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Telling Our Stories: A Phenomenological Study of the Leader's Gendered Experience of Self-Disclosing

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TELLING OUR STORIES:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE LEADER'S GENDERED EXPERIENCE OF SELF-DISCLOSING

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It is a privilege to travel this journey with each of you.

In memory of

Frank M. Garrity, Jr.

my hero, my guide

Abstract

Leadership is a personal process that involves creating communities and influencing change through relationships of influence. This research explores one aspect of leadership, that of self-disclosing. The self-disclosure of leaders affects all aspects of leadership: Self-disclosure is *personal* in that people's voices are unique and come from their sense of self. The appropriate use of self-disclosure can facilitate increased self-awareness, and greater mental and physical health. Leaders can *influence change* by the strategic sharing of their disclosures. *Communities* are built when people can identify with leaders stories and be guided toward a shared vision.

The purpose of this study is to explore the issues of self-disclosure and gender in the context of leadership. What is the leader's experience of influence relationships? What is the leader's experience of self-disclosing? Are the leader's experiences of self-disclosing influenced by gender?

This research is grounded in multidisciplinary literature reviews on the topics of sex and gender, gender communication, self-disclosure and leadership. A methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology was used to explore the essence of the experience of self-disclosing. I implemented a pyramid plan for in-depth interviewing in which I began with six participants, and continued to probe at deeper levels of consciousness with three of these.

This research fills an important gap in the literature. Current literature on the subject of self-disclosure is primarily quantitative in design. This qualitative approach captures the voices of the leaders and allows for congruency in that their stories become the center of the research about their stories. Amplifying the voices of women leaders and describing the female perspective are important in a culture where women have not always been heard.

Current leadership literature refers indirectly to self-disclosure, but does not describe it specifically or directly. The purpose of this research is to move deeply into the leader's gendered experience of self-disclosing and to describe the essence of that experience.

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"Leaders achieve their effectiveness chiefly through the stories they relate."
Howard Gardner, 1995

INTRODUCTION

I have been preparing to research the topic of self-disclosure using the methodology of phenomenology for much of my life. I cannot remember a time when I was not absorbed in people's stories. Even as a young child, I was interested in my parents' tales of their lives and the drama of their friends' lives. More recently, I traveled to Amsterdam with my father and my aunt. Although the travels were exciting, the highlight of the trip was sharing a room with my aunt and ending each day nestled under the covers as she regaled me with stories of our family lore.

It is no surprise that, for the last 30 years, I have chosen the professions of teacher and therapist. My goal in both the classroom and the therapist's office is to create a safe haven where people can do their work, find their own meanings and wander about in their life's journeys.

As I began defining and refining a dissertation topic, I knew that I was interested in the ways that leaders keep themselves healthy and whole during the tumult of change. I was vague and uncertain about exactly what I meant by health and which aspect of that wholeness I would choose to research.

I read Heifetz and Linsky's (2002) *Leadership on the Line* and was struck by their differentiation between confidants and allies as targets of disclosure. I was immediately

involved in consideration of the confidants and allies in my own career; how I had used them, or perhaps confused them. Still reading, but with my mind traveling in a different direction, I was amused at Heifetz's story of his wife calling a "meeting" in the bathtub to get his attention and to bring him to his senses. I wondered what he got out of telling that story (and also if his wife knew he wrote it before she picked up her signed copy of the book). I wondered about how he made decisions concerning those aspects of his life that became very public.

Somewhere in the process of formulating my thoughts about Heifetz's story, it clicked. I wasn't merely interested in all the ways that leaders maintain a sense of health; I was interested specifically in their self-disclosing as a means of self-care.

I witness self-disclosure all day long. People tell me their stories. I listen and remember. And they are better for the telling. I was committed to this topic.

I had another clarifying moment when I talked with our program director, Laurien Alexandre, about my new-found topic. She asked me to simply talk about what I knew of self-disclosure and why it was interesting. I started rambling—a stream of consciousness. Her immediate feedback noted how many times I mentioned the differences between men and women. She suggested that gender communication might be a theoretical grounding for this subject.

Now I was really excited. I had an immediate flashback to a conversation I had long forgotten. Fifteen years earlier, I remember telling my boss Martha Ezzell that, if I could pursue my Ph.D. in any area, I would choose communication studies (Martha's discipline) but, since my undergraduate and master's degrees were not in communication,

I knew that would be impossible. So here I was, many years later, pursuing the subject I had assumed would not be possible.

The retrospective aspect of this story does not end here. I digested libraries of books and huge numbers of articles about gender communication and self-disclosure. I organized and outlined and re-read. All of the major works about self-disclosure cited the seminal work by Sidney Jourard, *The Transparent Self*, written in 1971. As I spent time with Jourard's work, it seemed extremely familiar to me. Initially, I assumed it was because I now hear self-disclosure in the subtext of every conversation and the basic tenets of Jourard's work have become part of my cell structure. But somehow I knew this book well. And then another long forgotten memory came to me. When I was completing my MSW in 1978, I did an independent study for my final credits. My topic was the self-disclosure of the social work professional. My primary source was Jourard's *The Transparent Self*.

The early reading on self-disclosure broadened my consciousness about the subject. Although self-disclosure may certainly be integral to the maintenance of self, the specific functions of self-disclosure are much more vast than I had previously considered. I was fascinated and intrigued to realize that self-disclosure is a part of many people's influence strategy, including its use as a currency in social exchange (Cozby, 1973; Petronio, 2002; Pennebaker, 1990), goal-based disclosures (Derlega, Metts, Petronio, & Margulis, 1993), impression management (London, 1995), and organizational management (Gibson & Hodgetts, 1985; Senge, 1990). Self-disclosure is associated with both mental health (Morran, 1982; Sinha, 1974) and physical health (Sloan and Marx, 2004). Self-disclosure is integral to self-awareness (Burnard & Morrison, 1992; Derlega

& Berg, 1987). As my understanding of self-disclosure increased, so did my interest and intrigue.

For me, the meaning and importance of self-disclosure has deepened in the past months since the death of my husband. Through the grief of this loss, I have been pondering the enormity of life's existential questions: What is my purpose? Who am I? At the end of my life, what do I hope to have done? Who will I say that I am? The churning of these questions will remain but, for now, my clear answer is that we share our stories, we hear others' stories and we connect on the deepest possible level. For me, that sharing is what matters most. I embrace the words of Wheatley (2002):

> I believe we can change the world if we start listening to one another again. Simple, honest conversation. Not mediation, negotiation, problem-solving, debate, or public meetings. Simple, truthful conversation where we each have a chance to speak, we each feel heard, and we each listen well. (p. 3)

I am further living the importance of self-disclosure in my own leadership as I work through the grief of my husband's death. I simply must talk about him. The relief that comes with that disclosure allows me to continue working and functioning. Stiles (1987) described the fever model of disclosure in which

> the amount of disclosure tends to increase with the intensity of a person's distress and that this disclosure tends to help to relieve the distress. [It is called] the fever model because it suggests that disclosure's relation to psychological distress is analogous to a fever's relationship to physical infection: both are a sign of disturbance and part of a restorative pattern. (p. 257)

This has certainly been my experience. My need to talk about this loss is a symptom of my pain as well as relief from it. The relief that comes with self-disclosure frees me to pursue my own leadership work.

Not only have I been moving toward this research on the subject of self-disclosure for much of my life, even using the methodology of phenomenology seems like a process for which I have long been preparing. I remember as a young adult arguing with a young man whom I was dating over my dislike for the cocktail parties we were attending. His explanation of my discomfort at these events was due to the fact that I "didn't talk like normal people." When I questioned this, he retorted, "When people say something casual like, 'How about those Steelers?', you immediately have to zoom in and find out why they like the Steelers, what that means to their lives, and how they formed this opinion." Although his intent was critical, I remember responding with the relief and delight that comes with new clarity. "Yes, yes, yes, that's exactly what I want to know." Borrowing from the language of phenomenology, I was seeking the essence of the Steeler experience. Although it may or may not make for good cocktail conversation, moving toward the essence of lived experience has been my lifetime pursuit.

Van Manen (2002) stated that "wonder is the central methodological feature of phenomenological inquiry" (p. 5). He added that " wonder is that moment of being when one is overcome by awe or perplexity—such as when something familiar has turned profoundly unfamiliar, when our gaze has been drawn by the gaze of something that stares back at us" (p. 5).

I have wonder in abundance. I began my musings by wondering about leaders in general. I wonder if the gender of the leader affects disclosure. Do women really tell more? In what settings? Does it hinder women's leadership to disclose? Does it help? Does self-disclosure help or hinder men's leadership? Are there different definitions of

what would constitute privacy and what would constitute disclosure between men and women?

I wonder where and when leaders disclose. I wonder who they talk to when they are confused or losing track of their vision. I wonder where they work it out when they are questioning themselves. I wonder where they take their vulnerabilities and self-doubt.

I wonder where leaders test drive their plans for change. Are they always strategic in getting people privately on board? Do they talk about the private elements of themselves as a way of influencing followers to disclose similarly and/or to follow?

I wonder about privacy and boundaries. What do leaders not tell? Do leaders have a place where they tell everything? Do they have a place where their various worlds come together?

But as I continued my meanderings, I realized that I was most interested in the experience of self-disclosing for a particular leader. I was not interested in generalizing to the whole, but rather in delving deeply into the folds and intricacies of each individual leader whom I would interview. This leads me directly to phenomenology as a methodology.

I have been preparing to research the topic of self-disclosure using the methodology of phenomenology for much of my life. I have arrived.

WHAT DO WE KNOW FROM THE LITERATURE?

I began the literature review with the broadest foundation and then moved to a more focused search. I started with a multidisciplinary review of sex and gender. I

examined the literature on gender communication because the gender differences in self-disclosure grow out of communication studies. Next I reviewed the existing literature about self-disclosure. Finally, I examined the leadership literature to determine how leadership scholars approached self-disclosure.

There is great debate about the meaning and development of both sex and gender. In general, sex refers to the physiology of people according to their sex organs and gender is the social and cultural expression of that sexual identity. Both sex and gender may be affected by nature (the biological development) and by nurture (the social creation). The degree to which nature versus nurture defines our sex and gender, and the degree to which sex and gender are related to each other remain a discussion.

One aspect of the debate addressed the use of the language of binary opposition to describe sex and gender, or even nature and nurture. The binary creates an either/or reference in the very meaning of the words; the word *feminine* is understood in relation to *masculine, female* in relation to *male* . Some argue that the use of the binary does not allow for the greater intricacies of sex and gender or for the experience of "fuzzy gender" (Tauchert, 2001).

Although the binary language may not be an accurate description of gender, I recognize that, for now, it is the primary language of use. So, I have accepted that language as integral to the research about gender communication. There are volumes of literature espousing that, although men and women may share some commonality in the communication styles, there are some fundamental differences as well.

The varying theoretical frames supporting these theories are born out of the interpretation of the nature/nurture debate. The form of men's and women's speech

varies according to the use of interruption, talking time, topic control, tone of voice, and use of silence and questions. The differing functions of gendered speech are described by Tannen's (1990) use of men's *report talk* which emphasizes their task roles, and women's *rapport talk* which evolves from their expressive roles. The discussion of men and women's use of humor is interesting because it encompasses the issues of both form and function.

The research that considered the use of self-disclosure grows, in part, from the discussion of gender communication. Men and women disclose differently depending on the sex, relationship and physical attractiveness of the audience, also depending on the topic and the disclosure situation. The data is vast and the results competing. Two patterns that have emerged with some certainty are that women disclose more to other women (as opposed to men-to-men) and men disclose more than women in the presence of a stranger.

Self-disclosure has been shown to be useful as an influence strategy in many situations. The clearest result in all of the research is the norm of reciprocity; self-disclosure invites more self-disclosure. The offering of disclosure is used as an exchange for many things in a relationship, one of them being disclosure from the other. Another influence strategy that most of us use is the controlling of our disclosures as a way of managing the impression we make on others. The careful use of disclosure is a skill that has implications for successful management.

Self-disclosure has been related to both physical and mental health. Physically, people seem to be healthier if they disclose negative or guilt-producing information and are not emotionally inhibited. Yalom (1975 as cited in Morran, 1982) asserted that there

is a curvilinear relationship between self-disclosure and mental health. A person who does not disclose may not receive the necessary support; a person who discloses excessively may frighten the listener and risk rejection.

Healthy people who disclose must also create boundaries which protect what is private to them. Johari's Window (Luft, 1969 as cited in Burnard and Morrison, 1992) has long been a model for what we make known to ourselves and to others. Petronio (2002) created a rule-based management system to explain how people determine who owns the information and if this information is private or to be shared.

Because self-awareness is essential to the leader, I have considered the research that discussed the mutually impacting relationship between self-disclosure and self-awareness. People might become more self-aware through the process of putting words to their inner selves. Additionally more self-knowing comes from the resultant feedback. However, one must have some awareness of self in order to disclose.

I have reviewed the leadership literature in search of its assertions about self-disclosure. Although none of the literature presented discussions about self-disclosure directly, there are many discussions of related topics and consequent inferences about the importance of self-disclosure to the leadership relationship. In attending to the feminist leadership literature, I have recognized the importance of gender. Ending the silence, hearing the female perspective, is a theme with implications for self-disclosure (Steinem, 1992; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule, 1986). The feminist literature emphasized the use of relationships and the development of community as essential to leaders (Gilligan, 1982, Helgesen, 1990, Steinem, 1992; Wheately, 2002; Perrault, 2005,

Erkut, 2001). Knowing self and communicating that knowing were part of the feminist perspective (Ambrose, 1995; Erkut, 2001).

The use of story, both that which is told and that which is lived, is essential to leadership (Gardner, 1995, Couto, 2004). These stories might be told in the development of transformational leaders, which Burns (1978) maintained needed to create "full, sharing, feeling relationships" (p. 448).

When leaders create change, they may need to discern what they share with confidants as opposed to allies (Heifetz and Linsky, 2002). In doing so, they must manage meaning, communicate their vision and create trust (Bennis, 2000).

The practice of leadership requires open dialogue for team learning (Senge, 1990). Additionally, leaders might model the way by finding their voices and setting examples (Kouzes and Posner, 2002). Clear leaders develop a side of themselves that is able to describe their beliefs and experiences openly (Bushe, 2001). Learning the skill of storytelling is an important leadership practice (Denning, 2005).

Clearly, there are themes throughout all the leadership literature that relate to self-disclosure: storytelling, dialogue, self awareness, communicating the vision for change and building communities. But these themes left me with questions about self-disclosure that the literature did not discuss.

WHAT DOES THE LITERATURE *NOT* TELL US?

Issues of Gender

As I review the leadership literature with an eye and ear for self-disclosure, it is essential to note that a great deal of the leadership literature was written by men. When

considering self-disclosure, I note that "there are probably more studies that test sex differences in self-disclosure than any other issue in the self-disclosure literature" (Petronia, 2000, p. 22). Men and women have different values, norms and expectancies about self-disclosure (Derlega, Metts, Petronio and Margulis, 1993). The smaller numbers of women's voices in this discussion is important. When considering the vast potential for difference between the disclosure tendencies of men and women, it became vital to hear the voices of women leaders when attempting to understand the self-disclosure experience of leaders.

Even in the work of Heifetz and Linsky (2002), one of the most direct discussions of self-disclosure in the leadership literature, their advisement may be skewed by their gender. In *Leadership On the Line*, they underscore the importance of differentiating between allies and confidants. They support the need for disclosing to a confidant. But they also caution the reader about not disclosing to an ally.

> When you need someone to talk to in difficult times, it's tempting to try to turn a trusted ally into a confidant as well. Not a good idea….In our experience, when you try to turn allies into confidants, you put them in a bind, place a valuable relationship at risk, usually end up losing on both counts. They fail you as a confidant, and they begin to slip away even as reliable allies. (pp. 201-204)

Although this advisement is certainly worth considering, I wonder about the differing perspectives of women leaders on the subject of what to disclose to allies. I have previously described Tannen's (1990) differentiation between men's report talk and women's rapport talk. Tannen (1990) furthered that men and women have different uses for social talk. Many women mix talk about the important aspects of their lives, such as business, with the seemingly trivial, such as clothes or dinner plans. For women, the mutual knowledge and trust that can grow out of personal talk can precede a business

relationship and grow from it. Some women place value on creating a warm and friendly place where business can be done. For many men, this is seen as wasting time. Men may be more inclined to get down to business and see the over-sharing of details as "gossip."

I wonder about the differences between the way Heifetz and Linsky and Tanner would characterize sharing in a relationship with an ally. What Heifetz and Linsky might consider overly self-disclosing to an ally and thereby jeopardizing the relationship, Tanner might consider establishing rapport to support the working relationship with that ally.

The Experience of Self-Disclosing

Throughout my review of the leadership literature, I have referenced research that *implies* self-disclosure. Narratives, stories, voice, self-expression and openness may all be related to self-disclosure. But we know very little more than that. We do not know the who, what, where, why and how of the leader's disclosure process. We know nothing of leaders experiences of self-disclosing and the meaning that they attach to those experiences.

I have hundreds of questions about the self-disclosure of leaders that the literature does not come close to addressing. A small sample includes: What is the leader's experience of influence relationships? What is the leader's experience of self-disclosing? Are the leader's experiences of self-disclosing influenced by gender?

Additionally, because the majority of literature about self-disclosure is quantitative in design, we have a great deal of information about various aspects of self-disclosure. However, we do not have information that integrates all of those components into the rich textures of the holistic experience. In using this qualitative approach, I

sought to do just that: to explore in depth the conscious experience of a leader's self-disclosure and to allow the complex themes of that multi-dimensional experience to emerge.

The Experience of Voice

I need to hear the voices of leaders, not just count the disclosures. I am especially, but not exclusively, interested in the voices of women leaders. By designing a qualitative approach, I intended not to separate the reader from the individuals who disclose. I relied on the speakers to interpret their experiences and I interpreted their interpretations. I was interested in hearing from leaders and I am interested in uplifting their language and emotions. My need to preserve the voices of these leaders directly affected my choice of qualitative methodology. My aim was to tell the story of their stories.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the issues of gender, self-disclosure and leadership. As I described previously, my initial interest was in self-disclosure, so the emerging question was "What is the leader's experience of self-disclosing?" In pursuing an exploration of the participants' leadership, I asked the question, "What is the leader's experience of influence relationships?" Central to this question is Rost's definition of leadership which is described below. As a woman and a leader, I have a burning curiosity about gender. So my third line of questioning was, "Are the leaders' experiences of self-disclosing influenced by gender?"

This third question is the one that adds the most complexity and ambiguity to this research. The leadership literature did not directly address the issues of gender and disclosure. The research on sex and gender suggested that debates rage over the impact of nature and nurture on sex and gender, and attempting to distinguish between sex and gender brings further unrest. The responses of my participants created greater dissonance in causing me to question my own point of view which required me to work hard to bracket my assumptions. This research offers a beginning step in exploring the multiple realities of the leader's experience of gender and self-disclosure.

Although the definitions of *leadership* are vast and broad, I turn to Rost (1993) for the definition here. Rost (1993) defined leadership as "an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes" (p. 102).

There are several components of this definition. The relationship between leaders and followers is based on influence and is both multi-directional and non-coercive. "The relationship involves interactions that are vertical, horizontal, diagonal, and circular" (Rost, 1993, p. 105).

The followers are active. There may be many followers and many leaders in any given situation. Due to the influence patterns, the flow of the relationship may be unequal. But given the "vertical, horizontal, diagonal and circular" relationships, leaders may become followers and followers may become leaders.

The leaders and followers intend real changes. *Intend* implies that it is purposeful. Real change is substantive and transforming. The change does not have to

actually occur in order for leadership to have occurred. The change might exist in the future. Leaders and followers might be creating multiple changes simultaneously.

Leaders and followers have mutual purposes, not goals, which are created in a non-coercive manner. The changes reflect, not realize, their purposes. Mutual purposes become common purposes. Those purposes are longer range than goals. Leadership has more to do with our intentions than with our accomplishments.

Most definitions of *self-disclosure* are fairly straightforward. Jourard (1971) stated that disclosure means "to unveil, to make manifest, or to show. Self-disclosure is the act of making yourself manifest, showing yourself so others can perceive you" (p. 19). Derlega, Metts, Petronio and Margulis (1993) added that this revealing is verbal in nature and includes thoughts, feelings and experiences. Disclosing then is the act of unveiling, making manifest or showing your thoughts, feelings and experiences through a verbal process so others can perceive you.

In further understanding my approach to this research, it became important to understand what is implied by use of the term *gendered*. One's "gender identity [is the] subjective, but continuous and persistent, sense of ourselves as masculine or feminine" (Bland, 1998--2004, Definitions section, para. 5-6). This might be distinguished from one's sexual identity which generally refers to one's physiology. Although the terms gender and sex are used casually, sometimes even interchangeably, they are by no means simple concepts. I have further explored the complexities of these terms in Chapter Two and have examined the murky understandings of both the origins and experience of gender and sex. Further, I have considered constraints imposed by the binary opposition of the language.

In inviting the participants to consider their gender when describing their self-disclosing, I have acknowledged both my specific interest and my own feminist perspective in using gender as a lens through which I view the world. But in using the constructivist approach (which is described in Chapter Three), I have created a space for multiple realities, including those that did not employ an awareness of gender. Paradoxically, it is in embracing the perspective *without* the lens of gender, that I situate myself in the feminist model. The feminist model is fundamentally constructivist in that it allows for multiple and sometimes competing voices (Sherwin, 1988). Truly hearing those voices allows for the feminine not to be defined by the masculine, but it may also allow for the description of self-disclosure as experienced through the lens of gender or the same experience without the perspective of that lens.

Because I have an awareness of gender in my perceptions of the world, it has been important to be able to bracket that perspective in allowing for multiple realities. I have discussed my bracketing process in Chapters Three and Five.

I turn to the literature on phenomenology to explore the definition of *experience*. From van Manen's (1990) perspective, research always has to do with lived experience.

> From a phenomenological point of view, to do research is always to question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world in which we live as human beings. And since to *know* the world is profoundly to *be* in the world in a certain way, the act of researching—questioning—theorizing is the intentional act of attaching ourselves to the world, to become more fully a part of it, or better, to become the world (p. 5).

I am interested in the gendered phenomena of self-disclosing as they present themselves to the consciousness of the six leaders whom I interviewed. That is to say, I

have searched for the essence of their experience, "for that which makes a some-'thing' what it is—and without which it could not be what it is" (van Manen, 1990, p. 10).

In searching for the essence of self-disclosing for these leaders, I have sought the lived or existential meaning that this experience has for them including "the direct conscious description of experience and the underlying dynamics or structures that account for the experience—[that] provide a central meaning and unity that enables one to understand the substance and essence of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 9). My purpose, then, was to explore the essence of these leaders' consciousness in relationship the gendered phenomena of their self-disclosing.

The inquiry process raises consciousness about gender, self-disclosure and leadership. This is consciousness-raising is integral to feminist research. "When we turn to feminism, the methodology of consciousness-raising is very much a 'first-order' methodology, where we begin by focusing on the concrete and the specific and delay abstraction and generalization to a later stage (Sherwin, 1988, p. 19). By inviting the participants of this study to consider whether their self-disclosure experience was associated with their gender, I raised their consciousness of the impact of gender on self-disclosing, but allowed for the expression of their own concrete experience.

The consciousness-raising aspect of this research was also underscored by Alexandre (2006) in her contention that "gender constitutes one of the most basic sources of division and experiences of power and politics. Leadership is embedded in a deeply engrained gender system…" (p. 3). In raising the awareness of gender in the leader's experience of self-disclosing, I am raising consciousness of gender in its embeddedness in leadership.

It was my purpose to describe the verbal manifestations of self in the context of the relationships of influence. I raised the consciousness of the participants by inviting an exploration of gender, but uplifted the feminist tradition by using the constructivist process of attending to multiple voices, including those experienced without the lens of gender. Using the discipline of hermeneutic phenomenology, I attempted to discern and describe the essence of the leader's gendered experience of self-disclosing.

SCOPE, LIMITATIONS AND CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

The purpose of this study was to write deep descriptions about a common phenomenon among leaders, that of their own self-disclosing. I created these descriptions by conducting a series of in-depth interviews with six leaders.

By embracing the process of hermeneutic phenomenology, I have, by definition, limited the scope of this research. My goal was to describe, not to explain. My goal was to gain an understanding of the essence of the experience of six leaders, not to create a sample of many leaders.

I defined an additional limitation to this study after conducting a pilot study. In the pilot, my general research question was "What is the leader's experience *with self-disclosure*?" The participant talked at length about her process of facilitation when others in her experience disclosed inappropriately for the given setting. Although this was an extremely interesting description, the process of conducting this pilot helped me to realize that I was most interested in situations in which the leader is the discloser. Consequently, I refined the language of my research questions to include the leader's

experience of *self-disclosing*. In so doing, my intention is to limit the scope of this exploration to a description of leaders' experiences with their own disclosures.

My hope is that this research would be rigorously evaluated based on the criteria relevant to the social constructivist paradigm and also based on those criteria specific to narrative inquiry. Lieblish, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (cited in Kenny, 2000) identify the criteria for narrative inquiry as width, coherence, insightfulness and parsimony. I have described these criteria in Chapter Three.

In this research, as in all constructivist approaches, there is an assumption that multiple realities exist. The participants have interpreted their lived experiences and I have interpreted their interpretations. I want to be evaluated on the trustworthiness of my interpretations. In evaluating the trustworthiness of this research, I have rigorously executed the four criteria provided by Guba and Lincoln (1989): credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. I have further described and discussed these criteria in Chapters Three and Four.

In addition to the criteria for evaluating trustworthiness, Guba and Lincoln (1989) offered criteria for evaluating the authenticity of the research. Those criteria which apply to this research include: fairness, ontological authenticity and educative authenticity. The importance of these criteria is that they are situated in the process of constructivist inquiry as opposed to being grounded primarily in method and springing from the positivistic model. Again, I have addressed these criteria further in Chapters Three and Four.

CONTENTS OF THIS DISSERTATION

Chapter One provides some of my history as the researcher, my positioning for the topic of self-disclosure and my consideration of gender. Further, I have identified the gaps in the literature and the utility of this study. I have offered criteria for the evaluation of this study.

Chapter Two includes a review of the literature in several disciplines. It is important to understand the effect of nature and nurture on gender and sex as a foundation for the gender communication research. The literature on gender communication provides a basis for understanding the literature more specifically about self-disclosure. The self-disclosure literature itself originates from the disciplines of communication studies, psychology, business and human development. I have provided an overview of the leadership literature where it directly or indirectly considers self-disclosure.

Chapter Three considers the use of hermeneutic phenomenology as the selected methodology for this research. It provides a clear explanation both of why I selected this approach and how I implemented the research design. A process for monitoring the criteria for evaluating and providing an audit of the research process is described.

Chapter Four provides a review of the findings gleaned from the multiple interviews with participants.

Chapter Five undertakes a discussion of the results of this study. The themes emerging through the interview process are presented.

