants. We considered the similarities and differences in our perceptions based upon our own imaginal structures, as well as cultural and archetypal influences. Once both the participants’ experience and our reactions were explored, they were placed in mythic context to give greater meaning and understanding to the data. The archetype of the Rainbow and the Native American legend of the Rainbow Warriors were used for the purpose of refraction of learnings and deepening of meaning.

The fourth phase, Integrating Experience, consisted of helping the participants to integrate their research experiences, as well as bringing the research learnings into the psychological community and society at large.
Learnings

The Cumulative Learning for this study, ‘Spiritual Surrender: a Path to Everywhere’, proposes that spiritual surrender can begin to have a transmuting effect on imaginal structures regarding personal will, freedom and belonging in such a way that the individual is able to interface more dynamically with the world, moving from an egocentric individualism to a heart-based, authentic individuality.

Learning One proposes that the imaginal structures related to the constriction of freedom can begin to transmute in the process of spiritual surrender, thus allowing the individual a measure of relief from obsessive thinking, compulsive, addictive behavior, and the need for over-control of both external events and internal emotional responses. Learning Two proposes that spiritual surrender can begin to reverse the vortex of isolation and darkness, common in addiction and alcoholism that leads to ‘jails, institutions, and death’. Learning Three proposes that the humility that can come through surrender involves a right-sizing of the sense of self in both directions - both a downsizing (through acceptance of being out-of-control), and at the same time an increase in the feeling of self-worth and responsibility for one’s actions. Learning Four proposes that spiritual surrender is an ongoing process rather than a discrete event. Learning Five proposes that in order for spiritual surrender to occur, there needs to be a softening of the boundaries of the individual’s sense of self.
Significance and Implications of the Study

Spiritual surrender is an important element not only in the process of getting sober, but also in recovery from obsessive worry or anxiety. Somehow the surrender of self-will allows us to live more comfortably in our own lives, and not be run by fear or compulsion all the time. This concept is relevant to just about every person on the planet; while not everyone is an alcoholic or drug addict, almost everyone harbors some anxiety or fear somewhere.

My hope is that being able to describe the process of spiritual surrender, with participants who have experienced it, may help others to find their way out of distress and isolation, and into their own powerful lives in creative community. The entire world benefits as each individual awakens to their rightful place in society; and in this time of world change, individual awakening is necessary to societal and world survival.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction and Overview

The Research Problem for this study was: In what ways might the practice of surrender affect imaginal structures related to personal will, freedom and belonging? The hypothesis was: The practice of surrender will shift imaginal structures regarding personal will, freedom and belonging towards humility, collaboration, and inclusion.

The first section of this literature review – Imaginal Transformation Praxis – situates my study within the Theory-in-Practice that informs it. Imaginal Transformation Praxis includes three components – Imaginal Process, Imaginal Inquiry, and Cultural Transformation Praxis.

The second section – Spirituality, Psychotherapy and Surrender – reviews a wide range of books and research, from Jack Kornfield to studies of post-traumatic stress disorder and compulsive shopping. Of most relevance to this study is the material on spiritual surrender – individuals’ experience of it and its benefits. Although most psychologies have traditionally avoided the subject of spirituality, in recent decades there has been an increasing amount of research done around the benefits of meditation and mindfulness; some of those studies are represented here as well.

The third section – Addiction and Surrender – reviews books and research specifically about addiction. Included are works from Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
and its intellectual predecessors. There are several works that attempt to explain in psychological terms why A.A. works. Also represented in this section are other approaches to overcoming addiction, including some that do not include spiritual surrender at all.

The fourth section – Obsessive Worry, Anxiety and Addiction – reviews books and articles regarding obsessive worry and anxiety. Highlighted are the commonalities between these psychological afflictions and other addictive behaviors, suggesting that there may be a similar path to psychological well-being available to those suffering from all of these problems.

**Imaginal Transformation Praxis (ITP)**

Imaginal Transformation Praxis (ITP) is the theory that most comprehensively informs this study. Developed by Aftab Omer and in use at Meridian University, ITP consists of concepts, principles, and practices that, “Constitute an integrative approach to personal and cultural transformation.” xxv

ITP has three distinct components:

1. As specified by Omer, “Imaginal Process is a distinct approach to transformative learning. In this approach, human capacities are cultivated through diversifying, deepening, embodying, and personalizing experience. Imagination amplifies and integrates the sensory, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of our experience.” xxvi

2. As per the Meridian Dissertation Handbook:

   *Imaginal Inquiry* draws on active, heuristic, phenomenological, naturalistic, and art-based research methods. Researchers using this methodology are called upon to access and create knowledge which is ordinarily restricted by dominant ideologies and our normative personal identities. Accordingly, marginalized
and taboo experiences receive special attention. Such new knowledge inspires collective action and catalyzes personal and cultural transformation. xxvii

3. Cultural Leadership Praxis is, according to Omer, “A creative and collaborative approach to fostering cultural transformation within organizations, communities and societies.” xxviii

A. Imaginal Process

Imaginal Process, according to Omer, “Emphasizes the role of transformative learning in catalyzing the emergence and cultivation of core human capacities such as self-awareness, collaboration, responsibility and empathy.” xxix According to ITP theory, the natural state of the psyche is multiplicity, defined by Omer as, “The existence of many distinct and often encapsulated centers of subjectivity within the experience of the same individual.” xxx Omer continues that, “ITP suggests ways of developing relationships with the various aspects of self that constellate at thresholds of change in order to expand the experienced sense of self.” xxxi

Omer also states that each individual has a core identity. He states, “Core identity refers to the unique endowment of particularities that unfold, mature and guide transformations of identity through the life span. Core identity is the unique endowment of particularities that makes individuation a possibility. There is a unique endowment that unfolds, matures, and guides the various transformations of identity.” xxxii

This core identity is subjected to stress and trauma in childhood, and develops self-images known as adaptive identities. According to Omer, “In the course of coping with environmental impingement, as well as overwhelming events, the developing soul
constellates self images associated with adaptive patterns of reactivity. These self-images persist as an adaptive identity into subsequent contexts where they are maladaptive and barriers to the unfolding of being.” xxxiii

In the state of adaptive identity, the multiplicity of the psyche is repressed by the phenomenon of gatekeeping. According to Omer: “Gatekeeping refers to the individual and collective dynamics that resist and restrict experience. The term gatekeeper refers to the personification of these dynamics.” xxxiv

Imaginal Process theory suggests that individual human experience is limited by imaginal structures, which Omer describes as, “... assemblies of sensory, affective, and cognitive aspects of experience constellated into images; they both mediate and constitute experience. The specifics of an imaginal structure are determined by an interaction of personal, cultural, and archetypal influences.” xxxv Omer elaborates on the interaction of these influences and the process of change:

These influences may be teased apart by attention to the stories that form personal character and the myths that shape cultural life. During the individuation process, imaginal structures are transmuted into emergent and enhanced capacities as well as a transformed identity. Any enduring and substantive change in individual or group behavior requires a transmuting of imaginal structures. This transmutation depends upon an affirmative turn toward the passionate nature of the soul. xxxvi

As described in the curriculum at Meridian, reflexivity is, “The capacity to engage and be aware of those imaginal structures that shape and constitute our experience.” xxxvii Omer explains the phrase restoration of experience as, “The individual and collective reclaiming of the ability to experience, previously diminished by traumatic events and adaptive identity.” xxxviii Furthermore he describes the goal of reflexive participation as, “The practice of surrendering through creative action to the necessities, meanings, and possibilities inherent in the present moment.” xxxix
As multiplicity is explored, one finds that the individual’s perceived self, or ‘I’, shares the inner world with many other psychic parts or subjectivities. If this exploration is deep enough, individuals can transmute their adaptive identity to a reflexive identity. In the state of reflexive identity, multiplicity is integrated. As Omer says, “Reflexive identity sustains coherence while experiencing distinct centers of subjectivity within a spacious field and is responsive to influence.” xl

Imaginal Process uses a variety of practices to access inner structures, including personification, ritual, dialoguing with images, art making, body-centered practices and journal writing. Personification is an exercise in which the person gives voice to an image, idea, or imaginal figure. According to Omer, “An imaginal figure is essentially the personified image of psychic energy.” xli

During the work done with the personifications of the subjectivities, the individual is encouraged to turn away from the influence of the gatekeepers from the past, and to begin to hear the voice of what Omer refers to as The Friend. Omer uses the term ‘Friend’ to characterize, “. . . those deep potentials of the soul which guide us to act with passionate objectivity and encourage us to align with the creative will of the cosmos.” xlii

B. Imaginal Inquiry

Imaginal Inquiry as defined in Meridian’s Dissertation Handbook is, “. . . a distinct, participatory research methodology, situated within Imaginal Transformation Praxis… The participatory paradigm recognizes participative consciousness as our true nature.” xliii
Imaginal Inquiry consists of four phases – evoking experience, expressing experience, interpreting experience and integrating experience. In the evoking experience phase, the researcher creates a situation that evokes fresh experience in the moment for the participants, rather than just talking about something that happened in the past. The experience that is evoked is meant to access the participants’ deeper experience that is freer and more separated from the participants’ adaptive identities. The assumption here is that by getting underneath the adaptive identity, at least briefly, a different kind of access to understanding and emotional truth can be gained. Expressing experience involves more than one type of data collection; both verbal sharing that is later transcribed, and art work or other expressive data (i.e. stories, poems, dance, song) can be created.

In the Interpreting Experience phase, researchers identify key moments in the research day, as well as themes in the data. The researcher and co-researchers respond to these salient moments and themes through a series of six steps, consisting of first, describing specifically what happened during the data collection which constitutes the ‘evidence’ that the new learning is based on. Second, the researcher must describe how he or she felt about what happened during that particular part of the research experience. Third, the researcher engages in self-reflection, and describes his or her own imaginal structures that were in use while making these interpretations. Fourth, the researcher discusses the various theoretical concepts that helped to make these particular interpretations of the data. Fifth, the researcher proposes his or her own interpretation of what happened during the research, specific to the particular learning. And, finally, the sixth step consists of listing all validity considerations relevant to these interpretations.
The researcher and co-researchers explore the commonalities and differences of their experiences during the research and while examining the data. ITP theory states that, “Human knowledge is inherently social, active, and dialogical…” xliv

The final step in developing the learnings of the research involves placing them within a larger theoretical and mythic context. The researcher finds a myth that relates to the study’s subject matter, and examines the learnings again through the lens of this story.

The Integrating Experience phase of the research involves bringing the results of the research both back to the participants, and out into the greater community.

C. Cultural Leadership Praxis

Habits are routines of behavior that are repeated regularly and that tend to happen with little thought. Omer defines culture as a “web of habits.” xlv He states that, “Cultural leadership most of the time has an element of transgression in it, sometimes of a law, sometimes a taboo.” xlvi Generally, leaders of transformative cultural change act from the edges of a culture, rather than from the center. When totally enveloped by the culture, it is difficult to have perspective.

Omer posits that, “Denial of past trauma leads to a culture-wide trance where denial and bias are the norm. By ritualizing cultural shame about the defeats, failures and losses of the past, as well as engaging differences that were previously denied suppressed and trivialized, an awakening from cultural trance can occur.” xlvii He explains, “Creative ritual offers us an occasion to surrender to the guidance of spontaneously emerging images, enabling us to be carried by the river of imagination toward an
unknown future. . . Creative ritual is imagination in action. . . The transformation of
culture and consciousness are inextricably intertwined.” xlviii

Omer declares, “Ritual trust, evoked by creative ritual, engenders a temporary
suspension of fear, suspicion, indifference, conflict, and even hatred. The buoyancy of
this liberating trust revitalizes connections among people, offering a touchstone to the
potentials of healing through friendship.” xlix

**Spirituality, Psychotherapy and Surrender**

The second section of this literature review includes works from spiritual and
religious viewpoints as well as psychological ones. Relief from human suffering is a goal
of most spiritual paths and religious traditions; it is also one of the most common goals of
psychotherapy. Addictive behavior, craving, anxiety, and obsessive worry are all sub-sets
of the larger heading of the ‘dis-ease’ for which relief is sought. There have been
innumerable writings throughout history describing the path one should follow in order to
reduce suffering, cease worrying, be happy, or find enlightenment; the focus here has
been on those that describe spiritual surrender. Some of the literature reviewed is from
journals that represent a combined viewpoint of Psychology and Christianity; there are a
number of works from a Buddhist perspective, as well as from psychological theorists
who describe the benefits of meditation and mindfulness. In recent years there has been a
lot of research validating the benefits of meditation and mindfulness.

Going back in philosophical history, Bruno Guiderdoni notes that the Greek and
Medieval philosophers distinguished two parts of the human intellect: (1) the faculty of
pondering, or reason, and (2) intellectual intuition, or the ability to grasp truth
immediately. Guideroni elaborates, “Because of the spectacular progress in our scientific understanding of the universe we have forgotten the latter aspect, which is equally necessary.”¹ The ‘intellectual intuition’ he speaks of is related to spiritual surrender, as it does not come from the reasoning part of the psyche.

Hajime speaks of ‘metanoia’ – the ‘action’ of self-negation. ² He explains, “This activity of self-negation, supplemented by transcendence (absolute nothingness), effects a conversion from negation to affirmation, from death to life…The complete death and self-negation wherein one acts while being aided and acted upon by absolute nothingness signal the start of a new life, a life in which one lives as one who has been brought to life.”³ This is the spiritual surrender that I am researching.

M. Scott Peck explored individualism, community and peace-making, writing both from a theoretical stance and from significant personal experience in group dynamics and community-making. He calls attention to the uniqueness of the individual stating, “We are called to be individuals… We are called to be unique and different… We are also called to power. In this individuation process we must learn how to take responsibility for ourselves. We need to develop a sense of autonomy and self-determination.”³³ He also notes that the individual also needs the group, suggesting, “Our individualism must be counter balanced by commitment.”³⁴

Peck notes that genuine communities often form at the times of crisis, and instructs the reader of the Chinese word for crisis, which consists of two characters: one representing “danger” and the other “hidden opportunity”.³⁵

When Peck encourages his group members to “empty themselves,” he explains that they needed to empty themselves of “barriers to communication… specific things –
feelings, assumptions, ideas, and motives – that have so filled their minds as to make them impervious as billiard balls.” lvii

Peck states that, “…all change is a kind of death, and all growth requires that we go through depression…emptiness, depression, and psychological death. They are the bridge between chaos and community, between the decadent and the revitalized, between sin and reformation.” lviii

Regarding the freedom to act, Peck suggests that, “The need for control – to ensure the desired outcome – is at least partially rooted in the fear of failure… I must be willing to fail.” lviii Peck notes that, trapped as we are in our western tradition of rugged individualism, we are an “extraordinarily lonely people.” lix He posits that:

We are desperately in need of a new ethic of ‘soft individualism’, an understanding of individualism which teaches that we cannot be truly ourselves until we are able to share freely the things we most have in common: our weakness, our incompleteness, our imperfection, our inadequacy, our sins, our lack of wholeness and self-sufficiency… It is a kind of softness that allows those necessary barriers, or outlines of our individual selves to be like permeable membranes, permitting ourselves to seep out the selves of others to seep in. lx

Peck elaborates, “While rugged individualism predisposes one to arrogance, the ‘soft’ individualism of community leads to humility.” lxi

James Fowler defines faith as “the most fundamental category in the human quest for relation to transcendence… Faith is an orientation of the total person, giving purpose and goal to one’s hopes and strivings, thoughts and actions… faith involves an alignment of the will, a resting of the heart, in accordance with a vision of transcendent value and power, one’s ultimate concern.” lxii

Fowler speaks of the kind of spiritual awakening that this dissertation focuses on when he states, “Less predictable are those more momentous changes in the life of faith
when one’s image of the ultimate environment undergoes a shift of center.” Louis Roy defines grace as, “the energizing and relational principle on the spiritual level for the proper functions of the ego.”

Warren R. Miller and Janet C’dé Baca began in 1989 a study on what they called ‘Quantum Change’, interviewing fifty-five people who had experienced, “a vivid, surprising, benevolent, and enduring personal transformation.” Miller and C’dé Baca divided the quantum change experiences into two types – insights and epiphanies. Insightful change is “such as one might imagine to occur in psychotherapy. Suddenly the person comes to a new realization, a new way of thinking or understanding… The ‘aha’ is deep and often of such magnitude as to leave the person stunned or breathless.” Miller and C’dé Baca point out that, “Insightful quantum changes have a quality of growing out of life experiences. Although they occur in salient, identifiable memorable moments, they tend to follow from the person’s development rather than being an intrusion into it. There is a sense of continuity.”

‘Epiphanies’, or the mystical kinds of quantum change, are, according to Miller and C’dé Baca, very different from the insightful type. They explain that, “What epitomizes the mystical type is the noetic sense of being acted upon by something outside and greater than oneself. Vivid recall for time, place, and details is more common with this type.” Attributes of the mystical type of quantum change are described as ineffability, noetic, transient, passive, transcendent, loving, distinct, awesome, and giving a sense of unity. During a quantum change event, “people typically become aware of a nonmaterial level of reality that is difficult to put into words.” “Usually a mystical
quantum change includes the experience of being given a message, of having an
important truth revealed.” lxxii

Regarding the individual’s sense of ‘self’, Miller and C’de Baca relate,
“People who have a mystical experience often have a powerful and direct experience of
unity with other people, with nature, with the universe, with everything. It is as though
the boundaries of individual identity drop away and the person perceives an
interconnectedness of all being.” lxxiii

Clarifying the differences between the two types of quantum change, Miller and
C’de Baca suggest that, “One common characteristic that distinguishes mystical from
insightful quantum changes is the experience of being in the presence of an Other, of
something outside of and greater than oneself. This experience has been described as awe
and is often difficult to express in words.” lxxiv “When a mystical quantum changer feels
the presence of another being, almost always he or she experiences the nature of that
presence as profoundly loving.” lxxv

Miller and C’de Baca relate the timing of quantum change to ‘hitting bottom’, and
found several themes in their participants’ stories in this area – traumatic childhoods, a
sense of being trapped, a sense of wandering aimlessly, and sometimes alienation from a
religious tradition that the person had once experienced. lxxvi

The effects of quantum change are chronicled as follows: “A very common
experience during and after quantum change is a profound sense of peace and release
from chronic negative emotions.” lxxvii Miller and C’de Baca note, “Quantum change
insights also involve a shift in perception and the realization of a new reality, but at a
much deeper level… It is as though a new pair of glasses suddenly brings the world into clear focus, and having seen, the person can no longer envision it as before.”

Relating to the subject of freedom and control, Miller and C’de Baca point out that, “A frequent theme is control. Sometimes the insight has to do with the need to stop trying to control, and instead to accept that which is beyond personal control.” And in summarizing the ongoing effects of quantum change, they declare, “… Quantum change often leaves a deep sense of compassionate acceptance, both for others and for oneself.”

Miller and C’de Baca relate the after-effects of quantum change to Abraham Maslow’s theory of self-actualization, pointing out many similarities. “They (the quantum changers) are not self-absorbed, but rather are conscious of and committed to the world beyond their own skin… They have a sense of the sacred, and of responsibility not only for themselves, but to others and the world around them.” “… A common experience was that all people are somehow linked, intimately and profoundly.”

Joan Borysenko also declares that there are “moments in life that are watersheds, points of no return, when one’s view of the cosmos is forever changed.” She declares, “When the heart is open, we overcome the illusion that we are separate from one another, and the mystery of divine love wraps us in a cloak of security, unity, wisdom, and joy.” Borysenko describes the shift of perception as “seeing with the eyes of the heart.”

Lynne Namka suggests that spiritual surrender happens “when the self is emptied of all roles, images and attachments that it had been holding. This issue, which has been
obsessed over in the rational, left brain which operates out of fear, is transferred to the right, gestalt brain which operates out of love and knowledge of oneness.” lxxxvi

Rollo May talks about how confronting and living in relation to our destiny brings a sense of freedom. lxxxvii The most compelling and fear-producing aspect of our destiny as human beings is the ultimate, unavoidable reality of our death. May explains, “To admit genuinely one’s mortality is to be released, to achieve a sense of freedom.” lxxxviii

May’s definition of freedom is “the capacity to pause in the midst of stimuli from all directions, and in this pause to throw our weight toward this response rather than that one.” lxxxix May talks about the significance of the pause, where we stop ‘doing’ and open ourselves up to the concepts of freedom and destiny. “In the pause we wonder, reflect, sense awe, and conceive of eternity… It is in the pause that people learn to listen to silence.” xc

May goes on to explain how in the pause, the “rigid chain of cause and effect is broken… response no longer blindly follows stimulus.” xci May stresses the importance of man’s forming of symbols in the pause, as we humans cannot directly handle all the stimuli that constantly come at us, and must be able to make symbols to help us digest incoming data. xcii

May also leads us to acknowledge the anxiety that is produced by the pause, and by freedom in general: “It (the pause) is the tremulous moment when we balance possible decisions, when we look forward with wonder and awe or with dread or fear of failure. The pause is the moment when we open ourselves, and the opening is our vulnerability to anxiety.…many people flee from silence because of the anxiety the silence brings…” xciii
While May acknowledges that, in our society, drugs and alcohol are the common ways of denying the anxiety of freedom, he notes a paradox: “Overuse of alcohol erodes our freedom to imagine, to reflect, to discover some possibility that would have helped us cope with the anxiety in the first place.” xcv Through the use of the drugs and alcohol, we paradoxically destroy our personal freedom by avoiding the sensitivity that would allow us to be open to creative possibilities. xciv

In fact, May stresses that the sensitivity caused by pain is essential in life:

“In running away from pain we lose our vitality, our capacity genuinely to feel and even to love.” xcvi

Regarding why changes in self may occur in the depths of despair, May states:

“Authentic despair is that emotion which forces one to come to terms with one’s destiny.” xvii He describes despair as a preparation for freedom. xviii “Despair can be a ‘giving up’ and a ‘letting go’ of neurotic problems that had been solidifying since one was an infant… a letting go of false hopes, of pretended loves, of infantilizing dependency, of empty conformism.” xix

Regarding ‘hitting bottom’ (i.e., when one has reached ultimate despair), May states: “I would describe this process as giving up the delusion of false hopes and, thus, acknowledging fully the facts of destiny. Then and only then can this person begin to rebuild himself.” c “There is surely value in the client’s experience that he has nothing more to lose anyway so he may as well take whatever leap life requires of him…” ci

Finally, regarding despair, May shares the old folk truth – “Despair and confidence both banish fear.” cii
The advantages of spiritual surrender are expounded in the words of the Taoist Chuang-tzu, as translated by Thomas Merton:
No drives, no compulsions
No needs, no attractions:
Then your affairs are under control.
*You are a free man.*

Robert Sardello talks about the difference between the brain-centered ego and the heart-centered ‘I’ – “not the psychological ego, but the individual spirit.”

He states that the heart is the organ of the body that remains open to the spiritual worlds, and that the will of the brain and the will of the heart are quite different.

The individual who practices spiritual surrender, or surrender of self-will, is open to increasing harmonious union with the Soul of the World, Sophia, according to Sardello. An essential element to the new sense of self is the ability to imagine who we can be, rather than acting out of what has influenced us from the past. This is what is referred to in Imaginal Psychology as ‘transforming one’s imaginal structures’.

Alan Watts describes his view of the spiritual surrender that can be brought about through the practice of several Eastern religions/practices, specifically Buddhism, Vedanta, Yoga and Taoism. He asserts that all of these paths to surrender and liberation are based in the belief that “our ordinary egocentric consciousness is a limited and impoverished consciousness without foundation in reality.”

Watts notes that the confusion of oneself with a limiting and impoverished view of one’s role or identity creates feelings of isolation, loneliness, and alienation. He states that the Christian view of man as ‘skin-encapsulated ego’ is the historical basis of the Western style of individuality, resulting in the sensation of ourselves as isolated islands of consciousness confronted with objective experiences which are quite ‘other’.
Watts writes that the ‘Western style of individuality’ - believing in oneself as the ‘skin-encapsulated ego’ - denies the intimate relationship between self and other, man and world, inside and outside, yin and yang. He states that the true reality is that, “the organism/environment is a unified pattern of behavior somewhat like a field in physics.”

Regarding the boundary of man and world, Watts declares, “. . . Beneath the separation of the individual and the world lies the field pattern. In this pattern every push from within is at the same time a pull from without, every explosion an implosion, every outline an inline, arising mutually and simultaneously so that it is always impossible to say from which side of a boundary any movement begins. The individual no more acts upon the world than the world upon the individual.”

Watts argues that what needs to be overcome through psychotherapy or other traditions of spiritual transformation is the artificial separation between self and world created by our social institutions and by human language, which by its nature labels everything, thus separating it from what it ‘is not’. Watts elaborates on this in his statement: “When a man no longer confuses himself with the definition of himself that others have given him, he is at once universal and unique. He is universal by virtue of the inseparability of his organism from the cosmos. He is unique in that he is just this organism and not any stereotype of role, class, or identity assumed for the convenience of social communication.”

In those states of consciousness called ‘mystical’ we have, I believe, a sudden slip into an inverse or obverse of the view of the world given in our divisive language forms. There this slip is not, as in schizophrenia, a tortured withdrawal from conflict, the change of consciousness again and again brings the overwhelming impression that the world is a system of love. Everything fits into place in an
indescribable harmony – indescribable because paradoxical in the terms which our language provides. cxiv

Jack Kornfield reminds us that, “The territory of spiritual practice is as vast as the universe and the consciousness that created it.” cxv He points out that, “Letting go is a central theme in spiritual practice, as we see the preciousness and brevity of life.” cxvi “In the end we discover that to love and let go can be the same thing. Both ways do not seek to possess. Both allow us to touch each moment of this changing life and allow us to be there fully for whatever arises next.” cxvii

New realms of consciousness can also open spontaneously through what is called grace, or they may occur under the press of a circumstance such as a near-death experience. They can be stimulated by sacred power spots, by the presence of powerful teachers, and by psychedelic substances, or they can be reached by the systematic and direct means of spiritual practice – by following strong spiritual discipline, through great continuity of meditation or prayer, or circumstances of profound silence. cxviii

Kornfield tells us that “In navigating these realms, we can be helped by teachers and maps that hold the knowledge of the many who have traveled there before us.” cxix The individual can reach higher levels of consciousness through meditative concentration; the Theravada school of Buddhism describes a set of mystical realms called the Realms of the Dissolution of Self.

According to Kornfield, “This set of realms arises when we direct our consciousness deeper and deeper into the source of our being, gradually dissolving all identity and sense of individual self through a process of death and rebirth. In these realms, meditation is directed to unraveling the whole mysterious process by which consciousness creates separate identity, to come to selflessness and freedom in the midst of it all.” cxx
Kornfield tutors us in the meditative methods suggested to move through the levels of consciousness in an ever-deepening and focused manner. He explains, “The states of absorption are filled with rapture, happiness, light and ease. Our body experiences a rapture that fills every cell.” CXXI Kornfield notes that the principles of meditation used to reach ‘access concentration’ are repetition, concentration and surrender. “Focusing on a prayer or a mantra, on a colored light or visualization, on the breath or the body, or on a feeling such as loving-kindness or compassion, refocusing on it or repeating it over and over and over again . . . until the heart and mind begin to become still, unified, and virtually absorbed in the experience.” CXXII

Kornfield emphasizes, “. . . For true liberation, the direction of meditation must be shifted from the calming and expanding of self to investigating how consciousness creates the self and all its forms of experience.” CXXIII Kornfield enumerates methods to ‘transcend the self’:

Spiritual traditions offer many ways to dissolve or transcend the self, the sense of our separate identity. One such practice is a repeated inquiry into the question, ‘Who am I?’ Others involve transcendent surrender through prayer or devotional practices, or dissolving the self through profound rituals and visions quests. In Insight Meditation, a common path for dissolving the self begins, like expanding the self, from the level of access concentration. CXXIV

After all the practice of meditation, “. . . The true path to liberation is to let go of everything, even the states and fruits of practice themselves, and to open to that which is beyond all identity.” CXXV Kornfield explains: “When we can finally look at the horrors and joys, our birth and our death, the gain and loss of all things, with an equal heart and open mind, there arises the state of the most beautiful and profound equanimity . . . Consciousness becomes luminous even beyond the stage of pseudo-nirvana, because now is untangled, free, and we grasp at nothing.” CXXVI
Kevin Griffin explores the compatibility of Buddhism and the 12-Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. He states, “What makes Buddhism and the Twelve Steps so compatible? The Buddha said that the cause of suffering is desire, and the Twelve Steps try to heal people from desire gone mad: addiction.” cxxvii Griffin states clearly:

Surrender is a traditional element of every spiritual journey. Before we can begin to realize our potential, we must break out of limiting concepts of who and what we are and what we think is possible. This may mean giving up long-held beliefs and comfortable behavior patterns. Cynicism or fantasy, fear or control, anger or grief – many of us cling to these patterns and others. As we begin to surrender, we see that we will have to let go of these destructive habits of mind before we can move toward freedom. cxxviii

Griffin takes us through the Twelve Steps, relating them to Buddhist practice and his own experience. “Steps One through Three can be characterized as the Surrender Steps. First, a surrender to the truth of our disease and our inability to control it; then surrendering to a Higher Power, seeing that we will have to depend on something besides our own will and knowledge to stay sober and develop spiritually.” cxxix He states that denial is what keeps us from beginning the process of spiritual surrender. cxxx

Griffin points out, “In the Third Noble Truth, the Buddha sees that when desire ends, suffering ends; when we let go of craving, the pain dissolves. He sees in this letting go the possibility of freedom.” cxxi

In terms of our self-view and connection to others, Griffin states, “Step Two leads us toward a less self-centered view of the world, toward seeing ourselves as part of a system…” cxxii And in the opening up that this brings, Griffin says, “Step Two reorients the alcoholic or addict toward a less self-centered life. By looking to a ‘power greater than ourselves’ we open to new possibilities, possibilities we couldn’t even imagine while living in the seemingly endless cycle of addiction.” cxxiii
Griffin suggests, “Alcoholism is a disease of faith. Alcoholics often develop a cynical attitude toward life, not seeing anything to believe in. When you persistently feel the need to change your consciousness through drugs or booze, you are expressing a lack of trust in life itself. And, in some ways, you are expressing a lack of trust in yourself, in your ability to tolerate life undiluted, to find value in your own, unadulterated experience.”

Regarding balancing faith and wisdom, Griffin describes:

One of the Middle Way teaching of the Buddha points to the need for balance between faith and wisdom, between openheartedness and discrimination. If we are to develop our spiritual life, we need to have both of these. We need to be able to access the soft, accepting, loving, and compassionate place in ourselves we call ‘the heart’. Here we discover the sense of connection with others and with the universe; we learn to live with uncertainty; to trust in our intuition; to take risks based on this intuition. We need to be able to ‘turn our will and our lives over to the care of God’ and venture deeper into the spiritual life, even though we don’t know where it will lead or if it even makes sense. This is the power of faith.”

Mark Epstein writes about the Buddhist emphasis on the importance of spiritual surrender, declaring that, “Buddhism has always made the self’s ability to relax its boundaries the centerpiece of its teachings.” He also notes that, “While psychotherapy has a long tradition of encouraging the development of a strong sense of self, Buddhism has an even longer tradition of teaching the value of collapsing that self.”

Epstein explains the process and benefits of both psychotherapy and Buddhist practice using theory, his own experience, and that of past clients as material. He talks about both the surrender of self and the quieting of the thinking mind. The achievement of both of these can bring about greater connection with others. Epstein concludes that, “… our endlessly repetitive thinking interferes with our ability to connect with our own
world. Isolated in our heads, we yearn for the kind of connection that our own thinking guards against.”

Epstein also notes the fear that arises when the individual contemplates surrender, “We fear that which we most desire, the falling away of self that accompanies a powerful connection.” In this particular case he refers to the falling away of self that occurs during sexual connection. He tells us that in the Buddhist view, “connection is already present. We are not as separate and distinct as we think we are. Connection is our natural state; we just have to learn to permit it.” He notes that the most basic fear of those coming to see him for therapy “is being overwhelmed by the force of their own emotions if they relax the grip of their egos.” Epstein reassures us that emotions can be experienced safely if they are “… given room to breathe. Contained within the vastness of awareness, our emotions have the power to connect us with each other rather than driving us apart.”

Epstein grounds his statements in the work of D.W. Winnicott and Sigmund Freud. He refers to Winnicott’s work on childhood trust, and the child’s development of the capacity to be alone. Epstein says that our ability to let go completely “requires a trust that for most of us was lost in childhood.” Epstein gives us, as adults, the task of regaining this lost childhood ability to trust and let go of our defenses.

Relating back to Freud’s work and the beginning of the field of psychoanalysis, Epstein states that, “Much of the liberating promise of early psychoanalysis stemmed from its attempts to cure this isolating tendency of the human mind.” Freud wrote that, “The proneness to decay of all that is beautiful and perfect can, as we know, give rise to two different impulses in the mind… Either we get depressed when confronted
with impermanence… or we devalue what we see and push it away.” Epstein points out that these reactions are what the Buddha termed attachment and aversion. “Only through cultivating a mind that does neither, taught the Buddha, can transience become enlightening.”

Larry Rosenberg also explores man’s ultimate anxiety – that of death – from a Buddhist perspective. He explores practices of acceptance that lead one to be at peace with illness, old age and death. Rosenberg explains, “The attachments we form when we live, and that we will have to let go of when we die, are actually what make us suffer while we are here…” Rosenberg suggests that fear of the unknown is often a reluctance to give up what is already known (from past experience), because this is the material out of which we create our ‘self’. According to Rosenberg’s method, “You gradually see all your addictions and attachments, until finally you come to the supreme addiction, the addiction to self.”

The concept of attachment not only arises in the Buddhist literature, but also in the psychotherapeutic theories known as ‘Attachment’ and ‘Human Stages of Development’. In his dialogue with the Jesuit psychiatrist W.W. Meissner, Louis Roy argues that the psycho-spiritual attitudes of faith and hope are linked with Erikson’s first psychosocial crisis of human life, namely trust/mistrust. In this crisis, one either experiences or fails to experience the trustworthiness of the mother. The success or failure of this original trust experience significantly influences the individual’s later ability to trust both oneself and others, including God.

Meissner attempts to keep the ‘psychology’ of grace absolutely distinct from the theological perspective, though he does allow that “the effects of healing grace are open
to understanding both from the theological side and from the psychoanalytic side without contradiction.”

Deepak Chopra describes addiction and its cure from the perspective of Ayurveda – the traditional Indian science of health. Chopra argues, “Our real task in dealing with addiction lies not so much in pointing out the destructive effects of addictive behaviors but in reawakening the awareness of perfection that always resides within us.” The Ayurvedic concept of perfect health is based upon the idea that body, mind, and spirit are truly one. The absence of joy from one’s life is the most important cause as well as the fundamental effect of addiction. Chopra suggests that, “The only lasting solution to smoking or addiction of any kind lies in the discovery of your true spiritual nature.”

Scott Kellogg looks at recovery from addiction through the lens of multiple-identity theory. He explains that individuals are part of various social groups; with each social group membership comes an identity; each identity has a particular perspective or viewpoint on the world, as well as prescriptions for thought and behavior. These identities are both “self-definitions and the internalization of the respective group norms.” Kellogg observes that when a process of recovery begins, there is a state of conflict and tension within an identity or among identities. Kellogg calls attention to a hierarchy of identities within the individual; in getting sober and joining a 12-Step group, the addict is working on putting a new identity on top, in place of the old addict identity.