Chapter Six provides a discussion of this work. I have considered the implications for leadership theory and practice and the implications for my own

leadership. I have considered the limitations of this study and the possibilities for future research.

I have spent much of my life being absorbed by others' disclosures as well as by my own. I have long been interested in moving toward the essence of many qualities of lived experience.

Although there is a great deal of quantitative research that seeks to explain self-disclosure, there is little research that attempts to describe the holistic experience of self-disclosing by utilizing the words of participants as the primary data. The leadership literature deals with issues that relate to self-disclosure, but does not describe it directly.

I feel that I have come to the confluence of the meandering streams of my many interests. Researching the leader's experience of gendered self-disclosing is my life's work.

Chapter 2

Trust that meaningful conversations can change your world.
Margaret J. Wheatley, 2002

SEX AND GENDER

"There are probably more studies that test sex differences in self-disclosure than any other issue in the self-disclosure literature" (Petronio, 2000, p. 22). Consequently, some understanding of gender communication, insofar as sex may be related to gender, is a prerequisite for understanding self-disclosure as a specific type of communication. Broadening the lens yet further, a general understanding of the scholarly debates about sex and gender themselves create a foundation for the study of gender communication.

The terminology associated with the study of gender requires clarification. *Sexual identity* is the "objective categorization of a person's physiological status as male or female….*Gender identity* [is the] subjective, but continuous and persistent, sense of ourselves as masculine or feminine" (Bland, 1998--2004, Definitions section, para. 5-6). There is some confusion in the daily use of the language around these terms. People's sex role refers to whether they live as male or a female, whereas gender refers to how they live that role.

The raging debate is in the consideration of how much of sexuality and gender is determined by the biological and physiological contributions of nature and how much is determined by the nurture of environment and culture. The definitions of the terms themselves beg the nature/nurture question. Does *sexual identity* "mean genetic status as XX or XY, or does it mean the sum of our development up until birth? Or is it simply the

social label applied to us by our birth certificates" (Bland, 1998--2004, Definitions section, para. 6)? In considering the "continuous and persistent" quality of the definition of *gender identity*, much of the literature refers to gender as an aspect of the whole person and makes rather subtle distinctions between *being* male or female and *becoming* male or female (Bland, 1998-2004, Preface section, para. 7).

The nature/nurture debate invites discussion within many disciplines. A brief look at psychology, sociology, biology and physiology illustrates both the breadth and depth of these influences.

Psychoanalysis finds its roots in Freud and his followers. It provides one starting point for the controversy surrounding sex and gender. There are three processes that psychoanalysts have considered in the development of sex and gender. First is negotiation between the ego, the socialized self, and the id which is the primitive, more animal self. Second, the subconscious mind lies behind our everyday functioning and thinking. Third, early experiences color our behavior in later life (Bland, 1998-2004, Psychoanalysis: Introduction section, para. 6-8). Interactions between the id and the ego, with the subconscious presence of early experiences, create the internal negotiations concerning a person's understanding and experience of sex and gender.

Later studies in psychology expanded the approaches to gender. Social learning theory is concerned with the experience of learning gender through encouraging or discouraging certain behaviors. Therefore, this approach has a strong reliance on nurture.

Cognitive psychology, however, attempts to discover what boys and girls do as they follow the processes related to their sex. There is an assumption that children first

know which sex they are, and then learn to support that knowing with learning and behaviors. The reliance here is greater on nature.

The interactionist position creates a middle ground in suggesting that "children learn different things in different ways in response to pre-existing dispositions. Thus no child has exactly the same biology as another, nor the same environment" (Bland, 1998--2004, Psychology Introduction section, para. 23).

The discipline of sociology takes the approach that gender is socially constructed, not a product of biology. This construction creates a social practice of "perceiving and defining aspects of people and situations inconsistently, [forcing] our observations to fit our social beliefs….The very notion that all humans can be clearly and without argument categorized as female or male is a social construction" (Bland, 2005, Introduction section, para. 12-13).

The focus of sex and gender from the disciplines of biology and physiology has been on the development of the embryo. The difference in physiology between the sexes is referred to as sexual dimorphism. Generally, there are seven steps in the sexual development following conception: 1) chromosomal sex (males XY, females XX), 2) gonadal sex (operation of the genes to produce ovaries or testes), 3) hormonal function, 4) internal genital development, 5) external genital development, 6) assigned sex at birth and 7) psychosexual differentiation. Developmental idiosyncrasies in sexual dimorphism between stages one and five will impact the assignment of sex and the psychosexual differentiation in stages six and seven (Money, 1972 cited in Bland, 1998--2004, The Developing Embryo: Introduction section). Again, the effects of the physical on the lived experience and vice versa are intricately entangled.

There is yet more complexity when adding the feminist perspective. Webster (2002) refuted the supposition that sex is aligned with nature and gender is aligned with culture. She stated that the sex/gender distinction has been refuted because it "fails to capture the sense in which sex is itself a construction of culture and secondly, that it fails to capture the sense in which we are essentially embodied beings" (p. 192).

As the previous discussion suggests, there is little clarity or agreement associated with our understanding of either sex or gender. The language used to explore and explain these concepts mirrors that lack of clarity. The binary opposition of female and male, feminine and masculine, does not embrace the complexities of sex and gender.

This understanding of gender in the context of binary opposition has been argued by many current feminist scholars. Tauchert (2001) explained that binary opposition is a theoretical model upon which we develop an understanding of our language. We understand "up" by conjuring up and canceling out the concept of "down." "Every concept relies on a chain of negated differences to claim meaning" (Tauchert, 2001, p. 181). We can have no black without white, left requires an understanding of right, dark is defined by light, and so on. Any verbal or visual reference to "man" conjures up and cancels the concept of "woman." Similarly, the qualities of "masculinity" are dependent on an understanding of "femininity." Oppositionality demands that we identify with one group or the other; there is no defined space for betweeness (Tauchert, 2001).

Matthis (2004) explained that the term *gender*,

> which implies the constructivist approach, was introduced to help solve the problem of biological sex versus psychosexual identity. It was, however, soon invaded by the same binary opposition—the division into feminine and masculine identity—and the same discussion resumed. (p. 7)

One of Tauchert's (2001) suggestions is that we deploy gender-free language which challenges the binary mode of thinking. This allows for the lived experience of subjectivities, rather than polar opposites, to reside in our expression of language. She referred to the betweeness of this lived experience as "fuzzy gender" (Tauchert, p.183).

Philpot (2004) suggested that regardless of gender socialization and sexual differences, men and women have the capacity to adopt a variety of characteristics and attributes. Matthis furthered (2004) this thinking in her statement that "[t]heory and practice are not always in harmony with one another, although the former is created and applied in order to achieve precisely that….In the special case of 'sexuality and gender', we find that if we—whether women or men—fail to conform to the (general) theory about what we are supposed to be (female or male), it is usually *we* who are in trouble, not the theory" (p.1). Philpot (2004) pointed out that people ignore the existence of those characteristics which do not fit their stereotype, furthering still the more narrow stereotypical view.

Relevance to this Research

Relying on the construction of gender in this research has emerged as an organic part of this process. I began with a curiosity about self-disclosure and then realized that I was interested in how leaders may see their gender as impacting their disclosure. In wondering about using the lens of gender, I was led to consider the greater questions about the meaning of gender and the impact of nature and nurture in creating that meaning.

Using the language of *gendered experience* in this research is not a position that I take casually. The words lead us into a deep reservoir of meaning—or lack thereof—and

the tumult of debate. Both the origins and the experience of sex and gender have been subject to the theories of psychology, sociology, biology and linguistics. The binary opposition of nature/nurture, female/male, feminine/masculine may not serve the complexities of the lived experience.

It is beyond the scope of this research to further analyze the debates surrounding sex and gender, or to create a language that fully embraces the varied experiences of sex and gender. In approaching this research with a constructivist perspective, I have attempted to hold the tension implied in the gender debates and allow for the experience of "fuzzy gender" (Tauchert, 2001, p. 183). I have invited the participants' expressions of their own gendered experiences. I have not attempted to label them masculine nor feminine, although I have accepted their use of those terms. I have written participants' descriptions of the connection between their gender and self-disclosure, and I have written the descriptions of others who did not experience those connections. It describing the essence of the gendered experiences of self-disclosure, I have created space for multiple realities of gender.

GENDER COMMUNICATION

By providing an overview of the vast literature on gender communication, I create a foundation for the understanding of self-disclosure. In the previous discussion of the development of sex and gender, I have clarified the competing positions of nature versus nurture. These debates affect the theoretical orientations of gender communication. Further, our own experiences of self-disclosure are interpreted through our understanding of gendered speech. And our understanding of gender leads us back to nature/nurture.

In reviewing the literature about gender communication, I have used the rhetoric of the researchers. This utilizes the language of binary opposition: female/male and feminine/masculine. Additionally, in most of this research, there is at least some association of feminine as female, and masculine as male. As I stated in the previous section, this rhetoric may not fully embrace the reality of experience, but it is outside the realm of this research to create the language of "fuzzy gender" (Tauchert, 2001, p. 183). Furthermore, it is my purpose to accurately review the literature as it was written, including the researchers' rhetoric about gender.

Theoretical Positions

When creating an overview of the gender communication research of the past three decades, it is helpful to understand the theoretical positions upon which these theories were developed. These varying frames include theories centered around sex differences, theories of hierarchy, gender socialization and moral development. Again, the varying emphasis on nature or nurture is evident.

Sex Differences

Theories that focus on differences between the sexes have a physiological and/or psychological base. One of the very early theories was the female deficit theory originally posed by Jesperson in 1922 (as cited in Bloemer, 1997). This position asserted that women's language skills were not equivalent to men's due to both biological and environmental factors.

Although much research has studied the physiological differences between male and female speech, Maccoby and Jacklin (1974, as cited in Bloemer, 1997) determined

that the only well established sex difference in language among children was that girls have greater verbal ability.

It is not surprising that the research on language developed in the 1970s had a sex-difference approach as our culture became entrenched in the era of increasing attention on feminist theory. However, over the next decade,

> there was also a shift from considering sex as a dichotomous 'natural fact' to considering sex or gender as historically changing social relationships which are socially regulated with the assignment of women and men to hierarchical positions and privileges. (Kramarae, 1990, p. 347)

Hierarchy

Male dominance theory related language differences to the male position which exists in the domains of family, employment, economy and politics (Eakins and Eakins, 1978, as cited in Bloemer, 1997). The power that men experience in those environments allow them to dictate what is normal in the course of conversation.

Meeker and O'Neill (1977, as cited in Bloemer, 1997) have taken the position of the expectation states theory. This position explains that individuals who have been awarded greater external status will have greater status in the context of a group and will be expected to contribute to a greater degree.

Kramarae (1990) suggested that "gender, far from being a separate 'variable,' is a part of all interactions as a hierarchical ordering….Since gender-ranking locates everyone within a hierarchy, it is an important shaping factor even in single-sex interactions" (p. 350).

Gender Socialization

The views of the socialized nature of gender and language have been approached using two different frames: two cultures and cultural constraints. The two cultures

approach emphasized that boys and girls play and develop in same-sex groups and, consequently, are socialized in two different cultures. Kramarae (1990) noted the changes occurring in the 1970s that shifted the approach of language to a reliance on gender as opposed to sex, placed emphasis on the socialized nature of gender as opposed to the physiological aspects of sex.

The boys' culture is likely to establish a hierarchy, gain audience attention and assert the male identity. The girls' culture stresses cooperation and equality and utilizes sensitivity in managing relationships. The men and women who grow out of these two cultures use language representing two very different world views. Kendall and Tannen (1997) stated, "…gendered identities—and other aspects of social identity—are maintained and (re-)created through social practices, including language practices. Individuals are active producers of gendered identities rather than passive reproducers of socialized gender behavior" (p. 82).

Maltz and Borker (1982, as cited in Kramarae, 1990) embraced this two-cultures perspective in approaching gender differences in language by utilizing the research on cross-ethnic communication. The miscommunication comes from good faith misunderstandings of the differing cultures. Coates (1993, as cited in Bloemer, 1997) described those influences as the directives about appropriate ways for each gender to speak, differential adult talk to boys and girls, differing adult responses to the language of boys and girls and children's participation in their same-sex subcultures.

The two-cultures position has become known in the popular press through the work of Tannen (1990) in her book *You Just Don't Understand*. Tannen discussed the competing interpretations of language as metamessages. Men's language functions to

maintain their own independence and creates an asymmetrical interaction or hierarchy. The central purpose of women's language is to create connections and support, and their interactions work to create a symmetrical relationship.

Eagly (1987, as cited in Canary and Dindia, 1998) considered gender socialization, but from a slightly different position than the theorists examining two cultures. Eagly focused on the *cultural constraints* existing *within* a particular culture as opposed to viewing gender differences occurring *between* two cultures. Eagly suggested that social roles provide an explanation of the differing language types of men and women. Eagly argued that members of social groups experience similar situational constraints in a particular culture and frequently share the same social positions within that culture. Consequently, similar group members within a culture develop differences from other parts of the culture. We have stereotypes of men and women that create expectations and, by sharing community, these expectations become their norms. Expectations for a particular language tends to confirm that behavior. Consequently, sex role stereotypes shape a person's behavior both externally (expectations from the culture) and internally (one's own expectation).

Moral Development

The work of Gilligan (1982) challenged that the research addressing moral development had, until that point, been constructed on a male frame. Gilligan's (1982) work suggested that hierarchies and webs represent the difference between the way men and women structure relationships and become the primary influence on their assertions

and responses. To women, hierarchical relationships appear to be unstable and morally problematic.

Gilligan (1982) furthered that moral dilemmas arise out of a conflict of truths. Gilligan pointed to examples in which men (Ghandi, Abraham) were called to sacrifice people to truth. For women (she exemplified abortion studies) the moral dilemmas are frequently around conflicting responsibilities of care.

Kramarae (1990) pointed to the differences in moral development of Gilligan's work as one of the lenses through which gender differences in communication can be understood. Males' speech development comes from a moral frame built around "separation from others and independent actions,…equality, objectivity, individual rights, and rule-governed justice" (p. 351). For women, the moral frame is based on "relatedness, cooperation, relationships, care equity, flexibility, and responsibility" (p.351).

Summary

The theoretical positions undergirding the understanding of gender communication harkens back to the nature/nurture debate. Emphasizing the importance of nature is research (Jesperson, 1922; Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974) that has indicated a physiological difference affecting the speech of males and females. Many more theoretical positions consider the artifacts of culture and their implications for feminine and masculine speech. The implications of hierarchy (Meeker and O'Neill, 1977; Kramarae, 1990) is one of the approaches that rely on culture. Those who focused on the socialization process might emphasize the difference in the cultural practices of boys and girls (Kramarae, 1990; Kendall and Tannen, 1997; Maltz and Borker, 1982). Eagly

(1987) considered the restraints within the gender groups as opposed to between the groups. Gilligan (1982) was among the first to represent the differences in moral development between boys and girls, which may have additional implications for the use of language.

Dialogue Form

Much of the literature indicated that men and women use speech patterns quite differently. It is my purpose to review the literature examining the differences in speech form as a function of gender. This analysis of conversational style includes the evidence and interpretation of such forms as interruptions, dialogue maintenance, tone of voice and the use of silence and questions.

Interruption

Interruption is a highly scrutinized and studied behavior of communication, particularly gender communication. Although the studies are pervasive, the results are inconclusive.

Crawford's (1995) review of the literature revealed that patterns of interruption are asymmetrical, and are based on gender and status. She cited Zimmerman and West (1975) who found that 96% of the interruptions in mixed sex dyads were made my males, but were equally divided in same-sex pairs.

Pillon (1986, cited in Pillon, Degauquier and Duquesne, 1992) found some results similar to Zimmerman and West in that men produced 61% of the interruptions in mixed-sex groups. However, Pillon furthered that women attempted more unsuccessful interruptions.

In contrast Hirschman (1973, 1974 cited in Pillon, Degauquier and Duquesne, 1992), Esposito (1979, cited in Aries, 1987) and James and Clarke (1993, cited in Kendall and Tannen, 1997) found no significant differences between the genders in the numbers of interruptions initiated. The results of the research of Kennedy and Camden (1981, cited in Pillon, Degauquier and Duquesne, 1992) complicates the issue still further. Kennedy and Camden found that it was actually women who did more interrupting.

Although Kendall and Tannen (1997) recognized contradictory results in the interruption research, in reviewing the research focusing on interruption behaviors *in the workplace*, they concluded that some potential patterns emerge. In general, these patterns suggested "that men professionals may interrupt clients more frequently, and the women professionals may be interrupted more often than men in the same position….Similarly,…men managers tend to interrupt more than the women managers" (p. 83).

Hopper (2003) offered some explanation for these competing results in suggesting that "interruption is a slippery discourse concept…..[It] is not a concrete speech specific feature, but rather a broad interpretative category that sounds more specific than it is" (p. 178-179). Hopper went on to explain that, in some research, interruption is tabulated as a speech overlap. In other research, an interruption must function as not facilitative (as opposed to interrupting with a supportive utterance of "yeah" or "uh huh"). Further, other research defines a speech behavior as interruption only when it successfully drives the initial speaker from the floor. Tannen (1990) also did a more in depth study of the interruption literature. She suggested that most interruptions are viewed in the literature

as acts of dominance and hostility, but furthers that it is important to understand the effect that the interruption had on the conversation.

Tannen (1990) went on to explain that there are interruptions without overlap, overlap without interruption, successful cooperative overlapping, unsuccessful cooperative overlapping, and significant cultural differences in the meaning of interruptions.

Dialogue Maintenance

Related to interruption is the cluster of behaviors known as dialogue maintenance. Maintenance includes such behaviors as talking time, taking the floor, holding the floor and topic control. The research in this area seems to result in clearer distinctions than those related to interruption behavior.

In their review of the literature, Pillon, Degauquier, and Duquesne (1992) found that "most findings show that men took the floor more frequently and for longer periods than women, whether the examined interaction took place in a natural setting without the explicit presence of an observer…or in an experimental one, in which the subjects were asked to discuss a given topic…." (p. 150). In their own research (Pillon, Degauquier, and Duquesne, 1992), they concluded that the only gender difference appearing among all of the varying behavior variables was "sequence structuring of dialogues: Males started new conversational sequences more often than did females, whose speaking turns were more often replies to the previous turns" (pp. 164-5). They also found, however, that women produced shifts in topics and re-started conversations after a pause as frequently as did men.

Crawford's (1995) review of the literature determined also that men take more than a fair share of talking time in a variety of settings. Crawford pointed especially to Spender's (1989) research in which she determined that in interactions with men, women are allowed to have about one third of the talking time. Beyond this amount "*both women and men* are likely to perceive the contribution of the woman as domineering" (pp. 9-10, as cited in Crawford, 1995, p. 43, emphasis in the original).

Kendall and Tannen (1997) pointed to both the Eakins and Eakins (1976) and Edelsky (1981, 1993) studies. In this research they found that, among university faculty, men spoke more often and for longer periods than did women.

Tone of Voice

Tone of voice is frequently referred to as a leaky channel, that is to say, it is difficult to manipulate intentionally so the speaker's true attitudes may well be expressed through tone of voice. LaPlante and Ambady (2002) determined in their review of the literature that "tone of voice has been found to be quite informative about phenomena and characteristics that are important to organizational functioning, such as politeness [Ambady et al., 1996], dominance [Hall & Friedman, 1999], and gender relations [Steckler & Rosenthal, 1985]" (p. 2436).

LaPlante and Ambady's (2002) research determined that there were gender differences in the effective use of tone of voice in messages between supervisors and subordinates. They found that female supervisors were able to motivate the greatest productivity from their subordinates when using a negative tone of voice, and the male supervisors were able to motivate the greatest productivity when using a positive tone. Additionally, greater productivity was elicited from positive verbal messages from

women and negative verbal messages from men. For women, tone seemed to influence their subordinates to a greater extent than content. The authors note that, for women, this "firm-but-fair mixed message (positive content/negative tone)" (p. 2451), might discourage the stereotype of the soft female supervisor and might allow her to be seen as "competent and no nonsense" (p. 2451).

Silence

"Silence is not merely the absence of talk. Rather, silences are a part of communication itself and provide information about what is considered important and valuable to say, who makes judgments about the importance and value of what is said, and levels and types of responsiveness of interactions to one another" (Molseed, 1989, p. 147).

Crawford (1995) suggested that silence is used for controlling interactions and can be related to dominance. She cited Fishman (1978) who found evidence of husbands withholding responses to their wives to express lack of interest. She furthered this view by presenting the research of Sattel (1983) and DeFrancisco (1991) who found that men exhibit greater use of silence to gain conversational control.

Molseed's (1989) position is that there are four kinds of silence and, depending on the type, silence is not always about control. The types of silences include: 1) supportive silences involving the use of nonverbals to indicate attentiveness and interest in what the other is saying; 2) inexpressive silences occurring when one withholds or delays information that the other has requested; (3) nonsequitur which is not silence in the form of absence of talk, but functions much like the inexpressive silence in that it functions to silence or negate the other (replaces the topic with something new); and 4) withdrawal

occurring when the interactant remains present, but becomes disengaged from the conversation.

Molseed's (1989) research determined that in mixed-sex groups, females tended to use supported silences which elevated males. Males were likely to employ inexpressive silence and nonsequiturs. Males who were silenced through inexpressive silences and nonsequiturs tended to withdraw; women who were silenced tended to vebalize less but remain involved through supportive silences.

Questions

Questions, especially tag questions (e.g., "We are going to the theater tonight, aren't we?"), are seen by many researchers as being used disproportionately in women's speech. Lakoff (1975) introduced this discussion in noting that tag questions form a declarative function, but imply hesitancy, uncertainty and deference. Further research has both supported and refuted Lakoff's claims. One aspect of the debate is concerned with the function of tag questions in the context of conversation. Although the questions may express tentativeness or uncertainty, they may also express solidarity with the speaker. When tag questions are classified by their functions in speech, Holmes (1984, as cited in Aries, 1987) found that women used more tags and that tags in women's speech were most frequently used for the purpose of expressing solidarity.

Moltz and Borker (1982, cited in Kramarae, 1990) furthered this thinking by examining the general use of questions in gendered speech. They learned that women are more likely to use questions to encourage more conversation. Men are more likely to hear questions as a request for information.

Coates (1996) designated the following functions of questions in women's speech: 1) information-seeking, 2) conversation maintenance, 3) instigating stories, 4) topic initiation, 5) topic development, 6) hedging, 7) rhetorical question and 8) avoiding playing the expert. Coates also went on to explain that any question could serve a number of these functions in any particular conversation.

Summary

In considering the relationship between dialogue form and gender, I have found competing results and differing degrees of relatedness. There are, however, some patterns that emerge: Men and women both interrupt. It appears that in a work setting men do so more than women (Kendall and Tannen, 1997). There is some indication that men use more talking time than do women (Pillon, Degauqueir, and Duquesne, 1992; Crawford, 1995; Kendall and Tannen, 1997). The tone of voice in female supervisors seems to influence subordinates more that content (LaPlante aand Ambady, 2002). Women use silence to support men. Men are more likely to use inexpressive silence to withhold or delay information (Molseed, 1989). Women may be more inclined to use questions than men. These questions serve a variety of functions (Coates, 1996).

Functionality of Gender Communication

In the previous section, I analyzed dialogue by examining the form and patterns of the speech of men and women. Building on form, I move now to function. I will review the research analyzing how gender communication serves the traditional masculine and feminine roles, how task and status are connected through gender language and how gender relates to influence; and how authority is expressed.

Task vs. Expressive Roles

The history of the research on gender differences in terms of function has long and deep roots. The work of Parson and Bales (1955, as cited in Pillon, Degauquier, and Duquesne, 1992) on family relationships pointed to the division of labor by sex. Fathers worked outside the home and, therefore, were seen as the instrumental leaders, whereas mothers were the socio-emotional leaders in that their role was to support their husbands and the family. Parson argued that, even when women held jobs outside the home, they chose positions with a primary expressive component such as secretary, social worker or nurse.

Research has suggested that, in mixed-sex groups, men tend to use a communication style that is more task-oriented and women use a style that is more socio-emotional. Men demonstrate their task orientation by giving advice, providing information and giving directives (Aries, 1987). Women demonstrate their social orientation by responding to topics initiated by men, stimulating others to talk and behaving in a diplomatic fashion (Gass, 1992, as cited in Bloemer, 1997).

Aries (1987) furthered this understanding by pointing to research (Heiss, 1962; Leik, 1963; Altman &Taylor, 1973) demonstrating that, although men show more task orientation and women show more socio-emotional orientation, the difference between their styles decreases with increased intimacy. This suggests that couples in established relationships show a broader repertoire of communication behaviors and tend to rely less on the conventional norms. In comparison, Soskin and John's (1963, as cited in Aries, 1987) research shows that the communication patterns vary with the setting, and the most difference between men and women occurred in a private context.

Verdi and Wheeler (1992, as cited in Bloemer 1997) showed that time affects the degree of difference between the task and expressive styles. They found that there were less stereotypical gender differences after the group had been together over a period of time.

In her research studying supportive interactions, Gareis (1997) found that men and women did not differ in the forms or the functions of the support that they offered. Gareis found that cross-sex exchanges did not proceed as easily as same sex exchanges. She also noted that interactions intended for support could have multiple functions within the conversation and could even have contradictory effects.

Carli's (1990) conclusion about the varying evidence of the existence of gender differences in socio-emotional and task functions is that

> gender differences in social-emotional orientation is a function of expectations and behavior norms that depend, in part, on the gender composition of the group in which subjects interact, and not on gender differences in personality. The sex composition of groups may affect the salience of gender as a social category; this, in turn, may trigger gender-linked schemas leading to different gender-related expectancies and behaviors. (p. 943)

Task and Status

Success at a particular task is assumed to require a level of skill. In the absence of familiarity or direct information, members of a group attempt to gauge the expertise of the other members of the group by relying on external status. In a society where men are seen as having more dominance and prestige, men will be deemed more able in a group and will be given opportunities to manage the task (Aries, 1996).

Group members with low status who are task-oriented are assumed to be motivated by a desire to enhance their status. It is argued that it is acceptable for a high-

status person (man) to further enhance his status, but it is unacceptable for a lower-status (woman), "undeserving" person to attempt to status-enhance. (Meeker and O'Neill, 1977, as cited in Aries, 1996). Ridgeway's (1988, as cited in Aries, 1996) research confirmed this and further suggested that women need to be cooperative and friendly in order to be heard in a mixed group. This provided some explanation of the difference between men and women in the observed task and socio-emotional roles in groups as discussed in the previous section.

Aries's (1996) literature review pointed out the confusion in examining the relationships of task, status and gender communication. High status individuals are likely to talk longer and emerge as leaders in a group. Because more status and power are assigned to men in our society, some of the differences that seem to indicate gender differences may be more about status.

Strodtbeck and Mann (1956, as cited in Craig & Sherif, 1986) found similar results when studying influence patterns in twelve-person juries in Chicago and St Louis. Although men initiated more acts than women, high status individuals (as conferred by the larger society) initiated more acts than low status individuals, regardless of gender.