There has been a lot of research done in the past couple of decades demonstrating the benefits of meditation and mindfulness, particularly in the treatment of substance
abuse and anxiety. Jon Kabat-Zinn defines mindfulness as, “paying attention in a
particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgementally.” \(^{clvii}\)

According to David Black, mindfulness “can refer to both an experiential practice and a
mental state.” \(^{clviii}\)

Meditation is one method used to develop mindfulness. There are many styles of
meditation, the most common being concentration or focused meditation, and
mindfulness or vipassana meditation. In the former, the individual focuses on a sound,
object, mantra or thought, in order to improve the power of concentration and overcome
distraction. In the latter, the individual is aware of the sounds and activities happening
around you, but allow the mind to be fluid and flow from one thought to the next, not
really focusing on one particular thing. Other meditation techniques include heart-
centered meditation, movement, and reflective meditation. While meditation practices
were being administered in substance user programs well over four decades ago, the
publication of mindfulness meditation as an adjunct therapy for substance users did not
appear until early 2000. \(^{clix}\)

S. Bowen, Janis Leigh and G. Alan Marlatt reflect that “a growing body of
research suggests that mindfulness-based therapies may be effective in treating a variety
of disorders including stress, chronic pain, depression and anxiety.” \(^{clx}\) Their 2005 study
tests the reliability and validity of a new mindfulness measure, the Freiburg Mindfulness
Inventory, explored the relationship between mindfulness and spirituality, and
investigates the relationship between mindfulness and/or spirituality and alcohol and
tobacco use in an undergraduate college population (N=196). Results support the
reliability of the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory, and suggest that spirituality and
mindfulness might be separate constructs. Smoking and frequent binge drinking are negatively correlated with spirituality scores, however a positive relationship between mindfulness and smoking/frequent binge-drinking behavior is shown. 

In their 2006 study, S. Bowen et al. suggest that Vipassana meditation, a Buddhist mindfulness-based practice, provides an alternative for individuals who do not wish to attend or have not succeeded with traditional addiction treatment. Their results indicate that “after release from jail, participants in the meditation course, as compared with those in a treatment-as-usual control condition, showed significant reductions in alcohol, marijuana, and crack cocaine use. Vipassana meditation participants showed decreases in alcohol-related problems and psychiatric symptoms as well as increases in positive psychosocial outcomes.”

S. Bowen et al.’s 2009 study evaluated the efficacy of an eight-week outpatient Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention program as compared to treatment as usual. The results from this initial trial support the feasibility and initial efficacy of Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention as an aftercare approach for individuals who have recently completed an intensive treatment for substance use disorders. In both two- and four-month post-intervention assessments, those who participated in the Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention program showed significantly lower rates of substance use, greater decreases in craving, and increases in acceptance and acting with awareness, compared to those who did not receive this treatment.

A preliminary study by K-H Lee et al. measures the psychosocial outcomes of Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention in twenty-four incarcerated substance abusers in Taiwan. This study uses the Drug Use Identification Disorders Test – Extended,
the Drug Avoidance Self-Efficacy Scale, positive/negative outcome expectancies, and the Beck Depression Inventory-II. The results show pre- to post-intervention effects of Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention on depression, and significant group differences over time on negative outcome expectancies, with the Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention group reporting increases.

K. Witkiewitz and S. Bowen examined the relation between measures of depressive symptoms, craving, and substance use following Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention. The authors point out that a strong relation between depressive symptomatology and craving has been demonstrated in laboratory and clinical studies, with depressive symptomatology showing strong links to craving and substance abuse relapse. Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention, shown to be efficacious for reduction of substance use, uses mindfulness-based practices to teach alternative responses to emotional discomfort and lessen the conditioned response of craving in the presence of depressive symptoms. The results of this study show that Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention attenuated the relation between post-intervention depressive symptoms and craving (Penn Alcohol Craving Scale) two months following the intervention; and this moderation effect predicted substance use four months following the intervention. The authors conclude that Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention appears to influence cognitive and behavioral responses to depressive symptoms, partially explaining reductions in post-intervention substance use among the treatment group.

B.D. Ostafin et al. looked at the relationship between intensive mindfulness training and the reduction of psychological distress. They examined the effects of a
A 10-day Buddhist mindfulness meditation course on the psychological symptoms of 53 participants. A repeated-measures analysis of variance indicates reductions in overall psychological distress from the pre-course baseline to a three-month follow-up. Correlation analyses indicate that the reported reduction in psychological distress was not influenced by social desirability bias and that the effect was not dependent on daily meditation between course completion and follow-up.

Peggilee Wupperman et al. conducted a study using a transdiagnostic psychotherapy known as Mindfulness and Modification Therapy, developed to target behavioral dysregulation. They targeted women (N=14) court-referred for alcohol abuse/dependence and aggression, and found significant decreases in alcohol use, drug use, and aggression. clxvii

Anne C. Fernandez et al. assessed the validity of the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire, and examined its relationship with alcohol use and alcohol-related negative consequences among 316 college-aged adults. clxviii Results support the five-factor structure of the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire, and show that one acceptance-based factor (nonjudging of thoughts and feelings) was negatively related to alcohol-related consequences, and one awareness-based factor was positively related to consequences. clxix

J. A. Brewer et al. published results in 2011 from a randomized controlled trial of the effectiveness of mindfulness training for smoking cessation. clxx Eighty-eight treatment-seeking nicotine-dependent adults received either mindfulness training or the American Lung Association’s freedom from smoking program. In both groups, cigarette use was significantly reduced during treatment and follow-up, though mindfulness
training was associated with greater smoking reductions than the American Lung Association’s freedom from smoking program during both periods. A trend toward higher abstinence rates with mindfulness training at the end of treatment (36% vs. 15% with the freedom from smoking program) became significant at 17 weeks (31% vs. 6%).  

In researching the cognitive mechanisms involved in the onset and maintenance of alcohol dependence, Eric Garland et al. hypothesize that, because trait mindfulness is associated with attention control and emotion regulation, that trait mindfulness would be inversely associated with attention bias towards visual alcohol cues. They found that, indeed, recovering alcohol-dependent individuals high in trait mindfulness exhibited less alcohol attention bias, stress, and craving, and greater alcohol-related self-efficacy, than their counterparts low in trait mindfulness.  

Akihiko Masuda and Erin C. Tully investigated whether mindfulness and psychological flexibility were unique or redundant constructs, and how they accounted for variability in psychological distress (somatization, depression, anxiety, and general distress). Their results are consistent with prior research in that both variables were negatively associated with somatization, depression, anxiety, and general psychological distress; also that mindfulness and psychological flexibility are interrelated but not redundant constructs.  

Alishia D. Williams and Jessica R. Grisham looked at impulsivity, emotion regulation and mindful attention focus in relation to compulsive buying. Compulsive buying was related to several domains of impulsivity and emotion regulation deficits. Also, compulsive buying was associated with less dispositional mindful attention focus, which was in turn associated with specific emotion regulation deficits.
B.W. Smith et al. conclude that mindfulness is associated with fewer Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms, depressive symptoms, physical symptoms and alcohol problems in the 124 urban firefighters they investigated. Personal mastery and social support are also related to fewer depressive symptoms; firefighter stress is related to more PTSD symptoms and alcohol problems; and years as a firefighter were related to fewer alcohol problems.\textsuperscript{clxxv}

Cara Geary and Susan L. Rosenthal evaluated self-reported stress levels and daily spiritual experiences in academic health care employees before, immediately after, and one year after enrolling in an eight-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction course. No intervention or treatment was offered to a control group. The researchers also evaluated the correlation between a potential measure of pulse rate variability and self-reported stress levels.

The Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction participants improved on all measures except the physical component score, and these results were maintained at the one-year follow-up. The researchers concluded that this program effectively reduces self-report measures of stress and increases daily spiritual experiences in employees in an academic health care setting, and that these effects are stable for at least one year.\textsuperscript{clxxvi}

Marcel A. de Dios et al. published a pilot study testing the efficacy of a brief intervention using motivational interviewing plus mindfulness meditation to reduce marijuana use among young adult females. Participants randomly placed in the intervention group were found to use marijuana on 6.15, 7.81, and 6.83 fewer days at Months 1, 2, and 3, respectively, than controls. The findings from this pilot study provide preliminary evidence for the feasibility and effectiveness of a brief motivational
interviewing/mindfulness meditation intervention for young adult female marijuana users.

People may seek happiness, serenity, or even a state of grace through spiritual practices, religion, or psychotherapy. The surrender of self-will, or spiritual surrender, is an integral part of many of these practices. This section has provided an overview of material related to spiritual surrender, written by philosophers, theologians, psychological theorists, and spiritual practitioners. Recent research has established the benefits of meditation and mindfulness in a number of areas related to psychological and spiritual wellbeing. Although there are some parallel concepts in the literature, there appears to be an identifiable gap regarding the effect on imaginal structures of personal will, freedom and belonging of spiritual surrender.

**Addiction and Surrender**

This third section focuses more exclusively on addiction and its treatment, and less on psychotherapy and spirituality per se, than the previous section. Included here are publications from the group Alcoholics Anonymous, as well as from some of its intellectual predecessors. The A.A. approach to addiction and surrender is highlighted because it has proved worthwhile to so many people since its inception. Additional literature is reviewed that looks at addiction in other ways such as an ‘out of control habit’ or through the lens of systems theory.

There are several thinkers whose written work formed the building blocks for the 12-Step program of Alcoholics Anonymous; included here are William James, Edwin Starbuck, and Harry Tiebout.
William James lectured and wrote around the beginning of the 1900’s, and was a pioneer in bridging the fields of philosophy, religion and psychology. Indeed he boldly went where most have dared not tread – either before or since – trying to make sense of human life and consciousness using all three disciplines at once.

James describes the phenomenon of religious conversion as “the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right, superior and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities.” He refers to a man’s regular state of consciousness as “the group of ideas to which he devotes himself, and from which he works.” James also terms it “the habitual centre of his personal energy”. James describes conversion as the moment when, “religious ideas, previously peripheral in his consciousness, now take a central place, and that religious aims form the habitual centre of his energy.” He refers to Edwin Starbuck’s theory when he states, “Conversion is in its essence a normal adolescent phenomenon, incidental to the passage from the child’s small universe to the wider intellectual and spiritual life of maturity.”

Both James and Starbuck touch upon the essential element of surrender of self-will in the conversion phenomenon. Starbuck declares, “The personal will must be given up. In many cases relief persistently refuses to come until the person ceases to resist, or to make an effort in the direction he desires to go.” Starbuck concisely argues that the conversion experience is “a process of struggling away from sin rather than of striving towards righteousness.” This, according to Starbuck, is why the spiritual surrender is necessary; the individual’s “conscious wit and will, so far as they strain towards the ideal, are aiming at something only dimly and inaccurately imagined.” Starbuck suggests
that the individual’s conscious striving (the will) can actually get in the way of the
“organic ripening within him.” William James summarizes the situation when he
states, “So long as the egoistic worry of the sick soul guards the door, the expansive
confidence of the soul of faith gains no presence.”

Harry Tiebout “is uniquely distinguished for having facilitated communication
between the worlds of alcoholism and psychiatry.” Tiebout was a brave pioneer in
supporting without qualification Alcoholics Anonymous and it’s belief in the necessity
of surrender to a higher power being an essential element in recovery from alcoholism.
Tiebout expanded the traditional notion of conversion to include “any major switch
from negative to positive thinking and feeling irrespective of a possible religious
component.”

Tiebout observes that the alcoholic’s typical qualities of defiant individuality and
grandiosity often stand in the way of their being willing to seek or accept help with their
problems. Tiebout points out that “defiance…is a surprisingly effective tool for managing
anxiety or reality, both of which are so often a source of anxiety.” He reflects Freudian
concepts when he says, “Grandiosity springs from the persisting infantile ego.”

Tiebout declares that the moment of surrender comes when “the unconscious
forces of defiance and grandiosity actually cease to function effectively…the individual
is wide open to reality; he or she can listen and learn without conflict and fighting back.”
In the ongoing state of surrender, the individual no longer fights life, but accepts it …
there is a persisting capacity to accept reality.

Tiebout summarizes what must be surrendered as the part of the personality that is
the inflated ego – immature traits carried over from infancy into adulthood, specifically a
feeling of omnipotence, inability to tolerate frustration, and excessive drive, exhibited in the need to do all things precipitously.  

In the “Big Book” of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.), Bill Wilson talks about Step Three: “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.” He states that any life run on self-will will not be successful, as we will always fail if we try to run the whole show singlehandedly. “Selfishness – self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate... the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot.”  

Following one’s spiritual surrender to a higher power, the A.A. member becomes “less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs. More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life... we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter.”  

Wilson further describes how the recovering alcoholic must be careful not to harbor resentments, as this is “infinitely grave.” Harboring resentments can prove, in fact, to be fatal. He states, “If we were to live, we had to be free of anger.”  

The benefits of this way of life are huge. In the section of the Big Book known as ‘the Promises’, the authors declare:

We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness... We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace... That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us."
After the alcoholic has become sober, ongoing attention to one’s spiritual wellbeing is required. The recovering alcoholic is told to watch out for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. In Step Eleven one is told to pray and meditate on an ongoing basis, and not to fret about indecision – that “What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind.” When living a life built around ‘intuitive thinking’, Wilson suggests we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day ‘Thy will be done’. We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity or foolish decisions. We become much more efficient.”

In terms of becoming more interested in one’s fellows Wilson states, “Helping others is the foundation stone of your recovery.” Focusing one’s attentions outside of one’s own problems and self is of primary importance to ongoing sobriety.

Another foundation publication of A.A. – Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions – delineates further the process of the 12-Steps. Step One talks about breaking denial and accepting one’s alcoholism. Step Two revolves around gaining faith that one’s life can improve through surrender to a ‘higher power’; and in Step Three we make a decision to turn our lives and our will over to our higher power. “The more willing we become to depend upon a Higher Power, the more independent we actually are. Therefore dependence, as A.A. practices it, is really a means of gaining true independence of the spirit.” In Step Four we “make a thorough and fearless moral inventory of ourselves”; in Step Five we share this inventory with another human being and with our higher power. “A.A. experience has taught us we cannot live alone with our pressing problems
and the character defects which cause or aggravate them." A sense of community begins to awaken in the recovering alcoholic; through sharing one’s weaknesses and wrongdoings we get rid of “that terrible sense of isolation we have always had.”

Humility is another important benefit that stems from sharing our shortcomings. In Steps Six and Seven we become willing, and then ask, our higher power to remove all of our defects of character. In Steps Eight and Nine we make a list of all people we have harmed and then make amends where and how we can, without causing more problems. These steps are all crucial in terms of taking responsibility for one’s actions, and becoming accountable to those we have hurt.

Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve are taken on a regular, ongoing basis. Step Ten says, “Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.” Step Eleven states, “Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.” It is pointed out that renewing the simple request “Thy will, not mine, be done,” at moments of stress during one’s day, can be helpful.

The authors of Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions state that, “one of the greatest rewards of meditation and prayer is the sense of belonging that comes to us. We no longer live in a completely hostile world.”

Finally, in Step Twelve the recovering alcoholic moves his spiritual wellness out into his community. “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.” The authors state that the spiritually awakened individual has been granted the gift of a “new state of consciousness and being.”
David Schoen describes the process of the 12-Steps from a Jungian perspective. He states that by taking Step One - “Admitted we were powerless over alcohol and that our lives had become unmanageable” – one essentially cuts off the energy supply for the addiction, which has been living like a parasitic organism, while the individual has been the ‘host’. Schoen posits that Step Three of A.A. “is crucial to neutralizing the Archetypal Shadow/Archetypal Evil aspect of the addiction, because only the most powerful, transpersonal, archetypal spiritual forces can counter and hold the massive diabolical forces of the addiction in check.” He suggests that the addiction is an expression of Archetypal Evil.

In Jungian terms, Schoen says that the “Ego must in self-reflection realize that it is not the highest authority in the psyche – that the Self is the Highest Power in the psyche, and that the ego should always subordinate its position and power and will to be in service to the true Self.” Schoen states that the Jungian term ‘Self’ is equivalent to the A.A. use of ‘Higher Power’. He argues that in order to successfully overcome alcoholism and addiction one must use “the same fundamental psychodynamic principles embodied in the Twelve Steps of A.A. (ego collapse, neutralizing of Archetypal Shadow/Archetypal Evil, conversion experience, ego-Self axis alignment, community, persona/personal shadow work, personal inventory, amends, and helping others, etc.)…” The essence of the recovery process, according to Schoen, is aligning the conscious ego with the true Self.

Using Jungian concepts, Schoen concludes that the more we can contain and process our own shadow elements, the less we project onto others and into the world;
this allows us to live our destiny more authentically, and to be in connection with all of humanity.  

Ron Dunselman approaches the issue of addiction from an anthroposophical perspective. He describes an addiction as a “psychological dependence caused by an irresistible desire.” He explores the reasons for the growth of addictive behavior in human society over the past few decades, and asks, “What has changed in the human psyche for people to seek refuge in all sorts of substances as an external means of evoking particular experiences in the soul?” Dunselman concludes that the breakdown of traditional society has led to a certain psychological freedom, but also the “need to create an inner relationship between ideas, feelings and desires, using one’s own resources.” Whereas it is the job of the Self to create interrelationship between the three areas of the soul – thinking, feeling and will – drugs can sideline the Self and begin to determine the combination of the three soul-elements.

Dunselman points out that the drug addict loses the quality of patience, and also finds it difficult to deal with feelings of displeasure, aggression, sorrow, disappointment, tension and conflict. The individual in active addiction is egocentric, and increasingly isolated from his environment, growing ever more lonely.

Father Thomas Keating describes the frustration of every human child growing up, when the child’s wish for boundless gratification of desire is thwarted regularly. Keating explains that, “As we grow up, our self-identity and awareness is bound up with our instinctual needs for survival and security, affection and esteem and approval, and power and control. He also stresses the importance of belonging to a group.
Where the process of spiritual surrender to a Higher Power is concerned, Keating believes that the question “Who is God?” should be left open-ended, as it continues to change and expand as we do. Keating points out, “So whenever there is an experience that surpasses our narrow ideas and that brings us peace, encouragement, a genuine sense of compassion, forgiveness, and reconciliation there is an encounter with the Higher Power or God.”

Keating writes that true happiness cannot be found in the childhood instinctual needs of security, approval and affection, and power and control. As a child, when gratification is not found, “off go the afflictive emotions of grief, anger, fear, discouragement, shame, guilt, and others…” Keating suggests that it is not our fault that we are all born with the disease of “lack of intimacy with God… It is just the way we come into life and develop our self-identity.”

Keating states that Faith is surrender to the Higher Power. This surrender allows God to move into one’s life. Keating explains: “Nobody is asking you to be perfect. But the goodness of the universe and one’s own basic goodness is always inviting you to become fully human and open to the goodness of creation.” “We begin to change from…an intellectual God at the center of our belief system, to a God of the heart.”

Keating makes the important point that everybody is recovering from something, whether it be alcoholism or just the human condition.” Gerald May also states, “The same processes that are responsible for addiction to alcohol and narcotics are also responsible for addiction to ideas, work, relationships, power, moods, fantasies, and an
endless variety of other things.”  He simply notes that, “To be alive is to be addicted, and to be alive and addicted is to stand in need of grace.”

Gerald May unabashedly includes his religious views in his writings, which allows his description of spiritual surrender to flow freely. May describes grace as an “the active expression of God’s love.”  Faith, according to May, “is the human component of that mysterious interweaving of divine grace and human intention that can vanquish the power of attachment…True faith choices, those that reflect the purest human freedom, are made in the heart…”

Robert S. Stephens and G. Alan Marlatt chose to look at the phenomenon of substance abuse as a habitual action that has become out of control. They deny that ‘hitting bottom’ is always necessary in order to remedy this “maladaptive behavior.” They believe that “increased awareness or vigilance may be sufficient to produce change.” While they advocate the mastery of new skills, they also concede that “behaviors that define who we are and constitute our unique identity may not be replaced simply by learning a new skill: a major shift in self-concept may be required in order to give up the habit.” However, they don’t go into detail about what this major shift might look like, or how to bring it about. In their final analysis, Stephens and Marlatt give the individual responsibility for their lives, declaring that “ultimately we are capable of determining the habits we acquire.”

Arnold M. Ludwig makes exactly the opposite determination when he writes, “It is the sin of pride that allows the alcoholic to believe that he is capable of exerting control over something he has no control over – his drinking – and that makes him so vulnerable to temptation. It is only when the alcoholic no longer can maintain the fiction of being in
control, when stark reality begins to shatter his illusions, that he is able to set aside his false pride and turn outside of himself for support and guidance.” Ludwig explains how the program of Alcoholics Anonymous helps the alcoholic deal with cravings, and how the 12 Steps of A.A. are similar to those used by Buddhist monks for centuries to control unwanted, intrusive thoughts during meditation. Ludwig states that the hallmark of true sobriety is “commitment to an emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually fulfilling life.”

Bill Bucker explores the connection between epistemological change and spiritual development from the perspective of systems theory. According to Bucker, epistemological change “involves a radical transformation in the way a person experiences the world.” Bucker refers to Gregory Bateson and his theory of epistemology, saying that for Bateson, “all experience is processed through personalized filters that interpret that experience on the basis of unconscious presuppositions. As a result, each person’s reality is constructed via a subjective process that is probably influenced by a number of factors, ranging from social forces to genetics.” In fact, Bateson’s ‘change in epistemology’ sounds a lot like Imaginal Psychology’s ‘transmuting of imaginal structures’.

Morgenstern, et al., studied the effects on ‘12-Step cognitions’ of treatment in ‘Minnesota Model’ private treatment programs – through treatment and 12 months following discharge. Morgenstern found that most patients appear to enter treatment committed to abstinence and ready to take action to realize that commitment, and that 12-Step cognitions deteriorated following discharge from treatment.
Courtney Vaughn and Wesley Long studied the surrender process in adolescent recovery from drug and alcohol use. They determined that through surrendering to a higher power, members of 12-Step groups were able to “forgive and be forgiven, leave the past behind, and begin to develop positive identities.”

Keith Humphreys drew conclusions from several large studies in the 1990’s of the benefits of 12-Step facilitation interventions, combined with or compared to cognitive-behavioral interventions. Humphreys found that 12-Step Facilitation Therapy was more effective than cognitive-behavioral therapy or motivational enhancement therapy in promoting abstinence, as measured in one- and three-year follow-ups. In Project Match – one of the large studies referenced by Humphreys – the Major Goals of 12-Step Facilitation Therapy are listed as Acceptance and Surrender. Acceptance by the patients that: (1) they suffer from the chronic and progressive illness of alcoholism, (2) they have lost the ability to control their drinking, (3) there is no effective cure for alcoholism, the only viable alternative is complete abstinence from the use of alcohol. Under Surrender, the Project Match researchers list: (1) Acknowledgment on the part of the patient that hope for recovery (i.e. sustained sobriety) exists, but only by accepting the reality of loss of control and by having faith that some higher power can help the patient, whose own willpower has been defeated by alcoholism, and (2) Acknowledgment by the patient that the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) has helped millions of alcoholics sustain their sobriety and that the patient’s best chances for success are to follow the A.A. path.

Christina Grof talks about how, when we enter the world as a human being, we come from “an expanded, unified and eternal pool of consciousness to which we all belong.” She believes that this “intense craving for our own wholeness is the
underlying impulse behind addictions of all kinds.” Grof describes the moment of spiritual surrender: “We let go of who we thought we were, and something shifts inside of us…we are born into a new life.” She lists the qualities that make up spiritual maturity – the process that is begun with the surrender moment – as: (1) the capacity to love or feel compassion, (2) the ability to live in the present moment, and (3) the ability to let go and start afresh – let go of unnecessary or bothersome emotions and experiences, or our attachments, (4) serenity and a sense of personal freedom, (5) a basic connection with the Earth and with daily life, (6) a mystical worldview – a cosmic perspective that comes from direct spiritual experiences, rather than just reading or hearing about God, and (7) humor and play.

Christopher Ringwald believes that the most crucial change for the addict or alcoholic seeking recovery is the move away from self-centeredness, with or without a corresponding move towards a higher power. He concludes that, “The addict simply has to stop believing in the religion of one, to cease the cult of self.”

This section has addressed literature related to Addiction and Surrender, including the influential teachings of Alcoholics Anonymous and its intellectual predecessors. There is a strong current in this material suggesting the surrender of self-will and self-centered thinking as a primary treatment for addiction. The Alcoholics Anonymous literature also talks about the growth away from isolation and into community. Several authors were included who are unabashedly religious; others approach the subject of addiction in a strictly secular manner. Each author attempts to describe the same phenomenon in ways that are congruent with their own world-views.
Represented in this section are the results of several studies on recovery from addiction. While some research has been done that indicates the effectiveness, through quantitative analyses, of an approach to addiction including spiritual surrender, there has been minimal research to explore what this ‘spiritual surrender’ looks like. Prior to the current study, there has been no research at all that has specifically studied the effects of spiritual surrender on imaginal structures regarding personal will, freedom and belonging.

**Obsessive Worry, Anxiety and Addiction**

This final section reviews literature regarding a range of psychological affliction - primarily anxiety - that one would not necessarily, at first glance, class with drug addiction and alcoholism. The review spans the history of anxiety and its treatment. Through this exploration the commonalities with more traditional addictive behaviors are examined, as well as the commonalities in potentially resolving these issues through spiritual surrender.

George Makari tells us, “In pre-modern, Western Christendom, the Latin *anxietas* signified unease that often took its shape within a framework of sin, redemption and eternal judgment . . . Treatment for those anxious ones was available from physicians of the soul, Catholic priests who offered confession, among other consolations.”

The Reformation then dismantled the suffering individual’s priestly-conduit to the divine, and left him somewhat alone with his distress. Later, the philosopher Kierkegaard and the existentialists would “riff on this theme of a dread that attends individual freedom and responsibility.”
In approaching modern-day anxiety, Makari points out “the possible causes and meanings of anxiety are so varied that any one predetermined answer is sure to be often wrong.” In attempting to treat the individual with anxiety disorder, Makari summarizes: “… For anxious troubles are quintessential mind-body phenomena. They implicate a possible symphonic interaction of DNA, hormones, neurons, anticipatory fantasies, memories and thoughts, as well as the constraints and opportunities of our culture.”

Beginning in the 16th century, long before ‘anxiety disorder’ became a common diagnosis, the term hysteria was used to describe anxiety and other related disorders. Various medications were used through the years to try to treat hysteria or ‘weakness of the nerves’, including digitalis, opium, ethyl alcohol, bromide salts. In the 20th century barbituates, tranquilizers, lithium, SSRI’s, SNRI’s, benzodiazepines and tricyclic antidepressants were all used for treatment of anxiety. Anxiety disorders today include the diagnoses Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Panic Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Social Anxiety Disorder, and other Specific Phobias.

In the early 20th century Sigmund Freud advanced his theories around childhood traumas, the nature of the unconscious, hysteria and anxiety. Freud believed that anxiety arose as a result of interactions between the three parts of the personality - the id, the ego, and the superego. The id is entirely unconscious, according to Freud, and includes the instinctive and primitive behaviors. Freud posited that the id was driven by the pleasure principle, which strives for immediate gratification of all desires, wants, and needs. The repression of these instinctual drives by the ego results in a state of anxiety or tension.
The superego holds our internalized moral standards and ideals that we acquire from both parents and society; the superego works to make the ego act upon idealistic standards rather than upon realistic principles. It acts to perfect and civilize behavior, and to suppress all unacceptable urges of the id. \textsuperscript{cclxv}

Freud believed that the first development of anxiety comes when a child is separated from his mother and finds that his needs are not immediately met.\textsuperscript{cclxvi} Later, anxiety is formed due to fear of castration when the child represses the unacceptable desires of the Oedipus Complex (the wish to kill one of the parents). This fear of castration then develops into dread of conscience – social anxiety; and the final transformation is into fear of life and fear of death.\textsuperscript{cclxvii}

Freud stated that in psychopathology:

Symptoms are supposed to be an indication of and substitute for an unachieved instinctual gratification; they are, that is, a result of a process of repression. Repression proceeds from the ego, which, possibly at the command of the superego, does not wish to be a party to an instinct cathexis originating in the id. Through repression the ego accomplishes the exclusion from consciousness of the idea which was the carrier of the unwelcome impulse.\textsuperscript{cclxviii}

The ‘symptom’ acts outside of ego-control.\textsuperscript{cclxix} According to Freud, the isolated character of the symptom is abhorrent to the ego, even though the ego inadvertently caused the formation of the symptom by the repression of the desires of the id. “The ego also attempts to do away with the alien and isolated character of the symptom by utilizing every possibility of binding it to itself in some way and of incorporating it within its organization by means of such ties.”\textsuperscript{cclxx}

Freud explains, “Eros desires contact, for it strives for union, for the annihilation of spatial boundaries between ego and loved object. . . Isolation, however, is the
abolishing of the possibility of touching, the means of withdrawing a thing from every contact…

John Watson’s ‘behaviorism’ formed the foundation for the behavioral treatment of anxiety. Watson suggested that people could be conditioned to fear certain situations that cause anxiety. According to behaviorism, “Behavior can be described and explained without making ultimate reference to mental events or to internal psychological processes. The sources of behavior are external (in the environment), not internal (in the mind, in the head).” From the behaviorist stance evolved Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, which, according to its proponents, provides a “well-established, highly effective, and lasting treatment” for anxiety.

The most common therapies used to treat anxiety today are Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, Exposure Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing.

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) focuses on identifying, understanding, and changing thinking and behavior patterns. Benefits are usually seen in 12 to 16 weeks, depending on the individual. In this type of therapy the patient is actively involved in his or her own recovery, has a sense of control, and learns skills that are useful throughout life. CBT typically involves reading about the problem, keeping records between appointments, and completing homework assignments in which the treatment procedures are practiced. Patients learn skills during therapy sessions, but they must practice repeatedly to see improvement. In exposure therapy (a form of CBT), a person is gradually exposed to a feared situation or object, learning to become less sensitive over time.
Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) uses strategies of acceptance and mindfulness (living in the moment and experiencing things without judgment), along with commitment and behavior change, as a way to cope with unwanted thoughts, feelings, and sensations. ACT imparts skills to accept these experiences, place them in a different context, develop greater clarity about personal values, and commit to needed behavior change.

Dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT) integrates cognitive-behavioral techniques with concepts from Eastern meditation, combining acceptance and change. DBT involves individual and group therapy to learn mindfulness, as well as skills for interpersonal effectiveness, tolerating distress, and regulating emotions.

Under certain conditions eye movements appear to reduce the intensity of disturbing thoughts. A treatment known as Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) seems to have a direct effect on the way that the brain processes information. Basically, it helps a person see disturbing material in a less distressing way. Scientific research has established EMDR as effective for posttraumatic stress disorder.

‘Complementary and alternative treatments’ are now beginning to be used more regularly to treat anxiety disorders. Complementary approaches are used as well as conventional medical approaches, while alternative treatments are used instead of traditional treatments. Complementary and alternative treatments currently include relaxation techniques, yoga, acupuncture, mindfulness, and natural remedies such as kava and natural reuptake inhibitors.
Howard Leventhal and David R. Nerenz researched how people comprehend and cope with illness threats, and generalized their findings to the more general problem of stress and stress control. Leventhal and Nerenz point out that the term ‘stress’ can refer to environmental circumstances that disrupt the normal activity of an organism, the responses of the organism, either physiological or psychological, to particular events, or as a global label for a field of study that examines the processes by which organisms adapt to disruptive events. They note that a major goal of much of the research done on stress to that point in time had to do with establishing plausible connections between psychological stress and physical illness.

Leventhal and Nerenz report, “One of the central findings of our studies is that patients have a strong tendency to interpret all illness in terms of a schema for acute or infectious disease… Although it may be wrong, the expectation that illness is acute is reassuring. It generates hope for a ‘100% cure from cancer’, for complete remission, and for the discontinuance of treatment for diabetes and hypertension.”

According to Leventhal and Nerenz, “Health problems appear to place especially heavy demands on emotional coping resources because they provoke substantial levels of threat and require reliance on external, expert sources of help.” “Patients draw on a wide range of resources to meet the demands of severe illness. Central among these is their own ability to generate coping responses, or what Bandura (1977) has labeled a sense of self-effectance. People with a history of effective self-regulation, who can differentiate problems, generate plans, and act, are likely to do so when they confront illness threats.”
Leventhal and Nerenz explain that many patients appear to see their own fear as a sign that they are unable to manage threat. However, given time, they may calm down and recapture their ability to generate coping responses. Subjects low in self-esteem can be temporarily paralyzed by their fearfulness. The researchers conclude that the way patients conceive of themselves and their illness appears to be a crucial underlying factor in successful coping.

Donald Meichenbaum and Roy Cameron developed a cognitive-behavioral approach called Stress Inoculation Training, which consisted of an educational phase, a skills training phase, and an application phase, where the clients actually tested out the skills in a stressful laboratory situation (unpredictable electric shock was administered). In the educational phase, the clinician suggests to the clients that coping self-statements and self-directed relaxation will help to ameliorate the problem. The researchers found this treatment more effective than imaginal systematic desensitization, then the standard treatment for phobia. Meichenbaum also points out that “the transactional model of stress postulates that people both influence and respond to their environments.”

Meichenbaum’s goal of treatment is three-fold: (1) Behavior change – maladaptive behaviors are identified and altered, and adaptive behaviors are fostered, (2) Self-regulatory activity – attention is devoted to altering the ongoing self-statements, images, and feelings that interfere with adaptive functioning. At the same time, attempts are made to promote adaptive cognitions and affect (e.g., a problem-solving set, facilitative self-regulatory cues, sense of morale and optimism), and (3) Cognitive structures – tacit assumptions and beliefs that give rise to habitual ways of construing
Meichenbaum suggests that if stress inoculation training is undertaken, it is advantageous to develop a positive client-therapist relationship, and he points out that there are many ways to cope with most problems. He brings up the important point that people with established support networks (close relationships with others) are generally in better mental and physical health and cope better with stress than those who are unsupported. Individuals who live alone and who are not involved with people or organizations have a heightened vulnerability to a variety of chronic diseases. He states that people manifest less fear and stress and greater courage in the presence of others than when they are alone.

Seymour Epstein declares that graded stress inoculation is a natural healing process of the mind. He explains that stress is retroactively mastered through repetition of a stressful event in memory or in reality, initially at weak levels of intensity and gradually at stronger ones. While this reenactment usually permits prevention of, or recovery from, chronic pathology, in the traumatic neurosis there is a failure of the process of graded stress inoculation because the trauma is repeated in memory at excessive levels of intensity.

Epstein emphasizes the freedom gained by the fine-tuning of the control of emotions and raw impulses. He notes, “Such a control system increases freedom, for it permits the individual to experience the emotion or impulse over a wide range of intensity without danger of losing control. A fine-tuned control system can be contrasted with the all-or-none system, in which emotions or impulses must either be completely avoided or experienced with overwhelming intensity.” Epstein explains that stress in
everyday life is spontaneously mastered in small doses through repetition of the stressful experience in reality or in memory. \textsuperscript{ccxcii}

Epstein describes the three major techniques for treating anxiety disorders – systematic desensitization, flooding, and modeling. In flooding, the individual is forced to fully perceive a stimulus in a situation where defenses are of no avail. In modeling, the individual sees another person deal with the stimulus in a successful way. Systematic desensitization involves the graded stress inoculations already described. What all three techniques have in common is that the individual is forced to face the feared stimulus, and sees that what was so feared did not materialize. \textsuperscript{ccxciii}

Richard Lazarus and his colleagues developed what they called a transactional model of stress, which suggested that stress occurs in the face of “demands that tax or exceed the resources of the system or . . . demands to which there are no readily available or automatic adaptive resources.” \textsuperscript{ccxciv} This works relates directly to spiritual surrender, as the individual’s perception both of the stressfulness of the event and of his or her ability to cope with events ultimately defines the stress. An adequate coping response, according to Lazarus and Launier (1978) may involve direct action, or relinquishing certain goals. \textsuperscript{ccxcv}

In other instances, in which stress cannot be altered or avoided, one may use what Lazarus and Launier call palliative modes of coping – ways of responding that make us feel better in the face of threat and harm without resolving the problem. Lazarus notes that, “stress prevention and reduction programs must recognize that in some situations retreat, toleration, and disengagement may be the most adaptive responses.” \textsuperscript{ccxcvi}
Albert Bandura developed a theory of self-efficacy, or exercise of control through self-belief. Bandura reflects, “Conventional modes of treatment have relied heavily on the interview as the principal vehicle of personality change. I had been pursuing an alternative theory premised on the view that human psychosocial functioning can be altered more fundamentally by empowering people with the coping competencies needed to gain mastery over their problems.”

Bandura elaborates, “In the social learning theory of anxiety, it is mainly the perceived lack of efficacy to manage potentially aversive aspects of the environment that makes them fearsome. People fear potential aversive events that they construe as exceeding their coping capabilities, but do not find them fearsome if they believe they can manage them.”

There are currently many self-help books written for anxiety and its cure. Archibald Hart declares that more than twenty-three million Americans suffer from some form of anxiety disorder. He points out that almost all psychologists now accept that anxiety is both a mental phenomenon and biologically-based, and states that, “Humans were designed for camel travel, but most people are now acting like supersonic jets, resulting in anxiety and burn-out.”

Hart describes different types of anxiety problems and their symptoms, and addresses the Christian readers directly, acknowledging that he is a Christian himself. He asks the question, “Does Scripture condemn anxiety?” and then answers it to his own satisfaction. He suggests the following scripture areas for help with anxiety problems: Mark 13:11, Luke 12:22-30, and 1 Pet. 5:6-7.
Hart describes at length the chemical bases for anxiety and pharmacological treatment; he points out the importance of changing your thinking habits and of rest and relaxation. He puts together a seven-week plan for ‘breaking the worry habit’, which is a cognitive-behavioral approach to changing thinking patterns. Hart then once again directs his advice specifically to Christian readers, advocating Christian meditation. He differentiates it from ‘New Age’ meditations such as yoga and transcendental meditation, which he claims have “put the fear of life into Christians, many of whom have rejected the very idea (of meditation) as unchristian.” Hart concludes by offering for purchase a tape that offers a guided tour of five ways of Christian meditation.

Robert DuPont, Elizabeth DuPont Spencer and Caroline DuPont together presented an eight step program they call ‘The Anxiety Cure’. They declare that fear of fear is at the heart of anxiety disorders and that anxiety is like a dragon that attacks the suffering, anxious person. DuPont et al. explain that this dragon keeps you running scared, and occasionally offers a deal such as, “Give up part of your life and I will give you some peace!”

DuPont et al. also introduce the Wizard – another imaginary creature they find helpful in explaining how to recover from an anxiety problem. This wizard is the personification of the wise teacher who promotes acceptance with the practical knowledge that you need to tame the fear.

DuPont et al. describe the brain science behind anxiety as out-of-control fear; they also go into detail on the pharmacological treatments currently available. They then delineate their eight-step cure, which begins with keeping a journal and doing self-inventories around anxiety symptoms and self-diagnosis.
DuPont et al.’s eight-step cure includes tips on how to face your fears, along with some cognitive-behavioral methods to change thought patterns and suggestions to use support people. They state that, “When it comes to recovery from anxiety disorders – You alone can do it, But you cannot do it alone.”

The authors direct readers to evaluate their medical condition and to assess all possible contributors to their anxiety – including both medicines and caffeine, and social/career situations. They advise on breathing and body-relaxation techniques to help with anxiety.

DuPont clarifies the similarities and differences between stress and anxiety, telling us, “Stress and anxiety are not synonymous, but they are linked through your brain. Stress is externally located, while anxiety is an internal state. Change causes stress. Anxiety is a feeling usually associated with tension, worry, and irritability.”

These authors write about connecting with a Higher Power as helpful. They state firmly, “It is a simple fact that one of the best ways to gain control of your life and to find serenity is to find a spiritual base for your new growth.”

Carlo DiClemente states succinctly, “In my view, change is the antithesis of addiction.” DiClemente has developed the Transtheoretical Model of intentional behavior change, which consists of precontemplation (not yet considering change), contemplation (considering change but not taking action), preparation (planning to change), action (making changes in one’s behavior) and maintenance (changing one’s lifestyle to maintain new behavior). DiClemente believes that change in humans takes place over time. He also states that “the learning needed for successful recovery from an addiction requires learning new behaviors and modification of many other behaviors in order to sustain the change long-term.”
DiClemente et al. conclude that motivation is the most potent predictor of drinking outcomes throughout the post-treatment period, deriving this conclusion from data collected by the Project MATCH Research Group 1997. 

Regarding Anxiety Disorders, in 2009 the National Institute of Mental Health stated that about 40 million American adults are afflicted each year, causing them to be filled with fearfulness and uncertainty. The NIMH publication points out that, “panic disorder is one of the most treatable of all the anxiety disorders, responding in most cases to certain kinds of medication or certain kinds of cognitive psychotherapy, which help change thinking patterns that lead to fear and anxiety.”

The NIMH classifies the following as anxiety disorders: panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, social phobia (or social anxiety disorder), specific phobias, and generalized anxiety disorder. Suggested treatment includes medication such as antidepressants and anti-anxiety medications; also psychotherapy including cognitive-behavioral therapy or exposure-based behavioral therapy.

Neither DiClemente’s work, nor the NIMH publication focuses on any kind of spiritual growth or ego-surrender. The NIMH publication does mention briefly that, “Many people with anxiety disorders benefit from joining a self-help or support group and sharing their problems and achievements with others.” The NIMH publication also states, “Stress management techniques and meditation can help people with anxiety disorders calm themselves and may enhance the effects of therapy.”

Robert M. Sapolsky has thoroughly explored the mechanism of stress and anxiety from a biological perspective; he also discusses addiction from the same perspective.
He states that an addiction can broadly serve two dissociable functions – one involving the gain of positive affects (pleasure), and the other the removal of negative affects (pain, depression, fear, anxiety and stress). He points out that, “Humans, especially westernized humans, have come up with some pretty strange sources of negative emotions -- worrying about and being saddened by purely psychological events that are displaced over space and time.”

Sapolsky lists the negative effects of stress: “Stress can wreak havoc with your metabolism, raise your blood pressure, burst your white blood cells, make you flatulent, ruin your sex life, and if that’s not enough, possibly damage your brain.” He notes that humans with more of an internalized locus of control – the perception that they are the masters of their own destiny – are more resistant in experimental models of learned helplessness. Sapolsky sees these factors as helpful in dealing with stress: sense of control over one’s life, predictability, social support and outlets for frustration.

Sapolsky states that he is an atheist and has no room in his life for spirituality of any kind. However, he also notes that “one of the strongest stress-reducing qualities of social support is the act of giving social support. . . In a world of stressful lack of control, an amazing source of control we all have is the ability to make the world a better place, one act at a time.”

Sapolsky is leery about the benefits of meditation. However he says, “Even when the stressor is bad and your heart is racing in crisis, the goal should be to somehow make the fraction of a second between each heartbeat into an instant that expands in time and allows you to regroup.” Sapolsky also quotes some rather spiritual prayers – Reinhold Niebuhr’s Serenity Prayer, which is used in Alcoholics Anonymous:
God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and wisdom to know the difference. 

Sapolsky also quotes a Quaker prayer:

In the face of strong winds, let me be a blade of grass.
In the face of strong walls, let me be a gale of wind.

Rollo May wrote in 1950 that “we live today in an ‘age of anxiety’.”

May states that anxiety is part of being human; without some anxiety we would be prey animals calmly waiting to be eaten by the predators. He also notes the connection between anxiety and community-belonging. He refers to Jung’s belief that anxiety is the individual’s reaction to the invasion of his conscious mind by irrational forces and images from the collective unconscious. A different view comes from Alfred Adler, who said that anxiety, “can be dissolved solely by that bond which binds the individual to humanity. Only that individual can go through life without anxiety who is conscious of belonging to the fellowship of man.”

May placed anxiety within our modern Western culture, and determined that, “individual competitive success is both the dominant goal in our culture and the most pervasive occasion for anxiety.” In fact he concretely states that modern anxiety is due to the state of “psychological isolation and the lack of the positive value of community, both results of excessive individualism.”

May goes on to explore the close relationship between isolation and anxiety. He notes the dialectical nature of freedom: “in its negative aspect it is freedom from restraints and authority, but in its positive aspect it always involves the question of whether this freedom will be used for new relatedness.”
May points out that anxiety creates hostility; he also notes three feelings associated with anxiety – isolation, insignificance and powerlessness. He defines anxiety as, “the apprehension cued off by a threat to some value that the individual holds essential to his existence as a personality.” He also notes that anxiety “is a signal that something is wrong in one’s personality and one’s human relationships.” However May also normalizes anxiety when he says that our innate anxiety about mortality drives us to create and to give form to things from our imagination.

In terms of treating anxiety, May defines the meaning of anxiety again as indicating “the presence of a contradiction within a person’s value system.” May talks about the individual’s religious attitude towards life defining his value system. Therefore, according to May, resolving anxiety comes through aligning one’s behavior with one’s religious attitude and life values. May turns instead toward discussion of the “realization of the self.” He asks us to: “Consider now the positive aspects of selfhood – freedom, enlarged self-awareness, responsibility. The emergence of individual freedom is very closely connected with anxiety; indeed, the possibility of freedom always arouses anxiety, and how the anxiety is met will determine whether the freedom is affirmed or sacrificed by the individual.” In the end, May determines essentially that the more the self is realized, the more the individual is able to confront and walk through his fears, moving into more creative action.

Joseph Chilton Pearce has also written about anxiety, its causes and resolution. He defines anxiety as “fear without a target”, and declares it a state or “condition of disorder.” According to Pearce, anxiety is the most powerful and pervasive of
all emotions, and can override all sensory information, rational thought, and discrimination.  

Pearce concludes that insight-intelligence operating through consciousness in the only way out of anxiety; this insight must be given, and can be a grace – not of our making and not clearly deserved.  

Pearce says that isolated thinking breeds anxiety, and vice versa.  

The way out of anxiety, according to Pearce, is through being given, “an actual inner demonstration of an inner source of peace and power greater than that we might think we can get through manipulations of our outer world.”  

A study by T.L. Simpson et al. investigate whether Post-traumatic Stress Disorder symptom severity was associated with participation and treatments outcomes by comparing a Vipassana meditation course to treatment as usual in an incarcerated sample.  

While participation in the Vipassana meditation course was associated with significantly greater reductions in substance use than treatment as usual, the study found that Post-traumatic Stress Disorder symptom severity did not differ significantly between those who did and did not take the Vipassana course.  

Williams et al. explored the experiences of participants with severe health anxiety (hypochondriasis), comparing those who received Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy with those would did not receive the treatment. The randomized, controlled trial included semi-structured interviews carried out three months after participants completed Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy in order to explore their experiences of the course and subsequent self-managed practice. Participants reported beneficial impacts of Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy, both on their health anxiety and on their broader functioning.
This final section of the Literature Review has included literature on Obsessive Worry, Anxiety and Addiction. The history of anxiety and its treatment was briefly reviewed, presenting cognitive-behavioral, exposure-based, and pharmaceutical approaches to treatment for anxiety disorders and addiction, as well as the more spiritually-oriented methods of meditation and mindfulness. Some theorists see the cure for anxiety in a more behaviorist view, suggesting the need for ‘re-gaining of control’; others frame anxiety and obsessive worry in terms of individuation and social development.

Conclusion

Spiritual surrender is challenging to describe, especially in a scientific manner. Theologians uses such terms as ‘grace’ and ‘God’; most psychologists do not. For centuries prior to the advent of modern science, theologians spoke of ‘conversion’, being in a ‘state of grace’, and the goal of eternal salvation. With the rise of Western rationalism and science, and the decline of faith in religion, modern man has increasingly struggled not only with addiction, alcoholism and chronic anxiety, but also with how to describe the path out of these afflictions. In recent decades there has been a growth in interest in spirituality and in the benefits of mindfulness and meditation towards alleviating a variety of psychological distress, including addiction and anxiety.

The first section of this Literature Review has placed this dissertation within the framework of Imaginal Transformation Praxis. This comprehensive theory consists of three parts – Imaginal Process, Imaginal Inquiry and Cultural Transformation Praxis.
The second section of this literature review explored spirituality, psychotherapy, and surrender. In the past couple of decades, there has been a renewed interest in spirituality. A large number of psychological practitioners have written books describing various paths of spiritual growth; several are included here, including Rollo May and Robert Sardello. Also reviewed are a number of books on the benefits of Buddhist practices that include the goal of ‘freeing oneself from attachment’; authors in this area include Jack Kornfield, Kevin Griffin, Mark Epstein and Larry Rosenberg.

The third section focused more directly on addiction and surrender. The principle treatises of Alcoholics Anonymous were examined, and some of its principles were traced through earlier publications. Several authors were presented who describe the process of spiritual surrender and recovery from other theoretical stances, including Jungian archetypes, habit theory and systems theory.

The final section brought in literature on obsessive worry, anxiety and addiction. The history of anxiety and its treatment was traced, including its evolutionary roots; Freud’s early description of anxiety was included here. The split is apparent in this section between theorists who seek to treat anxiety as a strictly behavioral disorder, and those who see it both in terms of a step towards individuation and of a societal problem – a ‘dis-ease of our times’.

None of the books or research studies reviewed here addresses the subject of this dissertation – *In what ways does working with the process of spiritual surrender impact imaginal structures related to personal will, freedom, and belonging?* While there are some research reviews based on quantitative studies of people trying to overcome their addictions, there is not a body of research on spiritual surrender. The topic of spiritual
surrender, moreover, lends itself to the in-depth nature of qualitative, rather than quantitative, research.

A number of the authors reviewed do not include the topic of spiritual surrender in their discussions of addiction and/or anxiety at all. Some authors describe the process of recovery in terms of a move away from self-centeredness, towards a new identity, or out of a bad habit. One of the clearest points of difference in these authors is the locus of control in the change of attitude and behavior. Some theorists either state or imply that the individual can choose to change their behavior at some point, while the authors that promote spiritual surrender indicate that the afflicted individual must acknowledge defeat and turn to a higher power of some sort for guidance or ‘grace’.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction and Overview

The research design for this study was participatory in nature, and served to bring forth and explore the Research Problem: In what ways might the practice of spiritual surrender impact imaginal structures related to personal will, freedom, and belonging? The Research Hypothesis was: The practice of surrender will shift imaginal structures regarding personal will, freedom and belonging towards humility, collaboration, and inclusion.

This study utilized the participatory methodology of Imaginal Inquiry; Imaginal Inquiry accesses knowledge ordinarily restricted by dominant ideologies and by psychic structures (imaginal structures) that support normative personal identities; it also facilitates the flow of new knowledge and experience through creative imagination. Through the Imaginal Inquiry research process, knowledge was accessed and created in four inquiry phases. These phases were: Evoking Experience, Expressing Experience, Interpreting Experience, and Integrating Experience.

In the Evoking Experience phase, participants experienced an evoking that brought past experience of spiritual surrender into the present moment. The first part addressed the period of life immediately before their experience of surrender; the second part addressed the period during and just after this experience of surrender. In the afternoon there was an evoking designed to explore a currently unresolved situation.
where surrender might be beneficial. Participants explored a part of themselves that was ready to surrender, and a part that was not.

In the second phase, Expressing Experience, participants expressed their evoked experiences in image and verbal form through artwork and journaling, as well as through written dialogue. Each participant’s expression was gathered as data through their dialogue with their artwork, journaling in response to questions, and transcribed audio-tapes of their verbal sharing with the group.

The third phase, Interpreting Experience, consisted of analyzing the data collected on the research day. My co-researcher and I looked at the data and determined key moments and themes. We also studied key moments identified by the participants. We considered the similarities and differences in our perceptions based upon our own imaginal structures, as well as cultural and archetypal influences. After both the participants’ experience and our own reactions were explored, they were placed in mythic context to give greater meaning and understanding to the data.

The fourth phase, Integrating Experience, consisted of assisting the participants to integrate their research experiences, as well as bringing the research learnings into the psychological community and to society at large. Most of the participants (7 out of 8) attended one of two follow-up meetings.

**Co-Researcher**

Meridian Brady assisted me throughout the research process as my Co-researcher, enhancing the study’s validity by contributing an additional perspective as well as helping out during the data collection and later analysis. She was acquainted with the
research methodology; she possesses a high level of psychological awareness, collaboration, and reflexivity; and she had expressed an enthusiasm for the research topic.

Meridian had been a student at Meridian University for several years, completing her degree in Master’s in Counseling Psychology. Meridian has experience using the Imaginal Inquiry method through the coursework at Meridian University; she also has experience working with the 12-Step model of recovery.

A second Co-researcher unfortunately could not make it at the last minute due to an acute illness.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

Particular restrictions were imposed on the study through the research design that created limitations and delimitations to the research. These restrictions in turn created advantages and disadvantages for the study.

This research was limited to people who had gotten sober through a 12-Step program, and maintained continuous sobriety for at least two years. In addition, they must have had at least a year of individual or group psychotherapy.

The relatively small sample size – eight participants - although typical in qualitative research studies, could be seen as a potential limitation to the generalizability of the study. Generalizability is not a criterion of validity within the participatory research paradigm; rather, authenticity is held as the basis for validity. Further, within the participatory research paradigm, the small participant size is believed to allow for increased research depth and richness of data-producing experience.
There was a built-in time constraint in the research meeting with participants. The research occurred in a one-day, seven-hour meeting. There were also two separate 3-hour follow-up meetings, held 2 weeks after the original research meeting.

Delimitations to this study are those restrictions that I imposed on the study as follows. Making a distinction between research and therapy was a delimitation that helped to protect participants from experiencing affect that might exceed the level appropriate for a one-day research project. A further delimitation to this research was the group format; the group setting can cause participants to limit or somehow shade their sharing due to fear of shame.

**Participants**

My goal was to recruit a group of between eight and ten participants for my study, in order to allow for attrition and to have at least seven participants on the Research Day. In the end, eight participants were present on the Research Day. I recruited both men and women, and attempted to attract an ethnically-diverse population to my study. However, as I drew participants from my local area, their ethnicity followed the local demographics to some degree. My participants were at least 18 years of age; there was no upper limit on age. They could be single, married, divorced or widowed.

I believe that the participants in my study enjoyed exploring their experiences of spiritual surrender, honoring these experiences, and contemplating how to access such experience in an ongoing manner. In the spirit of sharing what you have gained, my participants also expressed interest in sharing their experiences and personal knowledge.
of spiritual surrender with a larger population through the process of my dissertation study.

In terms of essential participant characteristics, I recruited participants with at least two years of continuous sobriety. They must have gotten sober with the help of a 12-Step program such as Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) or Narcotics Anonymous (N.A.). They had to feel as if they experienced some kind of spiritual surrender as a part of this process, and be interested in exploring this process and sharing within a group setting.

My participants had to possess a sufficient level of psychological awareness to enable them to engage in meaningful self-reflection and report. This was evidenced by their current or past participation in psychotherapy, and by their dialogue and behavior in the preliminary interview phase. They had to be willing to work in a group setting for the research day, and be somewhat comfortable with art modalities such as drawing, painting, clay, and creative writing. I also wanted participants who had some experience with meditation.

There were personal characteristics that would exclude people from participation in my study. Individuals could not be diagnosed with any serious mental illness such as schizophrenia, bi-polar, or major depression unless they were being treated, and their therapist and/or psychiatrist agreed to their participation. Participants could not be developmentally disabled.

Participants were first recruited by public flyers, by e-mail announcements, and by personal entreaty at A.A. meetings. The flyers were posted in locations frequented by sober members of 12-Step groups and in other locations where people congregate who might be interested in exploring the topic of spiritual surrender (i.e. local coffee shops).
E-mail announcements were sent to several local psychotherapists and drug and alcohol rehab centers.

I also spread the word personally, asking for participants at 12-Step A.A. meetings. I asked for individuals with at least two years of stable sobriety, who have had at least one year of psychotherapy. While I did have some responses from these entreaties, I was surprised not to get more offers of participation. A.A. is an organization built around the principle that through helping others, one is able to maintain one’s own spiritual condition and sobriety. I was under the impression that because I was excited about my research, and because it relates to the spiritual surrender that helps people get sober, that many more people would step up to help than was the case. By the time I was two weeks or so away from my Research Day, I had only confirmed about five people for my study.

I then decided to put out the word through the alumni of the drug and alcohol rehab center in Marin County where I had gotten sober myself in 2006. I had not previously recruited from this population, as it is over an hour’s drive from Marin to the location I was using for the study. There could have been complications for the Research Day in having participants who know each other from other settings; also I would have preferred having participants whom I had never met prior to the research. However, when I put the word out by e-mail and social media to the rehab center alumni community that I was in need of participants for my study, I had six volunteers within a few days. They filled all of my qualifications for inclusion in the study, and were happy to participate, even though it meant long drives for most of them.
It was just as well that I recruited extra participants at the last minute, because within the last 48 hours prior to my Research Day I had three cancellations, bringing the final number of participants to eight.

I used a questionnaire to screen participants; this could be filled out over the phone, by e-mail, or in written form. In the end I conducted most of the screening interviews over the phone. I told potential participants that my study was about the nature of spiritual surrender, and that I was exploring the results that currently-sober people had experienced from such a surrender.

I advised potential participants by phone either of their inclusion in the study or their exclusion. If they were excluded, I told them that their participation was not required, as they did not fully meet the profile for participation in the study; I thanked them for their willingness to participate, and offered to forward to them the results of the study once it was finished.

Participants who were accepted into the study received notification by phone of their acceptance. They were also mailed a packet including a confirmation letter, a description of the study, and an Informed Consent form. The description of the study included information about the discipline of Imaginal Psychology, the significance of my research, the plan for the research day, and the voluntary nature of the study.

Confidentiality was formally described in the Informed Consent form and at the research meeting. It was clarified that, although I asked them to keep their fellow participants’ identities confidential, I was not asking for this same agreement of confidentiality for myself and for my co-researcher. Participants could freely discuss
anything I or my co-researcher did or said, and could freely provide the names of myself and my co-researcher to anyone outside of the study.

I held my research day at the Valley Presbyterian Church in Portola Valley, California. I had originally reserved a small room with a wonderful, picture-window view across a creek and through the redwoods, but this would have required using outside tables to do art and to write on, and it was the rainy season. In the week prior to my Research Day, I had the good fortune to be able to move our research into a bigger space, in which we could do all of the evoking exercises, art-making, journaling, etc., without having to go outside. There was also an attached kitchen and plenty of chairs and tables available; a friend helped with lunch preparation and serving. The day proved to be somewhat stormy and wet, so I was very glad to have upgraded our room prior to the research day.

Informed consent forms were signed at the beginning of the research day, after I read the entire form and the participants had the chance to ask me any clarifying questions about the study.

I had a second, follow-up meeting planned for two weeks after the main Research Day. While the main day had gone very well, soon afterwards it became apparent that most, if not all, of the six participants who had travelled an hour or more to come for the main Research Day would struggle, for a variety of reasons to return for the second scheduled meeting two weeks later. The two participants who lived closer by were planning to attend. After consulting with my Dissertation Chair, Melissa Schwartz, it was agreed that I could run two Follow-up Meetings instead of one. I ran one meeting Saturday April 7, 2012, at the Valley Presbyterian Church in Portola Valley, and the
second meeting on Monday April 9, 2012, in San Rafael. In these meetings I presented participants with my preliminary learnings and obtained their feedback. To assist with closure from the research experience, they also made a collage symbolizing their spiritual surrender, recovery, and how they felt about their participation in the research study.

I asked my several of my participants their opinions on why it was so difficult to ensure everyone’s attendance at the follow-up meeting, and had the following interesting conversation with one of my participants:

Researchers: “Okay, so you had said that as alcoholics we were…did you say that we were the ‘most unreliable group of people on the planet’?”
Participant: “In my experience I have never met a more dysfunctional, abnormal group of people, as a general rule.”
Researchers: “And do you think this has contributed to the difficulty in getting this second meeting together?”
Participant: “Without a doubt. The second meeting should have been held 15 minutes after the first meeting.”
Researchers: “Now it was my feeling that alcoholics, in general, are not great rule followers, and not very good at reading the fine print, and thinking that it applies to them.”
Participant: “Yes, I would say that we are very much a group of people that go ‘Yeah, I’ll sign. Yeah, where do I sign.’ Without ever looking at anything, and again, a group notoriously…I mean it’s almost in our genetic makeup to not pay attention to…how do I want to put this politely. We suck at accountability.”
Four Phases of Imaginal Inquiry

Evoking Experience: Phase One

Prior to my day of study with the participants, I asked them to reflect back on their initial experience of spiritual surrender – whether there was a discrete incident they remember, or whether the process happened for them over time. I asked them to find an object or image(s) honoring their experience of spiritual surrender. They were asked to bring this object or image to our research day. I also asked the participants to reflect on things in the world that they currently worry about, covet, fear losing, or obsess over. I asked them to bring a symbol of this to our research day as well.

On the morning of the research day, I had the participants sit in a circle in chairs. I went over the format for the day and reviewed the confidentiality rules. I read the entire Informed Consent form, and the signed forms were collected. Participants were reminded that the Research Day would be audio taped, with portions later to be transcribed for use in the dissertation. I gave a brief talk about group rules and confidentiality so as to have no confusion or unpleasantness regarding these issues. Participants were reminded that their participation in the research was completely voluntary, and that they could leave at any time they wished.

We began with an introduction ritual where my Co-Researcher and I introduced ourselves. Next, the participants introduced themselves, and each said something about what had drawn them to this study. Participants were invited to notice how they were feeling as they began the day of exploration, and to share this in a word or phrase. They
each lit a candle, and placed it in a candelabra to symbolize their willingness to explore their own spiritual surrender with the group.

The first evoking experience activity began with watching two short film clips – the first one set to the song “Party Girl” by Despite the Virus, showing young women in many forms of extreme inebriation. Some were vomiting; several had urinated on themselves. It was very intense and disturbing. The second film clip was from the movie “Leaving Las Vegas”; it was titled Getting the Fear. This film clip was slightly lighter-hearted than the “Party Girl” one. It had more of a ‘circus gone bad’ feel to it, and reminded us of drug and alcohol-induced psychosis, de-toxing, etc. Lastly I read a poem, entitled “The Party Past”, that I wrote while in rehab myself in 2006.

The Party Past

Run, run, run...
Laughter that is not funny,
Sex that is not love.
Run, run, run...
Dissonance and chaos,
Shrieking demons,
Death stalking.
Run, run, run...
The party is over;
Everyone has gone home.
I open my eyes
And find myself alone.
Or let them close,
And slip into the blackness.

The poem was followed by a short meditation where the participants were taken back to the time just prior to their initial experience of spiritual surrender. Participants were asked to remember what that time was like for them, while the images from the film clips and poem were still echoing in their minds.
To begin the second evoking experience, each participant chose a photo of a beautiful scene in nature from a collection that I had taken over the past couple of years. They were given a few minutes to contemplate either this photo, or the object or image that they had brought from home that represented their spiritual surrender and recovery. Participants were then invited to join with me in reciting A.A.’s 3rd Step Prayer as follows:

**The Third Step Prayer**

God, I offer myself to Thee-
To build with me
and to do with me as Thou wilt.
Relieve me of the bondage of self,
that I may better do Thy will.
Take away my difficulties,
that victory over them may bear witness
to those I would help of Thy Power,
May I do Thy will always!

Next there was a guided, heart-centered meditation where the participants were taken back to the time of their initial experience of spiritual surrender, whether it was a sudden experience, or a phenomenon that occurred over time. They were asked about what that time was like for them - the period of, and immediately after, their spiritual surrender.

After a 40-minute lunch break, we addressed a situation where participants currently feel stuck – a situation where spiritual surrender might be helpful, but they feel that they have not taken that step yet. Participants were invited to share the object they brought that symbolizes this stuck place.
In the first meditation on their ‘Current Issue,’ I asked the participants to concentrate to on the part of themselves that does not want to, or is not ready to surrender. I asked them to feel the wants, needs, drives, thoughts, and emotions of this part of themselves, and to feel its firm, unyielding position throughout their bodies.

In the second meditation, participants tried to access the part of themselves that is ready to surrender in a way that they feel will help to resolve the troubling situation. To help them with this, I read William Stafford’s poem “A Ritual to Read Together,” followed by another heart-centered meditation, and an entreaty “to relax, to stop trying to force a solution, and to allow a solution to come from somewhere beyond you.”

Following each of the two meditations, participants had made clay figurines representing each part of themselves, and dialogued with them to explore their positions. Next I had the participants place the two figures on a surface facing each other. The participants imagined into each figure’s feelings towards the other.

Finally, I invited the participants to join me in speaking the Prayer of St. Francis together; after which they stepped back into each of the two figure positions to see if anything in their relationship with one another had shifted.

In closing for the day, participants were ask to speak a phrase or a few sentences, or use a gesture to describe their overall experience or learning from our Research Day. Then together we blew out the candles.

Expressing Experience: Phase Two

The Expressing Experience phase was designed to collect data on participants’ evoked experience from the Evoking Experiences phases of the research. In order to
gather the data, an Expressing Experience phase was included after each Evoking Experience activity. This means that the data collection occurred in sequences as follows: evoking activity, expressive arts and journaling, dialoguing with their art pieces, and verbal sharing with the group.

After the first Evoking Experience (‘Pre-Surrender’) there was time for drawing or painting images that arose regarding participants’ experience prior to their initial spiritual surrender. Participants then dialogued in written form with their art piece. They were then asked to share verbally with the group their experience in the guided meditation and with their art piece. All verbal sharing during the research day was audio taped, and most was later transcribed for use in the writing of the dissertation.

Again after the second Evoking Experience (‘Post-Surrender’) there was time for drawing or painting regarding participants’ experience during and after their initial spiritual surrender. They again dialogued in written form with their art piece. Participants were then asked to share verbally with the group their experience in the guided meditation and with their art piece.

After lunch we researched the ‘Current Issue’ that was troubling each of the research participants. After each of two evokings, participants made a clay figure – the first one symbolizing the part of themselves that is reluctant to surrender, and the second one symbolizing that part that is ready to surrender. They dialogued with their clay figures, and wrote in response to set questions. The participants then had the clay figures interact with each other, and they wrote about that interaction.

Lastly, after a Group Prayer, the participants again had the clay figures interact with each other, and afterwards wrote about this interaction. Participants were then asked
to verbally share with the group about their experience in the ‘Current Issue’ guided meditation and in their dialogue with the clay figures.

At the end of the day participants shared with the group a word, phrase or gesture symbolizing their overall experience or ‘learning’ from our Research Day. While all of these expressions were verbal, the last participant’s share stood out from the others as she sang in a beautiful voice, “The Rose (some say love)”, a song made famous by Bette Midler.

**Interpreting Experience: Phase Three**

My co-researcher, Meridian, assisted me during the research day, and afterwards in the interpretation phase. She has a graduate degree in Psychology, has experience using a 12-Step program, and has had her own experiences of spiritual surrender. I had planned to have two co-researchers assist in my study, but at the last minute the other planned co-researcher was sick and could not attend.

I used the intuitive approach for data interpretation, looking for key moments and themes in the data. I presented my preliminary findings back to the participants for their reflections and expansion in two follow-up meetings, prior to finalizing them.

I have contextualized my findings within the theories that I have studied in the literature review phase of the dissertation process, and reflected upon the learnings that came out of this study, using the archetype of the Rainbow and the legend of the Rainbow Warriors as a mythic backdrop.
Integrating Experience: Phase Four

At the end of our research day, participants had a chance to briefly share with the group how the day had made them feel. We had a closing circle where participants listened to a poem, and they were asked to offer a word, phrase or gesture to the group. After the closing my co-researcher and I photographed artwork and collected the written journals.

The participants and I met again two weeks after the initial study day. I presented my initial findings to them and asked for feedback. The participants also had a chance to share any further reflections that they had on the research.

The participants in my study will be sent copies of the completed Summary of Learnings section of my dissertation.
CHAPTER 4

LEARNINGS

It is part of what we must learn in this age, namely to live out of pure trust, without any security in existence, trusting in the very present help of the spiritual world.

Truly, nothing else will do; for if our courage is not to fail, let us discipline our will. And let us seek the awakening from within ourselves every morning and every evening.

- Rudolf Steiner

Introduction and Overview

The Research Problem for this study was: In what ways might the practice of surrender affect imaginal structures related to personal will, freedom and belonging? The hypothesis was: The practice of surrender will shift imaginal structures regarding personal will, freedom and belonging towards humility, collaboration, and inclusion.

Cumulative Learning: Spiritual Surrender - a Path to Everywhere

The Cumulative Learning for this study proposes that spiritual surrender can begin to have a transmuting effect on imaginal structures regarding personal will, freedom and belonging in such a way that the individual is able to interface more dynamically with the world, moving from an egocentric individualism to a heart-based, authentic individuality.

The will is what “organizes, restrains, and enlists impulse in an infinite variety of ways to create a life characterized by spontaneity as well as control.”

ccclv Spiritual
surrender can be described as “an increasing acceptance of the truth about human power and control, and a growing recognition of reality regarding the ultimate source of power.” Surrender involves releasing one’s long-held sense of self and allowing a new identity to emerge; it has been described as the ‘opening of the heart’, which requires suspension of not only the head-based intellect, but also letting go of all “concern for our image of self in the public eye – identity of self as rational, responsible, and respectable.”

*

**Imaginal structures** are “assemblies of sensory, affective, and cognitive aspects of experience constellated into images; they both mediate and constitute experience . . . During the individuation process, imaginal structures are transmuted into emergent and enhanced capacities as well as a transformed identity.”

The egocentric individual is self-centered and self-absorbed. According to Robert Sardello, “Egotism is the illusion of belonging to ourselves . . . [Egocentric] individualism consists of a one-sided development of the ego. Here, the ego may take in all the surrounding world has to offer, all the soul realm has to offer, all the spirit realm has to offer, but it does not create anything from what has been received.”

Heart-based individuality, on the other hand, “consists of continually giving out to the world as a response to the act of taking in what the world offers.” When living in heart-based individualism, one lives with purpose and creativity. “Purpose involves the perfect alignment of inner impulse toward individuality with outer activity in the world . . . coming to the sense of purpose involves the act of continually releasing whatever and whoever we think we are. This act of releasing becomes a new habit, not merely something that is done until we find our ‘real’ purpose.”
Five major learnings emerged from the analysis and interpretation of the data collected in the main research day and the two follow-up meetings:

Learning One proposes that the imaginal structures related to the constriction of freedom can begin to transmute in the process of spiritual surrender, thus allowing the individual a measure of relief from obsessive thinking, compulsive, addictive behavior, and the need for over-control of both external events and internal emotional responses. Learning Two proposes that spiritual surrender can begin to reverse the vortex of isolation and darkness, common in addiction and alcoholism, that leads to ‘jails, institutions, and death’. Learning Three proposes that the humility that can come through surrender involves a right-sizing of the sense of self in both directions - both a downsizing of the sense of self (through acceptance of being out-of-control), and at the same time an increase in the feeling of self-worth and responsibility for one’s actions. Learning Four proposes that spiritual surrender is an ongoing process rather than a discrete event. Learning Five proposes that in order for spiritual surrender to occur, there needs to be a softening of the boundaries of the individual’s sense of self.

The remainder of this chapter explores each of these five learnings in detail. All participants have been given pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality.

**Learning One: The See-saw of Freedom - Freedom “from” and Freedom “to”**

The primary claim of this learning is that the imaginal structures related to the constriction of freedom can begin to transmute in the process of spiritual surrender, thus allowing the individual a measure of relief from obsessive thinking, compulsive, addictive behavior, and the need for over-control of both external events and their own internal emotional responses. Freedom can thus be seen as a paradoxical issue in
addiction; it is not a black and white move from one behavior to another. Rather, here freedom is understood as involving the development of a capacity for discretion and balance, following the guidance of the heart. Freedom can also include the responsibility for positive action; it is not a free pass to apathy and inaction. The Serenity Prayer used by Alcoholics Anonymous refers to this capacity when it states:

“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

What Happened

The key moment for this learning occurred when “Mark” (pseudonym) said, “I became befuddled by the fact that this (my addiction) was something that I actually could not control; the idea of self-will while I was an addict for me was complete fallacy. I don’t believe that it was myself that wanted me to do the things that I did everyday for years and years. So, I was left very puzzled that my brain, at a lot of times in my life, is not my friend...” This moment was echoed in my follow-up discussion with Mark about pre-surrender behavior, when he pondered, “So, is it out of control, or is it actually very controlled, stringently controlled, but just controlled by another aspect of ourselves that we don’t have power over?”