Influence

Becker (1986) did a meta-analysis of 78 studies which examine gender differences in social influence. Her results determined that gender differences in social influence are not consistent. However, one gender difference that does appear with some stability is that, when position on the outcome variable (prior to being influenced) is equated between the sexes, women change more from that variable than men. Similar

patterns of influence were noted in the group pressure studies. The results of these studies indicate that women seem to conform more than men do.

Carli's (1990) research determined that a woman's use of tentative speech increased her ability to influence men, but reduced her ability to influence a woman. Both genders considered women who spoke tentatively to be less competent and less knowledgeable than women who spoke assertively. Neither gender considered language when rating the competence of men. Although we might intuitively assume that speakers who are judged as incompetent and lacking knowledge might be less influential, the women who spoke tentatively were found to be more influential on a male audience, even though they were considered less competent and less knowledgeable.

Carli's (2001) later work determined that, because those who are competent and likeable influence people, the process of influence is very different for men than for women. Because competence is congruent with the male gender role, any behavior that increased the perception of a man's competence would, therefore, increase his influence. For men, there is no conflict between influence behaviors and gender appropriateness. For women, competence has a less clear effect on influence. While people may consider a woman more credible when she is competent, such competence is not gender role-consistent and therefore reduces her likeability. Competent behavior can simultaneously increase a women's influence by increasing her perceived knowledge and ability, and decrease her influence by reducing her likeability. This social prescription demands that a woman be warm, in that likeability is an important aspect of her influence.

Craig and Sherif (1986) found that, in groups consisting of one man and three women, men were more influential. Women had more influence success in a gender-

equal group. The researchers offered an explanation of this result by suggesting that, in the gender-equal group, the task may not have been taken as seriously.

Authority

Related to the influence studies and the status studies is Johnson's (1994) work on authority. She examined group process where there was formal, legitimate authority and found that authority was significantly more important than gender in understanding communication patterns. Johnson (1994) found that position was most significantly related to verbal behaviors. Managers allocated tasks, directed and checked performance. In contrast, the nonverbal behaviors of smiling and laughing do not seem to be related to authority in a direct way.

Johnson (1994) stated that the implications of her work are that women in authority in business may very well take on the language patterns of their male counterparts. Further, she argued against the position that men and women are in frequent miscommunication in organizations. When women are in positions of legitimate authority, this may not be the case.

Summary

Our understanding of the function of communication has roots going as far back as 1955 when Parson and Bales associated fathers with task roles and mothers with expressive roles. Although more recent research (Aries, 1987; Gass, 1992) has continued to support the notion that task-oriented language may be more associated with men and socio-emotional language with women, there is some controversy as to whether these differences become greater or are reduced with increased intimacy. When considering the language of task, there are some situations when the effects of status may masquerade

as gender. Further, Carli (1990) indicated that the process of influence is complicated for women because there may not be congruence between their gender roles and their perceived competence. In considering the language of authority, Johnson (1994) found that women in the workforce may borrow from the language of men.

Humor

One aspect of language in which both form and function can be observed is in the gendered use of humor. Both Crawford (1995) and Hopper (2003) have analyzed the research concerning the use of humor in gender communication. Crawford (1995) stated that humor is especially important to consider because it represents all levels of the gender system: individual, interactional and social structural.

Collaboration

Humor is an activity requiring conversational collaboration if it is to be successful. There are many phases to this collaboration: Speakers signals (verbally or nonverbally) that they would like to be funny. Listeners must grant them the floor, must allow them to hold the floor, and then must indicate that they "got it" by laughing at the end of the joke. When people signal that they are about to introduce humor, the others can choose to collaborate or resist (Crawford, 1995).

Hopper (2003) pointed to research by Jefferson (1994) who found that women accept men's invitation to laugh more often than men accepted women's invitation. Crawford's (1995) assertion that women are expected to provide conversational support adds to this position.

Indirectness

Humor can also be used to do some very serious work in the context of the conversation. People can use humor to test messages that they then either deny or convey further depending on how the message was received. "Indirect modes can save face, minimize accountability for one's actions, and slip taboo topics into conversation" (Crawford, 1995, p.134).

Hopper's (2003) research addressed how these indirect agendas are likely to be received. Hopper suggested that many laughs are not performed to be shared, especially those which express mocking or derision of the other. Most often, in these cases, the social target does not share in the laugh. He goes on to explain Jefferson's (1994) position that a woman will join into a man's laughter, even when she does not see anything funny except: if he is disagreeing with her; or if he is talking about the trouble he is having. A man will *not* join in a woman's laughter if he does not see what is funny except: if he is flirting with her; or if she is talking about a trouble she is having.

Muted Group

Women, especially feminists, are seen as lacking a sense of humor. Crawford (1995) pointed to Kramarae's (1981) work which applies the theory of muted groups to gendered humor. In every culture there is a dominant group that determines the culture's ways of being. Although members of the muted groups may have their own ways of interacting, they must openly subscribe to the dominate group. The study of humor reflects the dominate group's (male) views and the lack of knowledge of women's humor "has stemmed from many factors, including the scarcity of research that involves women participants, the customary focus on measuring responses to ready-made humor, the lack

of attention to spontaneous wit and its appreciation, and the paucity of studies in natural settings" (Crawford, 1995, p. 136).

Hierarchy and Dominance

Crawford (1995) cited research done by Coser (1960) and Pizzini (1991) suggesting that humor followed the hierarchy of rank and prestige. Those at the top create more humor and direct it downward. Consequently, men make more jokes, while women laugh harder.

Hierarchy and dominance can also be seen in men's use of sexual humor. Women's bodies and services are frequently at the disposal of the joke-teller. Such humor can be used to silence and negate women.

Mulkay (1988, as cited in Crawford, 1995) described humor as conservative in that it may function to release tension, but rarely interrupts the social hierarchy. Humor generally runs downward in the hierarchy. The degree of structure in a situation is a determinant of the kind and amount of humor. Highly structured situations generate less humor. Less formal situations allow for fewer constraints on discourse and, therefore, more humor.

Women's Humor with Other Women.

A primary assumption of the two-cultures theory is that women's conversation is primarily for intimacy and men's is for positive self-presentation. Consequently, the humor of men and women can be expected to serve different functions.

Humor in all-women groups portrays a collaborative style of storytelling. While women have a reputation for telling jokes badly, this might minimize the importance of the collaborative style in female humor (Crawford, 1995). Green (1977, as cited in Crawford, 1995) suggested that much of women's humor is expressed privately in their own gatherings, not in a public arena.

The picture created by the research of Crawford and Green suggested women's humor flourishes in same-sex groups when the storytelling can be a shared process. This process does not depend on the storyteller controlling center stage or reciting a rehearsed joke.

Humor as Political Action

Crawford (1995) quoted Kate Clinton (1982), a lesbian comedian, who has said that feminist humor is not just a string of jokes but "a deeply radical analysis of the world and our being in the world because it, like the erotic, demands a commitment to joy. Feminist humor is a radical analysis because we are saying that we have a right to be happy, and we will not settle for less" (Crawford, 1995, p. 160).

Summary

Humor is an aspect of language in which both form and function of gender styles become apparent. The social construction of the experience of humor requires collaboration between speakers and listeners (Hopper, 2003; Crawford, 1995). Humor can serve to carry a message that might be otherwise difficult to deliver. (Crawford, 1995). Women's humor is thought to be best shared in groups where collaborative storytelling is encouraged (Crawford, 1995). Humor is both conservative, in that it

preserves the existing social order, and political in its silencing and/or giving voice to muted groups (Crawford, 1995).

Men and Women in Dialogue

Both scholarly research and popular media attention has been focused on the issues of men and women in conversation with each other, and the reasons why there is frequently a disconnect. Tannen's (1990) *You Just Don't Understand* and Gray's (1992) *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* have popularized the awareness of this subject.

Tannen (1990) framed her work from the two cultures approach, describing men and women as growing up in different worlds. Although intimacy and independence might be important to both, women tend to prioritize the first while men are inclined toward the second. "Conversation between men and women can be like cross-cultural communication, prey to a clash of conversational styles. Instead of different dialects, it has been said they speak different genderlects" (Tannen, 1990, p. 42).

Tannen (1990) explained that meta-messages are the key to many misunderstandings. The meta-messages are not the content that a particular message carries, but rather the function of that message in the overall dialogue. Women attempt to achieve symmetry in their conversations, offering a bid for understanding by matching a story with a similar story. Men are more comfortable with asymmetry in that a problem calls for a solution, creating a hierarchy of position between the owner of the problem and the solver. Men's conversation goal is frequently to gain respect; women's is to be liked.

Tannen (1990) described men's talk as report-talk in that their talk is primarily a means of preserving independence through holding center stage such as through joke-telling or imparting information. Women are more inclined toward rapport-talk which is a way of establishing connections and relationships. Emphasis is placed on indicating similarities and matching experiences.

Men and women have different uses for social talk. Many women mix talk about the important aspects of their lives, such as business, with the seemingly trivial, such as clothes or dinner plans. For women, the mutual knowledge and trust that can grow out of personal talk can precede a business relationship and grow from it. Some women place a value on creating a warm and friendly place where business can be done. Many men regard this as wasting time. Men may be more inclined to get down to business and see the over-sharing of details as "gossip."

Gray (1992) further popularized these notions in his book and made the two cultures approach abundantly clear in the title, *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus.* He suggested that there are two major mistakes made when attempting to relate to the opposite sex: "men mistakenly offer solutions and invalidate feelings while women offer unsolicited advice and direction" (p. 11).

Shem and Surrey (1998), a psychiatrist and a clinical psychologist, furthered the efforts to minimize the disconnect between men and women in their workshops and the book that resulted from those workshops, *We Have to Talk: Healing Dialogues between Women and Men.* They explain their title by indicating that those four words—*we have to talk*—may be among the most misunderstood words in the conversation between genders. For women, they are an expression of a desire to move their relationship to a

better place. For men, they generate relational dread and may predict "World War Three."

Summary

Men and women may have very different agendas in their shared conversations. Men are inclined to report; their goal may be to gain respect. Women may be more inclined to establish rapport and to work toward being liked (Tannen, 1990). Men may offer solutions when none are requested, while women may offer unsolicited advice and direction (Gray, 1992). Shem and Surrey (1998) suggested that the phrase "we have to talk" may be among the most misunderstood between women and men.

Relevance to this Research

The research on gender communication is vast and broad. This literature review includes only a small sample of the full range of topics and observations. Although the specific differences between women's communication style and men's will long be hotly debated, the research supports our overall understanding that there *is* a difference. Situating this research in a foundation of that awareness has been important to me for two reasons. First, as participants shared their experience of self-disclosure and its relevance (or not) to their gender, it has helped me to relate their stories to the literature. I have made some of those references directly in reporting the results in Chapter Five. Second, increasing my own sensitivity to gender-speak has made me a better listener. As a woman, I am a product of my socialization and my language reflects that. As a listener and a researcher, I have become more aware of interview moments when I might need to

ask for a translation, particularly with male participants who may speak a language different from my own.

SELF-DISCLOSURE

The growth of literature about self-disclosure finds its roots in the work of Sidney Jourard in the 1960s and 1970s. In his seminal work, *The Transparent Self,* Jourard (1971) explores the fairly expansive hypothesis that

> man can attain to health and fullest personal development only insofar as he gains courage to be himself with others and when he finds goals that have meaning for him—including the reshaping of society so it is fit for all to live and grow in. (p. ix)

As Jourard (1971) approached this hypothesis, he offered the words of Polonius to his son "…and this above all—to any man be true, and thou canst not then be false to thyself" (p. 7).

Most definitions of self-disclosure are fairly straightforward. Jourard (1971) stated that disclosure means "to unveil, to make manifest, or to show. Self-disclosure is the act of making yourself manifest, showing yourself so others can perceive you" (p. 19). Derlega, Metts, Petronio and Margulis (1993) added that this revealing of self is verbal in nature and includes thoughts, feelings and experiences.

The work of Bakhtin (cited in Emerson, 1986) provides a conceptual connection between communication theory and the specific speech forms of self-disclosure. Bakhtin believed that the smallest linguistic unit of contextual meaning was the utterance: "a unit of speech communication…determined by a change of speaking subjects…The speaker ends his utterance in order to relinquish the floor to the other or to make room for the

other's active responsive understanding" (p. 71). Bakhtin described language as a system and sees its relevance as a social phenomenon.

Kenny (2005) furthered Bakhtin's position in her analysis:

> Bakhtin embraces the paradox of human existence as a struggle between the forces that attempt to bring us together and the ones that drive us apart. He understands that language is at the core of this struggle and presents a theory or model for narrative and discourse which validates this struggle and helps us to rise above it. (p. 419)

Kenny's understanding of Bakhtin's statement of the paradox of existence provides a framework for understanding the specific paradox of self-disclosure. Smith and Berg (1987) suggested that

> for members [of a group] to learn who they are going to be in and to the group, they must be willing to disclose; to self-disclose, members need to know about the group to which they belong…..To know oneself in a social context, one may reflect on one's inner experience, but one also needs to know how one is experienced by others. (pp. 111--2)

Therefore, each of our utterances becomes a part of our own self-disclosure, but exists only as a part of an intricate language system. Creating the utterances promotes ourselves as social beings, and yet defines our uniqueness and consequent separateness within that social context. We may be willing to disclose to a group when we know that group, but we can also come to know the group through our disclosures.

Decades of research have continued to explore the concepts relating to self-disclosure. In the context of this paper, I will report the results of a portion of the research that examined self-disclosure. The specific areas that I will consider include the relationship between gender and self-disclosure, self-disclosure as an influence strategy,

the relationship between self-disclosure and physical and mental health, privacy and boundaries.

Gender and Self-Disclosure

"There are probably more studies that test sex differences in self-disclosure than any other issue in the self-disclosure literature" (Petronio, 2000, p. 22). Derlega, Metts, Petronia and Margulis (1993) suggested that the preponderance of this literature exists due the subcultural differences between males and females. They position themselves in the two-cultures approach to gender communication (Maccoby, 1990, 1991; Maltz & Borker, 1982; Tannen, 1990 as cited in Derlega, Metts, Petronio & Margulis, 1993). Petronia (2002) wrote that men and women have different sets of rules defining privacy boundaries. "This is not to say that they are precluded from coordinating those rule sets; however, men and women may initially come to an interaction with different visions of how privacy and disclosure work" (p. 24).

Sex of the Target

One variable that has been researched with regard to self-disclosure is the role of the listener of the disclosure. In reporting this literature, I have used the word *target* to describe the listener because that is the language in the existing literature. However, in Chapters Four and Five, when I described the experiences of the participants of my research, I used the word *audience*. By using *audience*, I value the perspective of Perrault (2005) whose work is reviewed later in this chapter, and who challenged that many of the metaphors associated with leadership are those of the military and battle.

Dindia and Allen (1992, as cited in Petronio, 2000) conducted a meta-analysis of sex differences in self-disclosure using 205 studies involving 23,702 participants. The results of their findings in relation to the sex of the targets revealed that:

--Women disclosed more to other women than men disclosed to women.

--Women disclosed more to women than men disclosed to men.

--Women disclosed more to men than men disclosed to women.

--Women did *not* disclose more to men than men disclosed to men.

Aries (1996) found that men talk at greater length (more talking time) to women than to other men when the talk is about informal subjects. She also found that men disclose more to women than to other men. All-female groups were found to talk more about their feelings, their homes and families, and personal relationships with men and lovers. All-men groups were inclined to talk about where they stood in relation to each other, and they were inclined to hold the floor through storytelling. However, in mixed-sex groups, the male themes gave way to the more personal topics of the women.

Hill and Stull (1987) explained the patterns of gender disclosure by suggesting that there is an interaction effect of the disclosers (in that women disclose more than men) and reciprocity of disclosure (disclosure invites more disclosure). Hill and Stull argued that female-to-female disclosure is the highest because women disclose more than men and the act of their disclosure elicits still more disclosures. They arugued that male-to-male disclosure is the lowest using the same reasoning, and mixed-sex disclosure exists somewhere between the two. However, the results of Dindia and Allen's meta-analysis (1992, as cited in Petronio, 2000) supports this position only partially in that male-to-male disclosure was higher than female-to-male disclosure.

Relationship to the Target.

Researchers have examined the relationship between speakers as a factor that might mediate the gender variable of self-disclosure. In initial stages of heterosexual dating relationships, there is some evidence that men are more open than women. The culture may invite men at this stage to take control and be in charge. "If making verbal overtures is considered to be more appropriate for males than females, self-disclosure can provide men an opportunity to initiate and pace the start of an opposite-sex relationship" (Derlega, Metts, Petronio, Margulis, 1993, p. 50).

Derlega, Winstead, Wong and Hunter (1985) considered gender effects in the initial encounter with varying gender pairs. Their results indicated:

--Males disclosed more intimately than females to an opposite sex partner whom they had just met.

--Males paired with females had a greater level of initial disclosure than males paired with males or females with females.

--The level of intimacy of self-disclosure for males paired with females (compared with females disclosing to males) was more correlated with liking the partner.

Beyond the initial encounter and within the context of an intimate dating or marriage relationship, there may be a cultural expectation of an "ethic of openness" in understanding self-disclosure. Support for this position was found in a study of heterosexual dating couples (Rubin et al., 1980 as cited in Derlega, Metts, Petronio, Margulis, 1993) that determined through self-reports that 58% of the women and 57% of the men disclosed "fully" to their partners.

Gottlieb and Wagner (1991 as cited in Derlega, Metts, Petronio, Margulis, 1993) suggested that, although males and females in a marriage relationship may be expected to be open with each other, the difference may become pronounced when stress occurs. Gottlieb and Wagner's study included married couples with a seriously ill child. Husbands were more likely than wives to concentrate on the child's health problems; wives were more likely to want husbands to express feelings more openly.

In looking at intimate relationships between same-sex friends, the research indicated with some consistency that women disclose more. A number of research studies (Caldwell and Peplau, 1982; Douvan and Adelson,1966; Aries and Johnson, 1983; Youniss and Smollar, 1985 as cited in Aries, 1996) examining adolescent friendships indicated that females disclosed more frequently and more intimately than did males. The research studying same-sex adult friendships found similar results. Women in intimate friendships disclosed more on personal matters, but disclosed at the same level as men friendship groups on topical matters (Aries, 1996).

Relative social status has been considered as another factor which might moderate the level of self-disclosure in a relationship. Intimate disclosures tend to flow from the lower status to the higher status individual (Goffman, 1967; Slobin, Miller & Porter, 1968 as cited in Hill & Stull, 1987). We would expect, then, that women who might have a lower status position would disclose more freely. However, Brooks (1974, as cited in Hill & Stull, 1987) found that men disclosed more to a high-status interviewer and women disclosed more to a low-status interviewer. These results support the previously

mentioned studies in which men disclosed more in initial encounters and suggest that the type of the relationship might influence self-disclosure more than the status of the target.

In considering the results of the studies examining the influence of gender on the disclosure in initial encounters, the differences in methodology affected the results of these studies. With the use of self-reports, males reported levels of self-disclosure to strangers that is equal to the self-disclosure of females. When the data is collected through observation, females are reported to disclose more to strangers than males (Aries, 1996), and the difference between men's and women's disclosures were also greatest when using observation (Dindia and Allen, 2000 as cited in Petronio, 2002).

Most of this literature regarded levels of intimacy as the mediating factor in determining the level of self-disclosure. However, Ovsiankina and Kusmin (1958 as cited in Goodstein and Reinecker, 1974) identified a pattern that they called the "Stranger on the Bus" phenomenon in which subjects were willing to share intimate disclosures to total strangers whom they expected never to see again. They explained this occurrence by suggesting that a certain freedom occurred when there was no threat of the negative consequences of self-disclosure.

Rosenfeld (1979 as cited in Grigsby and Weatherley, 1983) found that men self-disclosed more to strangers than women, but their disclosures were not as intimate in nature. Stokes, Fuehrer and Childs (1980 as cited in Grigsby and Weatherley, 1983) also found that men disclosed more to strangers than women, but were less willing than women to disclose to intimates.

In addition to the research identifying a particular relationship (or lack thereof) with the target, there is a body of research associating self-disclosure with liking the

target. Several researchers (Jourard, 1959b; Frankfurt, 1965; Worthy et al.,1969 as cited in Cozby, 1973) found disclosure among females to be positively correlated with liking the target. Worthy et al. (1969 as cited in Cozby, 1973) found that, among females, liking leads to disclosure and greater disclosure will lead to more liking.

In contrast, some limited research (Jourard and Landsman, 1960; Ehrlich and Graeven, 1971 as cited in Cozby, 1973) found that liking the target was not associated with male self-disclosure. Cozby (1973) suggested that the variable of content (levels of intimacy, actual subjects discussed) were quite mixed in these studies and confounds the understanding of liking.

Physical Attractiveness

Cash (1974 as cited in Cash and Soloway, 1975) found a relationship between self-disclosure and the target's physical attractiveness. In same-sex dyads, subjects disclosed more to strangers who were perceived as physically attractive. In the same study, he also noted that subjects in opposite-sex dyads gave more favorable presentations of themselves if the target was physically attractive. Clarifying the results of the study, Cash and Soloway (1975) found that disclosure was greater for both sexes if the target was physically attractive, however, this relationship was more pronounced for men.

The Cash (1974 as cited in Cash and Soloway, 1975) study considered the effects of the attractiveness of the *target*. Cash and Soloway (1975) extended the work of the previous study to consider whether physical attractiveness of the *discloser* affected the amount and type of information shared. For men, the more attractive their self-perceptions, the more they disclosed to peer strangers and the more likely that those

disclosures would be favorable. In contrast, the more attractive the women perceived themselves to be, the less they disclosed.

Cash and Soloway (1975) explained their results by suggesting that, for males, their behavior underlines the stereotype that "what is beautiful is good" (Dion, et al., 1972 as cited in Cash and Soloway, 1975, p. 584). The authors suggest that this is consistent with sex-role socialization in which males have expectations of competence and achievement. For females, the authors suggested that the results support a culture where physical attractiveness is more emphasized for women than it is for men. Perhaps those women who perceive themselves to have achieved physical beauty are willing to let their looks speak for them.

Gender Role Identity and Androgyny

More recent studies which include masculinity and femininity are not inclined to see these dimensions as mutually exclusive. Bem's Sex Role Inventory or BSRI (Bem, 1974, 1977, 1979, 1981 as cited in Hill & Stull, 1987) scored androgyny with an adjusted score between a person's masculine and feminine scores. Those individuals with a score near zero were thought to be androgynous, whereas those with a large difference score were considered sex-typed or sex-reversed depending on their gender.

Snell, Belk and Hawkins (1986 as cited in Petronio, 2002) proposed that researchers must understand gender-role conformity as an underlying factor that affects the disclosure patterns of the sexes. It may be that men hold more rigid gender expectations than do women. Snell et al. (1986) reported that both men and women disclosed more traditional gender content (masculine—instrumental; feminine—expressive) when talking to men than to women. Perhaps both men and women sense

that their female friends will be more accepting of non-gender stereotypical disclosures than their men friends.

Stokes, Childs and Fuehrer (1981 as cited in Grigsby and Weatherley, 1983) reported that androgynous persons rated themselves as more willing to disclose than did those individuals who were in either the masculine or feminine gender role categories.

Dingler-Duhon and Brown (1987) looked at the relationships between disclosure, Machiavellianism and androgyny. They considered the self-disclosure elicited by two kinds of tasks: influence and affiliative. Androgynous individuals were more likely to self-disclose in the affiliative tasks as opposed to using disclosure for influence. Further, androgynous individuals were accurate reporters of their disclosure style and saw themselves as more likeable on each task.

Although the clarity of the Stokes et al. (1981) and the Dingler-Duhon (1987) studies suggested that there might be agreement on the subject of androgyny and disclosure, such is far from the case. There are several studies in addition to the aforementioned that support the belief that androgynous persons disclose more: Switkin (1974), Fielden, (1982) and Ickes and Barnes (1978) (all cited in Hill & Stull, 1987). Fischer (1981 as cited in Hill & Stull, 1987) found greater self-disclosure to be true for androgynous men but not for women. Rosenfeld, Civikly and Herron (1979 as cited in Hill & Stull, 1987) reported this to be true for androgynous women, but not men. More contradictory still is the study that found that sex-typed men disclosed more to the androgynous men, with no effects for women (Mall, Gross, Erdwins & Gessner, 1979 as cited in Hill & Stull, 1987).

In Aries's (1996) meta-analysis of the literature, she summarized the findings on this topic by stating "the studies of sex role orientation suggest that while conceptually compelling, sex role orientation has not been found to be a major factor in accounting for gender differences in self-disclosure" (p. 158). And conversely, Petronio (2002) stated that "in many ways, the notion of [gender] expectations appears to be the most persuasive argument to understand how gender functions as an underlying structure for privacy rule making" (p. 46).

The Disclosure Situation

The situation in which the disclosure takes place is another variable that mediates and moderates the effect of gender on self-disclosure. Pearson (1981) found that men disclosed more in dyads than they did in small groups. Females disclosed more in small groups than men. Additionally, females disclosed more in small groups than in dyads.

Self-reports of subjects in a study by Roberts (1965 as cited in Goodstein and Reinecker, 1974) indicated that subjects would disclose more to a highly cohesive group than to a group with low cohesiveness. Jourard and Friedman (1970 as cited in Goodstein and Reinecker, 1974) examined a distinct aspect of the situation in reporting that a light touch on the back while guiding subjects to their seats produced significantly more self-disclosure.

Topic and Content

Sollie and Fischer (1985 as cited in Aries, 1996) studied disclosure patterns among women who were talking to a female friend, a male friend and a romantic partner. Across all relationships they found the greatest self-disclosure on topics of low intimacy and the least self-disclosure on topics of high intimacy.

Research (Morgan, 1976; Gitter and Black, 1976 as cited in Aries, 1996) suggested that females are more likely than males to disclose on subjects of high intimacy but disclose at the same level as males on non-intimate subjects. There is some difference among studies in terms of the definitions of intimate topics and in the levels of self-disclosure. Even considering these variables, no studies found men to be more disclosing of intimate information than women (Aries, 1996).

Grigsby and Weatherley (1983) trace the root of this difference to the sex role styles described by Parsons and Bales as far back as 1955. These early studies viewed femininity as expressive and affectionate, and masculinity as instrumental and goal-directed. It seems reasonable that intimacy of disclosure would be more related to the expressive style. However, in their own research, Grigsby and Weatherley (1983) found that women disclosed more intimate information than men, but they did not find that the femininity of these women (as measured by the Personal Attributes Questionnaire) was related to intimacy in self-disclosure. They did find that masculinity was negatively related to intimacy in self-disclosure.

Mechanisms Underlying Gender Self-Disclosure

Derlega, Metts, Petronio and Margulis (1993) have considered the gender differences in self-disclosure and have sought to explain these differences by identifying three mechanisms that may govern the disclosure process.

First, male and female subcultures place different *values* on self-disclosure. These researchers suggested that, from early childhood and into adolescence, girls spend more time with each other in conversation and enjoy more intimate topics of conversation than do boys.

Second, there are gender-related *norms* about appropriate self-disclosure for males and females. Because there is a cultural expectation that males should avoid things that are "feminine," men may be more concerned than women about the negative consequences of self-disclosure (Thompson and Pleck, 1987 as cited in Derlega et al., 1993).

Third, there are *expectancies* about gender differences in self-disclosure. The belief about how much men and women enjoy or expect intimate disclosures may govern how much one discloses.

Summary

The stereotype that women disclose more frequently and more intimately than do men is only partially supported by the literature. The literature clearly indicates that disclosure patterns between and among men and women is complicated by many variables including:

--the sex of the target (Petronio, 2000; Aries, 1996; Derlega, Metts, Petronio, & Margulis, 1993; Hill and Stull, 1987)

--the relationship to the target (Derlega, Metts, Petronio, Margulis, 1993; Derlega, Winstead, Wong, & Hunter, 1985; Aries, 1996; Hill and Stull, 1987; Petronio, 2002; Goodstein and Reinecker, 1974; Grigsby and Weatherley, 1983, Cozby, 1973)

--physical attractiveness of both the speaker and the target (Cash and Soloway, 1975)

--gender role identity (Hill and Stull, 1987; Petronio, 2002; Grigsby and Weatherley, 1983; Dingler-Duhon and Brown, 1987; Aries, 1996)

--the disclosure situation (Pearson, 1981; Goodstein and Reinecker, 1974)

--the topic and content (Aries, 1996; Grigsby and Weatherley, 1983).

Self-Disclosure as an Influence Strategy

Social Exchange

Cozby (1973) explained that penetration theory (Altman & Taylor, 1973 as cited in Cozby, 1973) describes relationships as developing through a series of reward/costs determinants. The rate of movement from the non-intimate to intimate areas of exchange (which includes both verbal and nonverbal disclosures) is determined by the rewards and costs of past, present and projected future exchanges.

Similarly, Petronio (2002) suggested that it is necessary to control our privacy boundaries because we need to balance the risks against the gains of revealing personal and private information. Petronio described the benefits of disclosure as including the following: 1) Expression—By telling someone something private, we may be more able to cope with the information. 2) Self-clarification—We can better understand the meaning of private thoughts through the process of revealing those thoughts. 3) Social validation—We might receive support and reinforcement for our feelings by revealing them to others. 4) Relationship development—We might enhance the nature of our relationship with others by disclosing private information to them. 5) Social control—By telling others how we feel about a topic, we may be able to influence their position.

Petronio (2002) explained that the types of risks of disclosure include: 1) Security risks—Telling a particular secret might shift the balance of power away from the teller and create hazards to personal safety or the safety of others, e.g., people might perceive

that telling of HIV/AIDS might jeopardize their job. 2) Stigma risks—The person revealing information risks discreditation based on a personal belief or experience. 3) Face risks—Situations in which self-disclosure causes embarrassment. 4) Relational risks—When telling a partner something of personal nature, there is always a risk that the partner will react negatively to that information and move the relationship in a direction that the speaker did not intend. 5) Role risks—These risks have the potential to jeopardize our standing or position, e.g., a supervisor who discloses very intimately with a subordinate, risks losing that person's support for the supervisory position.

Although the title of Pennebaker's (1990) book is *Opening Up: The Healing Power of Confiding in Others*, he included a chapter on the social price of disclosure and suggested strategies for choosing a confidant carefully in that all disclosures do not produce the desired outcome. Pennebaker discussed various aspects of the confidant. Trust is generally an important quality, as is the ability to give non-judgmental responses. Many people choose a "safe but anonymous listener" (Pennebaker, p. 121). Finally, he suggested that some people choose a professional listener.

Reciprocity of disclosure

The topic of reciprocity is integral to the concepts of social exchange in that one specific exchange might be disclosure (on the part of the speaker) for more disclosure (on the part of the listener). A great deal of literature has delved into the reciprocal nature of the disclosure process. Berg (1987) suggested that "reciprocity is by far the most consistent finding in the self-disclosure literature" (p. 111).

Lynn's (1978) research supported the equitable exchange theory which "emphasizes the primacy of the disclosure input as a determinant of disclosure response"

(p. 477). This study found that the disclosure of the confederate was associated with disclosure of the subject, but not to the same level of intimacy of the confederate. Goodstein and Reinecker (1974) noted a clear statement from the very early work of Jourard, "One of the necessary conditions for promoting self-disclosure in another is to volunteer it yourself" (Jourard, 1959b, p. 428 as cited in Goodstein and Reinecker, 1974).

Goodstein and Reinecker (1974) discussed the dyadic effect as a demonstration of reciprocity. They considered self-disclosure as modeling a behavior which was followed by others. Additionally, they considered the self-disclosure that followed self-disclosure as reinforcement for further disclosure. Most probably, the reciprocity of disclosure involved the interaction of modeling and reinforcement.

In addition to modeling and reinforcement, Berg (1987) further explained this social exchange as the "norm of reciprocity" (p. 112). The cultural norms invite matching disclosures as a way to stay normatively connected in the conversation.

Kangas (1972) expanded the understanding of reciprocity beyond the dyad and into the group setting. Again, the results are consistent. "Self-disclosure begets self-disclosure in small group settings" (p. 69). This reciprocity holds true whether it is the group member or the group leader who initiates the disclosure.

Holtgrave (1990 as cited in Derlega, Metts, Petronio & Margulis, 1993) summarized this reciprocity by stating, "It is misleading to consider self-disclosure as an individual phenomenon. Rather, the emphasis is on the joint contributions of the interactants through the give and take of a conversation. In the end, what is disclosed, and its significance are to be viewed as a collective, emergent phenomenon" (p. 196 cited in Derlega, Metts, Petronio & Margulis, 1993).

Goal-Based Disclosure

Miller and Read (1987) explained the process of disclosure by utilizing the goal-based model of personality. They view social interactions as a stable cluster of: 1) goals, 2) strategies, 3) beliefs and 4) resources, abilities and skills. They define a trait as a "chronic configuration of individual differences across each of these [four] areas" (p. 40).

High-disclosers, then, chronically use a specific strategy (disclosing information about themselves) to achieve a set of goals, e.g., intimacy, knowing self and others, wanting attention. The resources that these disclosers might possess are knowledge of themselves and their feelings. Their beliefs might include that they will feel good about the disclosure or that disclosure helps draw people together.

Derlega and Berg (1987) noted that, in instruments examining self-disclosure, there is little attention paid to the goals of the disclosure. The instruments do not include such things as "I disclose in order to impress someone" or "I disclose in order to help someone through an experience similar to one I have had." These authors suggest that some of the conflicting patterns of results of self-disclosure measures might exist because these measures did not consider the subjects' goals when disclosing.

One area in which Derlega and Berg (1987) supported their position is around the disclosure of the "opener," one who begins the conversation. By citing a series of studies (Miller et al., 1983; Miller, Berg & Archer, 1983; Purvis, Dabbs, & Hopper, 1984), they have shown that low openers (one who is less inclined to begin the conversation) lack goals, strategies, beliefs and/or resources to pursue the end of encouraging others to open up to them. Conversely, high openers possess these goals, strategies, beliefs and/or

resources and therefore use the environmental press of their disclosure to move people in a desired direction.

Derlega, Metts, Petronio and Margulis (1993) added to the understanding of goal-based disclosure by considering self-disclosure from the point of view of functional analysis. The goals of self-disclosure may include relationship development, social validation, getting feedback, getting help with problems and social control. Individuals may consider both their own needs and those of the recipient prior to disclosing. However, that may not always be the case.

As mentioned in the discussion of gender and androgyny, Dingler-Duhon and Brown (1987) regarded the effects of self-disclosure as an influence strategy in relationship to Machiavellianism, androgyny and sex. They differentiated the goals of the disclosure between those that were affiliative in nature (getting acquainted) and those that were influencial in nature (in this case, soliciting donations). The results indicated that the Machiavellian males were more likely to use self-disclosure on the influence tasks and the non-Machiavellian males were more likely to use self-disclosure as an affiliation strategy. Although Machiavellianism is associated with an instrumental orientation, Machiavellian females tended not to use self-disclosure for the influence tasks. Androgynous individuals were more likely to self-disclose in the affiliative tasks and also showed a greater awareness of use of self-disclosure than did the Machiavellians of either gender.

Jacobs, Hyman, and McQuitty (2000) have looked at a very specific goal attainment in their research, relating the use of self-disclosure to enhance sales efforts. They distinguished between exchange-specific self-disclosure which is necessary for the

sale to take place, e.g., financial information, and social self-disclosure which focuses on relationship building and is beyond the information directly required for the sale. In utilizing the norm of reciprocity, these researchers have associated both types of disclosure with trust, attraction and satisfaction, and ultimately with the commitment to the business. Their results indicated that beliefs about a sales person may be affected by both the customer's and the sales person's self-disclosures. They underlined the value of showing applicability of the social psychology literature to a sales context and suggested that training programs for salespeople should address self-disclosure. "Salespeople should be taught to disclose personal information quickly, releasing time to focus on their exchange-specific disclosures" (Jacobs, Hyman, McQuitty, 2000, p. 57).

Impression Management

"People use self-descriptions of their personal characteristics and feelings to influence how others see them" (London, 1995, p. 99). There are a number of research studies that have considered the process of impression management in a variety of contexts.

London's (1995) work examined the impression management of managers and subordinates in relationship to work groups. Managers disclose more to in-group subordinates than to out-group members (Graen, 1976 as cited in London, 1995). Subordinates may utilize impression management through self-disclosure in order to affect their performance ratings (Wayne & Kacmar, 1991 as cited in London, 1995). Managers may have a similar motive if the organization utilizes a 360-degree feedback process. Some managers may portray themselves favorably to all subordinates in an

attempt to create and maintain a public image that is consistent with their concept of their ideal self (Baumeister, 1982 as cited in London, 1995).

Ferris, Judge, Rowland and Fitzgibbons (1994 as cited in London, 1995) distinguished between job-focused influence tactics (self-promotion of one's competence) and supervisor-focused influence tactics, e.g., praising your supervisor. Interestingly, supervisor-focused influence led to higher supervisor affect for the subordinate; job-focused tactics led to lower supervisor affect for the subordinate.

Leary (1995) studied situations in which people consciously and deliberately managed their impressions so that others would see them as they saw themselves. It might seem curious that people need to *try* to appear to be as they actually are. Leary explained that there are three reasons for this. First, people may not be able to infer our true selves from observing our behaviors. Additionally, even when our behaviors might convey something accurate about us, adding a verbal disclosure can add legitimacy to our behaviors. Finally, we may wish to convey information about ourselves because time is limited and we can choose to convey those aspects of ourselves which seem most relevant to a situation.

Bugental, Tannenbaum & Bobele (1968) considered the absence of self-disclosure as an influence strategy. They were interested in why people choose to conceal certain aspects of the self-perception in a particular context. It should be noted, in the context of our understanding of the relationships between gender and self-disclosure, that this research included fifty *male* executives. It was expected that self-disclosure/concealment would be determined by the qualities that were perceived to be valued in a particular group context, that the disclosure would change based on the values of a social versus a

job context. This prediction was not found to exist. "It would appear that these subjects have a generalized tendency to reveal or conceal their self-perception which at least partially supersedes the subject matter….The man who saw himself as compliant and/or emotionally dependent was just as likely to disclose (or conceal) these self-perceptions in a social context as in a job context" (Bugental, Tannenbaum & Bobele, 1968, pp 27-28). Given the research on gender communication, I wonder about the effect of the use of an entirely male sample.

The work of Baumeister and Hutton (1987) examined two types of self-presentation motivations in a variety of contexts. They found that: 1) pleasing-the-audience matches one's self-presentation to audience expectations and preferences and 2) self-construction attempts to match one's self-presentation of one's own concept of ideal self.

Williams and Dolnik (2001) studied an influence strategy that they called "stealing the thunder," one in which speakers disclosed negative information about themselves in initial encounters. These researchers have determined that stealing the thunder can serve as a positive influence strategy in a courtroom setting, a dating situation and a political campaign. The authors presented several reasons why this seemingly counter-intuitive strategy has positive effects for the speaker. These explanations rely on our understanding of the process of self-disclosure.

1) Speaking negatively against oneself can contribute to one's credibility. (Eagly, Wood & Chaiken, 1978 as cited in Williams and Dolnik, 2001**)**. Audiences who are wondering why a person would reveal negative information may be left with the only plausible conclusion—this is an honest person.

2) People who hear personal information disclosed report feeling closer to the speaker as a result of the disclosure (Aron, et al., 1997 as cited in Williams and Dolnik, 2001).

3) Once the thunder is stolen, speakers have the first opportunity to put a positive or discounting spin on the negative self-revelation. McGuire's (1964 as cited in Williams and Dolnik, 2001**)** inoculation theory stated that "providing message recipients with a weakened version of the opposing position makes them resistant to its influence later" (p. 216).

4) Information that is perceived as scarce or secret is regarded as more valuable and more influential (Brock, 1968; Cialdini, 1993 as cited in Williams and Dolnik, 2001). Offering negative information outright suggests that there is nothing so powerful about this information that it requires hiding.

5) Message recipients will change the meaning of the message in accordance with what they know about the message source (Asch, 1948 as cited in Williams and Dolnik, 2001). Listeners fill in the gaps of information with their own narrative-consistent interpretations of the information (ForsterLee et al., 1993 as cited in Williams and Dolnik, 2001**)**. If people are revealing negative information about themselves, the listeners may fill in the gaps surrounding that information and decide that this information is not so damaging.

Self-Disclosure as a Management Skill

Gibson and Hodgetts (1985) state that managers may spend up to 70% of their time in communication and that "some executives even go so far as to say that management *is* communicating" (p. 41, emphasis in original). These authors further cite

Peters and Waterman (1982) as characterizing excellent companies as ones in which there is intense attention given to communication. Others (Ouchi, 1982; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Geneen, 1984 as cited in Gibson and Hodgetts**,** 1985) have described the best companies as those with the most open, straightforward, candid and direct communication.

Gibson and Hodgetts (1985) state that there are pros and cons to manager self-disclosure. On the plus side, employees want this type of communication. The effective use of self-disclosure by managers can improve the communication climate of the department. Additionally, when a manager discloses, information ownership is reduced and a team climate is promoted. Third, effective managers disclose openly and then use that opportunity to ask for open feedback in return. Finally, open disclosure reduces the alienation between the manager and the employee.

On the negative side of disclosure, Gibson and Hodgetts (1985) stated that its use can backfire. Those who are not used to the openness of this communication can feel threatened and defensive. The authors state that there is a skill to learning how to use self-disclosure to promote effective management.

In developing effective self-disclosure skills, Gibson and Hodgetts (1985) suggested five guidelines. 1) Disclose when the situation is of mutual concern, but do not disclose when it is extraneous to the person in the conversation. 2) Disclose if the sharing of one's feelings and concerns is reciprocal. 3) Proceed slowly to disclose to a group that is not used to open disclosure. 4) Disclose only when your information is both timely and pertinent. 5) Disclose in a problem-solving environment. Do not disclose in an effort to rid yourself of frustrations and move them onto others.

Summary

Self-disclosure is part of an exchange between two people (Cozby 1973; Petronio, 2002; Pennebaker, 1990). There are benefits and costs to that exchange which suggest that the discloser would benefit from making careful choices about to whom to disclose.

The most consistent finding in the self-disclosure literature indicates that self-disclosure invites more self-disclosure. This norm of reciprocity can be used by a speakers to further their goal in the relationship. That goal might be to invite the other's disclosure, or the goal might be more tangible such as sales efforts (Berg, 1987; Lynn, 1978; Goodstein and Reinecker, 1974; Kangas, 1972; Derlega, Metts, Petronio, & Margulis, 1993).

People use self-disclosure as a means of managing their self-impression. Some may be attempting to match specific requirements; others may be trying to match an image of the ideal self (London, 1995; Bugental, Tannenbaum, & Bobele, 1968; Baumeister and Hutton, 1987). One impression management strategy is called "stealing the thunder" and involves self-disclosing negatively before others can do so (Williams and Dolnik, 2001).

Self-disclosure is associated with managements. It can be used by managers as a part of their general skill base for management (Gibson and Hodgetts, 1985).

Self-Disclosure and Physical and Mental Health

Physical Health

There appears to be a relationship between self-disclosure and the measures of physical well being. Pennebaker (1984 as cited in Baumeister and Hutton, 1987) used an

experimental procedure in which subjects were asked to discuss the worst things they had ever done. The clinic records that followed showed that those who confessed, had better physical health than the control group who did not have an opportunity to confess. The implication of this research is that carrying around a "guilty secret" (p. 77) can be bad for your health and, conversely, opening up to someone else might be good for your physical well being.

Sloan and Marx (2004) reported a body of literature (Alexander, 1939; Alexander & Franch, 1946; Freud, 1961) that indicated that people who are emotionally inhibited may be more prone to physical impairments and disease than those who disclose their emotionality. Researchers have associated emotional inhibition with hypertension and coronary heart disease (Smith, 1992; Steptoe, 1993 as cited in Sloan and Marx, 2004) and to the onset and progression of cancer (Fawzy et al. 1993 as cited in Sloan and Marx, 2004).

This research suggested that the act of disclosing negative information in the form of experiences or emotionality can promote positive health. However, Baumeister and Hutton (1987) found evidence in the early work of Adler (1921) of a different relationship between disclosure and health. Those who chronically presented themselves as ill, did eventually end up having physical problems that prevented them from achieving their goals.

Ashworth, Furman, Chaikin & Derlega (1976) considered the physiological responses to being present in someone else's self-disclosure. They indicated that during high-intimacy disclosures, subjects (all male) reported "heart rate and galvanic skin response changes, reported greater discomfort, and indicated that the discloser had a

greater influence on their comfort than in low-intimacy conditions" (p. 71). The researchers noted that the context of the disclosure needs to be taken into account. In this particular study, the confederate (a stranger) began to reveal intimate information to the subject. The research suggested that, in more intimate contexts, these physiological responses may not occur. The physiology may be associated with inner stress and anxiety and the context may be comparable to initial sessions within a group therapy session.

Mental Health

Yalom (1975 as cited in Morran, 1982) suggested that there was a curvilinear relationship between self-disclosure and optimal psychological and social adjustment in which too little or too great amounts of self-disclosure are not healthy. A person who does not disclose loses opportunities for supportive relationships. Conversely, a person who discloses too much or too quickly can frighten the listener and risk rejection.

Jourard (1958 as cited in Wicklund and Eckert, 1992) "regard[ed] self-insight as a prerequisite to mental health and assumes that the self-insightful person can be recognized by the criterion of readiness to self-disclose to others in an accurate manner. At the same time, self-disclosure is also the instrument—the means to the desired end of self-knowledge and normality" (p. 19).

Stiles (1987) defined the "fever model" of self-disclosure. He suggested that people with psychological distress have an increased need to disclose, they have a feeling of being bottled up and urgency about talking. Further, the process of disclosing provides some relief from that distress and helps to move them to homeostatic mental health. Just as a fever is a symptom of infection and a part of the body's restorative process, self-

disclosure can be both a sign of and a response to psychological distress. The relief comes first from a feeling of catharsis. The benefits of this catharsis may require some understanding from another, but is more related to the depth of the disclosure. The more lasting effect of this relief may come in the form of greater self-knowledge.

There is some evidence that members who reveal themselves are most likely to benefit from the group therapy experience. Members who disclose are likely to gain more popularity from the group and popularity has been correlated with positive therapeutic outcome. (Hurley, 1967; Yalom et al., 1967 as cited in Morran, 1982).

Jourard (1959a as cited in Cozby, 1973) also described a curvilinear relationship between self-disclosure and mental health. Jourard's focus was on Maslow's (1954 as cited in Cozby, 1973) concept of self-actualization and his belief that one who does not disclose is repressed and will not be able to self-actualize.

Sinha (1974) explained that optimal self-disclosure is necessary for good mental health and, at the same time, is the means of achieving that mental health. Sinha cited Ruesch (1951) as explaining that the goal of all psychotherapies is to help the patient discover self and to accept self through communication to others.

Sloan and Marx (2004) have examined the effect of written self-disclosure and correlate a deep writing process with mental health using three theories. The first is the emotional inhibition theory suggesting that the process of writing about traumatic events reduces the stress of inhibition associated with these events. The second is the cognitive adaptation theory suggests that writing about trauma allows for cognitive control and produces a decrease in intrusive thoughts. The third theory, the theory of emotional

processing/exposure, has been developed on the assumption that exposure (through written disclosure) should affect the symptoms of post-traumatic stress.

Carpenter (1987) proposed a model for relating self-disclosure and psychopathology. He suggests that a person discloses when three conditions exist: motivation (anticipation of a reward), opportunity (a particular type of disclosure is possible and possibly expected) and relational competence (the skills and abilities to develop intimate relationships).

Carpenter's (1987) model identified three mechanisms by which self-disclosure and psychopathology can be related. The first mechanism is that of interference. The existence of psychopathology can interrupt all three conditions for self-disclosure--motivation, opportunity and relational competence.

The second mechanism is competence. People with various psychopathologies can become less competent in interpersonal situations. These problems may include losing the skills to initiate or inhibit disclosure, inability to disclose according to social expectations and inability to develop relationships that would provide opportunities for disclosure.

The third mechanism is adjustment. According to Carpenter (1987), it appeared that self-disclosure can have an effect on the duration and intensity of the pathology. Adequate adjustment mechanisms can help an individual deal with a disorder and the accompanying stressors. Those without the disclosure conditions are likely to have more severe or longer symptoms without the use of the emotional support that comes from disclosure.

Summary

There appears to be some relationship between physical health and self-disclosure; however, that relationship may or may not be a positive one. A number of researchers have found that self-disclosure and being less emotionally inhibited creates better health (Baumeister and Hutton, 1987; Sloan and Marx, 2004). However, there is also some research that suggests that those who chronically present themselves as ill will indeed develop physical problems (Adler, 1921 cited in Baumeister and Hutton, 1987).

Both Jourard (1959) Yalom (1975 cited in Morran, 1982) have long described the relationship between self-disclosure and mental health as curvilinear. Those who disclose indiscriminately or not at all represent the poorest mental health. Although this seems intuitively correct, more research on this relationship is required.

Sloan and Marx (2004) examined the process of written self-disclosure. They found that this might be a process of achieving greater mental health.

Boundaries and Privacy

The Johari Window, developed by Harry Ignhams and Joseph Luft (1969 as cited in Burnard & Morrison, 1992), provided a model of the four possible aspects of self: the open area, the blind area, the hidden area and the unknown area.

	Known to self	Not known to self
Known To others	**Open Area** (Luft, 1969) **Arena** (Hall, 1973)	**Blind Area** (Luft, 1969) **Blind spot** (Hall, 1973)
Not known to others	**Hidden Area** (Luft, 1969) **Façade** (Hall, 1973)	**Unknown Area** (Luft, 1969) **Unknown** (Hall, 1973)

Burnard and Morrison (1992) explained Luft's work (Luft, 1969) in describing the open area as the aspects of ourselves that we know about, and that others know about us. The blind area is what others know about us, but about which we are unaware. The hidden area is filled with issues of privacy and secrecy and includes those things that are known to us but that we do not share. The unknown area is not known to us or to others. Luft's argument is that we can come to know more about ourselves by disclosing more to others and by receiving feedback from others.

Gibson and Hodgetts (1985) utilized Hall's (1973) rendition of Johari's window to focus its application to management. In Hall's model, the open area is called the arena. It is in this area that interpersonal relationships flourish and high workplace productivity can be achieved. Hall refers to the blind area as the blind spot. The hidden area is called the façade because in this area one uses protective devices to guard the

information that might be potentially damaging. The fourth area, Hall also calls the unknown. Gibson and Hodgetts (1985) subscribed to the belief that increasing self-disclosure and encouraging feedback in the workplace, enhances the arena and contributes to a productive work environment.

The simplicity of Johari's window and Hall's adaptation might lead us to conclude that disclosure is always good; that it leads to a greater arena of productivity. Petronio's works (2002, 2000) dealt with the concepts of privacy and boundaries and led us to a greater understanding of the process of managing what we choose to protect in what Lutz would call the hidden window and Hall would call the façade.

Petronio (2000) argued that the way people handle private information has to do with the intersection of the boundary structures and the rule-based management system that drives boundary regulation. The dimensions that define boundaries are control, ownership, permeability and levels.

People create boundaries around their private information in part because the disclosure may make them vulnerable and they attempt to *control* the risk. Additionally, people create privacy boundaries because they believe that they *own* the private information and have a right to govern the revealing or concealing of that information. People also create privacy boundaries because they co-own the information with someone else and do not feel at liberty to make an independent decision about the disclosure of the information.

Private information has different *levels* of security and therefore different levels of sanctions in revealing. Because of these varying sanctions, some of the boundaries are

more *permeable* than others, the information might be shared in select places and not in others.

Petronio (2002) explained that the rule-based management system provides a structure for the way in which private information is handled. When we manage private information that belongs to us, the information is singularly owned. Collective management systems occur when the information is co-owned. Once a disclosure is made, the recipient of that information is expected to take on a level of responsibility for managing the information. Initial disclosures immediately require a need to coordinate the boundaries.

The rule management system (Petronio, 2000, 2002) depends on three processes. The first is the privacy rule foundation which has to do with the way rules about privacy tend to develop. Second, boundary coordination develops through the processes of managing collective boundaries. Third, boundary turbulence suggests that the management of boundaries of co-owned information does not always occur in a coordinated fashion.

Summary

The presentation of self has been presented graphically in Johari's window (Burnard and Morrison, 1992) and also utilized in Gibson and Hodgetts (1985) model adapted for management. In both cases, we create a more open or closed self by the amount of disclosure and the openness to feedback that we incorporate into our self-presentation.

Petronio (2000, 2002) has defined a rule-based management system which identifies who owns the information and the level of security of that information.

Therefore, the permeability of some boundaries is greater than others and directly affects the decisions to disclose.

Self-Disclosure and Self-Awareness

This discussion of the relationship between self-disclosure and self-awareness is an extension of several of the previous discussions that I have presented. Certainly, self-awareness is related to impression management, in that we have to know who we are in order to present either an authentic or unauthentic impression to others. Self-awareness is both a signal of mental health, as well as part of the restoration of mental health when mental illness is present. However, self-awareness merits some additional consideration in that impression management and achieving mental health limit the discussion of self-awareness to these specific forms of utility.

Burnard and Morrison (1992) suggested that "self-awareness refers to the gradual and continuous process of noticing and exploring aspects of the self, whether behavioral, psychological or physical, with the intention of developing personal and interpersonal understanding. Such awareness is probably not developed for its own sake—it is intimately bound up with our relationships with others" (p. 48).

Symbolic interactionists (Cooley, 1902; Thomas, 1923; Meade, 1934 as cited in Snyder, 1987) described the self as being refined and negotiated through interactions with others. Goffman (1967 as cited in Snyder, 1987) added to this point of view by stating that "a person determines how he ought to conduct himself during an occasion of talk by testing the potentially symbolic meaning of his acts against the self-images that are being sustained" (p. 8).