Mark’s statement about his brain not completely being his ‘friend’ suggests that the directions coming from his brain (in addiction, but also somewhat in sobriety) are not necessarily accurate, nor in his best interest. Mark was pondering the question of who or what part of me is in control, and who or what part of me should be in control.

At the beginning of the main Research Day, after an introduction and opening ritual, I showed two evocative film clips of out-of-control, drunken behavior
(“Party Girl” and “Leaving Las Vegas”), and then read a poem (“The Party Past”) that I wrote in early sobriety. I then asked participants to close their eyes and travel back in time to their own difficult time, prior to the experience of spiritual surrender that helped get them sober. All of my participants had qualified for my study because they had an experience of spiritual surrender that had helped them get sober. They quietly stayed with their own images for a bit, and then proceeded to draw or paint what had come to them. When we came back together as a group, a number of stories and images emerged around the issues of freedom and control.

There were several participant stories of desperately attempting to controlling the supplies of alcohol and drugs during their periods of active addiction.

“Will” (pseudonym) said, “My comfort level for about 10 years was the big bottle of vodka, the one with the handle on it on a daily basis. At the end of the day when I get about an inch left I was nervous about the next day’s supply....” And “Cathy” (pseudonym) said, “It was a lot of work, a lot of work to stay on top of my game...I had to have enough alcohol, enough drugs, everything, there...Because where I lived, it wasn’t like I’m going to drop down to the store... No, no, no, no, you had to get all that done before I got the kids. Before I got to dinner, before I got anything that was number one.”

Controlling and avoiding uncomfortable emotions such as shame is another pattern that emerged in the stories. “John” (pseudonym) said, “I think pretty early on I was a “never try”- so I never try, I never have to fail...”

Often alcoholics and addicts have an inflated concept of what they can control in life. The following participant quotes illustrate this eloquently:
John: “I think we have a lot of rebel pride. I think we have an abnormal level.”

“Kristin” (pseudonym): “Yeah. There we go. Control issues. We think we can handle everything.”

Even in considering getting sober, alcoholics can want to keep a sense of control. Will said, “I said to my wife that I thought I could get some – maybe get some help just so I could get to 5:00 before I needed my first drink. I didn’t want to quit drinking, I just wanted to be able to get to happy hour without a drink, because I was drinking 24/7."

But even within this super-controlling behavior that is often part of the alcoholic’s repertoire, there is an element that is being controlled by something else - the addiction. When Will was asked if he felt free, he replied, “No, I was absolutely trapped inside the bottle...that was the deepest relationship I’ve had with anything in my life, and the longest lasting.”

Later on I had participants revisit the period just after their spiritual surrender to see what had changed in the participants’ worlds, and to try to get a sense of what the surrender was all about. Participants’ experiences of freedom and control had shifted.

John has found some comfort in his sense of accomplishment within the 12-Step program, indicating that not all sense of control is a bad thing: “I felt bullied my whole life a little or whatever, and no one can out-recovery me, that was what I really liked, I think what was really exciting to me about this 12-Step Program.” Today John feels that he has some degree of control over his recovery – that it doesn’t depend on others’ opinions of him.

An image of the beautiful freedom that spiritual surrender can bring came in “Linda’s” (pseudonym) experience: “It was such a freedom...feeling filled up with love
that I’d never felt in my life, and that is the freedom that I never in my life experienced ever, ever. It was inexplicable…”

“Max” (pseudonym): “… I think when I worked the steps with my sponsor... I just felt like he said the freedom, and I just felt a release that it’s difficult to put into words, but I felt free and then peace …”

Mark had externalized his addiction and took action against it by getting sober: “Then that was followed by anger real quick because this disease has taken out other people in my family and people that I care about and it took out a large part of my life. And I was pissed, and I look at it as something on my shoulder in that moment, and I looked at it, and I’m like, I can’t deal with it if it’s in here, but if it’s there, all I got to do is piss it off. It had to be that simple for me…. “You don’t want me to do this, than that’s what I’m going to do because you don’t want me to do it. And I was angrier than I’d ever been in my life, before and after, in that moment at [the addiction]...”

In working within the 12-Step program in sobriety, Kristin’s sponsor told her to find an experience where you have to “physically feel what it’s like to let God take control,” so that she could practice surrendering on an ongoing basis. She told the group that she found this experience months after getting sober when scuba-diving; thrashing about, the water was muddy and she was fearful about the lack of visibility; when she finally relaxed and stopped thrashing about, then the water cleared.

After lunch we worked with a current issue in life where participants felt like surrender would be beneficial, but where they were struggling to let go. Kristin said, “There is a very large part of me that doesn’t want to let go... So it’s like kind of when
you get newly sober and those emotions, they come and they’re scary ... and you realize that as a sober person you’re going to have to face them and the time in which to do so will impact how soon you can get to a point of serenity.”

“In sobriety ... life problems are so much harder to control. I mean really honestly, with drinking, I mean I just needed to get drunk....”

Mark: “the minute that I believe that I have control over it, then my ego gets back involved, because it is something that [I think] I have accomplished...”

How I Was Affected

When Mark spoke about how he didn’t feel like it was himself that wanted him to do “the things he did for years and years,” it made me sad. I felt the lost years in my heart – all the sadness of the time people waste abusing drugs and alcohol while seeking relief from distress, excitement, happiness, or something else.

The discussions around controlling the supply of drugs and alcohol in the pre-surrender part of our research day were very serious; for all of us, when we were being driven by our addictions, this was very serious business. I remember how uncomfortable detoxing, or trying to be sober, was for me in my dark times. I remembered in my body how those things felt, and the lengths to which I would go to try to feel (or not feel) a certain way.

The discussions around controlling emotions, especially fear and shame, brought up memories for me. I remember not wanting to try to get sober because I had no idea what life without alcohol would be like, and I was sure that I couldn’t do it anyway. Also I remember the fear of facing my troubles and my past behaviors - the ‘wreckage of the
past’ - full-on sober. My co-researcher, Meridian, agreed that surrender frees one from addiction, but also, in her words, “leaves one to face the demons.”

What really struck me here was the physicality of being controlled by one’s addiction. I can remember in the cells of my body what the craving felt like – the desire to relax into oblivion, the tension beforehand. I really liked what Kristin’s sponsor had told her about finding a practice where you physically let God take control. I had never heard anything like this before – connecting A.A. to physical practice - but I think it’s a great idea to practice techniques to relax your body and mind, and surrender to something greater than yourself.

**Imaginal Structures in Use**

Reflecting upon the issues of freedom and control takes me back to the reason I liked losing myself in alcohol and drugs in the first place. Drinking gave me a chance to relax, and to ‘not be me’ for a while. I think I was always very driven to perform and to achieve; when I allowed myself to sink into my addiction, it felt like allowing someone (or something) else to be in charge for a bit, and let ‘me’ relax.

Growing up I always wanted to please my parents, especially my mother, who was a very high-achieving academic, physician, and mental health professional. I found school easy, but also strove to be a super-achiever all the time. When I found alcohol and drugs, it felt like a way-out of my over-achieving oriented stress. For many years I was able to perform at a high level in many areas of my life, and then relax when the work was done – drinking and sometimes doing drugs. Later in my drinking and using career, the substances seemed to dictate more and more of my life, eroding “my” freedom to choose my behavior and its consequences.
An integral part of feeling out of control as an addict or alcoholic is the shame and embarrassment one feels about being unable to control your own actions. As the primary researcher in this study the character within me who wants to be correct and to have everything under control was very much present on the research day.

**Theoretical Concepts**

The issue of freedom and the anxiety it can bring is central to this learning. With freedom comes the possibility of choice, and the accompanying responsibility. Rollo May contemplated this issue in depth. He stated, “Consider now the positive aspects of selfhood – freedom, enlarged self-awareness, responsibility. The emergence of individual freedom is very closely connected with anxiety; indeed, the possibility of freedom always arouses anxiety, and how the anxiety is met will determine whether the freedom is affirmed or sacrificed by the individual.”

Robert Sardello addresses this issue in his statement, “Our choosing to live in the noise of our thoughts and emotions – within the incessant clamor around us – happens almost without our recognition… Moments of quiet remind us that we have neglected the core of our being, and we cannot face the implications of this neglect. Anxiety enters. It’s better to keep running away from it.”

The individual’s perceived locus of control is a central issue in spiritual surrender. William R. Miller reports that, “A frequent theme (in quantum change) is control. Sometimes the insight has to do with the need to stop trying to control and instead to accept that which is beyond personal control.”

Kevin Griffin also writes about what form the surrender of control can take in the 12-Step process when he says, “It’s this
giving ourselves over that happens in Step Three, letting go, at least to some significant
degree, of our own control. Just being willing to take the advice of a trusted friend,
mentor, teacher, or sponsor is a huge movement away from acting out of our own ego-
driven impulses.” ccclxv Robert Sardello points out that, “… ego-consciousness does not
know how to witness; it has to feel itself at the center of our consciousness and in charge,
to the point that it identifies itself as the whole of consciousness.” ccclxvi

In A.A.’s Third Step prayer, the individual asks for direction from a Higher
Power, essentially saying “Thy will, not mine, be done.” This is a manner of
relinquishing control. Joseph Chilton Pearce states, “. . . in opening to the heart we
abandon all possibility and identity as known, giving our self-as-mind to that self-as-heart
– and no longer claiming jurisdiction over either. For our identity no longer tries or needs
to be in charge.” ccclxvii

Fear of failure is another concept brought up by this learning. M. Scott Peck
addresses this well in his statement, “The need for control – to ensure the desired
outcome – is at least partially rooted in the fear of failure. For me to empty myself of my
over-controlling tendencies I must continually empty myself of this fear. I must be
willing to fail.” ccclxviii

The need for balance between heart and mind is also brought up by this learning.
Kevin Griffin says that, “One of the Middle Way teaching of the Buddha points to the
need for balance between faith and wisdom, between openheartedness and
discrimination. If we are to develop our spiritual life, we need to have both of these. We
need to be able to access the soft, accepting, loving, and compassionate place in ourselves
we call ‘the heart.’ Here we discover the sense of connection with others and with the
universe; we learn to live with uncertainty; to trust in our intuition; to take risks based on this intuition. We need to be able to ‘turn our will and our lives over to the care of God’ and venture deeper into the spiritual life, even though we don’t know where it will lead or if it even makes sense. This is the power of faith.”

Griffin also notes how freedom is gained through the letting go of desire and attachment: “In the Third Noble Truth, the Buddha sees that when desire ends, suffering ends; when we let go of craving, the pain dissolves. He sees in this letting go the possibility of freedom.”

Interpretations

The wanton, shameless, out-of-control, ‘free’ behavior that characterizes the addict prior to spiritual surrender reflects a false freedom. The addict/alcoholic actually feels incredibly trapped and locked in. The individual seeks some feeling of freedom through their use of drugs and alcohol; instead, while using, they find themselves completely trapped and controlled by their need for the substance. The substance(s), and the addicted brain, are doing the controlling. Even in sobriety, the cognitions of the newly-sober individual are not always to be trusted completely; learning to follow a deeper intuition of the heart grows as a capacity over time. The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous states, “What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind.”

The literature on addiction repeatedly notes the theme of the addicted individual trying to control everything in their environment – both external situations and internal feelings. By this super-controlling behavior, the individual is seeking freedom from
engagement with and commitment to others, from rules, and from uncomfortable emotions such as shame, fear, sadness, loneliness and anger. Control issues themselves tend to be a reaction to fear of the unknown – an unwillingness to let go and trust. Fear of failure often is at the root of many of our problems, including sometimes even fear of trying to get sober. John said about his childhood, “I think pretty early on I was a never-try – so I never try, I never have to fail...” The levels of control are like nested Russian dolls. We try to control internal feelings and external situations, while we are, in turn controlled by our addictions.

In surrender we ease our need to control, and through doing so we are able to relax. We allow ourselves to be touched by others, and to feel the full range of our emotions. Not only am I not in control (“I am not God.”); but also I don’t have to try to pretend things are fine, and I don’t need to try to organize everything all the time.

Controlling emotions is a central issue for alcoholics and addicts. They tend to not have had a lot of successful experiences ‘feeling the feelings’ sober (of sadness, pain, loneliness, anger, even joy), having learned how to deaden all emotions through substances. Kristin talked about how things sometimes are harder to deal with in sobriety than they were when she was ‘out there’.

This is definitely a very physical learning, as any addicted individual can describe the physicality of their cycles of craving and relief during the active addiction. It brings to mind the relief and benefit that we get through physical exercise, and the importance of feeling grounded in the body and on the earth.
Validity

Validity in the participatory paradigm depends upon the authenticity with which the research is conducted; it is established through intersubjectivity, which entails accounting for all aspects of an intersubjective field, inclusive of researcher, co-researchers, and participants. The data from the research experience is then compared and contrasted with relevant literature and with prior research. The experience of the participants in my study was accounted for in both verbal and written formats. The verbal responses were recorded and later professionally transcribed. There were several journal-writing opportunities for participants during the research day in which they wrote about how they were affected by the evoking experiences, and to describe what their artwork meant to them. Participants were also invited to discuss responses to the initial learnings at the two follow-up meetings that were held – one in Portola Valley and the other in San Rafael.

My experience and that of my co-researcher, Meridian, was accounted for through our note-taking on the research day, and by our follow-up meetings over the phone and by e-mail. In these conversations we reviewed our own experience of the research day and the data that was produced; we expressed how we were affected; we explored similarities and differences between our impressions of what happened and our reactions to that.

In later correspondence and conversations, Meridian reviewed my initial findings. The validity of this learning was indeed supported by Meridian’s agreement with my findings. Validity for this learning was enhanced with further review and feedback from Meridian; she wrote, “When using, one is free from negative feelings yet trapped by the
addiction. In surrender, one is free from addiction but now needing to face the demons. Now that I am sober, I feel free but I also feel trapped because I can’t ever have a drink again. It doesn’t feel fair that I ended up an addict when others can drink responsibly, and yet I try to see this as a gift of warrior training that makes me a better person.”

Learning Two: Reversing the Fatal Vortex of Darkness

The primary claim of this learning is that spiritual surrender can begin to reverse the vortex of isolation and darkness, common in addiction and alcoholism, that leads to ‘jails, institutions, and death’. Prior to their experience of spiritual surrender, research participants almost unanimously reported that they had been heading towards isolation, darkness, and death - a place where there is a lack of imagination to do anything different. By contrast, having experienced a spiritual surrender that helped them to get sober, participants reported movement into community, experiencing a sense of lightness, love, and creativity.

What Happened

The key moment of this learning was when Kristin broke down crying during her recounting of what came to her during and after the first evoking exercise – the two disturbing film clips and poem. Through her sobs, she managed to say, “So, the video of the girls – that was me... And you just don’t want to be that, you don’t want to be the person who did that, or had that happen to. Oh God! You know it got to a point where I didn’t care if I died. I wanted to die.” Kristin was feeling hopeless and trapped before she surrendered.
In describing the moment of surrender, “Mary” (pseudonym) said, “...The night before the intervention, when I couldn’t get a hold of my dealer, I felt a feeling of infinity.” Mary felt the change from the constricting spiral of despair and darkness to the opposite – expanding to infinity.

The stories people told, and the images that had came to them in their pre-surrender meditation, were heart-wrenching, sad, disturbing, and at points somewhat disgusting. When the participants shared their stories, they came from deep places. The people who participated in my study had not gotten sober before their lives had become dark (and for some extremely so). Every single person in the group had spent time in rehab centers, some in jail, some in the hospital. These were individuals with significantly painful pre-surrender experiences. Some dialogue from the pre-surrender discussion illustrates how far down the spiral towards darkness and death people had gone, and how isolated one can be at that point.

“Mary” (pseudonym): “What stands out is just sort of being at the – like at the limits, constantly at the limits. Obviously having a will to die...”

Will: “...I never really thought about killing myself drinking, but I was also certainly doing it.”

Cathy: “Because no one could know, no one could – I couldn’t tell anybody, you know... I was not fit to be in public at that point in my life and my world got small. It got really small...it makes me – my skin crawl when I think about what I did and how long I did it.”

Mark: “You know I can drag out the stories about smoking crack until all my teeth fell out and having seizures every day and yada, yada, yada...”
Max: “I was holed up in an apartment. I had neuropathy so bad in my feet and my fingers I couldn’t feel them, and I was in the Kaiser Hospital emergency room, five times in eight months, three times by ambulance. I had a cab driver who I befriended who would bring me my wine, and that was my life. I mean I was evicted from that apartment and the power was turned off, and I was drinking by candlelight and it was pretty bad, and there was no spiritual anything. It was – I was in an abyss and it was chaos, confusion . . . I wasn’t showering. I wasn’t brushing my teeth. I had two grand mal seizures…” “They called the priest for me.”

John: “I was doing it [getting sober] because of the law. There was no like “Godness”, or being nicer to other people – it was for me to get out of jail, then to probably go back to my miserable little existence.”

Mark: “I came to the realization that death would be better than what I was doing. I had to jump the fence.”

The artwork participants developed after the first evoking activity reflected the darkness and constriction of their lives prior to spiritual surrender. Will said, “My picture is something of the sunshine being clouded over in my life.” And Linda said, “I have a picture of a lock . . . I (was) just very isolated and just very locked inside my head.”

During or after spiritual surrender, some participants talked of experiencing more light, as well as feeling physically lighter themselves.

Will: “... I think I’m past the threshold where I’m seeing a lot more light than I used to. I feel light – I mean thousands of pounds lighter…”

Cathy: “Yep. I’m in a spiritual condition; I’ll let stuff go... and I’m travelling lighter.”
Linda: “It was really like standing in the sunlight, and it – literally that was because it was outside the garden…It was such a freedom…feeling filled up with love that I’d never felt in my life experience ever, ever. It was inexplicable.”

John: “One day, I was sitting there, in the sun, and I was like, ‘Holy Shit! That feels good.’ And I was like, I find it more than ironic that the Spanish word for this is sol, because it wasn’t hitting my skin. I felt like, I was like ‘Wow, that is softening my heart.’ But it was one of those times where I was like, ‘What I’m doing is right, right now. I am right where I am supposed to be, experiencing what I am supposed to experience despite anything else my head is telling me’. And it was like, ‘Boom!’ and I was like, ‘Ha.’ And, you know for me that’s where I chalk up…the miracles or the light. That lightness was like, ‘Wow, I can do it.’

Kristin: “And I saw what I imagined vividly and what a pain is it like to, you know, the darkness and then like my loved ones just looking in and like terrified, you know. Not understanding that I wanted to… die . . . I didn’t care about myself, I cared about the people in my life that love me, and so that’s, that was the moment. It’s like for some reason, I saw that I wasn’t just an island unto myself.”

Also in the post-surrender phase of data collection, the following images emerged:

John: “…I got a token, or one of our anniversary chips, and a bunch of people clapped for me. And it was like, Whoop! Whoop! – I got a big Whoop! Whoop! – or whatever, and it made me feel included. Not fake included, or not like I did my whole life (where it was all made up). But it was like, this is my clique, or my group. I am a part of
And I think that’s when I really started developing a faith that I was like, oh wow, something’s working here. Something is happening.”

Kristin: “And there was a counselor there who I grew up playing soccer with – who just came around the corner. And I knew her really well, and she was like, “I heard you were here. I’m so glad you’re here.” And it was like every muscle in my body just melted. It was such a release, and she hugged me and I hugged her back, and I didn’t want it to end, which is – God, I can’t tell you how many times I feel like I’ve been in intimate situations where I just wanted it to end...And so that was kind of the first moment where I felt ‘a part of’...”

In the afternoon, when we were talking about present-day issues and surrender, the following thoughts emerged:

Linda: “I really, I have a hard time connecting, and I feel like those walls are getting broken down, I don’t know and that’s really important to do, and I think on the surrender thing there’s like this I think I’m just really scared there’s just this dislodging of maybe 40 years of like, something’s going to wrench free and I’m scared shitless to let that go...”

Regarding the change in imagination that occurs with surrender, the following comments were made –

Mark: “And all of a sudden I was hit with the distinct feeling that I could be done... There was a potential for me to never use drugs and alcohol again.” Mark also reflected in the follow-up meeting, “I think that the imagination that we have while we are addicted to whatever substance we have is severely limited and thwarted. It could
lead to a mass of people running around naked in their front yard because your imagination is a diseased imagination.”

How I Was Affected

When Kristin broke down after watching the evoking videos at the beginning of our research day, I felt awful for her. She was in her early 20’s when she got sober, and indeed, the images of drunken girls being sick, slutty, and disgusting were very evoking for her. I felt like hugging her, but I was also trying to act like a ‘scientific, professional’ researcher, so I felt awkward, and held back from my wish to hold her close. I empathized with the embarrassment and sadness that she felt about her past behavior. I, too, had been the out-of-control party girl, going way past what was attractive or ‘cool’ in my drunken behavior.

All of the stories of how close my participants were to death and darkness prior to getting clean and sober were heart-wrenching, and ‘sobering’. These were not easy or attractive situations that people were in. I was struck here about how amazing it is that ‘we’ addicts who are in recovery are still alive and living productive lives, while so many others never get sober. I felt lucky to be alive.

Imaginal Structures in Use

Meridian and I both felt that Kristin’s emotional breakdown was a key moment in the research day, and we both related to her shame at having been the over-the-top, out-of-control, ‘shameless and shameful’ party-girl. The shame that we experience in our
active addiction leads to a spiral of further isolation, depression, and self-harming addictive behavior.

I am not sure at what point I started being embarrassed by my own addictive behavior growing up. I thought it was fun and exciting – a game – getting away with being the top of the class, but also the secret sneaky-one. I was the teacher’s favorite and led the behind-the-scenes rebellion all at the same time. When I started partying hard as a teenager, I think part of me knew something was out of balance, but the partier in me just soldiered on. I could not resolve the disconnect I felt around my lack of control in partying, so I just put it out of my mind and carried on. Over the years it increasingly became so much work, so hard to put up the ‘I’m OK’ front, that in the end a major depression set in, and I really was in the ‘fatal vortex of darkness’. At times, death seemed like it would be a lot easier than living.

I can definitely relate to the feelings of community, lightness, vitality and creativity emerging after a spiritual surrender. It was a great relief for me not to be trying to manage my life as an active alcoholic/addict. Somehow I felt more in tune with what the universe wanted when I got sober.

Theoretical Concepts

Central to this learning is the concept of ego-centrism. Dunselman states, “The individual in active addiction is egocentric, and increasingly isolated from his environment, growing ever more lonely.”

The need for a symbolic process of death and rebirth is part of this learning. M. Scott Peck says, “So there is the equation between emptiness, depression, and
psychological death. They are the bridge between chaos and community, between the decadent and the revitalized, between sin and reformation. . . The essence of the emptying process – the work of depression and the agony of sacrifice – is the willingness to give up, to surrender.”

The relationship of light and lightness to spiritual condition is brought up by this learning. Jack Kornfield talks about how through deep spiritual awakening, “Consciousness can be experienced as clear light or as jewels pouring out of the cornucopia of experience like galaxies of stars sending out their light.”

The important role of creativity and imagination in change is central – the ability to see a possibility of a different action than those taken in the past. Joan Borysenko declares that there are “moments in life that are watersheds, points of no return, when one’s view of the cosmos is forever changed.” Borysenko describes the shift of perception as “seeing with the eyes of the heart.” Robert Sardello simply states, “Perceiving a sense of purpose through the heart has the power to change the whole of one’s life.”

Kevin Griffin says, “Step Two reorients the alcoholic or addict toward a less self-centered life. By looking to a ‘power greater than ourselves’ we open to new possibilities, possibilities we couldn’t even imagine while living in the seemingly endless cycle of addiction.”

Interpretations

Prior to surrender, the unwilling-to-surrender part of the self seems to do a lot of back and forth, repetitive behavior. There is a lack of imagination to do something
different – no creativity, dynamic thinking, or true relaxation. Phrases that came up in the research describing life pre-surrender are: ‘over and over again’, ‘locked’, ‘trapped’, and ‘frozen’. Lisa: “I have a picture of a lock, and I guess I (was) just very isolated and just very locked inside my head.” There is an A.A. saying that, “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, expecting a different result.” This certainly reflects a lack of imagination to envision new and different possibilities. John mentioned a helpful, creative saying he heard in sobriety: “Why not turn ‘Why’ into ‘Why not?’?” This is the creativity that spiritual surrender calls forth.

It also seems to take courage to commit to life through surrender, rather than to continue on the downward spiral of alcoholism or addiction. It is the difference between “I am free to kill myself because it won’t affect anyone,” and “I am committed to living and to being part of the human race; I care about other people and will make the effort to live.”

Validity

Exploring similarities and differences between my co-researcher and myself was an important aspect in establishing the validity of my learnings, expanding my perspective and allowing me to see a more complete picture. My co-researcher, Meridian, agreed with this learning; she was also deeply moved by Kristin’s emotional, heartfelt reaction to the first evoking sequence, and by the vulnerability she showed. Meridian said, “My heart went out to everyone for the suffering they went through… And yet what a gift that things can indeed turn around.” Meridian also made an important point to me in later discussion, which was that Kristin’s opening up to vulnerability in front of the
group deepened the whole group’s experience and served to encourage their deeper exploration, while judgmental words produced the opposite effect.

This learning grew from the very authentic and embarrassing stories that participants shared about their pre-surrender states. The vulnerability they allowed, and the deep truths that emerged were encouraged by both the ritualistic environment of the research day, and by the feeling of being in a safe container with others who had been through similarly horrific experiences.

**Learning Three: ‘Right-Sizing’: On Swimming with Other Fish**

The primary claim of this learning is that the humility that can accompany surrender involves a ‘right-sizing’ of the sense of self in both directions - both a downsizing (through acceptance of being out-of-control), and at the same time an increase in terms of self-worth and responsibility for one’s actions. The humility that can result from surrender is rooted in connection, the realization that I am not in control of everything, and the realization that I am not and cannot be alone. The ‘right-sizing’ also involves the realization that I am important, in fact essential, to the group, and that the self-imposed isolation of the addict/alcoholic is an illusion.

Coming to the conclusion that ‘I can do it’, but also that ‘I cannot do it alone’, involves breaking the arrogant illusion of brittle independence and individualism, acknowledging and accepting the love that connects us. The humility also shows in the realization that surrender is a lifelong process that must be sought each day. Spiritual surrender is not a discrete event; we are not ‘fixed’ for good.
What Happened

The key moment for this learning occurred in the afternoon, when John shared about a current issue where he felt that surrender was called for. He talked about how, “I got seven texts from people while we’ve been in this group, and I can sit here and tell you how lonely I am. That’s my sickness, or where I need to surrender.” John, even given the concrete evidence of the text messages, was having trouble accepting his connection to others.

Another important element to this learning was brought up in the follow-up meeting, when Will said, “But I think that this whole thing of belonging or inclusion has to do...with my willingness to hear you and not to force my opinion on you ....” Kristin echoed this new way of relating to others when she said, “You suggest... That’s it. I’m suggesting; I’m not demanding.”

A third sharing important to this learning also came in the follow-up meeting, when Mary said, “And I think that ultimately we find harmony with everybody because we find that place that’s connected to everybody, and not just privy to one group, or set of ideas or something.”

In the morning of the main research day, two disturbing film clips evoked what it was like for participants in the period of their lives just prior to their experience of spiritual surrender. The following images emerged as participants remembered their unhappy existence at that time, showing their feelings of unworthiness and fear to be part of a group:

Will: “I think the beginning of my surrender was before my first rehab. I said to my wife that I thought I could get some – maybe get some help...” "I looked somehow
looked at myself from outside myself, and I looked so small, and that was – I think my low point.”

Cathy: “I was not fit to be in public at that point in my life, and my world got small. It got really small. I felt like I built a prison for myself in Lagunitas, California.”

“I was – wasn’t worth it. I was unworthy...I couldn’t do it ... if I did try it wasn’t going to be good enough.”

John: “I just thought from a really young age I now know it is fear. I was so afraid of any physical interaction with anybody ... to this day will look at myself as not enough... I think pretty early on I was a ‘never-try’; so I never try, I never have to fail...”

As part of Kristin’s moment of surrender she realized, “I didn’t care about myself, [but] I cared about the people in my life that love me, and so that’s, that was the moment. It’s like for some reason, I saw that I wasn’t just an island unto myself. I was killing everyone around me in some way...”

In the post-surrender phase of the research day, the following images relating to the responsibility of being part of a group emerged:

Mary: “I was thinking there’s a part of humility that’s accepting our assets too, and the fact that people love us is ... a great responsibility.”

Max: “When I’m drinking, my biggest responsibility is finding that next drink, making sure that I have enough in the house. Whereas, dealing with everyday problems require maturity, require responsibility, and require action.”

In our follow-up meetings, the following emerged in the discussion of this learning on humility and being part of a group:
Will: “A really huge word for me is acceptance. Just to be a part [of something] used to sound really demeaning to me because I wanted to be the center... being ‘part of’ is a huge shift.”

Mary: “I’m learning how to just be right sized and swim with the other fish...I had a shift about it where I realized that I can stay in contact with a lot of people and be real about it.”

Mark: “The thing that helped me get to the other side of everything was the simple realization that I wasn’t unique.”

Mark: “And I’m a person that would always get frozen up on anything that I was supposed to do, because I was already too worried about the result. So that almost becomes like a self-fulfilling prophecy...for me, in a larger sense...this whole deal of not being in charge is a way of overcoming fear.”

John: “I was like ‘I’m fucking broken’. I might need to go to the hospital because I am on such a different frequency than everybody else. And...not in a good way.”

How I Was Affected

I was impressed by how insightful John was when he shared that he had ‘received seven texts from people’ during our research day, but was still lonely, and that this was how his sickness now presents itself. Somehow being connected to others is essential in the process of recovery from addiction, and this connection does not necessarily come easily. It seems very foreign to some of us at first.

I was annoyed that John was busy checking his text messages during our research day, while also impressed that he had so many people wanting to contact him.
My co-researcher, Meridian, noted, “Even 8 years sober, I still work with right-sized ego – vacillating between judging others and believing I’m superior, to thinking I am nothing and don’t have the right to try.”

In the follow-up meeting two similar statements came up that have echoed inside of me: Will and Kristin both talking about how part of this new attitude towards belonging comes from being able to listen to others and not force one’s opinion upon them. I certainly remember when I was under the influence much of the time, I could not be open to others because I was so busy hiding my shame and embarrassment about my behavior. I think it takes the capacity for stillness within oneself to be able to listen attentively to another. I think this is the capacity to which Will and Kristin were referring – the ability to tolerate and enjoy silence within oneself.

**Imaginal Structures in Use**

Regarding my own imaginal structures, I think I have had a life-long issue with a subjectivity who is impressed by how clever I am, how smart I am, by my having the right answers. This subjectivity also wants to make sure everyone else knows how clever I am. I suffer from the sin of pride. While working on this chapter, I had been at times helping in my daughter’s third grade classroom, and was frequently struck by how much of learning is social awareness – when to share your knowledge and when to listen to others. It is hard work even as a sober adult! What is helpful to share? And what is showing off what you know, or forcing your opinion into the world, when it perhaps might not be called for or wanted, versus taking some form of creative action or
leadership in situations where having the courage to do so might bring about potential benefit to those around you, or to the world at large?

**Theoretical Concepts**

This learning brings up the cultural concept of western rugged individualism versus a more community-oriented, heart-centered way of life. Joan Borysenko observes, “When the heart is open, we overcome the illusion that we are separate from one another, and the mystery of divine love wraps us in a cloak of security, unity, wisdom, and joy.”

And M. Scott Peck declares, “Our individualism must be counterbalanced by commitment.”

Rollo May explains it well: “Only that individual can go through life without anxiety who is conscious of belonging to the fellowship of man.”

In connecting the culture-wide issue of anxiety with individualism, Rollo May said that modern anxiety is due to the state of “psychological isolation and the lack of the positive value of community, both results of excessive individualism.” M. Scott Peck declares, “We are desperately in need of a new ethic of “soft individualism,” an understanding of individualism which teaches that we cannot be truly ourselves until we are able to share freely the things we most have in common: our weakness, our incompleteness, our imperfection, our inadequacy, our sins, our lack of wholeness and self-sufficiency… It is a kind of softness that allows those necessary barriers, or outlines of our individual selves to be like permeable membranes, permitting ourselves to seep out, the selves of others to seep in.”
This learning also brings up the importance of each individual to the group. It takes some amount of courage to fill one’s place within the society, rather than opting out. M. Scott Peck says, “So we are called to wholeness and simultaneously to recognition of our incompleteness; called to power and to acknowledge our weakness; called to both individuation and interdependence.” Jerold Sapolsky states that, “one of the strongest stress-reducing qualities of social support is the act of giving social support. In a world of stressful lack of control, an amazing source of control we all have is the ability to make the world a better place, one act at a time.”

The 12-Step program of A.A. also stresses the importance of giving back to others and staying connected. Step Twelve states, “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

Joseph Chilton Pearce states simply that, “. . . All creation is relational. Nothing stands alone. Everything is, only through relationship with something other-to-it.”

Robert Sardello reflects on the meaning of egotism when he states, “Egotism gives us a feeling of belonging to ourselves. And, actually, it is an illusion that we belong to ourselves. Egotism is the illusion of belonging to ourselves.” Sardello also notes that, “Individuality . . . consists of continually giving out to the world as a response to the act of taking in what the world offers.”

**Interpretations**

This learning focuses on the ability to connect with others – to be present to them and allow them to connect with you; not blocking this connection by believing,
“They are not worthy of my attention,” or alternatively by believing: “I am not worthy of their attention.” Also this learning suggests the benefit of downsizing our American rugged individualism – a culture-wide ‘right-sizing of the ego’ – a dismantling of the American John Wayne personality.

This learning is about accepting our connection to others – humanity, the earth and its creatures, the universe. If our self-involved narcissism is too prominent, then we don’t pay attention to others; we miss out and are lost in our aloneness. If our self-esteem is too fragile, then we fear connection and hide in our aloneness. Part of spiritual surrender involves being still enough within ourselves to be able to hear the others, to have the capacity to give our attention, and to have the courage to engage with them.

Robert Sardello points out that, “. . . we are present to Silence only when our soul is deeply humbled.” cccxci In terms of the change in consciousness that takes place with surrender, Sardello says, “. . . when we have entered into the Silence, our ordinary ego-consciousness recedes into the background, and a different kind of consciousness comes forward, one best called attention.” cccxii

Validity

Establishing the validity of this learning came through exploring similarities and differences between my co-researcher, Meridian, and myself. Meridian agreed with the learning and shared that, “Even 8 years sober, I still work with right sized ego, vacillating between judging others and believing I am superior, to thinking I am nothing and don’t have the right to try. Comparison can wreck lives. It’s a life long battle for at least some of us.”
Learning Four: Spiritual Surrender as Verb

The primary claim of this learning is that spiritual surrender is an ongoing process rather than a discrete event. Surrender can be seen as both a dramatic leap of faith in life’s possibilities, happening in a moment of time; it can also be seen as a capacity to be developed over time, as trust in oneself and faith in one’s intuition deepen.

What Happened

Mark’s statement about his ongoing efforts at surrender was a key moment for this learning. He said, “I have not surrendered in the sense I don’t feel I’ve surrendered in a past tense. I surrender right now... So I don’t try to act as if I have overcome anything at this point. I see about the next couple of minutes, and I’ve learned some tools around it that helped me to do that.”