Maslow (1950 as cited in Burnard and Morrison, 1992), in his discussion of self-actualization, explained that healthy people accept themselves and all of their discrepancies from their ideal image without great concern. This does not imply that they are self-satisfied. It simply means that they accept their frailties and problems as one would accept any characteristic of nature. Rogers (1958 as cited in Burnard and Morrison, 1992) furthered that change does occur once the acceptance of self has taken place.

In brief, self-awareness is an ongoing process that involves both an inner search and interaction with others. Both the inner journey and the externalization are essential to both the process and the purpose of self-discovery.

Self-disclosure has a circuitous relationship with self-awareness. One might become more self-aware through disclosing. One might disclose when one becomes more self-aware. Jourard (1959a as cited in Sinha, 1974) "emphasized that a person could know himself only through the process of making himself known to others" (p. 81).

Rogers (1951, 1958 as cited in Stiles) suggested that self *is* the client's internal frame of reference. Disclosures that rely on a client's internal frame of reference become therapeutic because they bring distortions, misevaluations or inconsistencies to awareness where they can be re-evaluated and differently accepted as a part of the self. That is to say, when we talk about ourselves and hold that talk up for open view, we have an opportunity to think differently about aspects of ourselves and come to a new sense of self-awareness.

In their discussion of enhancing self-awareness, Burnard and Morrison (1992) stated that the best approach is actually a combination of approaches, individual

introspection, with a group or with another, active and passive. "The 'self' is not a static one-and-for-all thing but an entity that is constantly changing depending, amongst other things, on the people we are with, earlier experience and social context" (p. 51). Burnard and Morrison emphasize the use of Johari's Window (see graphic in previous section) as a means for enhancing self-awareness. Openness to feedback and willingness to disclose enhance the open self: that aspect of self which is known to both self and to others.

Summary

The relationship of self-disclosure to self-awareness is an extension of the discussions of impression management and physical and mental health. Self-disclosure has a circuitous relationships with self-awareness. People might disclose when they become more aware; they might become more self-aware by disclosing (Sinha, 1974). The development of self and the process of self-actualizing rely on self-disclosure and feedback.

Relevance to this Research.

This research has created many data points of information which are vital to our understanding of self-disclosure. It is helpful to me to see that there are discernable patterns in terms of the disclosure behaviors and the results of disclosures. These patterns have become the essential starting point for my research. They have raised in me the questions I have asked of the participants in this study. Although the data of the research presented in this chapter come together to form patterns and themes, my understanding of self-disclosure remains fragmented. My intention for this research is to

describe the leader's experience of self-disclosing in a way that will unify some of the existing literature on self-disclosure.

LEADERSHIP AND SELF-DISCLOSURE

Very little of the leadership and change literature addresses the issue of self-disclosure directly. None of the literature uses the term self-disclosure specifically. There are, however, leadership topics and theories that relate to the literature on self-disclosure.

Women's Voice, Feminist Leadership

The literature about feminist leadership and the research by women contributed insights into leadership in many of the ways that are central to self-disclosure: ending the silence, leading through relationships, knowing self and building communities. Because gender is an important aspect of this research, I have separated the female authors as a means of hearing their voices most clearly and identifying the relevant themes.

The End of Silence

A disclosure theme that emerged throughout the feminist literature is the ending of silence: the presence of disclosure. In addition to what women are saying or why they are saying it, the feminist literature recognized the very importance of voice itself.

Women have individually and collectively known a long history of being silenced, of having their experiences invalidated by themselves and others and of being overshadowed by the male culture. Steinem (1992) wrote of singing, which we might consider both literally and metaphorically in her words, "Our critical, conscious self

literally stifles our voice. And, as with any other human capacity, the less we use it, the less we believe it to be worth using" (p. 173).

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) suggested that women's ways of knowing invites women "to the other side of silence" (p. 3). They illustrated this silence with the words of Marge Piercy's (1973) poem "Unlearning to Not Speak."

> Phrases of men who lectured her
> Drift and rustle in piles;
> Why don't you speak up (p. 106)?

These authors pointed to Gilligan's (1982) work in moral development as evidence that the power of women's voices can expand the knowledge of human development in a way that is applicable to both genders.

Leading through Relationships

Another theme that emerged is the importance of relationship in doing the work of the world, in leading. The significance of this relationship theme in this context is especially important in connection to my utilization of Rost's (1993) definition of leadership for this research in which he described leadership as "an influence relationship." There are implications for self-disclosure in the context of these relationships.

In the early parts of this chapter, I cited the work of Gilligan (1982) which bears repeating here. Gilligan suggested that, when men are assigning value to truth, they are inclined to sacrifice people to truth. Women's moral dilemmas are about the conflicting responsibilities of the care giving relationships.

Helgesen's (1990) research compared the style of women who led organizations to the men's style that was researched by Mintzberg in 1968. The women focused on

professional relationships both within and outside their organizations, as well as personal and family relationships. In considering the experience of being interrupted during the day, Helgesen noted that "the difference in the women's view of interruptions from that of Mintzberg's men seemed to stem from the emphasis on keeping relationships *in the organization* in good repair, a concern that was reflected in the words they used" (emphasis added, p. 21). She also noted that, like the men, "they maintained a complex network of relationships with people *outside the organizations.*" (emphasis added, p. 24). Finally, the women in this study made time for family and for "activities not directly related to their work" (p. 22).

We do not have direct information from Gilligan or Helgesen about the presence of self-disclosure in the context of the relationships that they describe. However, the emphasis on caring for and maintaining relationships has implications for self-disclosure.

Steinem (1992) created a more direct link between relationships and self-disclosure in her description of psychic families "for almost every situation and experience" (p. 178). The effectiveness of a psychic family depends on four principles. 1) Someone who has had an experience is an expert on that experience. 2) Sharing that experience can bind women together. 3) Confidentiality and commitment are honored. 4) Everyone participates, but no one dominates. The experiences of sharing and participating in these psychic families are likely to be expressions of self-disclosure.

Perrault (2005) suggested that we might rethink the metaphors of leadership by framing leadership in the context of friendship. She suggested that currently many of the metaphors associated with leadership are those of the military battle. In contrast,

> [the] friendship stance is a relational view of leadership, grounded in perceptions of connection and inter-dependence from which emerge a

> sense of respect and responsibility for the welfare of self and others. Such leaders seek to understand the views and needs of others, refuse to define others as enemies, and are open to the potential mutuality of the parties involved in any situation. (para. 20)

One quality of the friendship model of leadership is a commitment to listen to others and to remain genuinely motivated to understand the varying perspectives of others. "Listening has powerful effects on the person to whom the leader is listening" (Perrault, 2005, para. 25). Listening is, of course, a component of the whole of disclosure.

Wheatley (2002) also contributed to our understanding of the importance of listening. She stated,

> I believe we can change the world if we start listening to one another again. Simple, honest, human conversation….Simple, truthful conversation where we each have a chance to speak, we each feel heard, and we each listen well….Human conversation is the most ancient and easiest way to cultivate the conditions for change—personal change, community and organizational change planetary change. If we can sit together and talk about what's important to us, we begin to come alive. (p.3)

Wheatley (2002) wrote stories as an answer to the question "When have I experienced good listening?" (p. 88). The focus of those stories is on the receiver, the listener. But the additional theme which wound throughout this discussion is that listening is so important because all people need to tell their stories, to disclose. "Whatever life we have experienced, if we can tell someone our story, we find it easier to deal with our circumstances" (p. 88). Wheatley goes on to explain that being heard creates relationships. We know from science that nothing in the universe exists in isolation; everything takes its form from those relationships.

In Wheatley's (2002) discussion of gestures of love, she quoted Freire as describing love as "as act of courage, not fear" (p. 140). She believed that, when we are brave enough to risk having a meaningful conversation, it is an act of love that allows us to rediscover what it means to be human. "In conversation, we practice good human behaviors. We think, we laugh, we cry, we tell stories of our day. We become visible to one another" (p. 140). It seems that Wheatley is pointing to self-disclosure as an act of courage, an act of love.

Self-Knowledge

The title of Ambrose's (1995) book captured her position on leadership development: *Leadership: The Journey Inward.*

> Leadership begins and ends with the internal development struggles of the individual leader. It is by integrating and learning from these crises that we gain the stamina and tools of effective leadership. In short, our blueprint for leadership is embedded in our own life story. (p. 14)

Ambrose (1995) furthered that all leaders have at their core "an ordinary person with ordinary fears, concerns, and life challenges" (p. 25). Ambrose stated that, in order to transform organizations, leaders must begin first by transforming themselves.

I include Ambrose as more evidence of the importance of the leader's internal work and the multiplicity of complex thoughts and emotions that can come from that work. Although we know that self-disclosure can be helpful to the internal work of viewing and sorting, Ambrose did not talk about where, how, or even if we should communicate the life lessons we glean from our self-reflection. If this were to occur anywhere at all, it would be self-disclosure.

Belencky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) associated women's knowing with connecting to their inner voices. "[A]s a woman becomes more aware of the

existence of inner resources for knowing and valuing, as she begins to listen to the 'still small voice' within her, she finds an inner source of strength" (p. 54). These authors found that the women who had cultivated an inner voice had in common that they had parents who listened to them unconditionally and without judgment. That listening allows for a greater sense of self-knowing. Again, the theme of disclosing to a good listener emerges.

Erkut (2001) advanced these concepts of Ambrose and Belencky et al. by specifically describing the strategies that women can use to overcome the roadblocks to their leadership. Among those strategies are to know yourself, value yourself and let others know. This process took the self-knowing described by the previous authors and moved it into the world of others, presumably through a process of self-disclosure.

Building Communities for Change

The change efforts described by many of the feminist leaders were focused on building communities, listening well and sharing information. The women leaders interviewed by Erkut (2001) harkened back to their family groups and to the concept of good mothering as models for their leadership. Good mothering, like the leadership valued by these women, included empowering others and "eliciting from them their highest capacities" (p. 76). Additionally, the "good mother leaders" paid attention to their staffs and demonstrated a model of balance between work and home. They described themselves as nurturing and warm.

Steinem (1992) described the story of Wilma Mankiller, a Cherokee community renewal leader, whose philosophy was to "[trust] disenfranchised people to come up with

their own ideas" (p. 95). In so doing, she asked questions and empowered a participation that allowed the people of Bell, Oklahoma to create a water supply that was connected to every house, including indoor plumbing. The change, suggested Steinem, came from asking rather than telling, utilizing local talent and empowering change.

One aspect of the disclosure of women's leadership that affects change is the sharing of information. Relationships may motivate women to share information. In Helgesen's (1990) study, she learned that "this impulse to share information seemed to derive from the women's concern with relationships" (p.27).

This importance of sharing information is echoed by Steinem (1992) who wrote that "the communications revolution has eroded hierarchy by giving the bottom as much information as the top—and also by letting all parts of the hierarchy *see* each other…" (p. 188).

Finally, Wheatley (2002) included directives for turning to one another in order to make real change in the world. Included among these directives is the following:

> Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters.
> Talk to people you know.
> Talk to people you don't know.
> Talk to people you never talk to.
> Trust that meaningful conversations can change your world. (p. 143)

Summary

Women leaders use self-disclosure as a means of ending their long silence. They lead by developing relationships in which sharing and deep listening are valued. They focus on knowing themselves and listening to their inner voices, then speaking these

voices to the outside world. Women create change in the world by building communities of people who have the power to share deeply and to express themselves fully.

The Importance of Story

Gardner's (1995) book, *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership,* focused on the stories that leaders relate. Gardner suggested that leaders communicate their stories both by telling in words, as well as by embodying the stories in the lives they lead. There is a connection between Gardner's use of story and the concept of self-disclosure, although they are by no means synonymous.

In the embodied story, the plots and themes are created every day in the leaders' lives as they go through the process of living and leading. Some aspects of that story are lived and perhaps observed, but are not committed to the verbal exposures required by the definition of self-disclosure. But when the story is communicated through the words of the leader, the key players are the leader and the community: therefore, this aspect of the story is self-disclosure. "In speaking of stories, I want to call attention to the fact that leaders present a dynamic perspective to their followers: not just a headline or snapshot, but a drama that unfolds over time, in which they—leader and followers—are the principal characters or heroes" (Gardner, 1995, p. 14).

Gardner (1995) pointed out that the leader exerts influence in "two principal, though contrasting ways: through the stories or messages that they communicate, and through the traits that they embody….A tension may develop between stories and embodiments" (p. 37). Leaders have gotten themselves into trouble when the embodied stories of their lives contradict the stories that they are telling.

The power of self-disclosure was underscored in Gardner's (1995) explanation of the leader's use of story. "In recent years, social scientists have come to appreciate what political, religious, and military figures have long known: that stories (narratives, myths, or fables) constitute a uniquely powerful currency in human relationships" (p. 42).

Gardner (1995) wrote even more directly of the importance of self-disclosure by stating "that it is *stories of identity*—narratives that help individuals think about and feel who they are, where they come from, and where they are headed—that constitute the single most powerful weapon in the leader's literary arsenal" (p. 43, italics in original). Stories of identity are most certainly the leader's own self-disclosure.

Gardner's explanation of leaders' use of stories contributed some possible understandings of self-disclosure. By telling their personal stories and the process by which they come to their particular knowings, the leaders create an opportunity for others to identify with their disclosures, to become self-defined. The leaders and the followers are the key players in the story. In order for leaders to be authentic, their disclosures must match their embodied stories. Children are able to attach to a group by identifying with and attaching to the disclosures of a role model. Finally, stories, perhaps self-disclosure, can be used as currency for a leader. Specifically, those stories of identity can be a powerful tool.

Couto's (2004) entry in the *Encyclopedia of Leadership* deals with *narrative*, with "leadership as storytelling" (p. 1067). Couto cited MacIntyre (1999) who called humans story-telling animals and connected their histories to their futures through the stories that they tell. MacIntyre suggested that one can answer the question "What am I to do?" can

only be answered if the question "Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?" has been previously answered. If this is the case, that narratives are the voices that are developed in part in a free space and that defining a shared narrative is essential to leadership, self-disclosure becomes central to the leadership process. "Thus effective leadership exceeds mere communication. To influence a group of people, leadership must express a vision in terms and symbols of narratives—their shared culture—embedded in the minds and hearts of those people it is trying to influence" (Couto, 2004, p. 1073).

Summary

Story is important to the theoretical understanding of leadership. Gardner (1995) described stories as an important currency in leadership and the value of that currency is dependent in part on the congruency between the story told and the story embodied. In sharing stories of his/her own identity, the leader allows for others to relate, differentiate and ultimately self-define. Couto (2004) furthered the importance of stories to leadership in relying on MacIntyre's (1999) frame that we can answer the question, "What am I to do?" only after we answer the question, "Of what stories am I a part?"

Leadership Development

In Burns's (1978) *Leadership* he defined leadership, described the essence of moral leadership, and specifically elaborated on transforming leadership. Burns defined *leadership* "as leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations—the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations—*of both leaders and followers*. And the genius of leadership lies in the manner in which leaders see and act on their own and their followers' values and motivations" (p. 19). The

essence of *moral leadership* is that "leaders have a relationship not only of power but of mutual needs, aspirations, and values…. Moral leadership emerges from, and always returns to, the fundamental wants and needs, aspirations, and values of the followers" (p. 4). And finally, *transforming leadership* occurs when "one or more persons *engage* with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (p. 20).

A clear theme in these concepts is the definition and engagement of both leaders' and followers' values, motivations, wants, needs, aspirations and expectations. There was no discussion in Burns's work about the interpersonal processes through which this definition and engagement occurs. However, returning to Petronio's (2002) description of the benefits of self-disclosure might suggest some possibilities. Petronio described the benefits of disclosure as including expression, self-clarification, social validation, relationship development and social control. Although Burns did not make any reference to self-disclosure, I wonder if these benefits of self-disclosure are essential processes through which leaders and followers share their values, motivations, wants, needs, aspirations and expectations. I have a hard time imagining that the depth of these qualities could be known to others without a degree of self-disclosure.

Burns also emphasized that sharing is a two-way process, that both leaders and followers must make known their values, motivations, wants, needs, aspirations and expectations. If we were to assume that this sharing involved some degree of self-disclosure, the importance of self-disclosure among leaders becomes enormous.

In considering how this broad approach to educating leaders occurs, Burns (1978) got very close to the concept of self-disclosure.

> The search for wholeness—that is, for this kind of *full, sharing, feeling* relationship—between 'teachers' and 'students,' between leaders and followers, must be more than merely a personal or self-regarding quest. Fully sharing leaders perceive their roles as shaping the future to the advantage of the groups with which they identify.... (p. 448, emphasis in original)

It seems to me that leaders who develop a "full, sharing, feeling relationship" and who become "fully sharing leaders" must have learned to disclose, to tell their stories, in the process of establishing their leadership.

Burns eloquently defined leadership, moral leadership and transforming leadership in a way that requires an explanation of what is at the very core of the individual leaders and followers. This explanation may include self-disclosure. Further, when considering the teaching of leadership, Burns underlined the need for wholeness and fully sharing. Again, this may be akin to self-disclosure.

Bennis's (1994) work On *Becoming a Leader* once again discussed issues that may be related to self-disclosure without mentioning this concept directly. One of his explicit instructions for becoming a leader includes knowing yourself. He stated that

> knowing yourself…means separating who you are and who you want to be from what the world thinks you are and wants you to be…..Self-knowledge, self-invention are lifetime processes…..All of the leaders I talked with agreed that no one can teach you how to become yourself, to take charge, to express yourself, except you. (pp. 54—55)

When Bennis directed potential leaders to express themselves as a part of this knowing, he was guiding their self-disclosure.

Another of Bennis's (1994) directives for leadership involved "getting people on your side" (p. 155). In describing this process he emphasized "using your voice for change….Leading through voice, inspiring through trust and empathy, does more than

get people on your side. It can change the climate enough to give people elbow room to do the right things" (p. 167).

In his later book, *Managing the Dream: Reflections on Leadership and Change* (2000), Bennis described the four competencies of leadership. All four of these competencies have an underlay of self-disclosure. 1) Management of attention is the leader's ability to draw others to them "through a compelling vision that brings [them] to a place that they have not been before. 2) In management of meaning, Bennis stated that, in order "to make dreams apparent to others, and to align people with them, leaders must communicate their vision. Communication and alignment work together" (p. 18). 3) Management of trust is necessary in good leadership. Bennis stated that the main determinant of trust is reliability. In his interviews with the staffs and board members who worked with leaders, he heard such things as "Whether you like it or not, you always know where he is coming from, what he stands for" (p. 20). 4) Management of self involves knowing one's skills and utilizing them effectively.

Bennis also outlines a very specific list of things that organizations can do to cope with the complexities and the speed of change. Two items on that list include "make it okay to tell the truth" and "reward the straight shooters" (p. 53). These directives equate speaking truth to power.

Bennis, then, encouraged leaders to know themselves and to get people on their side. The competencies required for achieving this are the management of attention, meaning, trust and self. Bennis's discussion implies that some direct self-disclosure might be a part of these aspects of leadership.

Summary

In describing moral and transforming leadership, Burns (1978) emphasized the leader must create a two-way sharing process with followers with regard to their values, motivations, wants, needs, aspirations and expectation. Bennis (1994) cautioned that leaders must know themselves and then use the voices that come from that knowing to get people on their side. Bennis (2000) furthered that, in developing the competencies of leadership, leaders must make their dreams apparent through a compelling vision. He furthered that leaders must be open and honest enough to create trust.

Strategies for Change

In his work *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (1994), Heifetz addressed the process of adaptive work.

> Adaptive work consists of the learning required to address conflicts in the values people hold, or to diminish the gap between the values people stand for and the reality they face. Adaptive work requires a change in values, beliefs, or behavior. The exposure and orchestration of conflict—internal contradictions—within individuals and constituencies provide the leverage for mobilizing people to learn new ways. (p. 22)

There is no direct reference to self-disclosure in this explanation of adaptive work. However, again borrowing from Petronio's (2002) description of the benefits of self-disclosure (expression, self-clarification, social validation, relationship development and social control), it is difficult to imagine adaptive work without self-disclosure. The adaptive process of exposing internal contradictions within the individual seems to call for the benefits of self-disclosure. In Heifetz's later work, he made exactly that connection.

Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading (Heifetz and Linsky, 2002) is unique in that it referred more directly to self-disclosure than the other literature. In their discussion about managing your hungers, Heifetz and Linsky suggested that leaders can sometimes err by forgetting to pay attention to themselves. Leaders "get caught up in the cause and forget that exercising leadership is, at heart, a personal activity" (p. 163). The authors make a clear and strong statement in response to this concern: "Self-knowledge and self-discipline form the foundation for staying alive" (p. 164).

Heifetz and Linsky further articulated the positive role that doubt plays in adaptive work. "Doubt reveals the part of reality that you missed. Once you lose your ability to doubt, you see only that which confirms your own competence" (p. 173).

The questions for me then become: How does a leader move toward self-knowledge and self-discipline? What do leaders do with their doubts?

Heifetz and Linsky's answer was to anchor yourself. Their process for anchoring yourself included keeping confidants and not confusing them with allies. Allies share your values and strategies, but reside across an organizational boundary. They have some loyalty to your agenda, but may also have conflicting loyalties. Confidants do not have conflicting loyalties. Their interests are aligned with yours; they are loyal to you personally. Heifetz and Linsky believe that leaders need both allies and confidants.

> Confidants can do something that allies can't do. They can provide you with a place where you can say everything that's in your heart, everything that's on your mind, without being predigested or well packaged….When you do adaptive work, you take a lot of heat and may endure a good measure of pain and frustration. The job of a confidant is to help you come through the process whole, and to tend to your wounds along the way. (pp. 199-200)

The authors suggested that, when leaders experience difficult times, they may desperately need to talk with someone and may turn to an ally rather than a confidant. They believe that this is not a helpful approach. Because the very definition of allies requires that they straddle political lines, coming to wholeness with someone who has competing loyalties may be counterproductive.

If leaders are to do adaptive work, they must anchor herself themselves in the open and honest self-disclosure with a confidant. They must have a place "where you can say everything that's in your heart, everything that's on your mind, without being predigested or well packaged" (p. 199).

In Hirschman's (1970) *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty,* he explored the interplay between *exit*, when customers stop buying the firm's products and, in so doing, leave the organization, and *voice,* when customers express their dissatisfaction to specific authorities or, in the case of general protests, to anyone who will listen. Exit has been a primary strategy in the economic domain; voice has resided with the political.

Hirschman (1970) identified the use of voice as a vital aspect of the change process.

> To resort to voice, rather than exit, is for the customer or member to make an attempt at changing the practices, policies, and outputs of the firm from which one buys or of the organization to which one belongs. Voice here is defined as any attempt at all to change, rather than to escape from, an objectionable state of affairs…." (p. 30)

The use of voice and exit can be best understood as a function of loyalty. "As a rule…loyalty holds exit at bay and activates voice" (Hirschman, 1970, p.78). As a result of loyalty, some of the most quality-conscious customers/members will be more likely to utilize voice rather than to choose the option of exit immediately. Loyalty raises the cost

of exit therefore allowing the greater effectiveness of voice and the potential for discovering new ways of influencing the organization. Indeed, the effectiveness of the use of voice, in the presence of loyalty, is heightened by the threat of exit.

Hirschman then taught us about the use of self-disclosure as an influence strategy. Voice can be a catalyst for change when balanced against the threat of exit. Further, the presence of loyalty increases the likelihood and the effectiveness of using voice. When the option of exit is utilized, the absence of the disclosures of the opposing points of view can affect the discussions for those who remain.

Summary

In describing the movement toward adaptive change**,** Heifetz and Linsky (2002) wrote almost directly about self-disclosure in describing the difference between confidants and allies. The explained that, since allies cross political lines, leaders might be more selective in what they share with them, as compared to the more open and fully embracing disclosures that can be shared with confidants. Hirschman (1970) considered leaders' effect on change in his discussion of balancing exit with voice. Voice is a function of loyalty and can be seen in leaders who speak their opinions as a means of staying connected to an organization. Voice is most effective when exit remains a viable option.

The Practice of Leadership

In *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization* (1990), Senge described the core disciplines necessary for leaders to develop a learning organization. One of those disciplines is team learning. In order for team learning to occur "shared vision becomes an extension of personal visions. In fact, alignment is the

necessary condition before empowering the individual will empower the whole team" (p. 235, emphasis in original).

In order for team learning to exist, the team must master the practices of dialogue and discussion. "In dialogue, there is the free and creative exploration of complex and subtle issues, a deep "listening" to one another and suspending of one's own views. By contrast, in discussion different views are presented and defended and there is a search for the best view to support decisions that must be made at this time" (p. 237). The practice of dialogue is, then, an expression of self-disclosure.

Marking the path toward creating a shared vision, Senge discussed the importance of openness. Senge described the movement toward openness by stating that "getting started is as simple as sitting people in small circles and asking them to talk about 'what's really important' to them. …when people begin to state and hear each other's visions, the foundation of the political environment begins to crumble—the belief that all we care about is self-interest" (p. 275). Clearly, Senge was talking about self-disclosure.

In Senge's view, in order for an organization to learn, it must be able to create team learning. Team learning requires that individuals dialogue in order to create a shared vision. The process of moving toward that shared vision must exist in a climate of openness. It seems that creating a safe atmosphere for self-disclosure becomes a cornerstone of a learning organization.

The Leadership Challenge (2002) by Kouzes and Posner described leadership through five practices: modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, encouraging the heart. Each of these practices leads to two commitments and those commitments require practicing several specific behaviors.

Again, as in all of this literature, self-disclosure is not mentioned specifically. However, the practice of modeling the way includes commitments that are directly connected to the process of self-disclosure. Modeling the way includes the two commitments of finding your voice and setting an example. Finding your voice is a foundation of leadership. "At the core of becoming a leader is connecting one's voice to one's touch" (Kouzes and Posner, 2002, p. 44). In order to find your voice, these authors suggested that you have to "clarify your values" and "express yourself" (p. 44).

Kouzes and Posner's laws of leadership stated that "if you don't believe the messenger, you won't believe the message… and, you can't believe the messenger if you don't know what the messenger believes" (p. 48). We know that self-disclosure can be a part of both the process of clarifying your values and expressing yourself, central to modeling the way.

The authors suggested that finding your voice is a process of engagement. We try on others' voices, we look closely at our own values and, at some point, an integration occurs and our own authentic voice emerges. Consequently, the self-disclosures of others allow us to practice our own and to define and create a truer statement of self.

The second commitment of modeling the way is to set the example. In so doing, Kouzes and Posner (2002) suggested that leaders need to choose their words and their questions very carefully. Words are creative; they become the reality of the organization. The behaviors that help leaders to set an example include leading by storytelling and putting storytelling on the agendas of meetings. The authors' instructions with regard to storytelling speak directly to self-disclosure.

> What makes for a good storyteller? To begin with, they tell personal stories….To be vivid, a story should be about a real person, have a strong

> sense of time and place, and be told in colorful and animated language. It helps immensely if you can talk from a first-person perspective. Allow your emotions to surface as your speak….(p. 99)

Kouzes and Posner were very clear in their directives to developing leaders. The first of these directives, modeling the way, includes commitments that may include self-disclosure. One practice is to find your voice which includes clarifying your values and expressing yourself. The second practice is setting an example which emphasizes the use of story.

In *Clear Leadership: How Outstanding Leaders Make Themselves Understood, Cut Through the Mush, and Help Everyone Get Real at Work,* Bushe (2001) explained that we live and work in a situation of "interpersonal mush" which is the cause of most "people messes" that occur. We live in this mush because

> [m]ost people do not describe what is going on in themselves. Some people are even taught not to do so; they've been told that describing their experience makes them seem too self-centered. Most of us have never even thought that it might be useful or important to describe our experience to others. We have few role models…. (p. 25)

Bushe's (2001) suggestion for reducing interpersonal mush was to work on being a differentiated leader. Differentiation finds its place on the continuum between fusion, where a person's thoughts and feelings are in reaction to others, and disconnection where a person chooses individuality without any connection to others. From a position of fusion, leaders have fuzzy boundaries and demand that others manage their anxiety. From a position of disconnection, leaders have rigid boundaries and have very little sense of those around them.

Bushe (2001) described the differentiated leader as having healthy boundaries and the ability to resolve the paradox of belonging and individuality. Bushe described five elements of the differentiated leader; the one most relevant to my current discussion is

> being a Descriptive Self. This is not the same as 'being open,' where you tell people whatever is on your mind. It is where you describe the truth of your experience, fully aware that it is only one experience and no more valid or invalid than anyone else's experience. (p. 63).

The implications for self-disclosure are obvious and direct. If leaders are to be Descriptive Selves, they must be able to disclose their experiences appropriately without fusing or disconnecting the boundaries of those around them.

Denning (2005) moved beyond Gardner's theory of storytelling and its application to case studies, to the specific practice of storytelling in *The Leader's Guide to Storytelling: Mastering the Art and Discipline of Business Narrative.* Denning delineated the process of choosing the right story and of telling the story right.

Denning (2005) described eight narrative patterns which also suggest the importance of story to an organization: "motivate others to action, build trust in you, build trust in your company, transmit your values, get others working together, share knowledge, tame the grapevine, create and share your vision" (pp. viii-ix).

Finally, Denning (2005) described that one of the goals of this storytelling process is to become an interactive leader. This leader both participates and connects. "The interactive approach to leadership is modeled on the concept of conversation—a dialogue between equals" (p. 287).

In learning to transmit a sense of self and a sense of the organization through stories, the leader is actively self-disclosing. If Denning's (2005) assumptions are correct, that self-disclosure can have great effect on an organization.

Summary

Senge (1990) educated leaders to use the practices of dialogue and discussion in order to create alignment and team learning. He furthered that openness on the part of the leader allows the organization to move toward creating a shared vision. Kouzes and Posner (2002) taught leaders to model the way through finding their voices and setting an example. Bushe (2001) described a clear leader as one who is differentiated from those around him/her. In so differentiating, leaders are able to establish appropriate boundaries and share their descriptive selves. Denning (2005) explained very specifically how a leader can use storytelling to enhance his/her leadership and to impact the organization.

Implications for this Research

The leadership literature offered great inferences about self-disclosure. Feminist scholars have been instrumental in exploring these concepts by creating voice (Steinem, 1992, Blenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule, 1986). They talked of leading through relationships (Gilligan, 1982; Helgesen, 1990; Steinem, 1992; Perrault, 2005) and of creating community (Steinem, 1992, Helgesen, 1990). Good listening is an important quality of leadership stressed by feminist scholars (Wheately, 2002; Erkut, 2001).

We are told of the importance of story (Gardner, 1995; Couto, 2004) in establishing our foundations and implementing new directions. Leaders are developed through searching for wholeness (Burns, 1978) and management of meaning and attention (Bennis, 2000). Leaders create change through discerning the difference between allies and confidants (Heifetz and Linsky, 2002), and through balancing their use of exit and voice (Hirschman, 1970). The practice of leadership is enhanced by creating

team learning (Senge, 1990), modeling the way (Kouzes and Posner, 2002), becoming descriptive (Bushe, 2001) and learning the art of storytelling (Denning, 2005).

All of this research suggested that self-disclosure is absolutely fundamental to the leadership relationship. However, we are left with inferences. None of this research speaks directly to the experience of self-disclosure, and none of it describes the wholeness of that experience from the perspective of the leader.

By using a qualitative approach to address this self-disclosure, I was able to provide a perspective that previous research did not: a holistic view that directly captures the voices of women and men leaders. The methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology allowed me to explore the gendered experience of self-disclosure in depth. By identifying and interviewing leaders who could articulate their experiences, I was then able to describe self-disclosure as it was lived. In Chapter Three I described the methodology of this research.

Chapter 3

"[R]esearch is a caring act:
we want to know that which is most essential to being."
Max van Manen, 1990

My purpose is to describe the leader's gendered experience of self-disclosing. I have chosen to explore this topic through the disciplines and methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology. In this chapter, I will explain and justify the use of this methodology as an appropriate approach to this topic.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH

The vast majority of research completed on the topic of self-disclosure uses a quantitative approach. This approach is interesting to me as it gives me good data points about self-disclosure. However, Crotty's (1998 as cited in Creswell, 2003) statement of the assumptions of social constructivism is much more closely aligned with my world view, with my epistemology.

> Meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting….
>
> Humans engage with their world and make sense of it based on their historical and social perspective—we are all born into a world of meaning bestowed upon us by our culture….
>
> The basic generation of meaning is always social, arising in and out of interaction with a human community… (p. 9).

The qualitative approach is not just consistent with my world view; I have chosen a qualitative approach because it is aligned with my work in the world. I am a psychotherapist and career counselor. I hear people's stories. I attempt to help them

make meaning of their stories. The stories' meanings are as uniquely different as those who tell them.

In addition to my own style and work, the qualitative, social constructivist approach is appropriate because my goal in exploring the phenomenon of self-disclosing is to capture the *multiple meanings* of the experiences of leaders. My purpose is not to glean measurable results, but rather to capture the *complexity and uniqueness* of the human experience. Furthermore, leadership is a process which exists in the midst of the *human community*. I want to embrace the meanings of self-disclosing as they arise from the community in which the leaders live and lead.

MEANING-MAKING

Delving more specifically into the qualitative possibilities, phenomenology is helpful because I am interested in the meaning that leaders attach to the gendered experience of self-disclosing. My goals are in line with what Morse and Richards (2002) defined as the two assumptions underlying phenomenology.

> The first is that perceptions present us with evidence of the world—not as it is thought to be, but as it is lived….The second assumption is that human existence is meaningful and of interest in the sense that we are always conscious of something. (p. 45)

My research will explore the consciousness of the lived gendered experience of self-disclosing. The words of Morse and Richards (2002) are relevant to this research in that I am interested in knowing, not how previous research considers gender to be connected to self-disclosure, but how it is experienced by the leader. And, if "we are always conscious of something," I am interested in shining the

light of that consciousness on self-disclosure and in the descriptions of conscious self-disclosure that evolves from that process.

Further, "phenomenological research is the study of essences" (van Manen, 1990, p. 10). My research will attempt to uncover the "internal meaning structures" (p. 10), the essence of the experience of self-disclosing.

Cohen, Kahn and Steeves (2000) described phenomenology as the preferred methodology when a researcher is studying a new topic or when a fresh perspective is needed on a previously researched topic. I suggest that both situations apply here. There is very little research that *directly* considers the experience of self-disclosing among leaders. In many ways, this topic is entirely new. There is, however, a plethora of research about other aspects of self-disclosure but, as mentioned previously, it is primarily quantitative in approach. This is clearly a topic for which a "fresh perspective" might be in order.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY

I continue this discussion of meaning-making by providing a deeper look at the nuance of differing phenomenological positions. Considering the relationship between ontology and epistemology provides a frame for understanding my particular alignment with the philosophical positions of Heidegger and Gadamer. Bontekoe (2000) well described the interdependence between ontology and epistemology.

> On the one hand, we cannot expect to determine what sort of place the world is and what sorts of things are to be found there without first establishing how we can come to know these things. On the other hand, we cannot expect to determine how we can come to know something without first learning a fair bit about the circumstances under which knowing—and falling into error—occur. (p. 138)

Bontekoe (2000) continued by placing the primary phenomenological theorists at significant places on the circle, situating their positions in relationship to beginning with ontology or beginning with epistemology. My level of comfort is on the ontological swing of the circle with Heidegger and Gadamer (in contrast to Schleiermacher and Dilthey whom Bontekoe places on the epistemological swing of the circle).

This process of opening up of a space in which the phenomena can reveal themselves has been explained by Martin (2002) in his conceptualization of hermeneutic psychology. Martin described the process by which we rely on the historical and sociocultural understandings which require that we look around in order to look within. This perspective harkens back to my earlier discussion of the Kenny's (2005) summation of Baktin's work in its paradox of human existence ("the struggle between the forces that attempt to bring us together and the ones that drive us apart" p. 419) and Smith and Berg's (1987) assessment that "to know oneself in a social context, one may reflect on one's inner experience, but one also needs to know how one is experienced by others" (p. 112).

Gadamer, who was Heidegger's student, would be placed on the hermeneutic circle in a position that is slightly closer to epistemology than that of his teacher, but retains the primary reliance on ontology as the starting point for discovery (Bontekoe, 2000). Gadamer was dedicated to demonstrating that the truths derived by the human sciences are legitimate, even though the methods are not those employed by the natural sciences. He particularly emphasized that, although art exists for aesthetic pleasure, it also exists for the sharing of insights and truths. He wrote of the relationship between the historical context of the art or writing and the current context within which it is being

interpreted. The reading of text is a conversation between the writer and the reader. The text stands in for the absent writer. Neither does all of the talking; there is a mutual exchange.

Gadamer emphasized the importance of mastering the skill of asking open questions.

> What this means is that there is an art involved in the asking of questions. Because each question is limited by its own horizon, and consequently only focuses attention upon one aspect of the thing in question, each question calls for a follow-up question, which will bring yet another aspect of the object of inquiry into view. (Bontekoe, 2002, p. 115)

Mastering the art of asking questions does not involve some specific method, but rather it involves preparing yourself for what will be shown. Vital to that self-preparation is understanding one's own biases and how they affect the very asking of the questions and, consequently, the truths that will be disclosed. Therefore, beginning with one's own being, ontology, is the starting point for understanding the essence of lived experience.

For me, beginning with the being (ontology) is preferred to beginning with how we glean information from the world (epistemology). I exist in the world with experiences and information. These are integral to my being. Beginning with the notion that "I am my experience" and then moving to the asking of questions resonates with my sense of the world.

The process of bracketing becomes especially important when beginning the research with a sense of myself and my knowledge and experience. "Bracketing describes the act of suspending one's various beliefs in the reality of the natural world in order to study the essential structures of the world" (van Manen, 1990, p. 175).

LeVasseur (2003) contended that we begin the bracketing process by being curious and examining the world in a new way. Each new horizon of wonder creates a deeper level of meaning as we continue through the spirals of the hermeneutic circle. In Chapter Five I discussed LeVasseur's perspective further in its application to the bracketing of my understanding of the gendered experience.

In embracing the importance of bracketing, I have attempted both to suspend my various beliefs (van Manen, 1990) as well as to use my beliefs to propel me into deeper horizons of meaning (LeVasseur, 2003). The suspension began with my experience of reading the literature about self-disclosure reconsidering the opinions that I have had about self-disclosure. I challenged the values and opinions that I previously held about self-disclosure. I have dispelled such notions as:

--Self-disclosure is always a helpful experience for those who sort their way through it.

--Gender is accurately expressed in terms of female and male attributes.

--My disclosure style is close to the norm.

--Self-disclosure is primarily about understanding and supporting the self.

When I considered gender in relationship to the experience of self-disclosing, I was able to use my own experience with gender, as well as my experience of using gender as a perspective to view the world, to move me into deeper horizons of meaning as described by LeVasseur. I have considered this aspect of the bracketing process more thoroughly in Chapter Five. At this point, however, I would note that is was my early awareness of my own style of self-disclosing and my perception that it was different from

the way I experienced men's disclosing that peaked my interest and curiosity about the *gendered* experience of self-disclosing.

Although the reading of the literature invited my initial bracketing, setting aside that same literature allows for further bracketing to occur on a deeper level. This deeper searching and cleansing allows for a process of reduction which is what Merleau-Ponty (1962 as cited in van Manen, 1990) calls "the spontaneous surge of the lifeworld" (p. 185). Reduction occurs as a four-step process.

The first stage of reduction is the awakening of wonder, the driving curiosity to understand the lived world as it exists for those living it. As I described in Chapter One, my research into self-disclosure began with uncontrolled wonder. As I traveled through my days, experiencing my own disclosures and those of others, I became deeply curious about where leaders disclosed, what they disclosed, when they disclosed, how they disclosed and how these disclosures affected them as leaders as well as their leadership.

The second step in reduction required that I overcome my private and subjective feelings about self-disclosure. Some of those opinions I have completely abandoned, as just described. I have not been able to identify other internally held notions until they bumped against a new reality. Paradoxically, I may be blocked from perceiving the new reality if I hold too tightly to my internal position.

I have used multiple strategies in order to provide an openness, a clearing for competing notions. Before interviewing, I prepared my mind and my spirit to give a good listening. I took extensive field notes and journaled regularly in an effort to untangle my internal complexities. I relied heavily on my learning community to debrief

and challenge my thinking. Finally, I asked for verification of the participants in an attempt to capture their experiences, unfettered by my preconceived notions.

The third step in the process of reduction is to strip away the theories and scientific research that defines the self-disclosure. My reading of the literature helped with my initial bracketing in that I was able to rid myself of beliefs and conditions that were not universally true. In this third stage, I bracket my experience of the research itself because it may become part of the beliefs and conditions which are not be true to the experience of the participant.

The fourth stage of reduction is to see past the particularity of the self-disclosure experience to the universal, moving toward the essence of consciousness. Merleau-Ponty (1964a as cited in van Manen, 1990) stressed that reduction is not an end, but rather a means to an end: "to be able to return to the world as lived in an enriched and deepened fashion. The reduction is 'the ambition to make reflection emulate the unreflective life of consciousness'" (p. 185). It is my hope and intention that both the participants in this study and I will live our lives more deeply and consciously as a result of this research.

HOLISTIC EXPERIENCE

The quantitative research that measures and studies self-disclosure has created a multitude of pieces of data and generalized theories about this subject. However, in most cases this is discrete knowledge and we have very little idea about how these data points merge into an integrated experience. We know, for instance, that women disclose more to other women than men disclose to men, but we do not know how either gender feels

about these sharings. We know that individuals can influence others by self-disclosing, but we do not know how consciously this is considered by leaders.

However informative the quantitative approach may be, it does not shed much light on my fundamental curiosity: What is the leader's gendered experience of self-disclosing? I am interested in delving more deeply into this phenomenon than has been accomplished by the quantitative research.

> Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences….It differs from almost every other science in that it attempts to gain insightful descriptions of the way we experience that world pre-reflectively, without taxonomizing, classifying, or abstracting it. So phenomenology does not offer us effective theory with which we can now explain and/or control the world, but rather it offers us the possibility of plausible insights that bring us in more direct contact with the world. (van Manen, 1990, p. 9)

My interest in researching self-disclosure through phenomenology is to understand the leader's complete understanding of this experience, with all of its entanglements and implications. Giorgi (1992b, cited in Van der Mescht) stated that "only when a holistic sense of the participant's lived world is obtained through description does it become appropriate to extract themes and compare findings with other sources, such as literature" (p. 5). Beginning with a description of the leaders' disclosure in its entirety is the vital first step in pursuing this topic.

MAKING THE VOICES HEARD

Moving from a general position of social constructivism to a more specific choice in the use of phenomenology, I would further clarify and specify my preference for hermeneutic phenomenology. The hermeneutic approach allows the voices of the leaders to be heard.

> Hermeneutics is the study of texts, which is broadly used to mean language in both written and spoken form. The "practical ramification of…hermeneutic phenomenology is that the object of the research is both the language and the individual user of the language. Meaning takes place when a particular tradition—that is, the language of a group of people—is interpreted by a speaker. (Cohen, Kahn, Steeves, 2000, pp. 5--6)

By using a hermeneutic approach to self-disclosure, I relied on the speakers' interpretation of their lived experiences. They described their experiences and I interpreted their interpretation of those experiences. The language, their stories, is the essence that I attempted to unveil. This approach required me to acknowledge that the participants'

> 'reality' is not directly accessible to the researcher, and the researcher's focus…is on the 'dialogue' of individuals with their contexts, the 'dialectical organization of experiencing-behaving subject and physical social world which essentially defines the phenomenon is the question.'" (McConville, 1978, cited in Van der Mescht, 2004, p. 2)

The language, then, offers the elements of the study. Of great importance to this study is the necessity of capturing the voice of women leaders. Additionally, the hermeneutic approach captures the voices of the leaders. We know that women disclose differently than men. We know that there is very little in the canon of leadership literature that reflects the feminine perspective. It seems to me that it is important to let their voices be heard. This is particularly important because we have not heard in the quantitative research how the leaders, women or men, might describe their disclosure experiences. I want to hear their poetry, "their primal telling, wherein [I will] aim to involve the voice in an original singing of the world" (Merleau-Ponty, 1973 cited in van Manen, 1990, p. 13).

CONGRUENCY

I am researching the experience of self-disclosing, of leaders telling their stories. It seems inconceivable to me to undergo that research through any other method than one that uplifts the story. In short, the leaders will have an opportunity to tell their stories about telling their stories. They may have had an initial experience of making meaning somewhere in their lives through the process of disclosing to someone. They will then have an opportunity to make meaning of the meaning-making by disclosing to me. It is a story about the story.

Van Manen (2002), Sudnow (2001) and Ellis (2004) have demonstrated the power of consistency in their approaches. All of them have utilized their methodology in explaining their methodology. Ellis (2004) wrote an autoethnography about the experience of teaching autoethnography. Sudnow's in-depth description of getting to the essence of playing jazz piano helped him to make meaning out of the phenomenological process. And finally, van Manen explored the use of language in gleaning the essence of an experience by offering the language of those who were able to express their essential selves in relation to specific life experiences.

In his explanation of Heideggerian hermeneutics, Martin (2002) suggested that "we human beings must choose possibilities for acting that are available in the culture at large, but which inevitably must be tailored to our life projects and projections as self-interpreting persons" (p. 109). This clear statement might also be well applied to the process of self-disclosure in which we make decisions to disclose based on the "culture at large" but in the very act of disclosing we express ourselves as "self-interpreting persons."

Using the methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology to uncover the essence of the leader's experience of self-disclosing enjoys an isomorphic relationship between content and method. I am using the methodology of language and text to study the leader's language and text. The principles of the methodology serve a duel function of being both the tools and the content.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

For this research process, I used a pyramid arrangement of interviewing beginning with six participants. In identifying the leaders for this study, I began by focusing on Rost's (1993) definition of leadership in that these participants have been involved in influence relationships and have intended real changes that reflect the mutual purposes of their followers and themselves.

Additionally, I determined that the leadership of these participants would occur in at least one of the three domains of the arts, nonprofits and business. I selected those domains for two reasons. First they are of particular interest to me. The energy that comes from this interest stems from and feeds back into the curiosity and wonder upon which this research began. Additionally, because I have spent much of my career in education, I am interested in hearing the voices of leaders from the domains with which I am less familiar.

In selecting the six participants, I used a snowball process of discovery. For matters of convenience and because I wanted to do face-to-face interviews, all six leaders resided in my home area of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I included both men and women. I emailed and called my entire network of friends and colleagues, described my research

and asked for their suggestions of participants. I received lists of names. I sorted through these lists and began to select people based on the descriptions offered, my own knowledge of these leaders and my ability to actually reach them and spend time with them. Although I was open to leaders who were highly visible or who held high level positions, these criteria were not important in my selection.

Prior to contacting any potential participants, I completed the process of review by the Internal Review Board of Antioch University. (Later, all participants signed an informed consent before engaging in the interview process.)

As I began to call the potential participants, I furthered my selection process. There were some leaders whom I could never reach. There were others with whom I spoke but whose schedules made it impossible to get together. During my phone conversations, I was listening for both the participants' willingness to be interviewed and their ability to articulate their own experience.

I selected six participants to begin my queries. Four of these participants were women and two were men. Depending on which was more convenient for the participants, the interviews took place either in my office or in the office of the participant.

Each of the first six interviews began with this prompt:

> I am interested in the leader's experience of self-disclosing. I am interested in the positive, negative and neutral experiences that you have had with self-disclosing. I am interested in your experiences with self-disclosing as a process for defining self. I am interested in your experiences with self-disclosing as an influence strategy. I am interested in your experience of your gender as you consider your experiences of self-disclosing.
>
> ***Leadership*** is defined as an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes.

Please describe some of the influence relationships of which you have been a part.

Self-disclosing is defined as making yourself manifest through a verbal process, showing yourself to others including your thoughts, feelings and experiences.
Please describe your experience of self-disclosing in your leadership.

Are any of your self-disclosures influenced by **gender** (yours or the target's)?
If yes, please describe.

After the first six interviews, I interviewed three of the participants a second time. After the second round, I interviewed two participants a third time. I made decisions about whom to interview a second and third time based on the participants' willingness and ability to articulate deeper levels of consciousness about their experience of self-disclosing.

I audio-taped each interview. After the interviews, the tapes were transcribed. I reviewed the transcriptions in detail. The themes emerging from each interview served as prompts if I interviewed the participant again. I then repeated the process. Subsequent interviews were taped, transcribed, reviewed for themes, and the themes became the next prompts.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

Lieblish, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber (cited in Kenny, 2000) identified four criteria specific to narrative inquiry. I have incorporated these criteria into the narratives of this research and would hope to be evaluated on such. The participants' stories have *width* in that they are comprehensive. The stories include details and depth that allow for verisimilitude. The stories have *coherence* both within each story and among the stories.

The coherence of each story creates a complete picture of the participant. The coherence among the stories develops the integrated description of self-disclosure. *Insightfulness* is indicated in Chapter Five in the presentation of the themes which are unique to this inquiry. *Parsimony* refers to the elegance of the analysis based on a small number of concepts. Although the participants had high energy for sharing their stories, I have focused their attention on the stories specific to their self-disclosure. In presenting these stories, I have drawn on my experiences with the participants to portray them accurately within the context of the topic of self-disclosure.

It is through the achievement of width, coherence, insightfulness and parsimony that I have been able to achieve my purpose which is to provide an in-depth description of each leader's experience of self-disclosing. In so doing it is then possible for the readers to be catapulted into their own unique journeys in relation to their awareness of self-disclosing.

In Chapter One, I delineated the criteria upon which I hoped to be evaluated. The trustworthiness criteria include credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Throughout this process, I have provided checks for the assurance of this trustworthiness.

Credibility, the isomorphism between my findings and the objective reality of the leaders, is of utmost importance in this research. I used several techniques described by Guba and Lincoln (1989) to maximize the credibility of this study. With three of the participants, I utilized *prolonged engagement* in that I interviewed them two or three times. In each subsequent interview, I presented the themes that emerged for me from the previous interviews. This presentation served both the functions of *progressive*

subjectivity in that I presented to the participants my emerging construction of their experiences and *member checks* in that I asked for verification from the participants that the themes I identified were consistent with their experiences.

I further checked for credibility by utilizing *peer debriefing* between interviews. I clarified my thoughts and awareness with both my dissertation chair and with my learning community to identify any limitations or misconceptions in my interpretation. I have met bi-weekly with another doctoral student in the Leadership and Change program and have worked closely with her as a partial means of protecting my credibility.

The transferability of qualitative research rests primarily in the experience of the reader. However, as the researcher, my responsibility is to provide thick description in order to maximize the reader's ability to identify with and/or differentiate from the participants' experiences. In Chapter Four, I have included in this description the descriptions of the participants, the cultures in which they lead, the circumstances of the leadership and the details of the interview experience.

To assure confirmability, I provide information that assures the reader that the data and the conclusions stem authentically from the participants and that they are not products of my imagination. Confirmability assures that the data can be tracked to their sources and that the logic used to compress this data is sound and subject to inspection. In maximizing the confirmability of this study, I have given both the transcripts of the interviews and their corresponding descriptions to four different members of my learning community. In all cases, I have asked these colleagues to verify that the descriptions that I have produced stem directly and completely from the transcribed interviews.

In addition to the criteria for trustworthiness, I relied on Guba and Lincoln's (1989) criteria of authenticity as I stated in Chapter One: fairness, ontological authenticity and educative authenticity.

In maximizing fairness, my intent was to uphold the value structures of the participants. These value structures affect my reporting of their experiences but, of course, also their initial experiences themselves. The values around the subject of self-disclosing are many and varied, but include the definitions of privacy and appropriateness and of the experience of gender. I have accounted for fairness by using the techniques of member checking and peer reviewing that I described previously. I tested my emerging themes and the values underlying both the themes and the interpretation of those themes with each participant and with members of my learning community.

Ontological authenticity offers an opportunity for the participants to understand their own experiences of self-disclosing in more informed and sophisticated ways. If I assume that the existing research on self-disclosure and self-awareness is accurate, I also assume that self-awareness involves both an inner search and interactions with others. Therefore, self-understanding has occurred in part simply by participating in this research. The leaders may be able to gain new meaning of their disclosures simply by telling the experiences out loud. Several of the participants acknowledged this greater understanding to me in the context of the interviews. Self-knowing becomes part of the process and content of this research.

Educative authenticity has to do with how the participants increase their understanding of others' self-disclosure as a result of this research. It is my intention to make my completed research available to all participants so that they can note the themes

that have emerged from others in relationship to their own themes. Additionally, the process of disclosing about one's own disclosing in concert with focused discussions about credible interpretations and value distinctions is likely to enhance the awareness of the self-disclosing occurring around these participants in daily life.

ETHICAL ISSUES

I am enormously grateful to those participants who were willing to invest their time in this research. I have been and continue to be deeply devoted to treating them with the utmost respect and to paying close attention to the ethical issues that this research might raise. This research has been approved my Antioch's Internal Review Board as a partial means for ensuring the safety of all participants. Further, each participant has signed an informed consent form so that the expectations and potential risks of this research are clarified.

One ethical concern is the amount of time each participant has invested in this process, somewhere between one and five hours each. I have felt a responsibility to use their time wisely: I was prepared for each interview; I was flexible about the scheduling of time and place; I held to the agreed upon time frame for each interview. Additionally, I am committed to doing good research. If participants are investing a great deal of time, I want their investments to produce high quality work.

A second ethical issue is concerned with the emotional risks of the participants' self-disclosures to me. It has been absolutely essential that I keep all of their sharing confidential, both in my writing and in the de-briefing that I have done to monitor the

trustworthiness and authenticity of the study. Since this is one of the tenets of my profession, I feel committed to confidentiality and am long-practiced at keeping it.