A number of other reflections also supported the development of this learning. The following images came out of the Pre-Surrender sharing portion of our research day:

Cathy: “…I didn’t learn trust for awhile after I was sober. I was like ‘Yeah, right.’ Okay. I’m still hanging onto this line over here just in case, you know. Today, I don’t, I don’t really think about it, you know, I just know if I can’t figure it out at a standstill something’s going to happen regardless of what it is...You know, I can feel the addict come up in a lot of situations…”

And from the Post-Surrender discussion come the following:

John: “Before I got into this gig (A.A.), I was the first and last thing that I thought about every waking moment of the day...And today I am the first and last thing I
think about on a daily basis; I have just managed to put some other stuff in between, and that I think is big... for me that’s the big gift is I get to think about other people now...”

Kristin: “…that’s what happens when I’m running around like a crazy person – there’s nobody else, there’s nothing, it’s darkness, it’s scary – but I just needed someone else to come into my, like, psychotic mind... it was as simple as that, and I have to do that like probably once a week…”

And in the afternoon discussions of current issues and ongoing spiritual surrender, the following observations were made:

Will: “It is my will that makes the walls that I’m still in.”

Kristin: “Life problems are harder to control now – it used to be that I could just drink.”

Mark: “For me sometimes I’ve come to realize surrender has to come in a form of action. It cannot come in the form of “I’m not in charge.”

John: “And I think for me a lot of this brings up is I tell people that, like, I think this shit’s spirituality – it’s a verb. I always thought it was a noun. It’s just an action for me. I can sit on my ass and want my life to look a lot different, or I can get out and do what I can to make it different...”

At the end of our research day, Mark summed up how he felt about sobriety in the present tense:

“So now, man, I’m the dude, I’m the optimist... you know what, I’m... clean: I haven’t smoked crack for six years or drank vodka. I have concerns, but.... If all we got in the moment right now is this moment, I think we’re all doing pretty good. We could be doing a lot worse, at least I could be.”
And in our follow-up meeting, John quoted the head of the rehab center where he works, when talking about the right kind of attitude going forward:

“Why don’t you turn ‘Why?’ into ‘Why not?’?”

How I Was Affected

After the emotional and dramatic sharing in the morning, I was a little afraid that the afternoon exercise around the current troubling issue would be too anti-climactic and even boring. As part of our addiction is to emotional drama and high-energy living, I was worried that everyone would think that the afternoon work was irrelevant and dull.

As it turned out, my participants found the afternoon work very challenging. I was really struck by how much work there is to be done with spiritual surrender on an ongoing basis, and with how many questions there are about how to manage a sober life an a daily basis. I was intrigued that ‘how to live every day’ seemed much more perplexing to my participants than the large shift that had accompanied their original experience of spiritual surrender.

Imaginal Structures in Use

Imaginal structures around this learning for me have to do with always craving excitement and wanting to ‘win.’ My mother was the first woman to graduate at the top of her Stanford Medical School class during World War II. I saw her as brilliant, and beautiful, kind and loving, and growing up I wanted to be like her. I liked to be the best at everything I did, and I liked to win.
In running the research day, I felt very concerned about being a “good researcher” – not too personal, but not too stand-offish. I wanted the participants to feel that they were in the hands of a professional. I also wanted my dissertation committee to think I was doing a good job with my research.

It is hard to let go of perfectionism, and to focus on the now, instead of being past- or future-oriented. It is hard to be comfortable with who you are, rather than trying to project a desired persona. I think the imaginal structure I am describing has to do with my concern for how others view me – an issue that includes elements of both ‘locus of control’ and self-esteem.

**Theoretical Concepts**

At the heart of this learning are the dynamic, ongoing nature of spiritual surrender, and the individual’s connection with the universe. Epstein refers to this when he says, “Connection may be our natural state, as Buddhism teaches, but it is not static. Part of trusting in it is to let our experience of it come and go.” Tiebout says, “In the ongoing state of surrender, the individual no longer fights life, but accepts it … there is a persisting capacity to accept reality.”

This learning brings up the concept of ‘living in the present’ and not spending too much energy in the past or the future. Robert Sardello states, “We have to take on the task of continually un-doing what our mind structures. The awareness of purpose does not come from the mental realm. The sense of purpose requires its own organ for its perception, and this organ is the heart . . . It is the place of the self-as-activity, without the
burden of self-reflection and self-absorption.” Sardello believes that the physical center of this ‘awareness of purpose’ is, literally, the heart.

The contemplation of spiritual surrender as an ongoing event, even as a ‘capacity’, invites further research; indeed the participants in my research study were enthusiastic about my pursuing such research. According to Kevin Griffin, the Buddha’s Fourth Noble Truth – the Eight-fold Path – is where “the Buddha tells us how to live and attain freedom… He says we need to develop our hearts and minds, as well as live ethically and with kindness.” The Twelve Steps of A.A. also addresses the ongoing nature and importance of a fit spiritual condition, declaring this the essential element for ongoing sobriety. In the Big Book of A.A. the authors remind us, “It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition.”

Robert Sardello sums it up when he says, “Purpose involves the perfect alignment of inner impulse toward individuality with outer activity in the world. No compromises are possible… Thus, coming to the sense of purpose involves the act of continually releasing whatever and whoever we think we are. This act of releasing becomes a new habit, not merely something that is done until we find our ‘real’ purpose.”

**Interpretations**

The material for this learning came primarily from the post-surrender discussion and the afternoon work where the participants were queried about a current, troubling
issue. The thing that struck me the most at the time is that their ongoing quest for spiritual surrender and serenity seemed to be more perplexing to the participants than their initial, life-saving experience of spiritual surrender. In fact, in the follow-up meetings it was suggested that my next research project be on ongoing spiritual surrender – how people manage it. Meridian suggested that, “it seems we may move up several levels, but we never truly graduate.” While the questions around ongoing spiritual surrender may not appear so ‘life or death’ as what participants had experienced in the getting-sober situation, they appear to hold the key to a relaxed and joyful life.

Living in an ongoing state of spiritual surrender seems to be where the creativity comes in. This is where we are asked on a moment-to-moment basis how to live graciously and in the best possible manner. “What should I do now?” becomes an ongoing question, to be answered by the heart.

Regarding the afternoon exercise trying to resolve a present-day problem, there was a theme of the problem of trying to force surrender vs. allowing it to come. How much ‘action’ is the right amount in any given situation? Participants seemed to struggle most with how to determine what the ‘next right thing to do’ is in life’s challenges, and how much they should use their power and will.

Validity

As validity is established through accounting for all parts of the intersubjective field on the research day, this learning was developed through observation, review of the verbal and written data produced, and further review in the follow-up meetings with participants and with my co-researcher, Meridian. Meridian agreed with this learning, pointing out the relevance of Mark’s statement that, “I haven’t surrendered, past tense.
I surrender right now… Sometimes surrender needs to come in the form of action.” She also stated that, “Surrender is a part of the ongoing journey.”

Learning Five: Leap of Faith and Love Leaping In: Permeable Membranes and Changing Perspectives

The primary claim of this learning is that in order for spiritual surrender to occur, there needs to be a softening of the boundaries of the individual’s sense of self. Something from the outside comes into awareness; something new happens that the individual could not do by themselves. This may even take the form of being acted upon by an outside power – i.e. ‘bestowal of grace’. A meta-view of life is gained that results in better perspective.

What Happened

The key moment for this learning was at the very end of the research day, when Mary sang Bette Midler’s song The Rose, a cappella. The song’s most potent and relevant lines for this dissertation are:

It's the heart afraid of breaking
that never learns to dance.
It's the dream afraid of waking
that never takes the chance.
It's the one who won't be taken,
who cannot seem to give,
and the soul afraid of dyin'
that never learns to live.

…just remember in the winter
far beneath the winter snows
lies the seed that with the sun’s love
in the spring becomes the Rose.

Also striking, and relevant to the meta-view gained through surrender, was when
Will said: “I go for a walk in the cemetery and I look at somebody’s headstone that I
don’t know, and what’s on that stone but a name and two dates, and [I wonder] what was
so important. I wonder if they got if fixed…and I wonder if they didn’t...”

Will also noted: “...you need more altitude...So a whole lot to that kind of
perspective; when you’re in it you can’t see it. You need to somehow elevate yourself
out.”

Talking about a force outside one’s self, the following comments were made:

Max: “…we started drinking and doing powder, and I tell you once I started
drinking, alcohol stole my soul, and there was no two ways around it. I was either in God
or in alcohol, and alcohol led the way. I was in a real bad shape.”

Mark: “…and the thing that helped get me clean was that it didn’t change a bit of
my own mind because it wasn’t like I suddenly sat down and figured out something. It
just came...I’m never going to figure out what it is.”

When participants were sharing their stories related to the time of their spiritual
surrender, these realizations were voiced:

John: “It was one of those, like one of those moments where I was like, I could do
this. I can fucking do this.”

Mark: “I heard the same advice I’ve been given a hundred thousand times
before, but for some reason I heard it differently. I’m like ‘I got to ask’, and for some
reason I’ve processed it in a way that I never had, and I like to take credit, but I don’t, because I don’t think it was me.”

Max: “I think just knowing that you’re not going through it alone (helps); that you’ve got a higher power or a spiritual guide in your life, and that the weight of the world isn’t on your shoulders...”

Regarding gaining a meta-view of life, or gaining a “better perspective” on things, the following statements were made:

Mary: “Buoyancy; I guess that has to do with having a trust in the larger plan...”

Will describing his art piece: “I put an eyeball up here in the sky and ...there is something other than me putting an eye on things when I think I have it all under control. I guess it’s just an extra set of footprints in the sand...”

Mark: (comparing the road to spiritual surrender and the Wizard of Oz story): “So what happen’s she gets to the very end where she meets this Bill Wilson who’s the Wizard of Oz and whatever, whoever he represents, the higher power or whatever; and she’s like just wants to go home, and this answer to that is, “You had the power to go home the whole time, you just didn’t know you had the power. . . And that’s kind of like the ‘untapped inner resource’ [that is referred to in A.A.’s Big Book].”

Describing ‘hitting bottom’, Mark said, “I came to the realization that death would be better than what I was doing. I had to jump the fence.”
How I Was Affected

When Mary sang ‘The Rose’, I felt tingly all over, choked up, and a bit teary-eyed. It was beautiful. Not only did it sum up the importance of love in the process of spiritual surrender, but it also wrapped up our day of deep, emotional work in a truly beautiful way. I felt like it was the perfect ending, and a tribute to the work everyone had done - the vulnerability they had allowed in their sharing.

It brought to mind the paradoxical position that addicts and alcoholics are in when they ‘hit bottom’. While ‘hitting bottom’ is usually a miserable experience, it can be said that we are ‘blessed to be forced’ by our dire situation into spiritual surrender.

Imaginal Structures in Use

This learning brings in mystery, and the possibility of religious explanations for spiritual surrender. I possess multi-generational imaginal structures around organized religious ideology. My parents and grandparents were basically 20th century Darwinian scientists; and both my parents were psychiatrists trained in the days when Freud was the primary theorist in the field.

My parents came from Protestant families, but had, interestingly enough, both grown up in families that had mixed feelings about the Church. For my parents, and to some degree my grandparents as well, ‘Science was God’, and would eventually hold all the answers necessary in life. My grandparents on both sides had moved away from organized religion, allowing my parents to grow up without the strict religious upbringing common in their time. So, essentially I am at least the second generation away from a strong church presence of any kind in the family.
This learning again urges one to move away from the ‘pioneer rugged individualism’ mentality to a more communal, group-oriented one. I think this is where, in my grandparents’ time, the ‘rugged individualism’ was balanced by going to church on Sundays. In my upbringing, perhaps the lack of the church influence left too much room for egocentric individualism, although my parents both modeled community-oriented, caring behavior throughout their professional and personal lives.

Perhaps my own imaginal structures related to this learning involve wanting a concrete explanation for everything. While this is understandable, especially considering that this study was designed as a dissertation, but some things are impossible to put into words.

**Theoretical Concepts**

The concept most central to this learning would be the individual ego-consciousness, its boundaries, and what consciousness lies outside of the individual ego. What is “me”? And what is the “Other”? And what is “us”?

Mark Epstein states, “Rather than seeing the self as an expanding and contracting, coalescing and dissolving, separating and merging organism, Western psychology views the self as something that has to be developed or improved throughout its one-way journey toward separateness.” However, Joseph Chilton Pearce states that, “. . . all creation is relational. Nothing stands alone. Everything is, only through relationship with something other-to-it.”

Epstein also says, “Separateness, independence, and clear boundaries are not glorified in Buddhism the way they are in our culture. They are seen instead as potent
sources of suffering, as illusions that perpetuate destructive emotions like hatred, jealousy, and conceit.” And William R. Miller relates that, “People who have a mystical experience often have a powerful and direct experience of unity with other people, with nature, with the universe, with everything. It is as though the boundaries of individual identity drop away and the person perceives an interconnectedness of all being.”

The power of Love is brought up by this learning. Mark Epstein says that, “The major obstacle to love, I have found, is a premature walling off of the personality that results in a falseness or inauthenticity that other people can feel.”

The other concepts central to this learning are the phenomenon of ‘grace’ and the concept of a Higher Power or God. William R. Miller says, “What epitomizes the mystical type (of quantum change) is the noetic sense of being acted upon by something outside and greater than oneself.”

J. Chilton Pearce concludes that, “insight-intelligence operating through consciousness in the only way out of anxiety; this insight must be given, and can be a grace – not of our making and not clearly deserved.” Pearce also talks about how the opening of the heart can bring about this experience, “... one then finds one’s self in a broader and unconstructed frame of reference altogether, the only state through which one can become an instrument of Spirit.”

In talking about how to come into relation with Silence, Robert Sardello states, “We feel isolated within our individual ego, but if we move out of it just a little bit and begin sensing our own bodily presence, we feel the touch of Silence announce itself, and we have found the way out of self-absorption.” And Sardello also notes, “We are
deluded, for example, if we feel that we have found inner silence on our own, out of our own efforts . . . Silence comes as grace.”

Interpretations

There really are two parts to this learning. One involves the softening of the ego-boundaries of the self that allows one to be touched by others, and in turn to touch them. This requires courage, especially in the beginning, when one is used to isolation and tight boundaries. Mary said that with her drug-using friends, “We could not form a circle, but rather constantly turned our backs on each other.” Opening up to others, relaxing the boundaries between ‘me’ and ‘them’ involves vulnerability and the possibility of being hurt. Furthermore, inclusion and commitment to others brings responsibility and empathy/caring. It takes courage because I may be hurt if I acknowledge a desire and need for others; it requires a leap of faith.

The second part of this learning involves the concepts of Higher Power, God, and grace. What is the outside power that acts upon us? This is indeed where the science of psychology ends, and the divine mystery begins. While individuals may have personal experiences with their Higher Power, insight-intelligence, or God, it is beyond the scope of this study to describe them. The data I have gathered, however, certainly point to the power of Love as being central and essential. This learning also contains the element of mystery that defies concrete non-religious answers. What is Grace? Where/who does it come from?
Validity

The validity of this learning is supported by the intuitive responses of my co-researcher following the first meeting. During this debrief, Meridian assisted me in adjusting this learning from its original form, the wording of which she did not quite agree with. Originally I wrote that the ‘solution comes from the outside’; Meridian helped by suggesting that rather than the solution ‘coming from the outside’, the solution comes from a new perspective of things that include expanding one’s awareness and boundaries to include others (including God); switching from the micro to the macro and taking a meta-view of things.

Conclusion

In summary, five major learnings emerged from the analysis and interpretation of the data collected in the main research day and two follow-up meetings that comprised this study of Spiritual Surrender. Learning One: The See-saw of Freedom – Freedom ‘from’ and Freedom ‘to’, proposes that through spiritual surrender the individual lets go of super-controlling behaviors, but also grows in the capacity for responsibility to others. Learning Two: Reversing the Fatal Vortex of Darkness, proposes that through spiritual surrender the individual changes from an ever-constricting, isolated, dark, unimaginative life into an expansive, community-related, life filled with more light and creativity. Learning Three: ‘Right-Sizing’: On Swimming with Other Fish, proposes that the ‘right-sizing’ of the sense of self that occurs with spiritual surrender is both a move both directions – ‘not too big’ and ‘not too small’. Learning Four: Spiritual Surrender as Verb, proposes that while surrender can be viewed as a ‘Leap of Faith’, it is also an
ongoing process of contact with the outside. Ongoing surrender can be the biggest challenge for the individual; as there is usually not the dramatic, life-or-death, catalytic element that brought about the original surrender; finding a balance between surrender and action is difficult. Learning Five: – Leap of Faith and Love Leaping In: Permeable Membranes and Changing Perspectives, proposes that the softening of the ego-boundaries that allows spiritual surrender to occur brings the individual into intimate contact with the outside, and allows the power of love in. A meta-view of life is gained that eases suffering in the moment.

Together, the five learnings contribute to the overarching, primary Cumulative Learning of this study. This overarching learning is in direct relationship with the Research Problem for this study, which was: In what ways might the practice of surrender affect imaginal structures related to personal will, freedom and belonging? My hypothesis was: The practice of surrender will shift imaginal structures regarding personal will, freedom and belonging towards humility, collaboration, and inclusion.

The Cumulative Learning for this study proposes that spiritual surrender can begin to have a transmuting effect on imaginal structures regarding personal will, freedom and belonging in such a way that the individual is able to interface more dynamically with the world, moving from an egocentric individualism to a heart-based, authentic individuality.
CHAPTER 5

REFLECTIONS

“Life is the principal thing to consider, and true life is the inner life, the realization of God, the consciousness of one's spirit. When the human heart becomes conscious of God it turns into the sea and it spreads; it extends the waves of its love to friend and foe. Spreading further and further it attains perfection.”

--Inayat Khan

This final chapter reflects upon the significance and implications of the learnings that have emerged from this study of Spiritual Surrender. The first section, Significance of Learnings, explores the significance of the learnings from the perspective of Imaginal Transformative Praxis (ITP), the theory in practice used in this study. The second section, Mythic and Archetypal Reflections, deepens the learnings in relation to the archetype of the Rainbow and the Native American legend of the Rainbow Warriors. The themes of the ‘end of times’, apocalypse, and renewal are discussed in relation to the legend of the Rainbow Warriors. The third section, Implications of the Study, considers the implications of this study from a personal context as well as the implications for broader levels of psychology, community, and world.
Significance of Learnings

The Research Problem for this study was: In what ways might the practice of surrender affect imaginal structures related to personal will, freedom and belonging?
The hypothesis was: The practice of surrender will shift imaginal structures regarding personal will, freedom and belonging towards humility, collaboration, and inclusion.

The Cumulative Learning for this study proposes that spiritual surrender can begin to have a transmuting effect on imaginal structures regarding personal will, freedom and belonging in such a way that the individual is able to interface more dynamically with the world, moving from an egocentric individualism to a heart-based, authentic individuality. Five major learnings emerged from the analysis and interpretation of the data collected in the main research day, as well as the two follow-up meetings.

Learning One proposes that the imaginal structures related to the constriction of freedom can begin to transmute in the process of spiritual surrender, thus allowing the individual a measure of relief from obsessive thinking, compulsive, addictive behavior, and the need for over-control of both external events and internal emotional responses. Learning One highlights the humility that is involved in acceptance of one’s lack of control over external events and internal responses.

Learning Two proposes that spiritual surrender can begin to reverse the vortex of isolation and darkness, common in addiction and alcoholism, that leads to ‘jails, institutions, and death’. This learning emphasizes the move from isolation into community.
Learning Three proposes that the humility that can come through surrender involves a ‘right-sizing’ of the sense of self in both directions - both a downsizing through acceptance of being out-of-control, and at the same time an increase in the feeling of self-worth and responsibility for one’s actions. Both humility and courage are required in order to claim one’s power and occupy one’s rightful position within a group – authentically taking both responsibility for, and credit for, one’s actions.

Learning Four proposes that spiritual surrender is an ongoing process rather than a discrete event. This involves the ongoing challenge of staying open to direction from a power greater than oneself; acting as an individual within the greater context of community and with the heartfelt intention of good for the greater community.

Learning Five proposes that in order for spiritual surrender to occur, there needs to be a softening of the boundaries of the individual’s sense of self. This learning highlights both the humility involved in accepting direction from a power greater than oneself, and that inclusion and collaboration can be a result of surrender.

In summary, the data and learnings do support the research hypothesis. Each learning is authentic in the sense that it was an unknown prior to the research. The learnings confirm the importance and relevance of the Research Problem; no revisions to the problem statement are prompted by the learnings. Since spiritual surrender is difficult to study using a quantitative method, it has been perfectly suited for a qualitative study using the Imaginal Transformation Praxis of Meridian University. Further research is indicated, especially regarding strategies for ongoing spiritual surrender.
Mythic and Archetypal Reflections

Deeper understanding of the significance of my dissertation is gained by refraction through a mythic lens. I have chosen to use the archetype of the Rainbow and the Native American legend of the Rainbow Warriors for this purpose.

Rainbows appear in the sky when sunlight reflects in water droplets, often after a period of dark storm. They also appear near waterfalls. Rainbows are a lovely metaphor for the peace, joy, inclusiveness, and expansiveness found through spiritual surrender.

Almost all human cultures have held beliefs concerning the appearance of the rainbow. According to Christian and Mayan belief, the rainbow was put in the sky by God to show that he would never again destroy the earth by rain (or fire-rain in the case of the Mayans). Many cultures have believed that the rainbow is a bridge between heaven and earth. The Irish believed that the leprechauns put a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Other cultures, such as ancient Greece and the Aborigines, believed that the rainbow was itself a goddess.

Currently in our world there is a lot of fear about the possibility of a cataclysmic ending of the world – whether through global warming, world war, meteoric collision, religious fundamentalism, or some other apocalyptic disaster. However, in nearly every society, sacred narratives have been told not only about worldly cataclysm, but also of the regeneration of the earth, and the creation of a terrestrial paradise. In Native American prophecy the Rainbow Warriors are foretold to prevent complete destruction of the world, instead ushering in a new epoch in world history. At the time when all seems doomed, the rainbow and the Rainbow Warriors are foretold to teach a new, harmonious way of living with nature, the world, and one’s fellow human beings.
According to the legend of the Rainbow Warriors: “There would come a day of awakening when all the peoples of all the tribes would form a New World of Justice, Peace, Freedom and recognition of the Great Spirit. The ‘Warriors of the Rainbow’ would spread these messages and teach all peoples of the Earth or ‘Elohi’. They would teach them how to live the ‘Way of the Great Spirit’ ” - spoken by the old woman ‘Eyes of Fire’ of the Cree nation. cdxii

Another version of the prophecy states, “Children of the Rainbow Warriors will come before all is destroyed, and they will love the trees and the animals. They will love and respect each other and they will help people to live in peace with all creation. The rainbow in the sky will return as a sign of the Creator’s grace.” cdxiii

Daniel Wojcik suggests there are two types of apocalyptic thinking – secular and religious. He explains, “Secular apocalyptic thinking resembles the pessimistic nature of Greek tragedy. . . [where] human beings are struggling against an unhappy fate that will end in ruin and that will be brought about by human flaws.” cdxiv While religious apocalyptic thinking, according to Wojcki, “. . . reduces the anxiety and uncertainty evoked by perceptions of intractable crises and offer a sense of control and meaning.” cdxv He summarizes the benefits of the apocalyptic belief system: “Directly countering feelings of helplessness, despair, and uncontrollability, apocalyptic belief systems promise the annihilation and regeneration of contemporary civilization through radical supernatural transformation . . .” cdxvi

Over thousands of years, beliefs about worldly destruction and transformation have been an ongoing and significant part of the cultural and religious heritage of the United States, and are enduring way of interpreting the world. According to Wojcik,
“Apocalyptic traditions indeed provide comprehensive systems of belief that fulfill important religious and psychological needs.” cdxvii

Learning One considers that through spiritual surrender the individual’s imaginal structures related to freedom shift in such a way that the individual is afforded some relief from obsessive thinking, compulsive, addictive behavior, and the need for over-control of both external events and internal emotional responses. All people seek, to some degree, a sense of control, certainty, predictability, and inevitability to bring feelings of security and meaning to their lives. cdxviii This sense of control, meaning, and self-esteem can be provided by the promise of the annihilation and regeneration of contemporary civilization through radical supernatural transformation. cdxix Michael Meade tells us, “Without a working cosmology life can lose its sense of purpose, leaving the inevitable struggles of existence to seem random, pointless, and meaningless. Without a felt sense of cosmic order, people begin to feel accidental, lost in space, abandoned ‘in the middle of nowhere’.” cdxx

In bringing us out of the dark times, the Native American prophecy says, “The Warriors of the Rainbow will bring back this lost spirit before it is too late and the youth shall once more do great deeds of selflessness and heroism. The glory and the purity of their lives shall light the world.” cdxxi

Learning Two considers that spiritual surrender can reverse the vortex of isolation and darkness that can be part of the experience of addiction or anxiety, redirecting the individual towards community and light. Michael Meade states that, “Chaos is the polar opposite of cosmic order and implicit design; it is the eternal darkness and endless night that is the backdrop and default state of all creation.” cdxxii “A ‘dark night of the soul’
seems to be required in order for the inner light of life and enduring flame of imagination to be found and be confirmed." cdxxiii Meade furthermore states, “The light found inside the dark is a description of the human soul which tries to shine from within a person, especially in the darkest hours of life.” cdxxiv

The Rainbow appears when the light shines through the water droplets, often after a period of dark storminess, and the Rainbow Warriors are foretold to come in a time when “... the fish would die in the streams, the birds would fall from the air, the waters would be blackened, and the trees would no longer be, mankind as we would know it, would all but cease to exist.” cdxxv

The prophecies speak of “a great light that would come from the East that would come into the hearts of some of the Indians, and they would become like the prairie fire, spreading not only love between all races, but also between the different religions.” cdxxvi Only days before being killed, the great leader Black Elk saw in a dream, “... the people going through a great storm, a time of peril, but he was told he would be able to help his people through this time. ... Black Elk looked down from the sky and saw his people being blessed with friendly rain and a rainbow flaming in the east.” cdxxvii

Learning Three considers that the ‘right-sizing’ of the sense of self, necessary for collaboration in community, requires both humility and the acceptance of one’s power and responsibilities to the group. The Rainbow Warrior prophecy states, “Once again, they would be able to feel joy in solitude and in councils. They would be free of petty jealousies and love all mankind as their brothers, regardless of color, race or religion. They would feel happiness enter their hearts, and become as one with the entire human
race. Their hearts would be pure and radiate warmth, understanding and respect for all mankind, Nature, and the Great Spirit.”

Learning Four considers that spiritual surrender is an ongoing process rather than a discrete event. Michael Meade says, “The world as we know it ends all the time. The whole thing is ever on the point of re-creation, always on the edge of unraveling and slipping back into chaos. . . To be alive at this time means to be caught in a great unraveling that strands us near all the loose threads of creation; but it also means to be close to the revelation of the new design and the next paradigm.”

“. . . the creative individual must be born again and again in the crucible created by the tension between opposing instincts, conflicted feelings, and contrasting ideas.”

The Native American writer Willoya, talking of the Rainbow Warriors, says, “Like the rushing torrent of a river that wears away the hardest rocks, they shall wear away the hardest hearts with love, until the whole world begins to bloom with the new growth of man.” Spiritual surrender resembles the actions of the Rainbow Warriors and the rushing waters of the river in that it is an ongoing process. Hazrat Inayat Khan states: “In order to attain self-realization a certain way of life is necessary . . . It is the continual process of effacing the self. It is just like grinding something which is very hard; it is a continual grinding of the self.”

Willoya talks of the action needed in the times of the Rainbow Warriors: “Great are the tasks ahead, terrifying are the mountains of ignorance and hate and prejudice, but the Warriors of the Rainbow shall rise as on the wings of the eagle to surmount all difficulties . . . We have had enough now of talk. Let there be deeds.”
Learning Five considers that a softening of the boundaries of the individual’s sense of self is necessary in order for spiritual surrender to occur. As part of the prophecy the old woman, Eyes of Fire, stated, “The Warriors of the Rainbow would teach the people of the ancient practices of Unity, Love and Understanding. They would teach of Harmony among people in all four corners of the Earth.”

Connecting with a Higher Power, the Rainbow Warriors, “teach the people how to pray to the Great Spirit with love that flows like the beautiful mountain stream, and flows along the path to the ocean of life.”

The Cumulative Learning considers that the process of spiritual surrender can begin to have a transmuting effect of imaginal structures which involve personal will, freedom and belonging in such a way that the individual is able to interface more dynamically with the world, moving from an egocentric individualism to a heart-based, authentic individuality. The leaders of the people in the age of the Rainbow Warriors are said to be, “Those who demonstrated their love, wisdom, and courage and those who showed that they could and did work for the good of all . . .”

“In solitude and in council their hearts will lift with joy, free of the quarrels and petty jealousies brought by men, free to love all mankind as brothers. As the Great Spirit loves a smile and happiness, they shall sing of the coming glorious union of men.”

Or as Michael Meade says, “The essential dynamic of life, death, and renewal shapes the pattern of apocalypsis, but also represents the design of personal initiations through which the soul grows and within which the self within us becomes more conscious. As everything else seems to crack and dissolve and fall apart, the deep self moves closer to the surface and seeks to become known.”
Implications of the Study

This section considers the implications of this study, beginning with how it has affected me personally, and then broadening to consider implications for larger groups, including the field of psychology, contemporary culture, and the world.

I was very deeply moved and impressed by the honesty and authenticity that my participants brought to the research day. All were willing to ‘go deep’, and to share embarrassing, and sometimes horrifying, experiences with the group. It felt as if the participants were fully invested in the potential benefits of this research for others, through this exploration of their own spiritual surrender.

The afternoon work around ongoing, present-tense surrender seemed more mystifying than the morning work where we had revisited the time of participants’ original spiritual surrender. There was a general consensus that a future research study would be beneficial that focused exclusively on the ongoing nature of spiritual surrender, and how participants practice this surrender in their daily lives.

Working with the data since the time of the research day, it has felt very important to do justice to the data and to the participants who provided it. I have been amused more than once about the fact that working on my specific subject matter (spiritual surrender) has helped me not to become overly distressed while finishing the dissertation project. Another thing I have noticed about the dissertation work has been that it has been less daunting when I have been actually engaged in the process of the work, as opposed to being outside the process and just thinking, “I should get back to work on the
dissertation.” When not working on the dissertation process, my mind makes the prospect of beginning again a very scary thing indeed. The phrase ‘making mountains out of mole hills’ comes to mind.

Working on the dissertation has required the ability to ‘go large’ – open up my mind by reading a lot of different books and articles related one way or another to my study; and then to know when to call it quits and focus down on what really needs to get done in order to finish the project.

I think I have been somewhat fearful about actually finishing the dissertation, finishing graduate school, and having to face the ‘real world’ and the job-hunting that comes next. There is something daunting about becoming a professional psychologist, owning my power, and taking responsibility in the world.

I have found it necessary to curb my perfectionism at times in order to begin to work at all. The wish for the perfect product can keep one at a perfect standstill in the starting gate. I have also found it challenging to work with the continual process of editing that is part of the dissertation process. In the past I have been able to pretty much write things once, and turn in with minimal proof-reading. It has been a learning curve for me to be able to make cuts, changes and additions in my written work without undue distress.

I have found that the energy for the work has come and gone in waves; sometimes I am able to get up at 4 a.m. on a regular basis to churn out the work; other times I have had to back away and give precedence to life’s other demands – family, internship, jobs, house. I have had to practice surrendering to the fact that finishing the dissertation has taken longer than I had planned.
The time I have spent working on the dissertation has brought with it a lot of contemplation about the terms and concepts involved in my study. I am certainly better educated now about both my subject matter and psychology in general than when I began this project over three years ago. I have a deeper understanding of what people are looking for when they are ‘checking out’ through drugs and alcohol; also a better idea of how to help them find what they are really searching for. For those who suffer from anxiety and obsession, a way into a more peaceful life is also found through spiritual surrender.

Because of the work I’ve done on this dissertation I am a better therapist. I often contemplate the intelligence behind A.A.’s “Serenity Prayer”:

Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.

This prayer, in which one asks for help to connect in the appropriate way with one’s environment, seems central to the concept of spiritual surrender. I currently incorporate spiritual practices into my life and work, and can see the possibilities of sharing my knowledge through workshops or perhaps in a book form.

The people who participated in my study had a chance to re-visit the time of their original spiritual surrender, contemplate and wonder on the changes that it has brought to their lives. They also had a chance to spend some time thinking about how they practice spiritual surrender in an ongoing way, and to try to work out how to get past the ‘current issue’ that was troubling them. Through the art-making that was done as part of the research, they had an opportunity to turn the thoughts they had about these issues into visual images.
This study breaks new ground in the field of Imaginal Psychology, establishing Imaginal Transformation Praxis as a valid method of studying spiritual surrender, and opening up the possibility of further research into surrender, whether in regards to sobriety or to spiritual practice in general. I would like to see a study about ongoing spiritual surrender that combined qualitative study with some quantitative elements in a way that would catch the attention of the mainstream of psychology and culture.

The practice of spiritual surrender, and the process of heart-centered individuation, include benefits not only for ongoing individual life, but also for the Earth itself. Robert Sardello states clearly, “Individuality is not for oneself, but for the world.” Further defining what this important process is, Sardello explains that individuality “... consists of an active, enduring, pressing sense of purpose.”

Elaborating on the ongoing nature of individuation and spiritual surrender, Sardello explains, “Coming to the sense of purpose involves the act of continually releasing whatever and whoever we think we are. This act of releasing becomes a new habit, not merely something that is done until we find our ‘real’ purpose. The paradoxical nature of purpose is that it is not a knowing but a doing.” And, again emphasizing the importance of this work, Sardello notes, “Purpose first belongs to the soul, to our inner life as a felt ongoing impetus, a sense that something is pulling us toward significance, not for ourselves, really, but for the sake of the world.

The world is in crisis at this time, and requires mankind to wake up and take action in new, creative ways. Sardello states, “Individuality... consists of continually giving out to the world as a response to the act of taking in what the world offers... what is returned to the world is something truly new.” In conclusion, this practice - the
‘evolution of creative love as the driving force of a new Earth’ - is what is required of mankind at this point in history. The Earth needs us to grow in this way. The benefits of a practice of spiritual surrender are infinite and, indeed, Spiritual Surrender is a Path to Everywhere.

So the whole art is seeing through and through, and then without any fight simply putting it aside; just slipping out of it as a snake slips out of its old skin, without any fight. And the moment it happens, for the first time you feel that you are infinite. It was the mind that was giving you a definition, a limitation. It was the mind that was framing you, otherwise you are the unframed sky.

- Osho
APPENDIX 1

ETHICS APPLICATION

I will recruit a group of 8-10 participants for my study, in order to have at least seven participants on the day of research. I will recruit both men and women. I will attempt to attract an ethnically-diverse population to my study. However, as I will draw participants from my local area, their ethnicity will follow the local demographics to some degree. My participants must be at least 18 years of age; there is no upper limit on age. They can be single, married, divorced or widowed.

Participants will be recruited via public flyers and by e-mail announcements. The flyers will be posted in locations frequented by sober members of 12-Step groups and in other locations where people congregate who might be interested in exploring the topic of spiritual surrender. E-mail announcements will be sent both to psychotherapists and to members of 12-Step groups.

I will also spread the word personally, asking for participants at 12-Step meetings. I will ask for individuals with at least two years of stable sobriety, who have had at least one year of psychotherapy as well.

In terms of essential participant characteristics, my participants must have had at least two years of continuous sobriety. They must have gotten sober through the help of a 12-Step program such as Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) or Narcotics Anonymous (N.A.). They must feel as if they experienced some kind of spiritual surrender as a part of this process, and must be interested in exploring this process.
My participants must possess a sufficient level of psychological awareness to enable them to engage in meaningful self-reflection and report. This will be evidenced by their current or past participation in psychotherapy, and by their dialogue and behavior in the preliminary interview phase. They must be willing to work in a group setting for the research day, and be somewhat comfortable with art modalities such as drawing, painting, clay, and creative writing.