In addition to the risks attached to the confidentiality of personal disclosures, there is a risk of uncovering painful experiences and memories. It is my obligation to listen deeply and respectfully to these stories. As outlined in my informed consent, if a participant had become emotionally upset to the point where professional care was advised, I would have guided that participant to a reputable therapist. The reality was that several people had emotional reactions to the experiences they shared. However, all of them expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share safely.

Finally, I have an ethical commitment to represent the participants' stories as accurately as possible. The processes of ensuring trustworthiness and authenticity delineated previously has helped to ensure the accurate representation. I am ethically bound to do so. The participants have trusted me with their stories. I have honored that trust first by giving a good listening and second by representing those stories as true to the participants' interpretations as possible.

CONCLUSION

In pursuing the essence of the leader's gendered experience of self-disclosure, I have utilized hermeneutic phenomenological approach. I have chosen this methodology because I believe that there are multiple realities in the real world in which we live. I have made meaning by addressing this subject with the freshness of a qualitative approach. I began with what I understand about myself, bracketed that knowing, and listened attentively to the participants in this study. My intention was to use the precision

of language to make their voices heard, both the stories of men and of women. And finally, I used the hermeneutic phenomenological approach because the act of self-disclosure itself models the research process used to glean its knowing. This research is a disclosure about disclosing. My ethical commitment to this research has required that I be fully prepared to give each leader's story a good listening and to treat those stories confidentially.

Chapter Four includes the participants' stories. I have synthesized and summarized the interviews. I have, to the best of my ability, captured their voices and their experiences.

Chapter 4

"Sometimes stuff goes out there and you just don't have control of what's going to happen….You just have to let go of stuff, and that includes errors. I think of [the disclosure] process as being organic."
Ted, 2006, research participant

Bontekoe (2000) suggested that "all human understanding, by virtue of its occurring in time, is hermeneutically circular" (p. 2). Bontekoe then described the hermeneutic circle as being bound by two poles, the whole on one side and the parts on the other. The whole is understood in terms of its parts and must also be understood in terms of how those parts integrate into the whole. The whole, then, contextualizes the parts. Understanding occurs through the hermeneutic circle when there is an accumulation of new information related to the subject and that information is both sifted and weighed as to its importance in the process of integrating this information into the whole. This process creates a spiral of many circles in which the understanding becomes deeper by integrating new parts into the ever evolving whole.

My purpose is to present new circles of information for integration into the understanding of the leader's experience of self-disclosing. Participants in this research were willing to describe their leadership, their experience of self-disclosing and their awareness of their gender. Further, they were willing to dissect the components of that disclosure, in some cases delving into deep layers of meaning.

I used a snowball process of identifying six participants for this study. In so doing, I emailed my friends and acquaintances, describing my research and asking for their recommendations of local leaders who might participate. I received lists and lists of

suggestions. I combed through the lists, making decisions about whom to contact. It was important to me to include both women and men as participants. An immediately limiting variable was that I was interested in leaders whom I could interview face-to-face. I did not want to use the telephone or other media. Further, I wanted to use leaders whose schedules would allow them time to participate in several interviews if necessary. I noted leaders who were mentioned by several people as good candidates. I also noted those about whom specific reasons were given as to why I would be helped by that participant.

I then contacted potential participants by phone. Although no one refused to participate, in some cases the scheduling of the interviews was difficult or impossible. I talked with potential participants both to explain my research and to get a sense of their ability to articulate and willingness to do so. I returned to my original list several times to choose people who would be available, willing and able to talk about their experiences of self-disclosing.

Eventually, I identified six participants, four women and two men. Based on their ability to unravel the complexities of their disclosure experiences, I conducted second interviews with three of the participants. I conducted a third round of interviews with the two participants who were most willing to delve deeply into their disclosures.

All interviews took place at the convenience of the participants. In some cases, we met in my office. In others we met in the participants' offices. We arranged times according to our schedules.

After having the participants sign the informed consent and obtaining their permission to audio-tape, I gave each of them a written statement introducing my topic and research interest. The paper included definitions and an explanation of my research

interest. It also asked them to describe their experiences of influence relationships, their experiences of self-disclosing, and whether or not they perceived these disclosures to be influenced by their gender. I went over the contents of the paper with the participants orally. Then I listened to their stories. I did not attempt to control where they began or which aspects they emphasized. I asked for clarification if I did not understand, but I attempted not to lead the interview in any particular direction.

In this chapter, I recount the experiences of the six participants. Van Manen (1990) reminds us that "all recollections of experiences…are already *transformations* of those experiences" (p. 54). So as the participants shared their stories of self-disclosing, they were actually sharing his interpretations of the lived experiences. My reviews of the stories are products of my own transformation. My telling passes their experiences through my own filter, my own experience, my own limited listening.

In an attempt to preserve the integrity of each speaker's voice and to summarize these interviews accurately, I utilized a number of procedures. I tape recorded and transcribed the interviews. Further, I gave the participants their individual transcriptions for review. I have taken thorough notes on the transcriptions and have gone over my notes with those participants with whom I conducted multiple interviews. In so doing, I confirmed that I captured their messages accurately.

Additionally, I utilized my learning community for member checking. I selected five people to support me in this process. It so happens that they are well read and mulit-degreed, but these were not the most important reasons I asked for their help. They are all careful readers and straight talkers. I trusted each of these people to go over the

transcripts and summaries carefully and be clear in telling me if I misinterpreted what they perceived as the speaker's intent.

In cases of those participants whom I interviewed more than once, I presented one of these five people with both the transcription and my questions for further exploration. I asked them to judge whether or not I extracted the major points from the interviews they read. Further, when the interviews were completed, I asked these people to read the participants' transcriptions and then the summaries of the interviews. My challenge to the reader was to make certain that I had captured the voice and the main points of the interviews, and that I had not added or removed anything of significance.

My personal process for creating the summaries on the following pages was first to go over the transcriptions in great detail. I took careful notes as I went through each interview. For the participants whom I interviewed more than once, I combined the notes for those topics on which they spoke more than once. I included the participants' own words where their language choices described their experiences in their own particular styles. I then read through the summaries of the interviews to discern if they sounded like the people with whom I had spoken, if I had captured their stories. Then, as I stated previously, I asked five people to read the participants' transcriptions and interview summaries to check my accuracy in capturing the voices.

ANNE

Anne is a 42-year-old woman who manages a program for families in distress. Her program exists in the context of a much larger and highly structured corporation. The program is housed in a large downtown building. Upon entering the space, I was immediately greeted by the warmth and the comfort of the culture. Colorful quilts hang on the walls of waiting area, the halls and the meeting spaces. The entrance area contains a vast butterfly display as well as an enormous aquarium filled with colorful fish. I met with Anne for three interviews. I conducted each interview in one of her "family rooms" which are beautifully furnished living room spaces.

Leadership

Anne explained that she manages a "very high level, very competent, very well educated staff." She described herself as collaborative in relationship to that staff. She elicits their input for most decisions. She wants to know, "what their thoughts are, what their dreams are, what their experience has been." One of her strengths is in determining who needs to be asked about any specific decision. At the same time, Anne recognizes that part of working in a highly corporate setting is learning to "make a decision, to hold someone accountable, to put something in writing. And some things can't be negotiated.

She has been willing to be an advocate for her employees, regardless of what their next steps need to be. She has talked with her secretary about eventually developing her graphics skills and connecting with the design department of the organization. One of

her staff members is finishing a Ph.D. and may serve the corporation elsewhere. Another staff person is preparing to retire and his working part time is under consideration.

Anne described herself as a "coach-player" because "as well as managing [her] team, [she] also will work in the support groups with them, train volunteers with them, [she] will tour and educate community partners with them, or as back up, but certainly carrying the load." The struggle for Anne is how far away she is willing to move from the direct service work that she provides for children and families. She believes that, in her setting, "as you get to upper levels of management, the expectation is that you are going to become more administrative." Several years ago, she was passed over for a promotion because she was "not as willing to let go of the direct role or as able to live in whatever layer that is above [her]." Anne has not yet fully reconciled that experience because, in her words,

> I like who I talk to every day and I like the issues that I wrestle with every day, but there's always a part of me that thinks, 'Could I work at a higher level of administration?' And what have I done to not promote myself or even sabotage myself that I stay here? So I am absolutely shoulder to shoulder with my staff, but does that hurt me sometimes?

Anne describes herself as being "sandwiched." She clarified her leadership purpose by saying, "I am aware of what I aspire to do is to be the best advocate for those below me and those above me. And whether I can disclose above me is tricky, but I still want to be extremely competent. How do you make both sides look good? That's what I think my job is."

Self-Disclosure

Varying Audiences

Anne described her self-disclosure to her immediate staff. Because they work with children and families who are in extreme crisis, they use each other to process the difficulty and grief they encounter. Of course, their policy is to hold the stories they hear in confidence. "But this work resonates with all of us and it stirs up with all of us." Because of this resonance, Anne and her staff share at a deep level.

When her staff members talk together, the focus of their discussion may be about a child or family about whom they are concerned. So they may create a plan to work most effectively with that family. But sometimes it is the way the families' stories strike a chord in their own lives that prompts their disclosures to one another.

> [The stories of the families touch] …your feelings of helplessness of this will happen to me, or this has happened to me, this is something I fear for someone I love, or just profound—profound—just being touched by the stories. I think if you don't talk about those things that you will just become full of despair or hardened or hopeless. So I think you need a place to put it and to talk about it. So I certainly will talk about it with my staff and always will listen to them.

One example Anne shared was a situation in which some children had experienced the death of their father. Just recently, the staff had learned that the mother of these children had died. In illustrating the support of the children as well as the mutual support of each other as a staff, Anne said, "We were just crushed. And I don't even know—we just talked about that—also we went to the funeral. And we talked about what we were going to do. I said I just have to go home this weekend to see my mom. I need to connect with *my* mom—I have become very aware that your time is limited."

Similarly, Anne has structured into the program a plan for the many volunteers to have a place to disclose. They have scheduled time both before and after the volunteers work with the families to disclose what has affected them through the experience.

In working directly with the families, Anne is very mindful of the boundaries around her disclosures. She may disclose some information about her own family, but only for the purpose of giving them the message that it is all right to open up and share. It is never all right with Anne to disclose so much that the families begin to inquire about her experiences or that their focus becomes directed on her.

A similar boundary occurs with the volunteers, perhaps to a lesser extent. She may tell them a little about her own life, "but the balance is always that they need to feel free to disclose to [her] and not to take care of [her]."

The theme she conveys to the staff about their personal disclosures to volunteers and families is, "We are the sponge. The staff are the sponge. We disclose very little to families. We disclose very little to volunteers."

On one occasion, Anne was working with a very small group. Only two children were in the group, in addition to Anne and two volunteers who were new to the program. She made a decision that, in whatever exercises they undertook, the volunteers should participate and answer the questions with the children. She had trained the volunteers not to do this, so she explained to them that the reason that they were being asked to participate in that way is that Anne did not want the children to feel teamed-up on. She was pleased that the volunteers did a very good job of answering the questions without placing the focus on themselves. Anne explained that whatever is shared, it is always about making it safe for the children.

Anne was able to articulate clearly the reason that a safe place to disclose is so vitally important. Whether Anne is creating a place for her own and her staff's disclosure, or whether she is focused on the ability of families to disclose, she believes that there is help and healing in sharing stories.

> I have faith, that as difficult as these experiences are for people, that somehow they are able to talk about what's so difficult—just putting it out there, putting it outside of their internal self, that that becomes more manageable and more shared. And I don't know why I believe that. It just makes sense to me. That somehow if people can truly listen to one another and share their pain and their worries and their fears, that somehow when you give me 50% of what you're dealing with and I give you my 50%--we're still talking about--it's like a conservation issue—it doesn't seem like it would go anywhere and yet it feels lighter. And I don't know why. It just seems the human condition.

When I asked Anne to clarify how she made such clear differentiations in her disclosure boundaries between herself and her staff, her volunteers and the families, she said that some of it came from experience and some from her training as a psychologist. She said that she has learned from her training that boundaries help her to be effective and protective. She said that she has learned from her experience how valuable those boundaries are; they protect both parties. In Anne's words,

> When I am working with children and families, I'm just focused on listening. I'm focused on learning, making sure I understand and making sure I am making good judgments. So, whatever I'm feeling inside or whatever is resonating with me, it's a very disciplined tuning out for now. I'm not there to socialize and share stories. I'm there to listen to stories. And that's just very clear in my mind.

Management of Staff

Anne shares deeply and personally with her staff and they create a culture of mutual support. But Anne also must manage her staff. That management role requires a different set of behaviors and, in some situations, different kinds of disclosures. In her

role as manager, she is called upon to attend to such things as setting standards, implementing policy and communicating to and from other areas of management.

In terms of assessing her interactions with her direct staff about how she manages, Anne's disclosures are open and direct. They talk directly about whether she is managing them well. They have watched her grow as a manager. They can talk about that.

One example Anne shared was a situation in which she disagreed with one of her staff members about some written material that was to be published on behalf of the organization. After going back and forth for some time, Anne said, "I don't have time to argue with you because I have a meeting. I'm not comfortable with this [writing], but I have to go." The staff person later came back to Anne and asked if she (the staff person) were argumentative, mentioning that she was stunned by Anne's use of the word *argue* in their earlier conversation. Anne was able to reply,

> I wouldn't want to be using words that stun you. But I was trying to explain that I didn't know where to go. As a manager, I have to feel comfortable with what you are writing; I wasn't yet comfortable, yet I couldn't get my point across.

What ensued from this sharing was a very honest conversation about Anne's leadership style, the staff person's work style and both of their expectations. Both came away from the conversation identifying areas where they need work.

In situations where Anne has to assert her management, she has learned to develop her voice. She recently had a hard talk with her staff about adjusted time. Because everyone works very long hours, there was an ongoing issue about what time-off is "comp time" and what is vacation time. Anne had become uncomfortable because the process felt a little loose. She was able to clarify to her staff that, as a staff person, she would like them to work four days a week because they have put in 40-45 hours by that

point. But as the manager, she had to protect the program and create some understanding about time off. She has come to learn that she "can have an unpopular view and put it out there and it can sit side by side with someone else's viewpoint…and it doesn't have to demean or diminish someone else's opinion."

Anne's disclosures *with*, and consequently *about*, her upper management are much more difficult for her. There are managers in other parts of the state who are her peers and there is a director at a higher level. As a manager, Anne feels that she is expected to align herself with the other managers and her director, "while even professionally and emotionally feeling more connected to [her] staff." Anne explained some of the history in that there is a woman whom she hired and with whom she was friendly and collegial. In a very abrupt move, the Executive Director decided that the organization was going in another direction and named this colleague as the director. For Anne, it was very much a betrayal. She regretted that her new director knew so much about her personally. "She became a very unsafe person and [Anne] really wanted to back off."

At the upper management level, Anne monitors her disclosures. She believes that she is more open with her staff than the other managers. At the upper level, she finds that there is more criticism implied about staff members. Whereas, on her immediate staff level, Anne might be "duking it out" with her staff member about the written material, she said, "At [the upper management] level, they are more critical of what she's doing or maybe critical of how I am managing her, and I get defensive and it's just not safe because…I don't know why." When I queried further about why it isn't safe, Anne said she just doesn't know. She wondered,

> if it's because I feel more defensive or more protective of my staff. I don't know if I lose my voice at that level. Do I think that this group can play at the same level that my group plays? Do I think that they can be as creative in thinking? Do I think that they are as smart as my group? I don't know. There is just a whole bunch of combination of things. Maybe we haven't had the time to get together. But I'm not there with them.

When she discussed policies and procedures with upper management, Anne is "always trying to figure out how much to share with them about what [she] personally think[s] about these things and what [her] stance is." Even in group building sorts of exercises when people may be invited to share something that no one knows about them, Anne is careful to share something "that meets the criteria, but doesn't really cut into something about [her]."

When she discloses to her own staff *about* decisions or discussions that have occurred at the upper management level, Anne discloses a fair amount, but she has a great deal of ambivalence. She says, her staff

> pretty much knows where she is coming from. And when it's me talking versus something handed down to me. I don't really know how to lie about that. I've watched other people do that very well and I've wondered if that's a better way to be. Maybe not even lying about it, just being very straight-faced, very objective, not opening it up for questions and not opening it up for self-disclosure. I feel like things are written on my face anyway.

Her staff members comment quite openly, jokingly and sometimes negatively, about the style of other managers. To some extent, Anne joins the discussions because they are all trying to figure out how to work with these varying styles. But she does so with some regret. She does not take much time to sit around and talk in a way that feels "gossipy." But when they join in analyzing the managers' styles, occasionally with laughter, Anne reports that she is sometimes a part of that and she is not sure that it is appropriate.

When the interface is about an even higher level of management within the organization (the CEO, Executive Director or the Director), Anne is much less likely to be "flip." Anne shares with her staff that she is extremely frustrated that her Director does not get back to her about things in a timely manner. So she might say, "I'm frustrated and I don't know what to do. And it's impacting me, I'm sitting on this, I don't know what to do." But she is not likely to make jokes or tease about her Director.

When considering whether she uses self-disclosure as an influence strategy, Anne said that she can't say that she has never done that, but it "rings false" to her. She wonders if people get ahead by using disclosure and relationships to their advantage. Anne would rather be "right than relational." So she perceives herself more likely to want to persuade with a very "cogent argument" than with personal sharing that might advance the relationship.

Self-Disclosure Regrets

Anne described a number of situations in which she either regretted her disclosure or was at least ambivalent about what she said. Having shared her story with the woman who then became her director, Anne was sorry later that she had told this person so much about herself. Additionally, as described previously, an ongoing issue for Anne includes how much to share with her management team and how much to share about them.

Anne described herself as sometimes "blurty" and she sometimes says things with "wit and sarcasm." Consequently, there are times when she regrets what she has said. One example is a situation in which she calmed a family member who was angry with one of her staff members. Anne recalled then leaving a message on this staff person's

voice mail saying that it was all okay simply because she wasn't him. She later worried about how he might have taken her joke.

A second example occurred when a manger from another site called to ask about how to access a particular address which was in their computer system. Anne happens to have greater understanding of the system than the manager who called. She began to joke with him, telling him that there were other ways to access the address. She laughingly said to him, "If it ever happens again, call me. I know how to cheat the system." Anne is now being called in to meet with all of the managers because there is some perception that they don't know what she is doing with the computer system.

Anne also addressed what might be disclosure errors in saying that "you are vulnerable because you say that you are vulnerable." So if there is a situation when she makes a mistake, she believes she might compound that for herself by saying, "Oh my God. I screwed up." In so doing, she sets herself up as a target. In Anne's words,

> And so I struggle. I can't stop blurting yet. But should I stop setting myself up as a target and just not tell anyone when I am feeling this way? I am sort of unable to do it. But I recognize that it is not always helpful to me. I don't know what to do—I'm in a jam.

When considering what Anne does in response to her disclosure mistakes, she had a variety of responses. Internally, she beats herself up "from here to kingdom come." She "ruminates" about it and is "upset by things like that." Her self talk begins to include directives such as "Just remember to shut up. Just be professional. Don't say anything. Be serious."

In some situations, she goes back to the target of her disclosure and clarifies further. She called the staff member on whose voice mail she had said it was okay because she wasn't him and further explained that there was a clinical observation

beneath the surface: the woman was splitting them. But she had made such a flip statement that she wondered how it might have sounded. In this case, the staff member had fully understood and truly appreciated Anne's humor.

Another correction strategy that Anne has used is to pull way back after what felt like an uncomfortable disclosure. She wonders if her Director is frustrated by the very different disclosure styles that she gets from Anne. She said,

> So where I might feel like I disclosed too much to my Director, I find myself pulling away….I'll put my feelings about something right out there….And at the next meeting I am very closed because I am trying to back peddle. I really find that I am running back and forth between these two.

Sometimes Anne uses more disclosure to describe her disclosures as a way of managing her disclosure mistakes. In order to watch what she says to her staff about the upper management, she may say, "I'm really trying to watch my professionalism so I want to share what I am thinking and feeling, but that felt over the edge." As I mentioned before, Anne believes that sometimes labeling her interactions as mistakes places her in a position of vulnerability. So commenting on her disclosures is sometimes helpful to her, but sometimes seems to exacerbate the situation.

Creating a Safe Environment

With her immediate staff, Anne strives to create an environment in which disclosure can occur. In Anne's words, "I want to elicit their thoughts, dreams, experiences and points of view." On one occasion, the staff members needed to discuss their current reality of having more families seeking service than they could manage. Anne decided that discussion of this issue was larger than could be managed at a normal staff meeting. They set aside time to have this discussion and Anne joked with them to

"Eat your Wheaties." They had "this amazing discussion" in which "all kinds of difficult thoughts and feelings came out." In the end, they decided to extend their program through the summer months, increasing their work load considerably, because what they wanted most was to be able to serve families in a timely manner.

Part of what Anne suggested in urging them to eat their Wheaties, was that this would not be a discussion that could end in an hour. They needed to be prepared psychologically to stay with the discussion until there was some resolution. She furthered that some of the staff probably brought food, "they tend to be more physically nurturing than [she]. So everyone comes and gives."

Humor and Risk

On one occasion, Anne's staff members had had an intense discussion about the changes they had gone through as a result of having a new Executive Director. Anne asked her staff how they were all doing and if they had a last word. One staff person simply started singing "Slip Sliding Away." So they all shared a song.

Anne describes herself as having a good sense of humor and liking to be playful:

> So does that help the disclosure? I think I'm confused because I think of disclosure, humor, risk—they all kind of play with one another. So in order to joke about things, there has to be a high level of trust. Because I think you reveal quite a bit through the humor. And I've been in settings where people don't get my humor or I've thought something was funny and it's gotten me in trouble. So this is a group where I truly can laugh with them and I think it's not that the humor allows us to disclose. I think we disclose within the humor. So I think when you are singing "Slip Sliding Away," you are telling an awful lot about your state of mind, but it's in a playful humor way—but yet not. We heard the message underneath it. One of my co-workers, when she starts singing "If I Had a Hammer," I know where she's at. It's funny, but I am aware of where she's at too. So where do I disclose on that? I would join in. I don't know if I would start it, but I would certainly join in, and invite that.

In another example, Anne's staff was required to do a presentation for staff and managers of the various sites. Instead of a typical presentation, her staff decided to do a newscast with singing and props and a great deal of humor. The goal of her group was to express that they could deliver very important and complicated information about the difficult work they do, but it could be done in a fun way. It was a risk; Anne was aware that some of the things they laugh about internally would not be fully understood by their peers. She was also aware that she had a certain level of anxiety as they took this risk together, but recognized that her primary job was to support the staff rather than to analyze how each joke was received by their audience.

Gender

When I asked Anne if her gender affected her disclosure, she stated that her sense of self is absolutely intertwined with being a woman. In some ways, [she] is a feminine woman in that [she is] very aware of feelings, almost more than thoughts." She furthered that she uses her emotions in order to be connected. But the overriding issue in terms of Anne's disclosure is whether or not she feels safe. That sense of safety, for her, transcends any issues of gender.

When I queried further about whether gender influenced her assessment of a safe place, her answer was "only indirectly." She believes that it is probably "more likely that women are relational than men." When she considers her field of psychology, and

> you finally get down to how many people have applied for these positions and how many people go ahead and train to be psychologists or counselors, you start limiting the field in terms of gender. If you have that personality style and that wish to know one another deeply and live relationally, the men and women who are drawn to this work—my team, for example, live it very well. …I think when you get to a commitment to

> live this way—whoever gets drawn into that—I don't think it's gender any more. I think the funnel may be sifting out certain personality types or expectations from the culture. So when you get to my level, it has nothing to do with it, except that all that has brought me here is maybe more likely because I am a woman.

The Clear Sound of a Bell

Intertwined through all of our interviews was Anne's search for finding her clearest voice. One way in which she sought to do that was by understanding the connection between her anxiety and her self-disclosure. As Anne's staff members presented their newscast to the other departments, Anne became aware of her own anxiety in doing the presentation. At some point in the midst of the experience, Anne stepped back and differentiated between her experience as an individual who put herself "out there," and her experience as a leader whose group members had all extended themselves. To some extent, she was able to say to herself that it was not all about her, that she needed to focus on her group first and foremost. However, she was not able to let go of her own anxieties completely, so her tension emerges in self-effacing humor. Although she makes her statements in a tongue-and-cheek sort of way, she reminds herself to be careful because "it's a leaking of anxiety; it goes somewhere." She described this tension between her own feeling and what she discloses.

> I think that it's a constant struggle for me. I am anxious. It comes out. I want to do [the risky behavior] anyway. And then sometimes I can give myself a self-talking to, to say, 'Let's look at the bigger picture here. People don't realize how anxious you are, especially if you don't let on. Let it go.'

When I explored with Anne why she chose not to let that anxiety out, Anne's answer was clear.

> At its worst, anxiety just makes other people anxious. If you are anxious and it's about you, and it's something you can't manage, and it spills out to a high degree, I think you just force other people to manage it for you. It's not professional and it's not helpful.

Anne talked about her disclosure and self-management during a difficult period of time when she was diagnosed with a very serious disease. At the height of the crisis, she shared with her staff what was happening with her health. She wanted them to know what was going on with her and she got some comfort from them. She did not feel as though she had to have a "stiff upper lip" or be silent or secretive. Anne described how powerful it was to go through this extreme crisis and feel that she was not alone in the experience.

She was much more guarded about what she told a secretary with whom she had some conflicts, and also more guarded about what she told upper management. She only told them enough to let them know that it was serious.

At some point during the series of difficult medical procedures, Anne found a therapist to talk with about the process. She was aware that she wanted to share with her staff, but "they can't carry you. Ultimately, the goal is to get it out of here. You don't want it to be dumped here." Anne disclosed about her health because it was such a huge experience for her, she wanted her staff to know. She did not, however, want them to be her primary source of support.

Anne articulated in beautiful detail her ideal of honestly self-disclosing her vulnerabilities as opposed to her "blurts," which she sees as an attempt to manage anxiety.

> I guess I see different kinds of expressions. And I can imagine a deeply feeling person who tries to make decisions based on what their thoughts are, what their personal experiences are, maybe even the crises in their

> life, the feelings they have. I think there is a way of sharing that with people saying this is who I am, and being very vulnerable. And that to me seems what the ideal is. That you somehow put all yourself out there—it's your emotional, your spiritual, your cognitive, whatever it is, out there. That doesn't seem blurty to me. That just seems very authentic. And if the world wants to then decide that some of that is weak, that makes you vulnerable in some way, I can deal with that. All the more harm for you; too bad for you. That's a goal I think we should all aspire to.
>
> There's a different kind of vulnerability when I talk about blurting. I keep coming back to this idea of anxiety. There is something, when you put your whole self out there, but if you're not comfortable with what your whole self is, or it's not formed yet…it's developing. You are reacting to some concern about how you are going to be perceived by someone or someone's more important than you. I'm not sure what all of these little examples are. But there are times when you put yourself out there that's not a coherent whole. You feel unformed parts of yourself, or childish parts of yourself, or anxious parts of yourself—when they are expressed, I assume that people can recognize that as such and what they choose to do with it minimally is to say, "You're an immature person. You're not a trustworthy person. I can't count on you to contain yourself." And so that's the way you make yourself vulnerable, I think, where you become less trustworthy, you become a loose cannon, you become less than. Someone can then put you down.
>
> So I think that when I told my staff about my illness and this is what I am struggling with and this is what I think about it, this is what I am going to be needing, there's a very authentic self coming out to a group that I trust. I even did put that out to people that I trusted less because this is who I am, this is what I need, this is very real for me. I think there are other times when I am much less comfortable with my relationship with that person or my position or how I feel about something. And it's just a different kind of disclosure that I think makes me vulnerable—not in a good way, not in a helpful way.