There are some personal characteristics that would exclude people from participation in my study. Individuals cannot be diagnosed with any serious mental illness such as schizophrenia or bi-polar. Individuals diagnosed with depression may be considered for inclusion in the study if they are being treated, and their therapist and/or psychiatrist agrees to their participation. Participants cannot be developmentally disabled.

I will first contact potential participants by phone or e-mail. I will use a questionnaire to screen participants, which can be filled out over the phone, by e-mail, or in written form.

I will tell potential participants that my study is about the nature of spiritual surrender, and that I am exploring the results that now-sober people have experienced from such a surrender.

I will meet with potential participants in person at a convenient location, possibly the same location where the research day will be held – Valley Presbyterian Church, Portola Valley, CA. At this time I will again go over the nature of the study and what to expect on the research day. I will ask potential participants in person about the length of their sobriety, their experience in psychotherapy and with creative arts; also I will inquire about any characteristics that would prohibit them from inclusion in the study.
I will advise potential participants by phone either of their inclusion in the study or their exclusion. If they are excluded, I will tell them that their participation is not required, as they do not fully meet the profile for participation in the study; I will thank them for their willingness to participate, and offer to forward to them the results of the study once it is finished.

Participants who have been accepted into the study will receive notification by phone of their acceptance. They will also be mailed a packet including a confirmation letter, a description of the study, and an Informed Consent form. The description of the study will include information about the discipline of Imaginal Psychology, the significance of my research, the plan for the research day, and the voluntary nature of the study. Confidentiality will be formally described in the Informed Consent form and at the research meeting. It will be clarified that, although I am asking them to keep their fellow participants’ identities confidential, I am not asking for this same agreement of confidentiality for myself as the researcher. Participants may freely discuss anything I and my co-researchers do and say, and can freely provide the names of myself and my co-researchers to anyone outside of the study.

Informed consent forms will be signed in-person at the beginning of the research day, after the participants have had the chance to ask me any clarifying questions about the study.

After the research day, I will mail out a preliminary Summary of Learnings for participants to review prior to our follow-up meeting. Once the final dissertation is finished, I will mail them the completed Summary of Learnings.
The risks of participation in my research are minimal, as participants will have been carefully screened ahead of time for potential problems. However, there is some minimal risk that remembering past troubling times could cause anxiety, flashbacks, obsessive thinking, or other psychological distress.

Participants will be warned of possible risks in the initial interview process, in the Informed Consent, and again at the end of the study. The research process will be described in some detail to potential participants in the *Description of the Research for Potential Participants* that is mailed out with the Informed Consent Form prior to the research day. At the beginning of each phase of the study, the participants will be given some guidelines as to what to expect, but not so much that the data could be skewed. They will be given time frames in which to work at the beginning of each phase. They will be told at the beginning of the study that participation is voluntary at all times, and that they may withdraw from the study at any time. In the Informed Consent, the participants will be invited to contact the primary researcher and/or the Dissertation Director at Meridian University if they have any concerns. Also at the end of the research day, and in the Thank You Letter, participants are reminded to contact the primary researcher and/or a psychotherapist if they have any ongoing distress or concerns.

In order to promote sharing in a comfortable, safe container, there will be opening and closing rituals on the research day. Participants will begin the day by sharing an object they have brought from home that represents their initial experience of spiritual surrender. They will also share something about what drew them to the study. At the end of the day they will be invited to share a word, phrase, or gesture that represents what they are taking away from the day’s experience.
I plan to track my own responses to the research day by ongoing conversations with my co-researchers, as well as sharing with other wise friends. I will journal and possibly audio-tape my feelings and reflections following the day, so that I document my thoughts on the research day. I will try to schedule some relaxation time after the research day, so that I can re-group and integrate the experience of doing the research.

Participants in my study may benefit in several ways. They will have the chance to remember and reflect upon their original experiences of spiritual surrender, and how these experiences were instrumental in changing their lives. They will have the opportunity to share an object related to their original experience with the group, thereby celebrating their experience in a ritualistic way. Through participation on the research day, participants will be able to contemplate how to access such experience in an ongoing manner, practicing on the day with a current unresolved situation. Finally, participants will know that by doing this research we may be able to extend our findings to a larger population who may be helped at some later date.

For people suffering from addictions, chronic anxiety or obsessive thinking, my study may bring some attention to spiritual practices that help to alleviate these conditions. By noting the similarities between these three conditions, some of the stigmatism attached to addicted individuals may be somewhat lifted.

For the general psychological community, including therapeutic practitioners, this research may provide valuable insight into the serious afflictions of addiction, chronic anxiety and obsessive thinking. I hope to write up my findings and share them with the general psychological community in such a way that a new, useful, and refreshing view is
taken of these problems and their potential alleviation. I hope to stress the benefit of spiritual practices of surrender in our daily lives.

After the research day, I will send all participants a copy of the preliminary *Summary of Learnings* for their study prior to the follow-up meeting. At the follow-up meeting, I will ask the participants for feedback on the preliminary findings; this feedback will be incorporated into the final *Summary of Learnings*.

Participants will be sent a Thank-you Letter after the follow-up meeting. Also, when the dissertation is completed and approved, they will be sent a copy of the final *Summary of Learnings*. 
APPENDIX 2

CONCEPTUAL OUTLINE

Evoking Experience

Research Day

* Sharing of altar pieces and personal reflections

* Guided meditations

* Group prayer

Expressing Experience

Research Day

* Painting / drawing

* Creation of clay pieces

* Journaling based on questions

* Imaginal dialogue with art pieces

* Verbal discussion of art and experience

Follow-up Meeting

* Participants share their responses to researcher’s initial learnings through journaling and verbal discussion.

* Collage
**Interpreting Experience**

Research Day - Participants

* Participant responses during Ritual Closing – what they feel they are taking away from the research day plus word, phrase or gesture they share.

Follow-up Meeting - Participants

* Participants share their responses and reflections to researcher’s initial learnings.

Primary Researcher and Co-researchers

* Respond to data transcripts, noting key happenings
* Co-researchers share their responses to researcher’s initial interpretations
* Explore Researcher and Co-researcher differences and parallels in interpretation
* Primary researcher interprets data collected through theoretical and mythic lens

**Integrating Experience**

Follow-up Meeting - Participants

* Participants share their responses to researcher’s queries about how the experience of being in the research study has affected them.
* Group participates in a closing ritual.

Primary Researcher

* Researcher provides a closing ritual to assist participants in integrating their research experience
* Researcher provides a Summary of Learnings to participants
APPENDIX 3

RESEARCH MEETING CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE

Research Meeting (9:00 – 4:00)

I. Introduction and Orientation: 15 minutes (9:00 – 9:15)

   A. Obtain each participant’s signed consent form in duplicate.

      1. Participants are met and offered refreshment.

      2. Once all participants have arrived, participants will be seated in a circle in the research venue, participant questions on Informed Consent will be discussed and signatures obtained.

      3. Researcher will provide general information to participants.

         a. Space and building orientation, review schedule for the research meeting, give overview of meeting guidelines (respect for each person’s point of view and diversity, speaking one at a time, and maintaining confidentiality, etc).

         b. Remind participants that their participation is at all times voluntary, and that maintaining confidentiality regarding their fellow participants’ identities is crucial to building a safe container within which to explore their relationship to spiritual surrender.
c. Tell participants that we will be photographing their artwork and collecting their writing journals at the end of the day.

d. Researcher will respond to any questions participants may have.

B. Introduction Circle: 20 minutes (9:15-9:35)

1. Ritual Opening:

   a. Participants are invited to introduce themselves and share briefly about what drew them to the study. They may bring one personal object that represents their recovery and say something about it. They have also been asked to bring an object that represents a current issue where they believe that surrender would be helpful. They are asked to hold this object until the afternoon.

   b. Participants are asked to notice how they are feeling as they begin the day of exploration and to share a word or phrase describing their current state. Each participant is invited to light a candle symbolizing his or her participation in the research.

II. Evoking-Expressing Sequence #1 (9:35 – 11:05)

   A. Film Clips – “Party Girl” + “Leaving Las Vegas” + Poetry Reading “The Party Past” + Guided Meditation on Pre-Surrender Experience (15 minutes)

   B. Art Making: participants draw or paint their reactions to the guided meditation (15 minutes)
C. Journaling: guided questions + written dialogue with the art piece that they have just made (15 minutes)

D. Silent Break (10 minutes)

E. Sharing of Art and Journaling (35 minutes)

III. Evoking-Expressing Sequence #2 (11:05 - 12:25)

A. Contemplation of Nature Photos (provided by Researcher) or personal object representing their sobriety + Guided Meditation on Post-Surrender Experience including A.A.’s 3rd Step Prayer (10 minutes)

B. Art Making: participants draw or paint their reactions to the guided meditation (15 minutes)

C. Journaling: guided questions + written dialogue with the art piece that they have just made (15 minutes)

D. Sharing of Art and Journaling (40 minutes)

IV. Break for Lunch Activity: 40 minutes (12:25 – 1:05)

A. Participants are provided lunch and invited to relax. Participants are invited to share brief stories of their own coming-into-sobriety.

V. Evoking-Expressing Sequence #3 (1:05 – 3:25)

A. Guided Meditation on Current Unresolved Situation- Part 1:
part of self that does not want to surrender, including some contemplation of the object they have brought symbolizing this situation (10 minutes)
B. Art Making: Clay-Figures (10 minutes)

C. Journaling: brief written dialogue with art piece they have just made (10 minutes)

D. Guided Meditation on Current Unresolved Situation- Part 2: 
   part of self that is ready to surrender, beginning by reading of poem by William Stafford (10 minutes)

E. Art Making: Clay-Figures (10 minutes)

F. Journaling: brief written dialogue with art pieces that they have just made (10 minutes)

G. Silent Break (10 minutes)

H. Interaction with Two Figurines: place figures on different tables facing each other. Go to the first side and feel what it’s like there. What does the part of self that is not ready to surrender want to say to the other side? Journal about this. Switch sides, and repeat the exercise and journaling. (20 minutes)

I. Sharing of Art-work and Journaling (30 minutes)

J. Invitation to Group Prayer: whole group invited to read the “Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi” together. Invited to step back into the two positions and see how it feels now. Journal about feelings and reactions in each position. (20 minutes)

VI. Ritual Closing: 15 minutes (3:25 – 3:40)
A. Participants are invited to express what they would be taking from the day’s experience into their lives. Participants are then invited to use a word, phrase, or gesture to describe their experience of spiritual surrender. Together, participants will blow out the candles that were lit at the beginning of the research day.

VII. Close of Research Meeting: 5 minutes (3:40 – 3:45)
A. Participants are thanked for participating, reminded of their agreement of confidentiality regarding their fellow participants, of the Informed Consent Form for the Use of Artwork, and informed of the upcoming Summary of Learnings to be mailed after the dissertation is approved.

VIII. Photograph Artwork, Collect Journals: 15 minutes (3:45 – 4:00)
A. Participant artwork to be photographed, journals and written dialogues collected.
FOLLOW-UP MEETING CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE
(2 weeks later)

Follow-Up Meeting (9:00 – 12:15)

I. Introduction and Orientation: 10 minutes (9:00 – 9:10)

   A. Participants are met and offered refreshment.

   B. Once all participants have arrived, participants will be seated in a circle in the research venue. Informed Consent will be reviewed. Participants will be reminded that their participation is at all times voluntary, and that maintaining confidentiality regarding their fellow participants’ identities is essential.

   C. Researcher will respond to any questions participants may have about the Follow-up Meeting.

II. Ritual Opening: 5 minutes (9:10 – 9:15)

   A. Invitation to Group Prayer: whole group invited to do the 3rd Step prayer together.

III. Presentation by Primary Researcher of Preliminary Learnings: 20 minutes (9:15-9:35)

IV. Reactions/Comments by Participants: 45 minutes (9:35 – 10:20)

V. Collage-Making about “what participating in this research on spiritual surrender meant to me” + Journaling describing the artwork. 45 minutes (10:20-11:05)
VI. Sharing of the Collages: 30 minutes (11:05 – 11:35)

VI. Ritual Closing: 15 minutes (11:35 – 11:50)
   A. Participants are invited to express what they would be taking from the day’s experience into their lives. Participants are then invited to use a word, phrase, or gesture to describe their experience of spiritual surrender.

VII. Close of Research Meeting: 5 minutes (11:50-11:55)
   A. Participants are thanked for participating, and informed of the upcoming Summary of Learnings to be mailed after the dissertation is approved.

VIII. Photograph Artwork, Collect Journals: 20 minutes (11:55 – 12:15)
   A. Participant artwork to be photographed, journals and written dialogues collected.
APPENDIX 4

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

To the Participant in this Research:

You are invited to participate in a study on spiritual surrender. The study’s purpose is to better understand the process and benefits of spiritual surrender.

Participation will involve guided meditation, art-making, group discussion, etc. This will take place at the Valley United Presbyterian Church in Portola Valley, California, and will involve two meetings. The first meeting will last for 7 hours, and the second meeting will last for 3 ½ hours. The meetings will be audio-taped for later transcription. Meeting dates will be 3/24/12 and 4/7/12.

For the protection of your privacy, all tapes and transcripts will be kept confidential, and your identity will be protected. The data will be stored in a locked file under the researcher’s control; only the primary researcher, a professional transcriber and/or co-researchers will have access to these files and tapes. In the reporting of information in published material, any information that might identify you will be altered to ensure your anonymity.

This study is of a research nature and may offer no direct benefit to you. The published findings and any subsequent publications, however, may be useful to the recovery community and to the community at large. The deeper understanding of spiritual surrender gained through this study may benefit any number of people. This study is designed to minimize potential risks to you. However, some of the procedures, such as remembering difficult times, may touch sensitive areas for some people. There may be some psychological distress or discomfort, anxiety, fear, depression, etc. If at any time
you develop any concerns or questions, I will make every effort to discuss these with you. I, the researcher, cannot provide psychotherapy, but at your request or using my personal judgment, will facilitate referrals to an appropriate mental health professional, if such a need should arise.

If you decide to participate in this research, you may withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time and for any reason. Please note as well that I, the researcher, may need to terminate your participation from the study at any point and for any reason.

If you have any questions of concerns, you may call me at (415) 518-1888, Mon. to Fri. 9-4, or you may contact the Dissertation Director at Meridian University, 47 Sixth Street, Petaluma, CA, 94952, telephone: (707) 765-1836. Meridian University assumes no responsibility for any psychological or physical injury resulting from this research.

I, __________________________________, consent to participate in the study of spiritual surrender. I have had this study explained to me by Jennifer Vaughan. Any and all questions of mine about this research have been answered, and I have received a copy of this consent form. My participation in this study is entirely voluntary. **I understand that my artwork, written dialogue, and written response to questions will be photographed and used as part of the research. I understand that individual and group discussions will be transcribed, and any publication of this project will protect my anonymity.**

_________________________  _______________________
Participant’s Signature                  Date
This is an invitation to participate in a brief research study on the topic of *Spiritual Surrender*. Participants will be guided through meditation, journaling, art making, and discussion in a small group setting.

The research will take place at Valley Presbyterian Church in Portola Valley, CA, over two separate days: on Saturday March 24 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and on Saturday April 7 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30.

Individuals interested in participating, who have at least two years of sobriety and one year of either individual or group psychotherapy, are asked to contact Jenny at (415) 518-1888 or email jennyvaughan63@gmail.com.
APPENDIX 6

E-MAIL ANNOUNCEMENT

Hello ___________________,

I am Jennifer Vaughan, a psychology graduate student completing a dissertation on the process and effects of spiritual surrender. I am now recruiting 10 individuals who would be interested in exploring this topic with me. I am particularly looking for people who have a high level of psychological awareness and who are comfortable with using guided imagery and expressive arts.

Participants in my study must be knowledgeable in and comfortable with the 12-step program of Alcoholics Anonymous, preferably having gotten sober using the 12-steps. They need to have been continuously sober for at least two years, and have had at least one year’s psychotherapy, either in an individual or group setting. The research day will be from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday March 24th. There will be a follow-up meeting from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 on Saturday April 7th. Both meetings will be held at the beautiful Valley Presbyterian Church in Portola Valley.

The study will include guided imagery, drawing, painting, sculpting, and journaling; there will be group sharing and discussion. Food and beverages will be provided, including a catered lunch. If you or someone you know would be interested in participating or in having more information, please contact me by phone or e-mail: (415) 518-1888 jennyvaughan63@gmail.com

Thank you for your time and assistance.
APPENDIX 7

PHONE CONTACT TO FLYER RESPONDENTS

Hello ________________.

This is Jennifer Vaughan. Thank you for your interest in the research study on the process and effects of spiritual surrender. I have several questions I would like to ask you.

First, the research day is scheduled for March 24, 2012 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. There will be a follow-up meeting on April 7, 2012 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The research will occur in a small group with sharing and discussion. Will you be able to attend those days? *If the participant cannot attend they will be thanked for their interest and not considered a potential participant.*

Also, I need to speak with each potential participant prior to the day of research to ask some questions that will better help me select participants that meet the study criteria. It is possible that you may speak with me, and yet not be chosen to participate in the study. Would you be interested in scheduling this meeting? It will take about 30 minutes. *If the participant is unable or unwilling to schedule the screening interview they will be thanked for their interest and not considered a potential participant.*

I would like to schedule that meeting now. (Primary researcher and potential participant schedule the screening interview at this time.) If for any reason you are unable to attend this meeting please contact me. My phone number is 415-518-1888. Thank you for your interest and your investment of time. I look forward to meeting with you.
APPENDIX 8

SCREENING INTERVIEW

This questionnaire is to be completed by phone or e-mail.

1. Name:

2. Address, Phone Number, E-mail address:

3. Age and Ethnicity:

4. Gender:

5. Have you participated in psychotherapy in the past or present? If so, how long was that participation?

6. Are you now participating in a group or organization that requires a high level of psychological awareness? If not, have you participated in such a group in the past?

If so, what is that group, and what is it about that group that has increased your psychological awareness?
7. How long have you been sober?

8. Through the help of which 12-step program did you get sober, or through which you maintain your sobriety now?

9. Are you willing to participate in a research group setting of approximately seven to ten participants (men and women), myself, and two co-researchers, in which we use expressive arts, journaling, guided imagery, and verbal sharing as part of the research process?

10. Have you used expressive arts in psychological processes before, and how do you feel about their use?

11. Do you have experience with meditation – individually or in a group?
12. Your participation in this research will involve collecting your responses through audiotaping and then transcribing your verbal expressions, collecting your written journal responses, and photographing your artwork, all of which will be used as anonymous data in the dissertation. Are you willing to have your expressions documented anonymously in this way?

13. Seating for the Research Meeting will be in chairs or on the floor if you prefer. You are also welcome to bring a back jack and use that. This may cause some physical discomfort if you are not used to sitting for an extended period of time. Are you willing and able to participate in this way? Will you need other seating accommodations, and if so, what might they be?

14. Some of the activities on the research day may produce feelings of anxiety, or trigger cravings or other psychological discomfort. Do you often have these feelings, and, if so, what are the most common triggers? How secure do you feel that your sobriety is at this point in time?
15. The research will be held on Saturday March 24, 2012, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with a follow-up meeting on Saturday April 7, 2012, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Both meetings will be held at the Valley Presbyterian Church in Portola Valley. Will you be able to attend on both days, and for the complete time?
APPENDIX 9

PHONE SCRIPT FOR PARTICIPANTS SELECTED

Hello (Participants Name).

This is Jennifer Vaughan, and I am calling to let you know that you have been selected to participate in the research project on spiritual surrender, to be held Saturday March 24, 2012 (9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) and Saturday April 7, 2012 (9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.) at the Valley Presbyterian Church in Portola Valley.

I will be mailing you a confirmation letter that will again list when and where the research will take place, and will also give you an idea of what activities you can expect, and a description of the general nature of the study.

Included with the description of the study will be an Informed Consent form, which you should study. These will be signed in person at the beginning of the research meeting.

It is important that you review this material carefully. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions or would like clarifications. My phone number is (415) 518-1888.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study; it is greatly appreciated. I look forward to our meeting.
APPENDIX 10

PHONE SCRIPT FOR INDIVIDUALS NOT SELECTED

Hello (Individual’s Name).

This is Jennifer Vaughan, and I am calling to let you know that I have completed the screening process for potential participants, and your participation will not be required, as you do not fully meet the profile for participation in the study. This means your participation will not be necessary.

However, I truly appreciate your interest in the project, and if you would like, I would be glad to send you a summary of the research learnings once they are completed. If you would like this summary, please contact me.

My phone number is (415) 518-1888. Thank you sincerely for your time and for your willingness to participate.
CONFIRMATION LETTER FOR PARTICIPANTS SELECTED

Date
Address

Dear ________________,

This letter is to let you know that you have been selected to participate in a research inquiry group exploring the process and benefits of spiritual surrender. Enclosed you will find a description of the study, an Informed Consent form, and an Informed Consent for the Use of Artwork for your review. You will be asked to sign the consent forms before beginning the research day. Additional copies for signing will be available at the research location.

The inquiry group will include approximately seven to ten participants, two co-researchers and myself. We will be guiding you through the process throughout the research meeting.

Research Meeting specifics are:

Research Meeting Date:  Saturday March 24, 2012

Time:  9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Follow-Up Meeting Date:  Saturday April 7, 2012

Time:  9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Location for both meetings:  Valley Presbyterian Church

945 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA 94028
Parking: Ample parking is provided in the front of the building.

Attire: Casual. Wear comfortable, loose fitting pants and tops.

Refreshments and Lunch: To be provided by the researchers. Please notify me of any dietary preferences and restrictions.

If you have any questions or concerns after reviewing the Informed Consent forms or the information in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your support for this project and your willingness to participate. I look forward to our time together.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Vaughan, M.A.

(415) 518-1888
APPENDIX 12

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH FOR POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

Description of the Research

This research is an inquiry into the process known as spiritual surrender and its benefits. As a participant in this study, you have the opportunity to assist in developing psychological knowledge and increasing human understanding about spiritual surrender.

The research in this study emerges out of a distinct orientation to the discipline of psychology known as Imaginal Psychology. Imaginal Psychology recognizes that the active and social quality of knowledge depends on imagination and imaginative expression. The research conducted in this project will explore this knowledge through the expression of imagery that relates to spiritual surrender.

Over time, there have been many theories about addiction, chronic anxiety and obsessive thinking. Some psychological theorists who have studied these afflictions address the phenomenon known as spiritual surrender. Many do not. Very little actual research exists on spiritual surrender. Your participation in this research project will help fill this void, expanding the research base and providing greater scope and depth to our current understanding of spiritual surrender.

Your participation in this study will involve:

* Participation in a seven-hour research meeting with approximately eight other participants, both male and female.

* Experiencing of several guided imagery sequences.
* Participation in expressive arts sequences utilizing journaling, drawing, painting, clay forming, and collage.

* Sharing your experience and the meaning you give it with other participants in the inquiry group setting.

Your experience and expressions will be collected as data, through audiotape for the verbal portions, photography of your artwork, and through collected journals of your written expressions.

Participation in this research inquiry group is on a voluntary basis only. You are being selected because of your past experience of spiritual surrender and your interest in exploring this topic further in the group setting. You will be asked to sign an Informed Consent form at the beginning of the research meeting on Saturday, March 24, 2012. The Informed Consent form has been mailed along with this description of the research so that you may study it in advance.

Thank you very much for your interest in participating in this study.
APPENDIX 13

RESEARCH MEETING GUIDE

Informed Consent Forms

All participants signed the informed consents prior to beginning the research. Participants were seated as a group in a circle as the Informed Consent form was reviewed and signed by participants. I answered any questions about the consent forms while not revealing information that could potentially skew the research data.

Hello and welcome. Thank you for taking the time to participate today. To begin with we will cover the business portions of the day. You may recall receiving an Informed Consent form in the mail for your review. I’ll go over that form now before you sign it. I read the Informed Consent form. Signing this form means that you are willing to maintain the confidentiality of all participants, that you are aware of the potential risks that are involved in your participation, and that you agree to have your journals collected, your artwork photographed, and your verbal sharing audiotaped. Do you have any questions? I respond to questions.

If there are no additional questions, please sign the informed consent now, and pass the signed form to me or to one of the co-researchers. Thank you for your attention to this business portion of the day.
**Introductions**

I would like to begin by introducing you to those of us who will be assisting in the day’s activities. I am Jenny. I have met each of you already. This is Meridian, also a psychology graduate student and therapist. Together we will be supporting and guiding you through the exploration processes that you will experience today. Also my friend Josie will be supporting our exploration by bringing lunch for us later today.

Let me first take a moment to orient you to the building and review the practicalities of the day. There are restrooms down the hall on the right. You can exit the building in case of an emergency by exiting through the front door and following the corridor to the front of the building. At lunch you will be able to go outside to eat; the labyrinth area under the redwood trees is lovely if you would like to go there.

There is water available on the back counter, along with other refreshments and beverages. I ask that you eat only at break times. There will be formal breaks throughout the day for you to use the restrooms, have a snack, stretch, or take a brief walk. There will be a lunch break and food will be provided for you. We ask that you maintain silence for all of the short breaks; however during lunch we will all be free to talk. We will end today’s exploration at approximately 4:00 p.m.

We will be audio taping the verbal portions of today’s gathering and making notations periodically to supplement the taping. We will also be photographing the artwork at the end of the day.

You will notice that there are art and writing supplies on the back counter. You will be using these throughout the day. We will be guiding you through each step of the
day so that you will be free to focus on your experience. Are there any questions that I can answer?

**Opening Statement, Confidentiality, Description of Study, and Group Introductions**

Before we begin the research experiences that you will be having today, I will take a moment to review the general purpose of today’s activities, and to provide you with guidelines for our group interaction. I am interested in the process of spiritual surrender – how it happens and what the benefits are.

Today you will be engaging in a number of experiences that are meant to help you express the feelings, sensations, and images that you have concerning the process of spiritual surrender. I will be using guided imagery and guided relaxation to help you to access your experience; through journaling, drawing, painting, clay forming, and verbal sharing you will express this experience. Meridian and I will guide you through each process so that you can focus fully on your experience. If you have questions or would like clarification at any time, please let us know by asking us directly; if it’s during a guided imagery or expressive arts portion of the day, please raise your hand. One of us will gladly respond.

In order to support your full and focused participation we have established several important and specific guidelines that will direct the way we function as a group. You are a diverse group with differing experiences and backgrounds. It is important that this diversity be welcomed. It is also important for each of you to be able to share your experiences and ideas and to feel free enough to do so as genuinely as possible.
Respecting each person’s right to their own point of view, and allowing them to express themselves will contribute to honest and authentic sharing. To facilitate this, my co-researcher and I will be guiding the inquiry so that each of you have the time and opportunity to express yourself and to ensure that we stay in sync with today’s time schedule.

To welcome your diversity and your authentic expression a primary guideline for today’s activities will be to maintain the confidentiality of each person’s identity. Often people feel more comfortable sharing their experience if they know that their identity will be protected. I imagine this is true for most of us here today. For this reason, I am reminding you to keep confidential the identity of all participants by not revealing who participated here today, or identifying who said what. This confidentiality does not extend to myself and my co-researcher, meaning that you are free to share our identities with others – just not your fellow participants’.

A second guideline to the day’s activities is your cooperation as we direct attention from one participant to another, or when we redirect the group focus at times during the verbal sharing portions. We ask for your cooperation as we do this, in order for us to stay within the topic area, and so that we provide enough time for each participant to share.

I also will to remind each of you that your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose to stop or to leave the study at any time. However, please let me know if you should decide to leave, so that we will not be looking for you or worrying about your well-being. Does anyone have any questions?
Today, each of you will be engaged in drawing and sculpting expressions of your experience. I encourage each of you to let your mind rest, and to relax and let yourself respond from your innermost self, and from sources that you may not expect or even truly know. The expressions that you do in drawing, painting, and clay are not about artistic skill or talent, but instead are about your soul having the opportunity to express itself. Trust, and let your intuition guide you as you do these expressions on paper and in clay.

Ritual Opening

Let’s take a few moments to begin the day together. *I ring the Tibetan bell to demarcate entrance into the research exploration portion of the day. Once the sound of the bell subsides, I invite participants to introduce themselves to the group.*

We will start by introducing ourselves to each other and giving a brief idea of what drew you to participate today. After you have introduced yourself, take a moment to check in with your body and notice any anticipation, or intensified sensations you feel in your body. Then, in a word or phrase, describe how you are feeling right now. Light the candle that is at your side and place it on the altar. Notice that each of you has a candle next to you. I’ll begin, and then once you feel ready to introduce yourself, go ahead; we will pass the matches to the person who chooses to speak next.

*I guide this ritual participant introduction. The introductions will include participation by the co-researchers and myself.* Next I invite each of you to bring to the altar the personal object you brought symbolizing your spiritual surrender, and to say something about what it means to you. We will start to my left, and go around the circle clockwise.
Pre-Surrender Experience Sequence

This first sequence will involve a guided meditation. Please make yourself as comfortable as possible. You may stay seated in your chair, or find a comfortable position lying down on the floor. Feel free to use the pillows and blankets if you would like. If you have any questions during this guided sequence, please raise your hand and one of us will assist you. Once you are set, go ahead and close your eyes. Once participants get settled, I begin the Guided Meditation: Pre-Surrender Experience Script (Appendix 14).

Art-Making and Journaling

I ask you now to move to art-making. You are welcome to use any of the materials provided – there are crayons, pastels, paints, etc. Please draw or paint how your world felt to you during the time before you first experienced a spiritual surrender. This art does not have to be exact in any way, shape or form. It can be “realistic” or completely abstract. Please just describe through this art what came to you in the meditation. You will have about 15 minutes for this art-making. I will ring the bell when there are 2 minutes left. Please feel free to ask me or the co-researchers for any assistance you may need.

(When 15 minutes have passed) - 15 minutes have now passed. Go ahead and set aside your art materials. Now look for the journal and pen you have at your area. There
are cloths to wipe your hands at the back table. Keeping your artwork in front of you, journal what feelings arise as you look at it. *(see Appendix 16 – Written Dialogue Guide #1)* Do some areas captivate your attention – attracting or repelling you? What does your artwork want to say to you? What feelings come to you as you look at this artwork? You will have fifteen minutes to do this journaling. I’ll let you know when to end. (15 minutes pass.) Everyone can stop now if they haven’t already. I ask you to place your artwork on the floor, in front of your place in our circle. Once you have done this, we will move into a 10 minute Silent Break. When we return from the break, please bring your journal to the circle. I will ring the bell when it is time to return to the circle. Again, please maintain silence in order to stay more deeply present with your experience.

**Sharing of Art and Journaling**

Once the break is over, and participants have brought their journals to the circle, I guide the participants in sharing their experience in the Pre-Surrender Experience sequence through participant narratives about their artwork and journaling. I invite each of you to share, in a way that is meaningful to you, your experience with the meditation, and with the artwork and journaling that you have created. We may ask questions along the way that will better help us to fully understand your experience. There should be plenty of time for everyone to share fully. I will let you know if we need to move on to the next person. *Meridian and I ask questions to participants from the Script for Sharing Art and Journaling #1 (Appendix 17).*
Post-Surrender Experience Sequence

We will now move into a second expressive sequence, which will be followed by lunch. This second sequence will also involve a guided meditation. I invite each of you to again find a comfortable position – lying down on the floor or remaining in your seat. Please choose one of the photos that are being passed around (passing Nature photos). I ask you to contemplate for a few moments either this photo, or the object that you brought with you that represents your recovery, and move into the time of your first spiritual surrender. Now I will guide you in a short meditation. I move into the Guided Meditation: Post-Surrender Script (Appendix 18).

Art-Making and Journaling

I ask you now to again move to art-making. You are welcome to use any of the materials provided. Please draw or paint an image, or images, that came to you during this meditation. As in the earlier exercise, this art does not have to be exact in any way, shape or form. It can be realistic, or completely abstract, or anything in between. You will have about 15 minutes for this art-making. I will ring the bell when there are 2 minutes left. Please feel free to ask me or the co-researchers for any assistance you may need. Again, if you wish to move on to the written work a little early, that’s fine, too, but don’t hurry your artwork phase. Take time to let the images that come to you reveal themselves. Again, please ask us for an instruction sheet if you wish to move on.
When 10 minutes have passed, I ring the bell. Ten minutes have passed. You have five more minutes to work. (When 15 minutes has passed): 15 minutes have now passed. Go ahead and set aside your art materials. Now look for the journal and pen. There are cloths to wipe your hands at the back table. Keeping your artwork in front of you, journal what feelings arise as you look at it. (see Appendix 20 – Written Dialogue Guide #2)
What does your artwork want to say to you? What feelings come to you as you look at this artwork, representing the time of your first experience of spiritual surrender? You will have fifteen minutes to do this journaling. I’ll let you know when to end. (15 minutes pass.) Everyone can stop now if they haven’t already. Once again, I ask you to place your artwork on the floor, in front of your place in our circle. Once you have done this, we will move directly into the sharing phase.

Sharing of Art and Journaling

Once the participants have brought their journals to the circle, I guide the participants in sharing their experience in the Post-Surrender Experience sequence through participant narratives about their artwork and journaling.

Please share with the group, in a way that is meaningful to you, how you feel about the image of your post-surrender experience. Meridian and I ask questions to participants from the Script for Sharing Art and Journaling #2 (Appendix 21).

Lunch Break
We will be taking a 40-minute lunch break before moving into the next phase of the research. Lunch is ready, so please help yourselves. You may eat in this room, or outside, as you wish. I will ring the bell when it is time to begin the afternoon session.

(40 minutes pass)

**Beginning of Afternoon Session**

Please join me now back at the circle, bringing with you the object you brought from home symbolizing a current situation in your life that feels unresolved – a situation where you feel that surrendering spiritually might help to resolve the problem, but you are not sure that you are ready to make that move, or that you are able to let go. Please place this symbolic object in front of you.

**Current Unresolved Situation – Parts 1 & 2**

Please relax while I guide you in a meditation (*Guided Meditation on Current Unresolved Situation, Part 1 - Script, Appendix 22*). Now I invite you to make a clay-figure that represents the part of you that you accessed in the meditation – the part that is not ready to surrender, the part that does not want to let go. You will have 10 minutes for making this figure. When you have finished, place the image on the table. I will ring the bell when this 10 minutes is up. You are asked to then journal about this experience. What does the figure have to say to you? Why does it not want to surrender? What is it
afraid of? (see Appendix 24 – Written Dialogue Guide #3). You will have an additional 10 minutes for this journaling.

Next we will move straight into a final meditation for the day. (see Appendix 25 - Guided Meditation of Current Unresolved Situation, Part 2 - Script).

I ask you now to again use the clay to make a figure – this time representing the part of you that is ready to surrender yourself to the situation that has been troubling you. Once again, you will have 10 minutes for making the figure, followed by 10 minutes to journal - dialoguing with your figure and noting anything else that comes to mind. (see Appendix 27 – Written Dialogue Guide #4). I will ring the bell when the clay-work should be finishing, and again at the end of the journaling time. (20 minutes passes)

We will now take a 10-minute break. I ask you to maintain silence for this time, and continue to reflect on the two figures that you have made, symbolizing different parts of yourselves. (10 minutes passes) I ring the bell to bring participants back to the circle.

**Interaction with Two Figurines**

Now I will ask you to place the two clay figures on a surface, facing each other. They can be in front of you on the floor, or on one of the tables. Please take a few minutes standing next to or behind each figure, living into the experience of each of these parts of yourself. After you have taken a few moments in the first side, please write down what that figure would like to tell the other. Then do the same exercise for the other side – first spending some time in that position, then writing down what comes to mind (see
Appendix 28 – *Interaction with Two Figures*). You will have 20 minutes total for this exercise. I will ring the bell when there are 2 minutes left, so that you can wrap up.

**Invitation to Group Prayer**

Now I would like to invite those who would like to join me in reciting the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi. This is completely voluntary. You may choose to not participate in this prayer by just sitting quietly, or by moving to the side of the room (see *Appendix 29 – Invitation to Group Prayer Script*). Those who wish to recite the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi.

Now I invite you to re-visit your clay figures and feel if anything has changed for you. Take a few moments with each figure. Then please move back to your journals to note what, if anything, feels different.

**Ritual Closing**

*My co-researchers and I guided participants in identifying the key happenings of the day by giving examples.* I ask that each of you take a moment to identify what were the most significant or meaningful moments for you in the day’s exploration. This key moment could be in your personal experience or in your experience of someone else’s sharing. What do you feel were the most meaningful and significant moments in the day?
*Participants were then invited to use a word, phrase, or gesture to describe their experience of spiritual surrender. Together, participants blew out the candles that were lit at the beginning of the research day.*

**Closing Logistics**

This completes our day of research. I want to thank everyone who has come here today for your participation. I will look forward to seeing you all at our Follow-up Meeting on Saturday April 7th. In this meeting I will be presenting my preliminary learnings about the research, and ask you for your opinions and feedback on what we did here today. If you have any questions about the Follow-up Meeting, please feel free to ask me now, or contact me between now and then.

Spending this time remembering can bring up feelings that are painful and uncomfortable. If you have significant psychological discomfort as you integrate today’s experiences into your daily life, please contact me so that I can assist you in locating a psychological professional that can assist you in this process.

As part of the completion of our research, we would like to photograph your artwork before you leave. This will add important visual images to the study. We will also be collecting the journals, which will be mailed back to you if you wish, once they have been photocopied. Your patience as we do this is greatly appreciated. I encourage each of you to take your artwork home with you as a way to integrate today’s experience back into your daily life.
Finally, I would like to remind all of you that we have agreed to maintain the confidentiality of all participants here today by not identifying the names of anyone except for Meridian and myself. Your continued commitment to that agreement is important for the respect and privacy of all who have participated.
APPENDIX 14

FIRST EVOKING - PRE-SURRENDER SCRIPT

I am now going to show two short film clips, and read you a poem that I wrote in 2006 while I was in rehab. These will help you to revisit the time in your own life just before your initial experience of spiritual surrender. For many of us those were chaotic and disturbing times; the film clips and poetry are also disturbing. Take comfort in the fact that that was then, and this is now. Even though we are re-visiting those times, you are still here, in this room, with us now.


Now I would like you to relax and sink down into your mind, close your eyes if you feel comfortable doing so. Allow yourself to travel back in time to the period immediately prior to your first experience of spiritual surrender. For most of us this would be just before getting sober, though this may not be your experience. Pause.

I want you to visit this time of life for a few minutes, or as long as you feel comfortable doing so. Explore your feelings at that time. What was your world like? Were you with anyone? Or alone? Don’t be afraid to stay in that time for a little while. You are only visiting, and can come back to the present time at any point. Pause. I will ring the bell when it’s time to come back to the group.
APPENDIX 15

SCRIPT PRIOR TO FIRST ARTWORK EXPRESSION

I ask you now to move to art-making. You are welcome to use any of the materials provided – there are crayons, pastels, paints, etc. Please draw or paint how your world felt to you during the time before you first experienced a spiritual surrender. This art does not have to be exact in any way, shape or form. It can be “realistic” or completely abstract. Please just describe through this art what came to you in the meditation. You will have about 15 minutes for this art-making. I will ring the bell when there are 2 minutes left. Please feel free to ask me or the co-researchers for any assistance you may need. We will also help clean up after this phase. If you finish your artwork and want to move into the written phase a little early, that’s fine too, but don’t rush. Give the images that have come to you time to unfold onto the paper. If you wish to begin the written phase, please ask us for an instruction page.
APPENDIX 16

WRITTEN DIALOGUE GUIDE #1

You will have 15 minutes to complete this written phase. I will ring the bell when there are 2 minutes left. Please complete these questions in the composition booklet provided to you, and make sure to put your name in the front of the booklet. You don’t need to repeat the question – just write down the number that you are answering. There will be a ten-minute Silent Break following this phase. Feel free to use the restrooms or grab refreshment as you wish in the break.

1. In your own words, invite the drawing or painting to have a conversation with you. This is similar to inviting someone to have tea with you.

   Write your invitation and the image’s response.

2. Ask the image why it has come today?

   Write the image’s response.

3. Ask the image what it’s relationship is with you. What does it have to do with the time of life that you just visited – the time before your first experience of spiritual surrender.

   Write the image’s response.
4. What does your image want to tell you about the part of your life you just revisited? What was the world like before you surrendered? Did you feel that you belonged to your world? Did you feel freedom in your actions? What did you need to surrender at this point in your life? You can answer these questions, or journal as you feel compelled.
APPENDIX 17

SCRIPT FOR SHARING ART & JOURNALING #1

I invite each of you to share, in a way that is meaningful to you, your experience with the meditation, and with the artwork and journaling that you have created. We may ask questions along the way that will better help us to fully understand your experience. There should be plenty of time for everyone to share fully. I will let you know if we need to move on to the next person.

Possible questions for participants:

* In this “pre-surrender phase” of your life, what was your experience of belonging to a group or a family?

* What was your sense of freedom? Did you feel free to do what you wanted to do? Did you want more freedom?

* What is it that you did not want to surrender? What did you eventually surrender when you “surrendered your self-will”? 
APPENDIX 18

GUIDED MEDITATION: POST-SURRENDER SCRIPT

Now we will move into the second phase of our research day. I ask you to get comfortable, to relax and get prepared for a meditative journey. If you are comfortable sitting in your chair, great; if you wish to sit on the floor, that’s fine too.

Please collect the item that you brought that represents your recovery, and keep it close to you. Look at it and think about it for a moment.

I will also pass out some photos for you to look at. (Pass out Nature photos) Pick one that calls to you; you may take it home with you later if you wish. We are next going to move into a contemplation of what happened when you first experienced a “spiritual surrender”, and what it was like after that. I will let you know when it is time to move on – for now, just contemplate the photo that you have chosen, or your own personal item, and relax.

I invite you all to join me at this time in reciting the A.A. Third Step Prayer. A copy is provided in your written packet if you need to refer to it. This is completely voluntary, and you may opt out if you so wish.

< recite A.A. Third Step Prayer together >

I ask you now to close your eyes. Center your attention on your breathing for a few minutes. I would like for you to breathe in for a count of four, hold for two, and then
breathe out for a count of four. When you have fully exhaled, rest there for a count of two before inhaling again for four. *Pause.* Deeply in – one, two, three four. Hold for two. Exhale – one, two, three, four. Rest. *Pause.* And again. *(Repeat several times.)*

Now I would like to place your attention in the center of your forehead, and say inwardly the words, “I am.” Keeping your attention in the middle of the forehead, again say the words, “I am.” *Pause.* Now bring your attention down into your throat region. And inwardly say the words, “It thinks.” Try that a couple of times, the dropping of your attention down from the “I am” with your attention in the forehead, to the “It thinks, with your attention in the throat. *Pause.* Next I will ask you to drop your attention down into the region of your heart. *Pause.* When you have placed your attention in the heart region, I would like you to inwardly say the words, “She feels.” *Pause.* You can repeat this exercise, starting at the forehead “I am,” followed by the “It thinks” of the throat, and finally in the heart region saying the words, “She feels.” *Pause.* Don’t worry if you feel that you haven’t quite gotten there. If your attention is wandering, just relax. *Pause.* See if you can feel the air touching your skin. *Pause.* And now bringing your attention inward again to the region of your heart. *Pause.* See if you can feel it beating within your chest, and let your attention rest there.

Now I would like you to remember your original experience of spiritual surrender, whether it was a sudden occurrence, or one that happened over time. I ask you to stay in this time and remember what it was like for you – this time of surrender and renewal. Where were you? What did it feel like? What thoughts went through your mind? I will ring the bell when it is time to open your eyes and come back to the group.
APPENDIX 19

SCRIPT PRIOR TO SECOND ARTWORK EXPRESSION

I ask you now to again move to art-making. You are welcome to use any of the materials provided. Please draw or paint an image, or images, that came to you during this meditation. As in the earlier exercise, this art does not have to be exact in any way, shape or form. It can be realistic, or completely abstract, or anything in between. You will have about 15 minutes for this art-making. I will ring the bell when there are 2 minutes left. Please feel free to ask me or the co-researchers for any assistance you may need. Again, if you wish to move on to the written work a little early, that’s fine, too, but don’t hurry your artwork phase. Take time to let the images that come to you reveal themselves. Again, please ask us for an instruction sheet if you wish to move on.
APPENDIX 20

WRITTEN DIALOGUE GUIDE #2

You will have 15 minutes to complete this written phase. I will ring the bell when there are 2 minutes left. Again, please complete these questions in the composition booklet provided to you.

1. In your own words, invite the drawing or painting to have a conversation with you. Write your invitation and the image’s response.

2. Ask the image why it has come today? Is there anything it wishes to say? Write the image’s response.

3. Ask the image what it’s relationship is with you. What does it have to do with the time of life that you just visited – the time during and just after your first experience of spiritual surrender. Write the image’s response.

4. What does your image want to tell you about the part of your life you just re-visited? What was the world like during this experience (of spiritual surrender)? What was it like after?
APPENDIX 21

SCRIPT FOR SHARING ART & JOURNALING #2

I invite each of you to share, in a way that is meaningful to you, your experience with the meditation, and with the artwork and journaling that you have created. We may ask questions along the way that will better help us to fully understand your experience. There should be plenty of time for everyone to share fully. I will let you know if we need to move on to the next person.

Possible questions for participants:

* In this “post-surrender phase” of your life, what was your experience of belonging to a group or a family? What changed?

* What was your sense of freedom? Did you feel free to do what you wanted to do? Did you want more freedom? What was different from prior to your experience of surrender?

* What did you surrender when you “surrendered your self-will”? What was different afterwards? What were the palpable effects of this surrender?
APPENDIX 22

GUIDED MEDITATION ON CURRENT UNRESOLVED SITUATION – PART 1

I would like you to find the object you brought in today, the one that represents a currently unresolved situation in your life. Place it in front of you, and get comfortable once again – in your seat or on the floor. Pause. Feel your body sink into the chair, or the floor. Feel the support that the earth gives you, holding, supporting you. Concentrate on your breathing now, breathing in slowly for four counts and holding. Pause. Then exhaling softly for four counts and holding. Pause. And again. In for four and hold. Pause. Out for four and wait. Pause. In. Pause. And out. Pause.

Now I would like you to think about the situation represented by the object you have brought in front of you; this currently unresolved and troubling situation, whatever it may be. Pause. Thinking about this situation may make you feel tense or bothered. You probably feel somewhat conflicted about this problem – part of you wanting to surrender and quit fighting, part of you wanting to stay firm and not give in.

I would like you to close your eyes now, and concentrate on the part of you that does not want to quit. The part that thinks you can somehow resolve this problem your own way, or not have to give in at all. I want you to enter into this part of yourself and feel deeply its wants, needs, drives, thoughts, and emotions. Stay with this part for several minutes, and let that firm, unyielding position resonate through your body. I will ring the bell when it is time to come back to the room here.
APPENDIX 23

SCRIPT PRIOR TO FIRST FIGURE-MAKING

Again, we will move into art-making; this time I would like you to use the clay materials provided to make a small figure. This figure should represent the part of you that you just made contact with; the part that does not want to surrender in the current situation. Feel free to decorate the figure with any of the materials provided, or anything small from outside that you wish to add. You will have about 10 minutes for this exercise. I will ring the bell when there are 2 minutes left. Please feel free to ask me or the co-researchers for any assistance you may need.
APPENDIX 24

WRITTEN DIALOGUE GUIDE #3

As we did this morning, please write your answers to these questions in your composition book. You don’t need to repeat the question – just write down the number that you are answering. You will have about 10 minutes for this journaling.

1. Introduce yourself to the figure, and ask it for its name.
   Write the image’s response.

2. Ask the image why it does not want to give in or surrender (regarding the current troubling situation)?
   Write the image’s response.

3. What will the world be like if you (the image) continue to resist surrender?

   Possible additional journaling topics:
   * Interview your figure briefly on the topic of freedom.
   * Interview your figure briefly on the topic of belonging.
     - Does the figure feel alone? Or part of a group?
     - Is the figure afraid of being alone? Or afraid of being part of a group? Why?
   * Interview your figure briefly on the topic of personal will.
APPENDIX 25

GUIDED MEDITATION ON CURRENT UNRESOLVED SITUATION – PART 2

Now we are going to practice the heart-centering meditation that we did this morning. Let’s begin by getting comfortable, and concentrating on your breathing for a few minutes. (A few minutes pass.) I am going to read a poem, followed by the meditation. (Researcher reads William Stafford’s poem: “A Ritual to read to Each Other”).

Now I would like to place your attention in the center of your forehead, and say inwardly the words, “I am.” Keeping your attention in the middle of the forehead, again say the words, “I am.” Pause. Now bring your attention down into your throat region. And inwardly say the words, “It thinks.” Try that a couple of times, the dropping of your attention down from the “I am” with your attention in the forehead, to the “It thinks, with your attention in the throat. Pause. Next I will ask you to drop your attention down into the region of your heart. Pause. When you have placed your attention in the heart region, I would like you to inwardly say the words, “She feels.” Pause. You can repeat this exercise, starting at the forehead “I am,” followed by the “It thinks” of the throat, and finally in the heart region saying the words, “She feels.” Pause. Don’t worry if you feel that you haven’t quite gotten there. If your attention is wandering, just relax. Pause. See if you can feel the air touching your skin. Pause. And now draw your attention inward and relax.
Now I would like you to revisit the currently unresolved and troubling issue symbolized by the object in front of you. This time I would like you to access that part of yourself that is ready to surrender to the problem, to stop fighting and relax... To stop trying to force a solution... To allow a solution to come from somewhere beyond yourself... I want you to enter into this part of yourself and feel deeply its wants, needs, drives, thoughts, and emotions. Stay with this part for several minutes. I will ring the bell when it is time to come back to the present.
APPENDIX 26

SCRIPT PRIOR TO SECOND FIGURE-MAKING

Again I will ask you to use the clay to make a small figure. This figure should represent the part of you that is ready to surrender in the current situation, the part of you that you just got in contact with. Feel free to decorate the figure with any of the materials provided, or anything small from outside. You will have about 10 minutes for this exercise. I will ring the bell when there are 2 minutes left. Please feel free to ask me or the co-researchers for any assistance you may need.
Again, please write your answers to these questions in your composition book.

You don’t need to repeat the question – just write down the number that you are answering. You will have about 10 minutes for this journaling, followed by a 10 minute Silent Break.

1. Introduce yourself to the figure, and ask it for its name.

*Write the image’s response.*

2. Ask the image why it is ready to give in or surrender spiritually (regarding the current troubling situation)?

*Write the image’s response.*

3. What will be different in the world if you (the image) is able to surrender?

Possible additional journaling topics:

* Interview your figure briefly on the topic of freedom.

* Interview your figure briefly on the topic of belonging.

  - Does the figure feel alone? Or part of a group?

  - Is the figure afraid of being alone? Or afraid of being part of a group? Why?

* Interview your figure briefly on the topic of personal will.
APPENDIX 28

INTERACTION WITH TWO FIGURES

Now I ask you to place the two clay figures on a surface, facing each other. They can be in front of you on the floor, or on one of the tables. Please take a few minutes standing next to or behind each figure, living into the experience of each of these parts of yourself. After you have taken a few moments in the first side, please write down what that figure would like to tell the other.

Next, do the same exercise on the other side – first spending some time in that position, then writing down what comes to mind. Again, please write down what the second figure, who wants to surrender, has to say to the first.

You will have 20 minutes total for this exercise. I will ring the bell when there are 2 minutes left, so that you can wrap up.
APPENDIX 29

INVITATION TO GROUP PRAYER SCRIPT

Now I would like to invite those who would like to, to join me in saying the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi. This is completely voluntary. You may choose to not participate in this prayer by just sitting quietly, or by moving to the side of the room.

Those who wish to recite the prayer do so.

Now I invite you to re-visit your clay figures one last time, and feel if anything has changed for you or for them. Take a few moments with each figure. Then please move back to your journals to note what, if anything, feels different.
APPENDIX 30

FINAL SHARING/RITUAL CLOSING

My co-researchers and I guide participants in identifying the key happenings of the day by giving examples. I ask that each of you take a moment to identify what were the most significant or meaningful moments for you in the day’s exploration. This key moment could be in your personal experience or in your experience of someone else’s sharing. What do you feel were the most meaningful and significant moments in the day?

Participants are then invited to use a word, phrase, or gesture to describe their experience of spiritual surrender. Together, participants will blow out the candles that were lit at the beginning of the research day.
APPENDIX 31

THANK-YOU LETTER

Date

Participant’s Name

Participant’s Address

Dear (Participant’s Name),

I am taking this opportunity to thank you for your participation in my dissertation research. From your participation new insights may be reached that will further human understanding about the process and benefits of spiritual surrender. Within the next several months, the Summary of Learnings will be completed, and you will be receiving a copy at that time.

Research is most valuable when it contributes to the life of a participant in a beneficial way. For this reason I hope that you found benefit through engaging in this research project in ways that were personally meaningful. Integrating your individual experience and your experience with the group may cover an extended period of time. If for any reason you experience concerns or have additional insights about the research you have participated in, please feel free to call me.

Warm regards

Jennifer Vaughan, M.A.

(415) 518-1888  jennyvaughan63@gmail.com
APPENDIX 32

SUMMARY OF EVOKING FILM CLIPS & POEMS

Film Clips shown as part of First Evoking sequence:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kIIXVxuDw7VM&feature=related  Party Girl – Despite the Virus (Trotz des Virus)


Poem read as part of First Evoking sequence:

The Party Past

Run, run, run...
Laughter that is not funny,
Sex that is not love.

Run, run, run...
Dissonance and chaos,
Shrieking demons,
Death stalking.

Run, run, run...
The party is over;
Everyone has gone home.

I open my eyes
And find myself alone.
Or let them close,
And slip into the blackness.

Jenny Vaughan - November 2006
Poem read as part of the Second Evoking sequence:

**The Third Step Prayer of A.A.**

God, I offer myself to Thee-
To build with me
and to do with me as Thou wilt.
Relieve me of the bondage of self,
that I may better do Thy will.
Take away my difficulties,
that victory over them may bear witness
to those I would help of Thy Power,
May I do Thy will always!
Poems read as part of the Third Evoking sequence:

**William Stafford – “A Ritual to Read to Each Other”**

If you don't know the kind of person I am
and I don't know the kind of person you are
a pattern that others made may prevail in the world
and following the wrong god home we may miss our star.

For there is many a small betrayal in the mind,
a shrug that lets the fragile sequence break
sending with shouts the horrible errors of childhood
storming out to play through the broken dyke.

And as elephants parade holding each elephant's tail,
but if one wanders the circus won't find the park,
I call it cruel and maybe the root of all cruelty
to know what occurs but not recognize the fact.

And so I appeal to a voice, to something shadowy,
a remote important region in all who talk:
though we could fool each other, we should consider--
lest the parade of our mutual life get lost in the dark.

For it is important that awake people be awake,
or a breaking line may discourage them back to sleep;
the signals we give--yes or no, or maybe--
should be clear: the darkness around us is deep.
Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is Hatred, let me sow Love.
   Where there is Injury, Pardon.
   Where there is Doubt, Faith.
   Where there is Despair, Hope.
Where there is Darkness, Light, and
   Where there is Sadness, Joy.

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much
seek to be consoled as to console;
To be understood, as to understand;
   To be loved, as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.
APPENDIX 33

SUMMARY OF THE DATA

PRE-SURRENDER Audio Transcriptions:

Mary: What stands out is just sort of being at the—like at the limits, constantly at the limits. Obviously having a will to die and being in conflict with myself and just kind of numbness, unsettled running around all the time, desperate wanting to die not realizing it— that’s surpass it.

**********

Mary: At the—my—yeah, I felt alone at the end pre-surrender. I was like this sort of under illusions of—I kind of--I think I defended the idea--my ideas that I was part of this really loyal, powerful group and that is that illusion crumbled. I realized that I was alone and I did have a moment, pointed moment where I decided that I needed to have a nervous breakdown and that the people that I was hanging out with were going to handle it and like I went for it and they split and my family showed up at the door and I was--I realized that they were on my side and for the first time in several years. And so I felt alone and then I realized that I wasn’t alone, I guess the people who I thought were my family really weren’t then my family showed up.

**********

Mary: Just kind of like turning over every temptation so there’s this like constant sense of emptiness because there was like nothing; there is no shame or anything. There was nothing holding anything back so there is just sense of desolation, everything being exploited to its fullest all the time.

Will: All right. My picture is something of the sunshine being clouded over in my life. I’ve sobered up in Florida and I can remember just sweating vodka and being told so. My comfort level for about 10 years was the big bottle of vodka, the one with the handle on it on a daily basis. At the end of the day when I get about an inch left I was nervous about the next day supply and that’s where I went to from—as--at a 10 year run with alcohol after a couple of decades of very successful racing and then when the paper--I actually heard the guy share one time in Florida in the meeting that he had pawned his super bowl ring and stated that he had gone from the super bowl to the toilet bowl and I absolutely understood that person. Been to three rehabs, the last one was one of my choice when I first heard somebody else. I had the first two I wanted them to fix me. But I think the beginning of my surrender was before my first rehab I said to my wife that I thought I could get some--maybe get some help just so I could get the 5:00 before I needed my first drink. I didn’t
want to quit drinking I just wanted to be able to get the happy hour without a drink because I was drinking 24. I finally got to the place that were living in [inaudible] town and a brand new home, a good community and my wife had gone to work. And for whatever reason I didn’t have any alcohol in the house so I started drinking NyQuil and I didn’t have any pot so I went up in the attic with a little pot pipe I had and I scraped the inside of the pot pipe out made myself a little pipe out of a or a little smoking device out of a soda can with the shavings in there and let it and I somehow looked at myself from outside myself and I looked so small and that was--I think my low point. That was prior to my first rehab so this whole area of my life was--I was saturated and I couldn’t tell you what day, what month sometimes I can’t tell you what came first, what came second. For having prior had a spiritual experience years, years decades before I knew somehow that I was separate from what I was doing with my body. I can’t really explain that. But I--well it felt good just to take a good deep breathe, you know.

Researcher:  
...before you got sober did you feel free?

Will:  No, I was absolutely trapped inside the bottle. I was inside the bottle that was the deepest relationship I’ve had with anything in my life was with alcohol and longest lasting.

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Linda:  So, sorry. So, I do have a picture of a lock and I guess I’m just very isolated and just very locked inside my head in a lot ways in terms of just bottled up . . .

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Cathy:  Well, it was sad, you know, I can visualize myself. I remember that day that I looked in the mirror and I didn’t even know who that was. I didn’t know who she was. She was an angry woman and I what and I think that as I wrote—that I was angry at myself because I knew better in my heart. I knew so much better but I - there’s absolutely nothing I can do. I was--this was how I could handle it. Because no one could know, no one could--I couldn’t tell anybody, you know, I just had this insane. I was--wasn’t worth it. I was unworthy. I was I couldn’t do it, you know, if I did try it wasn’t going to be good enough. You know, I had this two little boys and I was thinking what am I doing here? Because where [inaudible] by the router, it wasn’t like I’m going to drop down the store. I’m going to drop over to my dealer’s house. No, no, no, no, you had to get all that done before I got the kids. Before I got to dinner, before I got anything that was number one. Then it started in the morning like with plan as soon as I open my eyes or if I didn’t even open my eyes. I mean but I never closed my eyes at night, you know, it was like, “Okay. Well, this is what we got to do.” And I just I got tired. I got sick and tired of being tired. I got tired of being angry, you know, it
showed up at work, you know, and I was called nobody wanted to deal with me at work zero. The guys were coming there, “Oh, shit she’s there. I’m going somewhere else.” I was not fit to be in public at that point in my life and my world got small. It got really small. I felt like I built a prison for myself in Lagunitas California. In a little tiny house, you know, did it—it makes me--my skin crawl when I think about what I did and how long I did it. I mean it’s just tiring. It exhausts me and today I know a different story, you know, today I know a different story. I am worthy, you know, and I believe every woman and man that chooses to step across this line just it is leap of faith. It is—because I didn’t trust. I mean I didn’t learn trust for a while after I was sober. I was like “Yeah, right.” Okay. I’m still hanging on to this line over here just in case, you know. Today, I don’t, I don’t I don’t really think about it, you know, I just know if I can’t figure it out at a standstill something’s going to happen regardless for what it is. I can get to the other side, you know. You know, I can feel that addict come up in a lot of situations and I’ve got big thing to do for my son’s 18th birthday and, you know, you want to do it right and my whole day was span, I’m thinking, “Why am I doing this? I’m taking the fun out of it.

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John: . . . What I’ve found out? I didn’t know that I had to surrender anything. I just thought from a really young age I now know it is fear. I was so afraid of any physical interaction with anybody and fear of--I was afraid that I wasn’t like I—to this day will look at myself as not enough. If I make an assessment of myself so I, you know, I think pretty early on I was a never try so I never try I never have to fail and that--I didn’t get sober and feel like I had a spiritual awakening for quite some for many months. I was doing it because of the law. There was no like Godness or being nicer to other people or it was for me to get out of jail then to probably go back to my miserable little existence. So for me in that I don’t know it wasn’t, I didn’t have a spiritual awakening until well after doing a program. There was not like up until that time I didn’t feel any different except I didn’t have any drugs or alcohol and I was still a poser and that’s really what all of these brings up for me anytime I talk about it is how much of a poser I actually I am. I would probably ask.

**********

Mark: Well I guess there is no need for profess. I’ll profess anyway by saying this. This is the way I look at it. I’m not real good with art as metaphor. I’m beyond disinterested I guess I’m uninterested in it which would reflect I guess my actual emotion behind it. Supposed my ideal is--I’m--I look at going over my past and how I was prior to getting cleaned as a form of--at least at this phase in my development of sobrieties a form of self-flagellation that I’m not really interested in. You know I can track out the stories about smoking crack until all my teeth fell out and having seizures everyday and yadi yadi yada. I’m not interested in it. I’m not interested too much in the artwork that I drew. One of the gifts for me of
sobriety and spirituality is the fact that I don’t have to visit that aspect of my life and other people’s lives that I know that have died around that from the past. I am willing to do so today only to the extent that it might benefit know, same story after six treatments center and yadi yadi yada, that moment where I understood that there was a possibility that I could be clean is one--prior to getting clean the one thing that my picture shows is question marks. I became befuddled by the fact that this was something that I actually could not control the idea of self will while I was an addict for me was complete fallacy. I don’t believe that that was myself that wanted me to do the things that I did everyday for years and years. So, I was left very puzzled that my brain at a lot of times in my life is not my friend. I always thought that it would be an ally and it always seem to work for me to that—until that road block. So get cleaned and what I’m left with is the contemplation on how that occurred. I have not surrendered in the sense I don’t feel I’ve surrendered in a past tense. I surrender right now. Have I surrendered? I’ll let, you know, when I get back on the road. I spent too many, too many times coming out of treatment centers or run out of my apartment in the morning after being up three days saying I’ve surrendered and all that was, was verbalization of something that there was nothing behind it. So I don’t try to act as if I have overcome anything at this point. I see about the next couple of minutes and I’ve learned some tools around it that helped me to do that.

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Max: I found spirituality when I was on the fifth grade and low and behold I was in the Catholic school but it wasn’t a big church that got me enticed. It was--I used to go to the nuns five o’clock mass in the morning and it was just a simple little chapel. Red bowls of candles it was small and warm and I remember that up to this day that it made an impression on me. It wasn’t always Catholic I mean I got into Eastern religion in my 20’s. I went around the world and I went into--it was in India, meditating on the beach but there’s always been a spiritual side of me. That I just loved and fostered but when I when I started drinking heavy and I guess I was kind of a late arrival. I was a periodic drinker I guess in my 20’s. I was doing but I was doing yoga and meditation and stuff and in my 30’s. I got introduced to a--we got introduced to a group of my friends in high school and we started drinking and doing powder and I tell you once I started drinking alcohol stole my soul and there was no two ways around it. I was either in God or in alcohol and alcohol led the way and I was in a real bad shape. It happened pretty fast and by the time 1987 through up to 2000 I was in ten different programs, treatment programs and in 1984 which was 85 was my worst time. I was hold up in an apartment. I had neuropathy so bad in my feet and my fingers I couldn’t feel them and I was in the Kaiser Hospital emergency room, five times in eight months, three times by ambulance. I had a cab driver who I befriended who would bring me my wine and that was my life. I mean I was evicted from that apartment and the power was turned off and I was drinking by candle light and it was pretty bad and there was there was no spiritual anything. It was--I was in an abyss and it was chaos, confusion and it was getting to the next day and I wasn’t showering. I wasn’t brushing my teeth. I had two grand mal seizures. It was pretty dark and I went I came back and there was a note on the
sheriff’s door - an eviction notice and from there I went to Project 90 and worked my way out of that so that’s kind of it.

Kristin: So, the video of the girls that was me. I’m getting so much [inaudible] (crying) I’ve had really hard times. [inaudible] so young and then all those, those things pile up. And you just don’t want to be that, you don’t want to be the person who did that or had that happened to. Oh God! You know, it got to a point where I didn’t care if I died, I wanted to die, you know, like it was a piece of shit. And I saw what I imagined vividly and what a pain is it like to, you know, the darkness and then like my loved ones just looking in and like terrified, you know. Not understanding that I wanted to fucking die but I mean it was seeing somehow [inaudible] my empathy and those people I didn’t cared about myself, I cared about the people in my life that love me and so that’s, that was the moment. It’s like for some reason, I saw that I wasn’t just an island onto to myself. I was killing everyone around me in some way just like the people who took advantage of me or fucking laughed at me or whatever they did. Those people have no emotions, no feeling or like soul and so I felt like I didn’t neither but when I found the source like I felt like something between the people who loved me and me. I don’t think I love them but there was something and so I just took the next step and the next step and the next step but I think I know why [inaudible] means (crying)

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POST-SURRENDER Audio Transcriptions:

Mary: Two moments really came up for me. One sort of stand was I’ve describe one that was also coming up but I didn’t go with it because it was sort of on the brink with a priest or under. So I had two moments that really profound, one being in a sense before I knew an intervention was coming and I had the sense the night before that I wasn’t betraying anybody to move on with my life which is something that I’ve feared greatly being a traitor. And I had I felt like because I knew that it was coming and I had the sense of like being responsible for some army or something, I felt like I should get loaded the night before the intervention so I got--tried to get in contact with the one person that I knew and around my parents house I was relieve that he wasn’t there and then went back to sleep and we’re laying down in bed just had this feeling of just like almost infinity when I thought about with great loves with people that the trailer park whenever around here that I ran with and all that, I was afraid that I’d be turning on and just felt like it’d always be a great sense of love and we always be a part of each other and blah, blah, blah. But I can't explain it exactly, I don’t know like if there is a person's face that came up and I have no idea and I really didn’t giving it much thought why that one person's face, there is a one person's face that came into focus and there wasn’t somebody I thought was really important to me. And then when I got to treatment then, I- my mother past away unexpectedly when I actually got there and I came back from her funeral to treatment and like all the old feelings have just rage about like people who my parent, my
mother wanted to me to get clean and sort of all came out and like I saw the big buck of alcohol is anonymous and it's just like full of rage and disgust and didn't want to have anything to do with it, didn't want to hear about recovery ever again which is like how you know I was I thought that we're all above it and whenever had all this self righteous or whatever speeches on how it's just lame. And so and then I took a little break for that moment and that past and then I came back to that same spot in that same [inaudible] big book was in that same spot and then I realize that I had a personal connection to this inspired book that I had come to appreciate in a weeks that I got in the treatment and then I had and then I wasn't doing it because somebody else wanted me to do it.

Will: I don't know that I'm really completely post-surrender but I think I'd pass the threshold were I'm saying a lot more light than I used to. I feel like--I mean thousands of pounds lighter I had remembering when I was drawing at--I draw through some peaks and valleys which I remember doing in a treatment center and then they had us overlay years, another exercise they did was write down the years of when were you doing well and when were you doing poorly and they did an overlay and surprisingly they matched. It's kind of what I revisited when I look at this today, I can remember my first feeling of being at one with something else that learn I've grew up in--I was a catholic, I guess I was 14 when I finish my first communion and whatever I did and I went to a weekend retreat and I felt the draw to that and that was my--in this life time I first draw up something up so I didn’t of course pay any attention to it because none of my friends did it and so I went for it, the crowd. And did that for my most of my life so from riot but after I hit the wall, it's been a process. I feel I'm going to shut some space until this one that relief actually I watch mother died and I think I told Jenny on the way in today I may have to fly out of here this afternoon and well, got at least get to my mother couple hours before she passed away last night. And so speaking at the funeral and the kids are all just [inaudible] but feel really good doing that today. I feel honored that they would ask me to do that. I don’t know, I am more on the spiritual side in the last few years of my life even though I've been sober for quite a few years now which I think is a miracle. The last few years had been quite spiritual for me. I'm looking at life as a whole different thing and I'm not looking at as it a biological thing.

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Linda: . . . It was really like standing in the sunlight and it--literally that was because it was outside the garden. It's just like standing in the sunlight and that the garden became a metaphor it was like dig enough the roots and over the months. It was such a freedom of that bond this slave to this constant behavior and constant and feeling field up with love that I'd never felt in my life and that is the freedom that I never in my life experience ever, ever it was inexplicable. I mean there is nothing that I ever felt like that it was like there's nothing I ever experience. So that was you know, yeah so that was literally—yeah, so that’s how.
Cathy: And there they are. I've showed two times of, the first time was that night on July 2nd, 2004 when I look in a mirror and I was done. I knew in my heart that I was done and I woke up in the morning, I just couldn’t do it anymore and there were still alcohol, there's still drugs, still everything that never was one of my deals, everything was gone before I woke up. So I did that day and then I was told that I had to surrender by intervention, which didn’t make me feel so hot. To counter that glory out and then the next time I felt complete surrender is when I was trying to fourth pit stop with my sponsor, cut out in West [inaudible]. And she had me after we were finish to go for this walk and I think I walk for like three hours. And it was like letting go of all the stuff that I carried about me that wasn’t good. Just letting go and I was like I could see it falling behind me and I didn’t have to think about it anymore. By the time I got done, I just felt like an entirely different women, completely different women. I felt strong, I felt—but you know what, no matter what, I’m going to be okay, no matter what. I don’t have to worry and I don’t have to live afraid anymore. And that was the gift of my surrender, it’s not living in that fear, not that I don’t experience it occasionally. I know it’s a short term. I’m not going to die, I’m going to be at the other side and the other side is always so much nicer.

John: For me what happened in the last 20 minutes is I know the idea of the meditation made me very hostile. For me to close my eyes and sit still is next to impossible if we’re not laying. I just--I wanted to be like, why don’t we just take a nap? The idea, I was really trying to do the forehead, the heart and he said some shit thing and I'm going to sound like an asshole and I’m really sorry about this, I didn’t want to said it, I thought about boobs, tractors and sandwiches. That’s what happened to me during that meditation. And not being her where I wanted to do was split. So that’s my stuff but for me, thinking about when we were going around the room, the spiritual experience, I think when I felt what happened to me was I had to go to a lot of rehabs and in this stuff and the recovery thing, no one can bully me. I felt bullied my whole life a little or whatever and no one can out recovery me, that was what I really liked, I think what was really exciting to me about this 12 Step Program. And I was thinking about--I got a token or one of our anniversary chips and a bunch of people clap for me. And it was like, woo, woo, I got a big woo, woo or whatever and it made me feel included. Not fake included or not like I did, my whole life where it was all made up. But I was like, this is my click or my group, I am a part of this. And I think that’s when I really started developing a faith that I was like, oh wow, something’s working here, something is happening. I don’t want to say to me, I want to say for me that made me want to go ahead and not do the bullshit, talk my way through it or read the book and answer--do the homework so I can get Cs but to really participate. And I say, the spiritual idea is the only thing that I don’t get tired off in my recovery so far, every other single person plays her thing has come to whatever to me to lose interest except the idea of the spiritual condition. So, that’s my two cents.

Mark: I don’t want to meddle. I’m going to take the question as what do I perceive or what was it like for that moment or that—and I don’t want to meddle what came after that. In my timeline at times now, in my narrative I can have a tendency I can say, well, and I realize how I hurt other people, I didn’t realize that at the moment. I
realize that a little bit further down the road as I was educated to what it was that I needed to do and to appreciate. The moment was January 25th, I’ve been in treatment about eight days, it was about 9:15 in the morning and I was sitting on a rock. I didn’t go into treat willfully, my door got knocked down by a guy from New York and a couple of other people, he is not in the program but he is a like a brother to me and he have flown out five times over the course of fifteen years and done the same thing. And I didn’t want to go to treatment because it was no reason to. And I was pretty close to own my way out and that was fine. It wasn’t that I wanted to die or anything. It wasn’t that grandiose. I just--there was no other option in doing of what I was doing. So I go into treatment and there was no reason to be there for me other than for other people, I always try to do that surface deal as much as I could. And all of a sudden, I was hit with the distinct feeling that I could be done. I wasn’t done because I’ve played that card too many times but for some reason it had nothing to do with me. There was a potential for me to never use drugs and alcohol again. I don’t know where that came from and that’s the one thing that inherently in me now allows me the faith that there is something larger than myself because I didn’t come up with that one. And so that was the deal and then that was followed by anger real quick because this disease has taken out other people in my family and people that I care about and it took out a large part of my life. And I was pissed and I look at it as something on my shoulder in that moment and I looked at it and I’m like, I can’t deal with it if it’s in here but if it’s there, all I got to is pissed it off. I had to be that simple for me. You don’t want me to do this than that’s what I’m going to do because you don’t want me to do it. And I was angered than I ever been in my life, before and after, in that moment at something not at anybody, it wasn’t anybody else’s fault that I was the way I was. I like to blame on family circumstances, this and that, I’m the one, it was me and it was this thing. So anyway, that’s what started it all for me than I ran in the smoking area where there was a guy named Dave Ramsey and I said, how do I talk with somebody in here? Now, I’ve been here eight days. And he said, all you got to do is ask somebody. And I just distinctly remember then I’ll stop the way I felt when he said that to me. I heard the same advic that I’ve been given a hundred thousand times before but for some reason I heard it differently. I’m like, I got to ask and for some reason I’ve processed it in the way that I never had and I like to take credit but I don’t because I don’t think it was me.

Max: When I first took this picture, when I first saw it and then I take it from there. I sense what really came up was peace and freedom because this reminded me of half dome and when I was 16, my very best friend and I climb the backside and we spent the night on half dome with our can of beans and franks or whatever it was, cans from beans and franks and it just--it was just, it meant a lot to me and as far as the re-surrender of--one thing I’ve heard about like two or three of us that we would read something and yeah, yeah, yeah and then we pick it up down the road or inexperience or whatever in a completely different sense to us and that’s a déjà vu that’s been happening to me with big book from day one. I read it five different times or six different times and every time I guess something else out of it but when I work the scripts with my sponsor, I think was--I have gut shots--I had a number of the third step prayer really hits me and I feel I would step prayer all that but I think when I
work the steps with my sponsor and I remember we go through it and we do one and I—we look for it and waiting for that miracle to happen but after we went through all the steps, I just felt like he said the freedom and I just felt a release that it's difficult to put into words but I felt free and then peace and I felt that I was on the new road to happiness without sounding too corny.

Kristin: So my first moment I think of surrender was I remember my—I had gotten drunk off of cooking cherry, that was the only alcohol that family hadn’t taken out of the house and they were like horrified and I was drunk and the door open and I sat on one of the couches I mean this is all kind of a blur and there's talking and there's somebody fighting with their husband on the phone and somebody crying in the corner. I was like, this is exactly what I thought It was going to be like, this is so fucking scary. And there was a counselor there who I grew up playing soccer with. Who just came around the corner and I knew her really well and she was like, I heard you were here. I'm so glad you're here and it was like every muscle in my body just melted. It was such a release and she hug me and I hug her back and I didn’t wanted to end which is—God, I can't tell you how many times I feel like I've been in intimate situation where I just wanted it to end. And so that was kind of the first moment were I felt a part of and then--I think I was surrendering everyday that I wasn’t—thank God for treatment because I couldn’t have done it on my own. I don’t—I have sponsor who he did it but I don’t get that. But when I was working steps with my sponsors, she said, I want you to physically feel what it's like to let God take control. Find something in your life that kind of matches bad experience because that is the experience, that is the transition and--months went by and we kept going through the steps and I was like--she had one with God driving a bus and I didn’t relate to it and I got my husband--I don’t know--just whatever, my partner--scuba diving lessons but me and we went down to [inaudible] to finally get certified and it was murky freezing awful, I mean I was frozen and you couldn’t see anything and your suppose to do these like instructions with the guide but you couldn’t—I couldn’t see--I couldn’t see my husband sitting next to me. And we drop down like 20 feet in the water and see anything and I was struggling and I don’t know if you ever scuba dive but look if you move too much you start to fall over you start to—you either go up or you go down and -- I was trying to lighten my load and then make myself more heavy and I just it was awful for 16 minutes whenever he was going to read--the instructors are going through other people. And then all a sudden the instructor appeared like out of the marquee stuff and he just goes like that to me and then he move on to another person because I guess I was clearly causing a scene. (LAUGHTER) and he can see somehow with magical vision that I was causing, yeah, chaos. And I stop, I just--every muscle loosened, everything it was just relaxation and it literally like the marquee has run away, it’s kind of cliché but I was like, oh, there's a star fish and there's another fish and I could see my husband. And then we went to but I walk out of that water being like that was it, that what's happens is when I'm running around like a crazy person, there's nobody else, there's nothing, it's darkness, it's scary but I just needed someone else to come into my like it's like covet mind and say and that was it, it was as simple as that and I have to do that like probably once a week so and I'm going to surrender now.
CURRENT ISSUE Audio Transcriptions:

Kristin: So it was--it's good to visualize it, get out of here, get in front of you but what I think I decide--not decided but what I've realize is that because I'm so aware that I'm not in a solution right now, I'm beating myself up. Like I'm not giving myself the time, like I'm forcing my bottom which is- it's a great feeling, it feels like a release because I'm not putting so much pressure on myself to be perfect or like have this surrender when it isn't just coming so I guess I'm being--I think I—from being able to surrender to not surrendering, it's like there's more willingness all a sudden. But you know there is a very large part of me that doesn’t want to let go. There been--it's like, I almost resent being here because I have to work at it. So it's like kind of when you get newly sober and those emotions, they come and they're scary and you hate it and you realize that as a sober person you're going to have to face them and the time in which you choose to do so will impact how soon you can get to a point of serenity. So that’s like I'm going back and forth between beating myself up and to trying to find the solution or letting the solution come to me because I'm not doing that perfectly and then I'm also stuck in this place of like just keep grinding, keep doing it and it will happen and I have to say when I wanted it to happen in alcoholism is which usually what I wanted to happen is to be drunk, it happens so much easier.

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Kristin: Like life problems are so much harder to control. I mean really honestly drinking, I mean I just needed to get drunk and this is--I can't drink and I can cause a lot of damage and there's a solution, I know it and I fucking hate myself right now because I can't get there. And but, I mean I think I am at the right place at the right time which is kind of a godlike thing because I'm facing it so. And they're hugging they're not wrestling Justin.

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Max: When I'm wrestling with and I go back and forth with is I don’t have a job and been out of job for like 20 months and my employment insurance is running out and like I've been--I'm a saboteur, I can sabotage myself, I sabotaged my marriage, I sabotage a couple of jobs, relationships and so it's like I've got two months to get a job or else I'm out on the street. I got a really nice place to live and it's like you're so crystal clear when I have to do but yet my friends are retiring and they're playing golf and I'm like, “Oh, God.” you know, I don’t have that luxury and I know that but there’s still that insane side of me that wants to fight that and say, “Well, things still--take your time, don’t worry about it.” And when I know rationally I've got to put my pedal to the metal and go but there's still that insane sickness in me that says slow down you don’t have to do it all in one day but I do. So I'm flip flopping, I mean one
day I'm going to surrender, yesterday I was going to surrender, I spent the whole day
doing a bunch of stuff and but I go back and forth and that's what I'm fighting with.

Mark: . . . For me sometimes I've come to realize surrender has to come in a form of
action. It cannot come in the form of I'm not in-charge. Because on a larger scale I
am not in-charge of anything, I'm not. But should that then deter me from doing those
things that I can do that I'm supposed to do. There—a dude that ran the treatment
center that some of us that went through but I learned from me and then I'll stop his,
I'm real big on words now because I read the big book or I’ll listen to people and I
will just assume when they say something or I read a phrase in the book that I
understand what it means.

And one time this guy sat in there, he's like, “Let's look at the serenity prayer.” He
said, “Let's look at the second word.” We all know--I'm like, “I know the serenity
prayer. I don’t even need to listen to this.” He says the second word is grant, what
does that mean? Those doesn’t mean give and I was like, “Wait a minute, he's right
because if they wanted it to mean give they would have said give.” And I remember
this moment because I'm like, grant means—he said, look what a grant is, you have to
do the work, if you do the work behind a grant then you go for the grant, you show to
an extent why you are worthy of that. When he said that I realized that there's a lot of
things in life that I've could just sit back, I'm the guy that like, “The shits about to hit
the fan, the shits about to hit the fan, get up and move the fan.” Don’t just sit and
keep saying that and I have a hard time doing that. There's fear behind it, sometimes
you don’t know what the thing to do is, I don’t know with my daughter what the
thing to do is, I don’t know. I do know that if I smoke crack and drink vodka, that
won't improve it, it's not going to do anything. The one thing I know I can do right
now around that problem is to be prepared for the moment that my daughter might
re-enter my life. And what kind of a person do I want to be if that can occur so I can
do that today. I need to get work. What does that mean? I've got to look for a job, it
doesn’t mean I sit around and keep telling people I need to get work,

John: . . . I have a lot of--if you were to--my life seven years ago versus what it looks
like, and I mean in my personal life is so far apart of who I was seven years ago and
what I've got going on now. And I think for me a lot of this brings up is I tell people
that like I think this shits spirituality--it’s a verb. I always thought it was a noun. It's
just an action for me. I can sit on my ass and want my life to look a lot different or I
can get out and do what I can to make a different and hopefully from her, I feel like
so far when I've done that with trying to positively impact others or be helpful of
service to a degree I get paid. I've noticed that when I go out and try to chase the
things that I want, its typically very uncomfortable the thing that I think is going to
bring me a sense of decent comfort is riddled with night’s thinking about imaginary
situations.

You know, mine boils down to all the shit for me, romance and finance. Am I
comfortable and am I wanted, that’s what--motivating factors to doing stuff are. Am
I--are you going to include me and are you going to pay me or do you know what I mean or am I going to be secure and I don’t know what that comes from. Again, I can sit here--I got seven texts from people while we've been in this group and I can sit here and tell you how lonely I am. That’s my sickness or that’s where I need to surrender, you know. And I feel like I'm on the course. I'm like, I can get often a bit jealous of seeing others that look like they're more comfortable than their own skin than I am and I believe that that’s my disorder, that’s my taking the power back instead of going, “Well, I don’t have no idea what there fucking names are much less how they feel.” Why do I--what's that and I don’t know I never felt more included so I feel like that’s the part of the surrender that is made me feel okay. That’s make any sense at all thank you for letting me taking you hostage.

Cathy:  [inaudible] I thought it was a new deal, totally lost it. I named mine and several ones comes from one of my sponsors that’s calls him a sassy pants. (giggle) And the other one is named Flow and she just lets go and okay, everything is cool and they were having a conversation about the situation of my life and it's funny because the one part that once thread stay there and do the next round thing is kind of like opening up since like it said we came here and its--I believe like Kathy said, there's a reason that things walk into your life, there's a reason that I got you email and I mean, I rarely talk hardly out but when we see each other we know each other but we're not on the phone every week or something, not even once a month. It's so nice to have that there's something that needs—that I need to go here for a reason, not just for you (laughter) there's got to be something that I want to learn or wanting to look at. I believe there's space putting from you, you can look at them or you can pass right by. I mean you can think of a return later but I would like to get things done now. I don’t want have a bunch of shit behind me saying, “Hey, over here. I'm a big procrastinator if there's a sunshine out. I don’t want to do anything; I'll just stay outside and playing. I study, not at all when it's sunny but I find that Kathy and I have a conversation out there and it’s sometimes you just stand still or maybe you just—and it comes and it does come and that’s where I got it. I was fighting were she was is now with the surrender, surrendering at all, denial. This isn’t really there, it’s got to be this way and now I’ve come to the part where, okay, I give but you find the answer and I'll walk around and when the situation comes up with that I should you shouldn’t say something I'll be present but I don’t know what to say and I know what I'm thinking I should say probably isn’t the right thing to say because I don’t have any sugar coating [inaudible] when I say things it's like, oh. You know, one of my girlfriends say, “Did you ever say hi, how are you when you talk to the phone?” And I said I always feel direct away. What is going on, I don’t have that filter or that, well I guess whatever it is. So I'm just going to like I said stand still and we'll see. I'm comfortable; I'm not uncomfortable when a couple of weeks ago I was like warm and…

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Will:  Got something out of with every person said. I think over time I have had all this issues and all of them has come to resolve except the one on the table and that’s of
course the one that’s loaming and huge. I have to subdue with finance of my creativity, I call myself an inventor these days and I have this grand or grandiose idea and I'm not quite sure which something to build and it's going to require some finance and I've blown all my personal finance and my wife supports me. Unfortunately I will follow my head but I feel there's a servant not as a participant in life and I don’t like that feeling. I think I'm nearing some resolve on the finance thing but I don’t know. I'm just going to get what’s coming; fingers cross through the program AM of the people who believe in me. That's happen before and I've been sued by somebody in the program. It took four years to get resolve, absolutely wipeout the path that I have. It no longer exist so I have--when I get into wrongs, I have some reserve of what I say and the thought that I might get back to this guy who sued me because I can't legally say anything about it and so it’s a fucked situation mentally and I feel I can't really dump. Matt and I were talking outside, we didn’t talk long, but it seems like we got a lot accomplish, I said one and tell them one. And they said it really hits fan for me I go for a walk in the cemetery and I look at somebody's headstone that I don’t know and what's on that stone but a name and two dates and what was so important. Wonder if they got it fixed. (laughter) And I wonder if they didn’t doesn’t matter, just got done listening to Tolls of Power of Now on CD you know when he talks about the moment is all there is. Like they're all saying, yesterday’s history, tomorrow’s a mystery and here we are. So the more of this type of spiritual work at least I'm willing to go to I think I'm better off I am. I'm glad that I came for them I'm not quite sure if I'm going to be here until 4:00. I feel like you all have your arms around me anyway.

FINAL THOUGHTS Audio Transcriptions

Mark: . . . So now, man, I'm the dude, I'm the optimist, good for us. I mean I know a lot of the people in this room and I know a few of them when they came into treatment and there's people in here that know me when I came into treatment and you know what, I'm fucking clean so I haven’t smoked crack for six years or drink vodka and I have concerns but well and everybody, that’s my deal if all we got in the moment right now at this moment, I think we're all doing pretty good. We could be doing a lot worse, at least I could be. So I’m always the dude that says, “You know what, pat yourself on the back because you’re on this fucking side of it right now. No not you. (laughter) Everyone but Justin.

John: It's always funny, this was something that was well outside of my comfort zone so in my segueway off, I left my meeting in a half hour early to come down here so I left in the middle of the meeting and I was by myself in my truck and telling myself all of the reasons why this is was the pain in my ass. And the reality is my best meditation is looking out a windshield. That’s where I feel the most me and 280 is probably one of my favorite stretches on the face of this planet that I get to go down and just there's enough room for everybody where I could go my speed, no one jamming me up and do my thing and I don’t know
that I'm an optimist but I truly feel the best is yet to come if I keep trudging this road to the best of my ability. It's been working so these little supplements that’s aren’t in what I'd initially planned always end up benefiting me always. And so yeah, I think it's interesting to look at the perspective of different people I was-- spent a lot of time with over a half people in this room I was spent a lot of time with and to see we're we evolving to in our different--some of us are close some of us are far away and doing another thing and it's kind of neat that we can come in, boom and go back out and do our things. Sorry, I'm moving the mic, there you go.

FOLLOW-UP Meeting PV – Audio Transcriptions

Mary: . . . And, I decided well I don't really want to die. Really we don't know exactly what happens anyway, right? And I realized well why don't I turn that over. Really what I want is I want to be free. I don't want to die. I want to be free. That's what I decided. But, yeah and the higher power. I like to make acronyms out of that. My favorite one has been the holy paradox because that's where it is that just really subtle, you know almost [inaudible] shift that's made you know to realize and then to surrender. Um so, yeah, I think that that's really on track. I hope I spoke to what you wanted to.

Max: I think it was paradoxical for me because the more I drank and got out of control the more I thought I was achieving my like best goal was just being out there completely. And - but I never wanted to die. I mean I was killing myself. I think I said last time I was in the emergency room five times in six or seven months, three times by ambulance. And I remember the feeling that just - I mean I had neuropathy and I was crawling around my apartment. And when they put me on the stretcher and I was in the ambulance and they had the siren going, I felt God. I'm saved. I was relieved. But at the same time I did that four or five times you know? And it was just absolutely crazy. And then I would get into hospital care and then I would start feeling better and realize, hey, I have to get my squared away. And as soon as I was realeased, I'd go home. I'd stop at the store. Buy a bottle of wine, a gallon of wine, and go back and start all over again. If that isn't crazy you know? [laugh] So I don't know. I never wanted to end my life but paradoxically I was trapped within that, so.

Will: You know I never really thought about killing myself drinking but I was also certainly doing it. I think I've been fairly spiritually since I was a small kid in this lifetime and I believe that in other lifetimes, so. It's kind of been [inaudible] but regarding my drinking I've never - I don't really fear death but, gosh, I don't know how to put this. You know when I got to a point in my drinking where I couldn't not take a drink, I had to take the drink. I was consuming huge quantities of alcohol and vodka and I would consume one of those 1.75 liter bottles daily. I'd go to sleep with
a drink at my bedside and get up in the night to go to the bathroom and have a since even during the night. And first thing in the morning I would drink some of that watered down from the ice melting. And my wife would leave for work at 7:30 in the morning and by 9 o'clock I was absolutely drunk in the morning every single day. I feared not having enough to make it through the weekend. I thought I was concealing all this from my wife, and she was absolutely knowing what was going on and I don't know. It's - it was - it seems like awhile ago; and in fact, it has been awhile ago since I've had a drink, but I remember it very well. I remember the morning sweats and just the shakes in the morning. I don't know. I've - from the spiritual base I come from, I think these lifetimes we come through are lessons - and maybe I've broken a chain. I feel kind of good about having come through alcoholism not knowing if I'm going to have another drink, but I know that I've done something about my alcoholism. I don't know how I've gotten to that point. I keep talking about that but it's coming out of me right now.

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Mary: Is that and I think I mentioned the last time I was here that it sort of freaks me out to think that you know, I don't know and I think that we don't know what the problem really is until the point of surrender. You know, because... you know I'm not clear about the fact that like you know using drugs or drinking is like always of problem you know. Like in the Big Book there’s a part that sort of reads about... writes about crossing the line. And I know there's... school of thought which I tend to subscribe to which is like it was a solution for a while. I guess the Big Buck does say that our people talked about that anyway that alcohol is the treatment for alcoholism for in the beginning. So, and when I corroborate that I totally felt like a bird when I finally got arrested. Because I think part of it was like my imaginable structure was kind of fulfilled actually. Being verified the fact that my war on fantasy had a lively conversation with the cop on the way to the jail about what he thought; hat his ethics were and stuff like that. When I first got for me to holding so I've got arrested at the Palo Alto… here in Palo Alto at the court house, and they put me down in the holding cell down in that same. And that humility yeah... I was thinking there's a part of humility that's accepting our assets too, and the fact that people love us is like is that's a great responsibility. There's also a great freedom in that too, but I haven't heard that before, that really rings a bell.

Max: I think of surrender every time I’ve gone into a program, and they’ve accepted me, they gave me a Big Book, and they gave me a room to stay and to detox. I felt relieved and I surrendered, but I think humility...surrender to me was like okay. It's not my life anymore to take care of me, and I'll be okay because I know I'm in a hospital. But I think humility is a process where you really surrender to God, not to a person or place or thing, you surrender to God, and that's the process. I offer myself to relieve me of the bondage of self that I may better do thy I will, and that's when it becomes spiritual, and I think when it becomes spiritual I cross over different threshold and that's when...for me that's when humility sets in. And as far as present
day problems when I’m drinking, my biggest responsibility is finding that next drink, making sure that I have enough in the house. Whereas, dealing with everyday problems require maturity, require responsibility, and require action. And for an alcoholic, sometimes I’m not a bucking bronco when it comes to that, because sometimes I fight that off. So that a big choice.

Will: You said one thing, when you were reading and you said “We cannot be alone,” and that just kind of jumped to me. And as far as spiritual surrender in one word I can say slowly. The first time I told my wife that I wanted…I thought I needed some help to stay sober during the day. I didn’t want to stop drinking, I just wanted to get to a point where I didn’t have to drink until like 5 o’clock in the afternoon. I didn’t want to have to drink at 9 o’clock in the morning. Or when I got up in the middle of the night to have that…I wanted to…that’s what I considered normal people who started drinking at the after work hour, and then till after bars close; that would be normal drinking to me, and that’s all I wanted. I didn’t want stop drinking. So there was definitely a process. I had a lot of barriers to break down, because I thought it was all about substance and not about spirituality at first. It’s what I wanted, and what I absolutely needed on a daily basis.

Coming from where I came from in the Midwest, and in a lot of European immigrants, and you know the dramatics, and all the Scandinavians and the Italians and a lot of us kids were first and second generation born in this country, and they were hard-working and hard-drinking people. And I never had any thought or not drinking. It just wasn’t there. It was just…that was just my life situation. But, I didn’t see people drinking all day; I don’t know how I got there, maybe because I moved to a different state, and I lived the lifestyle, there was a lot of partying. But it definitely has come slowly, but I think to me it is so strong, my belief in life lessons. It always come back to that to me, and when I think that way it makes my life so much more comfortable. It really tasks it. I used to rebel against…I really accept now. That’s a really huge word for me is acceptance. Just to be part of is …used to sound really demeaning to me to be the center. But being part of is [inaudible]. I don’t know if I’m there yet; I’m better at it than I used to be. I go through the things now with my wife and her family are very demanding people, and I just kind of go along until it just tramp too hard and I just leave the scene you know, and then they understand that you know, they’ve gone too far. That’s how I deal with it; it’s a whole different mode of dealing with things I feel uncomfortable with, and I think its much more effective. And it’s a whole lot more serenity for me.

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Will: …and I think the beginning of my surrender was my third rehab. I heard one of the facilitators was a priest who was asked to leave the clergy, because he couldn’t stay sober and I think that was the first person I really heard other than myself for many, many years, if not decades. And, as we sit here today I…as each person says something I really hear you, and I can’t have your exact feelings, but I can
understand much more than I used to, because you used to just be chattering no matter who it was. It was just stuff. It was just stuff, and now I hear your words and that helps me. That’s just being a part of now, and seeing the similarities not the differences. It’s all that simple stuff we’ve heard over the years in meetings, and some of that stuff is finally soaking in. There’s walls that you said that you mentioned a couple weeks ago of the walls of my will that’s absolutely unshakable. I went for decades and would not let anything through those walls, nothing. They didn’t look like walls to me, but it was not able to penetrate that barrier I had up of hearing anything, seeing anything other than what I thought to be the right way to go, the right thing to do. There’s not a bunker strong enough that was, you know, stronger than what was up there and it was absolutely impenetrable until I myself began to disintegrate it, and see that first alter there. I remember the first time in my earlier meetings in Florida, I used to be secretary then I was only on it a month or two or three sober, and one of the old people liked saying to me, “You go sit on that chair.” And I says, “I don’t know how to do it,” and the guy says, “Just read the book. Just read what’s on the paper,” and I’ve not forgotten that. That’s all you have to do; it’s words and they somehow changed my day that day, and I’ve not forgotten that. So, anyway we all had a point at some point.

Max: For me my first surrender was a physical surrender, and it was in a hospital and it was just getting better. And then I go to an AA meeting and I see people who had time and I saw hope, and as I got a little more time I came to believe, and then as I worked to steps, and did the third step prayer, and went all the way through the steps, I had faith. And it…surrender is the verb, because for me I’m either in ego or I’m in God; I can’t be both. I’m either one or the other, and of course, I always slip into ego very quickly, and God is something that’s a little harder to achieve. But, I try and step out of the way and do the next right thing, and if I am doing the next right thing that I know God’s driving the bus.

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Max: I think just knowing that you’re not going through it alone; that you’ve got a higher power or a spiritual guide in your life, and that the weight of the world isn’t on your shoulder, but you’re working…he’s working through you, and you’re doing the footwork. And you have faith that no matter how it turns out it’s going to be okay; even if it’s not the way you think it’s going to turn out; however it turns out I’m still going to land on my feet and I’ll be in a fair place, because I know God will be with me. And that’s about it.

Mary: Bouyancy; I guess that has to do with having a trust in the larger plan. That bouyancy was a word I was using to describe what I was…when I was in an employable state. I really didn’t want to work when I got out of treatment, and I didn’t for a while. The one time that I landed at a café and worked there for a long time. But there were days when I didn’t have buoyancy, and everything was just really freaking serious.
I was talking yesterday with a Christian Science practitioner who used to talk to my mom a lot; I had no idea they talked so much. But I’ve been so desperate I’ve been seeking that outside help, and she was talking to me about something that we talk about in AA a lot, which is you can’t find the problem…the solution is not in the problem. She gave me some Einstein quote which is, “You can’t solve the problem on the level of consciousness in which it’s occurring.”

Something like that, and she described like having a bird’s eye view, climbing to the top of the mountain and getting the perspective where you can kind of see that things are…that’ll pass. For example, the traffic’s all backed up; it’s not going to be that way forever, and it’s easier to be in the traffic when you can see that it’s going to break up. I heard somebody describe their little girl freaking out on the way to relatives on Thanksgiving, because she thought she was going to be in her car seat forever, and she didn’t know it was going to end.

So I don’t know; so just coming in and getting the treatment, and really…I mean I had been to meetings before, but I don’t think that I really was able to see that there was maybe anybody who really had stopped, but people who were just doing this little camp to not go to jail. I guess that’s how I saw it, but when I got to treatment I seem to meet people who had that perspective from beyond where I was, where they used to be. So…did you have something to share?

Will: It’s just…when you just closed you said…you know…from where they used to be and now they’re beyond. That was really striking to me; it kind of speaks to the evolution that coming out spiritually I think…there’s a fellow I see every Sunday at the meeting, and I…he’s a confidant of mine, and before and after the meetings I tell him about all my deep problems where I refuse to be [inaudible] and his answer’s always the same. He said, “Wayne, you need more altitude,” and that’s it, and then he smiles at me. And I have to smile myself. So a whole lot to that kind of perspective; when you’re in it you can’t see it. You need to somehow elevate yourself out. Every time I fly on an airplane I look out the window and I look at the clouds from the top, and imagine myself on the ground, and I can’t see my problems at all. What if? So what?

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Max: Well in regards to collaboration and inclusion; it’s a little difficult for me, because my nature is I’m a lone wolf, and I know some people just are real social extroverts, and they talk, talk, talk, and for me that’s just the opposite. I isolate a lot, and I’m not real social. If you have a social event I’ll go to it, but then I’ll partake to a certain degree, but I’m just a loner kind of guy.

I grew up alone two older sisters, and they were gone by the time I grew up, and I grew up alone, and that’s the way. But, when I read collaboration and inclusion, when I saw that the first thing I thought about was going through the…working the steps with my sponsor. It was the first time I really sat down with somebody and just really opened up and my life to him.
I felt...and there’s certain meetings we go to like men’s meetings I go to where I feel all inclusive, because they’re small groups like this, intimate and we share. And when somebody else shares you can tell when it’s emotional, and I really appreciate the fact that they’re baring their souls so I’m open to baring mine. So it’s a two-way street.

Mary: All I can think about at the very moment is this guy, Father Martin; I guess he started a treatment center, and I guess was an alcoholic and a priest. We watched his videos all time in treatment, but I don’t know if we were ever clear if he was an alcoholic or not, but he had a lot of good stuff to say. And something he said was that happiness is commitment to others, and I’ve been using that. I’m really committed at meetings; I’ve taken a lot of responsibilities.

And then my free time; that sort of freaked me out; there was a period where I ended up working a lot, and I was really busy with work. I was working two different jobs, and then I let go of the old one, and then I had all this extra time, and I get weird when I’m alone. I have my own cabin for a little bit when I was in treatment, and I thought I was going nuts trying to decide what to wear in the morning to go outside. It was like somebody else there; it was like a buffer. So, there’s something about just having...it keeps me afloat to have people to be in contact with every day.

Even about just real basic stuff, actually it’s very helpful even to just have...even on a casual basis sort of talk to people. Because I knew how to be really grandiose, and I was like...I had found my soul mate first in my weed life, and then in my speed life, because this was one person, and then the next person and it was like I found my soul mate and that was it. I was going to stay with that person all the time forever, and everything was really deep all the time.

And I didn’t know how...I just like...I don’t know; I’m learning how to just be right sized and swim with the other fish. And be like...yeah okay I’ll point these out and you can call that person. Okay cool I’ll see you next time you know what I mean. I had a moment when my mom died right after I got clean when I was in treatment, and I went home for the funeral. It was so dizzying to seeing all these...there were so many people there.

All these people from my childhood and stuff, and I got a card from one of the women who I had seen there. I had sang a song there, and she was saying that it was sure nice to hear me song and to see me again, and to give her a call if I was ever in town or whatever, and I just was like...had this moment over that. I was like oh God I can’t do this; I don’t have enough space to...I can’t communicate here, I can’t commit here.

But it wasn’t a big...but I had a shift about it where I realized that I can stay in contact with a lot of people and be real about it, and it doesn’t have to take up all my time or...I don’t know. But that was a big relief to realize that it’s possible; that I’m
definitely learning all the time, and everything was such a huge deal at the time, but it’s not.

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Will: I think [inaudible] is coming to me on this whole thing is willingness and [inaudible] and like you said you can hear the same thing hundreds of times but you don’t take it, it doesn’t come in because I won’t let it in. I guess it’s probably my own omnipotence prevents a lot or has prevented a lot and I’m grateful that it dropped some of those barriers, some of them only temporary but something came in and I still hold that in my awareness that I’m capable of putting up those barriers again. I think the word “grace” is a nice word. I don’t know, I think it’s something I felt but I don’t hold. I remember asking an old timer one time about when does this sobriety stuff come in and he said, “Seldom and brief.” And if [inaudible] for me to be true also. So I don’t know. I’m a changed person from a couple of decades ago but I’m not all good all the time. But I think that this whole thing of belonging inclusion has to do personally for me with my willingness to hear you and not to force my opinion on you or to hear you. I think that for me that’s a huge gift in my life. Just in a way I’m dealing with family issues right now and my partner is I think drinking to the point of what I would alcoholic drinking and it’s hard to be with, you know. And she’s holding purse strings and it’s kind of a real dilemma for me. I know I have options but I know the other side of some of those options is not so sweet. I’ve seen people who come into meetings who I wouldn’t give you a chance in a million to see you at another meeting and some of them [inaudible] years of survival. So it looks to me, I don’t know so I just have to somehow believe that there’s possibilities. So anyway that was my first thought and I just kind of took off on this.

Mary: I just want to I guess kind of talk about the outside/inside dilemma and try to iron it out a little bit because I think maybe what we mean by like because we talk about the addiction being looking for something outside of our self to make our self happy. And I guess so what we mean by that is physical or material or circumstantial things. And then but we also need to look beyond ourselves for something greater than ourselves, so that’s spiritual. But then there’s what the big book calls the unsuspected inner resource which is in us but it’s not us. So I think it’s sort of that connection to everything, it’s that bit of spirit that [inaudible] in ourselves that connects us to everybody. We were talking earlier about thinking that surrender is not to any person or place but to that greatest thing that we use God to call shorthand. And I think that that ultimately we find harmony with everybody because we find that place that’s connected to everybody and not just privy to one group or set of ideas or something.

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Max: [inaudible] and I’m dying and I’m forced to surrender because I don’t want to die even though all my actions indicate it, I want to survive. So I will surrender but
as soon as I start feeling better will I take it back as opposed to a spiritual surrender which is a bliss or in peace or in which case that’s where I’m relaxed and I’m letting the light come in as opposed to surrendering to fix me. I don’t know if that makes any sense but I think in terms of the surrender, the circumstances of the surrender dictate I don’t know.

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Will: I was at that point without alcohol for some days and obviously I was sober as I’d been in years. But I found a pool table in this place and there were a couple of guys hanging around. And in this particular room was a little less lit than the rest of the place so it felt kind of like a bar and I physically felt drunk. And I had the awareness that this is a psychological thing, you know? And I just had that awareness and that point and that just really stuck with me. Obviously I was not drunk but I felt drunk and that was something I liked to do when I was drinking was I was a pretty sharp pool shooter but I had to be in that zone, enough smoke, enough coke and enough alcohol and I was on the bulls eye and I could really shoot but I always missed the bulls eye, it didn’t stay there very long. I went off on one tangent to another. But that awareness stayed with me that I felt drunk when I wasn’t drunk. It was a situational thing that triggered me that—I think the psyche is such a powerful thing and yeah it’s huge.
**APPENDIX 34**

**SUMMARY OF THE LEARNINGS**

**RESEARCH PROBLEM:**

In what ways might the practice of surrender affect imaginal structures related to personal will, freedom and belonging?

**HYPOTHESIS:**

The practice of surrender will shift imaginal structures regarding personal will, freedom and belonging towards humility, collaboration, and inclusion.

The *Cumulative Learning* for this study proposes that spiritual surrender can begin to have a transmuting effect on imaginal structures regarding personal will, freedom and belonging in such a way that the individual is able to interface more dynamically with the world, moving from an ego-centric individualism to a heart-based, authentic individuality.

Learning 1 – *The See-saw of Freedom – Freedom “from” and Freedom “to”*

This learning proposes that the imaginal structures related to the constriction of freedom, can begin to transmute in the process of spiritual surrender, thus allowing the individual a measure of relief from obsessive thinking, addictive behavior, and the need for over-control of external events and internal emotional responses.
Learning 2 – Reversing the Fatal Vortex of Darkness
This learning proposes that spiritual surrender can begin to reverse the vortex of isolation and darkness, common in addiction and alcoholism, that leads to ‘jails, institutions, and death’.

Learning 3 – ‘Right-Sizing’: On Swimming With Other Fish
This learning proposes that the humility that comes through surrender involves a ‘right-sizing’ of the sense of self in both directions - both a downsizing of the sense of self (through acceptance of being out-of-control), and at the same time an increase in the feeling of self-worth and responsibility for one’s actions.

Learning 4 – Spiritual Surrender as Verb
This learning proposes that spiritual surrender is an ongoing process rather than a discrete event.

Learning 5 – Leap of Faith and Love Leaping In: Permeable Membranes and Changing Perspectives
This learning proposes that in order for spiritual surrender to occur, there needs to be a softening of the boundaries of the individual’s sense of self.
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