In sorting through these vulnerabilities in order to find her authentic voice, Anne said that sometimes she is able to put herself out there in a way that feels congruent. It might be about something in which she has a great deal of emotion, but she may also have a centeredness. She describes this as a very powerful experience.

But there are other times when Anne has too many competing voices. In these cases, she may take in the messages from those around her and then she sometimes loses

her own point of view. She recognizes that this is happening when she loses her words or can't get back to her point in an argument. Her general response in these situations is to shut up. "It's an internal and an external battle. You can hear what you are saying and how you are feeling. You're aware of not being aware of what your message is anymore. And so [she] has to back up and think about it and sort through it and get some perspective."

Anne believes that her "blurts" are part of her recognition that something is getting in the way of her voice. She also thinks that the blurts are some message to herself that she needs to learn. But she is not quite there yet. Right now, her blurts "feel like a sense of oh—someone's got you. Hopefully [she'll] be in a place where [she] will say, 'Oh, information.' I'm not there yet."

Sometimes Anne loses her voice because she is good at seeing so many viewpoints. She believes that quality makes her good at hearing the stories of families and children, but it complicates her role as a manger because she "know[s] where you are coming from. So therefore, [she doesn't] want to fold and then take your viewpoint, but [she] can understand it so much that it's hard for [her] to stick with [her] viewpoint." She learned a helpful strategy in this regard from her Director whom she watched slow down the discussion and her own decision making by simply saying that the various points of view were good information, but that she would have to get back to them at a later point. Anne described her Director's style as "layered" in that "she holds her place and then she'll back away."

Anne believes that there is more coherence in herself—and therefore in her voice—in a therapeutic setting because "you work at being a safe person, a good listener,

an authentic person. The role is aligned." But in the management levels of her leadership, there is more coaching, more persuasion and more spinning. "There's more aligning with someone else's values. And so [she] think[s] it's more difficult to line yourself up."

> When describing that voice that comes from her centeredness, Anne said,
>
> I guess it's like when you have an instrument and some instruments have different timbres. Like a bell tone is very clear—I don't know how you would draw a bell tone but it's not a fuzzy line. It's a very clear line. Reed instruments have a lot of static. And there's an internal sense of a bell tone. It's a clear voice.

Anne further described that the bell tone comes with a more developed voice. It still carries playfulness and humor, but it is more highly developed.

TED

Ted is a 49 year old photographer. Professionally, he works as a free-lance artist as well as a photography instructor at several institutions. Additionally, he is currently deeply involved in the merger of two major arts organizations. In the past, he has served as president of a large artists' organization and has owned and operated a photo lab.

Ted was recommended to me by mutual friends who were familiar both with his art work and his involvement in organizational change in various arts initiatives. Ted and I met for three interviews. Prior to our first meeting, I gave him a brief description of my research about leadership and my particular interest in self-disclosure.

Leadership

Ted arrived at the first interview, which we agreed to hold in my office, having already given a great deal of thought to the concept of leadership in general and, specifically, to his leadership. He immediately began to share his thoughts saying that the leader and the person are inextricably linked. He did not set out to achieve these leadership positions. It was not something he did on purpose; it was simply the result of who he is. Ted believes that, in his personality, there is a willingness to assume a leadership role. Although he didn't look for these roles, they are a part of a trail, a part of his life process. As an indication of that happenstance, he described a situation in which he was recruited and juried into membership of an organization of professional artists. Soon after being recruited, he was asked to serve on a committee. He served on that committee for only two meetings, at which point the chairperson resigned. He was elected chair of the committee. Because he was the chair he served on the executive

committee. He had "a big enough mouth at the executive committee." that he was elected vice president. "And after that, the natural step was to step into the presidential role. It was just sort of a natural process."

Ted went on to cite a number of similar instances in his current life where he is in an instrumental position in creating change in large arts initiatives, simply because he was invited into the process. He does not seek leadership positions, but is willing to take them on when invited. He believes that he has what might be called a "leadership personality." When I asked him to describe what a leadership personality looks like, he responded that he really didn't know. But because he did know that his leadership is inseparable from who he is as a person, he suggested that, if he told me who he is, that might illustrate one such case of a leadership personality.

Ted is the product of a Jewish household in Princeton, New Jersey. Although his parents were not associated with the university, many of their friends were. So he grew up in a culture in which his parents' cocktail parties included many notables of academia.

Ted's father was a holocaust survivor, a survivor of the labor camps. Typical of many holocaust survivors, he was very driven when he got to this country. His father was in academia for a while, having taught at UCLA, Case Western Reserve and the University of Pennsylvania. But when Ted was a young boy, his father became an entrepreneur and ran a consulting firm, a think tank. Initially he had been interested in computer modeling, but he eventually created a social science research company.

Ted's mother was considerably disabled during much of his youth. She had a slipped disk in her neck, chose not to have surgery, and so lived with a surgical collar for many years.

Ted suspects that, in some ways, "the idea of having children was better for them than the reality." It wasn't that he and his younger brother weren't wanted, it was more that they were "left to [their] own devices quite a bit when [they] were younger." This may have contributed to Ted's leadership personality.

Ted attended a highly esteemed university as a psychology major because college was an opportunity to "get the hell out of the house," and this university was a name school that his parents and their academic friends could recognize. But Ted hated the university. To his parents' chagrin, he dropped out of college in his sophomore year and took on a "fascinating series of minimum wage jobs." In time, he enrolled in an art institute and never looked back.

In talking with me, Ted further developed the notion that he does not seek out leadership positions, but is invited into them. He conjectured that he begins to ask questions and pursue information for the purpose of problem-solving. In that pursuit, he is seen as a leader; people begin to treat him as a leader. When he was asked to be the chair of an arts council, in Ted's words,

> I thought about it a long time and asked a lot of people a lot of questions about process. In doing that, they saw in me somebody already in a leadership position, looking to do the job well, when I was trying to decide whether I could do the job. So I'm asking questions about process and about who's in charge of what, and how things get done at the [arts center] and what the [arts council] does and doesn't do, and who's really in charge, and what's going on behind the scenes, and what are the personalities involved. And I'm asking all of this before I really agree to run for the position. And I'm mulling over these things. But people are viewing that as leadership. Just that I thought to ask the questions.

Ted likens his problem-solving process to his photography in that he is working with negative space, discerning the contrast between figure and ground. In his art, "figure and ground are so intertwined as to be a single word: fingureandground." Part of

what Ted enjoys is working with balancing the contrast between figure and ground. He explained to me that it is only because of the contrast with the background that we can discern the figure. “There is no real separating those things. There isn’t one without the other. It has to be a contrast.”

The same is true with his problem solving. He sifts through the “noise” in order to find the “kernel.” He illustrated with a story of the last [arts council] meeting he chaired. They made a decision to adopt *Robert’s Rule of Order*. The impetus for this decision was a opinionated woman who wanted to make decisions that would take the council back 25 to 50 years. By adopting *Robert’s Rules,* there was a framework for people who wanted to address the council and also a clearly defined decision making process. The negative space—the background—the noise—was the question of what to do about this woman’s position. The kernel—the object—was to adopt *Robert’s Rules*. Ted explained that they couldn’t have seen the need to adopt a framework for decision making without this woman. So like his photography, he believes that the decision making process requires the tension of contrast in order to see the kernel.

In Ted’s problem solving, he looks for ciaroscuro, the definition of the edge between figure and ground (or kernel and noise). His disclosure process is “to go back to the noise and try the kernel on them. So it’s like another layer of problem solving. ‘I think this, now, what about this?’”

Another of Ted’s beliefs about his own leadership and that of others is that everybody has an agenda. People may or may not make those agendas known, but they indeed have them. In most of his leadership roles, Ted’s agenda is to make himself known as an artist. He is perfectly willing to admit that agenda, if asked. So given that

his leadership and his person are inseparable, when he is genuinely present in a leadership capacity, he is simultaneously promoting himself as an artist. Ted's particular agenda places him in a position to pursue outcomes for an organization, but not a particular outcome. Visibly helping an organization to move forward, solve problems and reach an outcome, promotes Ted as a leader and an artist who can work with procedures and problems. He has no need to attach to a particular outcome; his agenda is advanced by being known in the organization.

At one point in Ted's career, while serving as president of an artists' association, he spearheaded the process of this organization selling a very expensive piece of real estate in order to have the capital to sustain its future as an organization. It wouldn't have been Ted's choice to sell the building. In fact, his suggestion was to use the building differently. But when competing agendas about artistic venue made Ted's suggestion unacceptable, he was willing and able to go to great lengths to move along the business deal and sell the building. He was not tied to a particular future of the organization. He was tied to the hope that the organization would have a future. And in so doing, his agenda was achieved.

Integral to Ted's leadership is maintaining a positive sense of self, no matter what. The interconnectedness between his leadership and his self requires him to tend to himself. Prior to one of our interviews, he had just returned from Houston where he had taken some of his art to a portfolio review event. Some of the experience was negative for him. But

> even though [he] felt raked over the coals—this was a very intense experience and it didn't go particularly well for [him]—[he] is a week away from it and already thinking about the good side of it and what it did for [him] and where[he] stands and where [he] goes from here.

Ted cares for himself by literally telling himself that he is okay. He states, "There is enough evidence pointing to a good life. I always fall back on the things that I am consciously aware sure of…..And so when it becomes frustrating, I tell myself it's okay. It's part of the process and you will get there. So there's a feeding of myself that by telling myself that I'm okay."

Self-Disclosure

In talking specifically about his self-disclosure, Ted indicated that his disclosure during the leadership process was much the same as it was during our interview: he answers people's question with examples from his own life, because his self and his leadership are intertwined and because the genuine sharing of self is part of the agenda of his leadership.

Making his Process Visible

As Ted indicated when describing his leadership, he openly and repeatedly asks questions which make his own leadership process transparent. His general position in this questioning comes from his belief that his own ideas may be wrong. In Ted's words,

> I'm just foisting things out there for people to try. And often they try them and they work. But sometimes they try them and they don't. So way down deep I'm a half empty kind of guy. I assume that I'm wrong, and I assume that the issue is with me and not with the problem.

Authenticity and Vulnerability

As Ted moved more deeply into his interpretation of this half-empty position and his open questioning, he explained the authenticity of his self-disclosure by saying, "So I can say, 'Correct me if I'm wrong,' and sound like I mean it. Or I can say, 'Correct me if

I'm wrong,' and sound completely condescending. I sound like I mean it because I assume that I am wrong. There is a better solution. I mean it. Correct me if I'm wrong….And that's what people respond to, the genuineness" (3/28/06).

Ted solves organizational problems by openly asking questions and, in the asking, openly exposing his internal assumption that he may be wrong. In pursuing a better answer, he gathers information that allows him to forward the change movement of the organization. In facilitating the forward motion, regardless of the direction, he advances his own agenda, which is to be known as an artist.

Ted talked about disclosure in terms of his own vulnerability. In part, he manages his vulnerability by ensuring there is a process in place for the outcomes the organization is trying to achieve. So when he is vulnerable, he can fall back on process. Personally, he sees himself as "one of those behind the scenes tight-asses," so he expends "a lot of energy on [his] thoughts and then it manifests itself outside as process."

Although Ted may worry about a particular outcome, he is not very inclined to talk about those worries. He said that sometimes he talks to his wife about it. He continued saying, "Once in a great while, I will talk to peers about it. But no, mostly I keep it to myself."

Ted described that direct disclosures of his vulnerabilities have been made only to his wife, his analyst, and maybe to a very, very safe group of friends. We talked further about this aspect of his disclosure, in part, because I was looking for some understanding of his openness with me. He explained that there are two conditions required in order for him to disclose the deepest parts of himself: It has to be safe. And he has to be asked. In terms of our interviews. I came recommended to him by some of his closest friends (as he

had similarly been recommended to me), so he believed from the beginning that I was safe. And I asked him questions. Therefore, he was willing to share.

I asked Ted if he needed to create boundaries when one of those conditions might exist, but the other does not. In one situation, he was asked, but the safety didn't exist. He was sexually pursued by a woman who had served as one of his models. He explained to her clearly that he was married and that he was not interested in a sexual relationship. Her attack was that he was not comfortable with intimacy. He responded was that he was very comfortable with who he was, that she seemed not to be comfortable with intimacy and being platonic. For Ted, the two were seemingly quite possible, but not with this person.

In the opposite situation, Ted has great comfort and safety with his family, but they really don't ask questions about his art. However, in this case, he does share without being asked. With laughter, he described it as "show and tell at home."

The experience of having been in analysis for a period of time also affects his disclosure and his boundaries in a number of ways. First, he has been able to internalize his analyst. He is able to use his analyst as part of his self-talk and reference him consciously through that process. "The person who was my analyst is still up there somewhere….What would Charlie do? Like, 'what would Jesus do?' I suppose he's my conscience in some way. But it's not a moral compass. It's an analyst compass." So in some ways, the process of past disclosures affects his self knowing and therefore his present disclosures.

Second, having been in analysis affects Ted's privacy boundaries. Having said everything out loud with another person in the room changes his need for disclosure. He

has integrated the voice of his analyst. “It became an internal sounding board, an internal conscience, [he] could carry the analytic process with [him], forward.” Since Ted has already revealed much of what he knows of himself, he may need that differently than others in public places. So when someone infringes on those boundaries, his response is, “Sorry. Too close. Let’s go somewhere else.”

Speaking to the Audience

Ted described himself as having “a big mouth at the executive committee.” When we explored more closely what it meant to have a big mouth, Ted talked about openly sharing his opinion. Those opinions sometimes tended to do with process, other times with the content being discussed. He attributes the expression of these opinions, this “big mouth,” to part of the reason he is sought out for leadership positions.

He translates those opinions to arts-speak, in a manner of adapting to his audience. In his words, “When I first started talking to arts administrators, I didn’t have arts-speak. And when I first started talking over boundaries, I then recognized, saying, ‘Oh, they’re not interested in that.’” Ted goes on to describe that he crafts the content he shares for the person with whom he is talking. He also acknowledged that now, more than before, he changes the words he uses in various contexts. In creating those messages, he listens carefully to what everybody is saying and what is being asked. Then he uses creative intuition.

> So maybe that’s the art part. Yea, there is always this—do you remember the Gary Larsen cartoon, where the scientist is standing at the blackboard and they have all these equations on the left side and it sort of funnels down to this little sentence and it says, ‘And then a miracle occurs.’ And then there’s the other side of all these gigantic equations. Creative intuition is kind of like that. I can’t say for sure where it comes from. I can only say that I have learned over 49 years to trust it. To use it.”

Privacy

In terms of what he is likely not to disclose, Ted reported that he is not especially inclined to share emotions. He and his wife are "better with business than with emotions." He acknowledged that "there must be some of that [emotional sharing]. I can't be just putting it away….I feel like I keep them, but they must go away." When Ted talks with other men artists, it is primarily about process. He suggests that they don't talk about feelings or emotions. Ted noted specifically that he is not particularly inclined to talk about how good he feels about his work or how he feels about himself. He stated, "It has always been a very private thing for me."

I asked Ted about the difference between the great openness he had in his analyst's office and the personal disclosures he shared in our interviews, as opposed to what sounded to me like less open and intimate disclosures in much of the rest of his world. I wondered if this were integrated somehow. He replied that maybe it wasn't. He believes that this may create a shortcoming in his business dealings.

> If I were more willing to share that part of myself, it would be easier for me and more natural for me to stay in constant contact with my clients. I have to push myself to do that. I don't just call people for the hell of it. Clients. When, in fact, I should and I think if I were more willing to share myself, I would do that more regularly and more comfortably and more often.

He does, however, share some of his personal life, particularly his family life. Ted states that those things are "part and parcel" of who he is, so he necessarily brings that forward as he works in various organizations. He may say, "This situation reminds me—I was talking to my daughter about…" Or he may notice a picture of kids on someone's desk and say, "Oh, do you have kids?" and get them started talking about it. Then he will chime in, "Oh, yea, I have three…." So it is salesmanship ultimately.

This leads to Ted's position that

> the true art of salesmanship is nothing but self-disclosure. And genuineness. And so in the sense that I use it all the time anyway, when I'm talking to people, the conversation is often on a personal level. "What do you do?" And so when these things come up, it's still the same message. It's still the same manner of presentation. I still talk about my kids. I still talk about my art. I still talk about my involvement in the nonprofits. And I still talk about the issues that we're dealing with and how they relate to whatever problem I'm trying to solve. And then I listen to what people say. I gather commonalities. And those commonalities often point at the kernel. The figure.

Further, because he sees himself as a "natural salesman," he knows that wherever he is, something will come up that he can talk about. If that happens not to be the case, he may just part from whomever and this is okay, ships parting in the night.

Mistakes Correction

Ted acknowledged that he makes self-disclosure mistakes. When I asked him what he did with those mistakes, he responded,

> Nothing much. Remember. Learn. Don't do it again. Sometimes stuff goes out there and you just don't have control of what's going to happen. To be the style of leader I am, and not everybody is, you just have to let go of stuff, and that includes errors. Right? I think of process as being organic and that I contribute to the organic-ness of it, but it has a life of its own. Any process has its sort of own-ness. And over time I'm willing to let it do that. Right? And you have to do the same thing with mistakes. I mean, I dwell on stuff all the time—but I don't dwell on what's going to happen after I let it go."

Ted continued saying that, if he has an opportunity to apologize or to unruffle someone's feathers, he always takes that opportunity. But if that opportunity does not exist, he trusts the "leap of faith and the willingness to let the process have its own life."

Gender

Ted clarified his experience of gender in relationship to his leadership and his disclosure. He characterizes himself in some ways as a non-traditional male. One example of that is that he is comfortable kissing his gay male friends as a part of their greetings and partings. However, in other ways, he is quite traditional: his wife does not work outside their home; she does the laundry and the cooking. Ted does the dishes, shovels snow and takes out the trash.

He does not perceive his disclosure as being particularly male, except for the fact that it tends to be about problem solving which some people see as male. However, he sees it not as specifically male but as specifically Ted. He does believe, however, that some people, particularly traditional females who are arts administrators, see his problem solving disclosures as traditionally male and as leadership and, in so doing begin to defer to him as a leader.

Although Ted does not see his disclosures as male, he harkens back to two images from his childhood which suggest to him that the fact that he exists as a leader is indeed male. He has a screen memory, a mental picture, of his dad reading the newspaper and hidden from Ted's view behind the big pages of the paper he is holding. Ted has gone forward in the world, symbolically waving his arms, making himself known, as a way of breaking through that newspaper. Ted associated and identified with his dad. So on some level, every barrier he has faced has been an attempt to break through the newspaper.

An even earlier memory portrays Ted's father while he was still working as an academic. That image includes his father sitting on the couch reading blue books. But

his dad is open, not hidden, more available. So on some level, Ted imagines that he did something to move his dad from an academic reading blue books, to a businessman behind the newspaper. Ted leads, in part, as an attempt to correct that situation, "to get him back….Just being a leader means, 'Hey, look at me.'"

The Kernel

During our third and final interview, Ted described his self-disclosure and his leadership in intimate and complex ways. He connected what initially seemed like competing descriptions in a way that tied together all of the other interviews and helped me to understand his disclosures more deeply.

When describing the privacy he feels about sharing how he feels about his work or feeling good about himself, he said that the first word that came to him was ostentatious, showing off. He believes, as his father's son, he has to "blend in, be careful, don't stand out," because "behind every corner is a Nazi."

On the other hand, also as his father's son, he is still waving a flag on the other side of that raised newspaper, hoping to get noticed. "So [he] became an artist. Because [he is] not an ordinary person in any way, [he] can stand out in the society that [he] lives in by being an artist."

Ted described himself as paranoid. He said,

> There is a Nazi around every corner. I have to make sure before I take the plunge in a lot of ways. In a new situation, I'll peek first. And I think there's a real nervousness about that because someday, really and truly, Mr. or Mrs. Nazi is going to be around the corner. That's the paranoia part."

But Ted also described himself as lucky. He is lucky because, although there is a Nazi around every corner, he hasn't bumped into one yet. And he described himself as "pretty naïve" when assessing the safety of a situation. Although he may be peeking around the corner, at the same time he "assume[s] that [he] is safe unless there is evidence otherwise….Unless [he] is threatened, he assumes safety. That's a relatively naïve and sort of childlike approach."

In addition to being lucky, Ted would say that he is brave. He jumps into social events and becomes the natural salesman. Or he takes on huge arts organization initiatives for change and talks with everyone he meets, eliciting their opinions. In Ted's words, "I am still in my father's face taking a chance. Waving a little bit of a flag."

JULIA

Julia is the Executive Director of a museum. Most of the exhibits are interactive; I experienced a high level of activity when entering the museum. Julia's office is on the second floor of the building overlooking the exhibit area. We met in her office for two interviews. For each of the sessions, Julia moved from behind her desk to sit with me at a round table beside the semicircular window. She kept her office door open during both interviews. At several points, people stopped in as they walked past her door.

Leadership

Julia described her leadership as relationship building. She said that it is "all about getting people on the same page" and about "promoting an atmosphere where you can be honest with each other and trust each other." When people begin to really listen to each other, you begin to figure out what everyone wants to do, and you really do create a shared vision. Julia believes it is easy to move forward when everyone is working toward the same thing.

Julia spoke with energy about her job, saying that it is a great one and that this museum is a great place to work. Her father was a steel worker who spent all of his life in a job he hated. His encouragement to her was to "just do something you like" (2/2806). So she thinks about his wisdom and considers, "How bad could it be in [this museum]? On the scale of things, it's pretty darn great."

Another skill of Julia's leadership is "getting the right people on the bus." If there are people who are not a good match for the museum, there is a point where the leader has to say that it isn't working. She suggested that there is some leadership in saying that

"you have to find your own path—it's not the museum's path." Julia reported with some pleasure that some of the people who were not right for the museum have grown into wonderful classroom teachers. She feels as though this is a situation in which everyone wins.

Julia's leadership also includes some quiet time, some mulling. She had recently scheduled some time with some friends at a museum in another city, saying to them, "I just want to come and sit. I just want to think about things for a little bit and figure out what the next step is."

Although she apologized that it might sound "corny," Julia believes that "you should really just be yourself." One of her mentors was Fred Rogers; she worked with him for two years. Who better to teach you to be yourself?

Self-Disclosure

Open Door

When describing her self-disclosure, Julia mentioned that her door was always open and that people were free to drop in at any time. I had the pleasure of experiencing this during both of my interviews with her. At one point, a woman who is part of the management team dropped in to comment on Julia's funky skirt, which Julia had made. Julia assured her that she had brought the other fabric along with her that day so the two of them could decide whether Julia should make a skirt or palazzo pants using this fabric.

Julia's assistant dropped in at a later point and brought coffee and a little chatter. Each time I watched Julia engage the other woman, create some connection, and then move back to our conversation.

Open Dialogue

Julia described her management team as a group wherein much of the sharing and open dialogue occurs. She gave me an example that had occurred just the day before when Julia went to the Exhibit Director to tell her how angry she was about something that had happened. The Director was then able to come back to Julia with a clear explanation of why she thought it had occurred. Each was able to express her feelings and their differences of opinions openly.

Further, in helping people to share their vision, Julia actively discloses hers. "Because sometimes people don't have a vision. So you say, 'Well, how about this one?'"

Shared Adventures

Part of the ease of disclosure within the management team has come from the fact that the members have traveled together in a number of capacities. The staff members sometime attend conferences together and, when the museum was smaller, they would get one room and accommodate everyone with cots. On one occasion, there were no cots, so four women shared one room with two beds. Julia described the situation with peels of laughter. "Four women and one bathroom—it was pretty funny—the joke was, who's going to sleep with the boss tonight?"

On another occasion, Julia took her staff to a mountain cabin to bring them together to prepare for the opening of the new museum. She imagined an "inspiring" getaway where they could all commune. Julia described everything that happened during that trip. It was pouring rain; the lights went out; they built a fire and the chimney hadn't been cleaned, so smoke came billowing through the room; they then had to sit with the

windows open. There were mice everywhere and the beds creaked. So when someone got up in the night to go the bathroom, everyone awoke and ended up going to the kitchen for snacks at 3:00 in the morning. In the midst of all of this, one staff person began to talk about slasher movies, which led to a discussion of their fears and finally settled into a long and very meaningful discussion about what they feared about the opening of the museum.

Julia explained, "I think we are a different team because we spent a night in the cabin….I think creating those situations where you can—you know, we're all human." In creating those situations where everyone can share, Julia said it is important to have food, lots of food. And plenty of wine helps too. It is important to choose people who can actually put up with these "cauca-mamy ideas" and can "grow from these experiences." As a result of these experiences, Julia's staff has created

> myths and stories that have lasted a long time. [She] think[s] they are very important to the relationship. [They] just have to say 'Stop, drop and roll' in front of Lois and [they] all just burst into laughter because there are these very funny moments that are hard to explain to anyone outside the circle.

Invitations to the Table

Inviting people into those opportunities where disclosure can occur is central to Julia's leadership style. Currently, there are some partners who are nonprofit organizations renting space in the museum. They are not part of the museum, but their presence strengthens the museum program. Every Tuesday morning, the café manager prepares a different menu and the entire museum staff is served breakfast. The nonprofit partners also come to breakfast. Julia described a situation where they all end up hanging

out together over coffee and breakfast, and coming up with new ideas for working in everyone's behalf.

Humor

Julia then added, "I think humor has a lot to do with leadership. And I always think that people just completely forget that." In describing her work, she said that this is a lively museum,

> How serious can it be?...No one is dying. Everyone is happy when they come here, for the most part. But I do think we laugh a lot, which actually helps quite a bit.

She spoke in some detail about the importance of that humor. Julia believes that it is an important aspect of disclosure because, as her mother says, "More truth is spoken in humor than the world will ever know." Julia said that seeing the comic irony in situations lends perspective. Of her own work she says, "We run a museum. You know, we are not finding peace in a dark world. We run a museum and we have to remember that in whatever decisions we make. And I think humor helps make those decisions."

In addition to lending perspective, Julia described their use of humor as taking "the tension out of things." Tough things can be said with humor and it helps to clarify a difficult situation or issue.

Further, Julia explained that everyone on the management team has a different kind of humor and that humor allows them to disclose who they really are as well as express the differences in their points of view. The shared stories of their past adventures allows that humor to become a part of their bonding and history.

Julia positioned the importance of the humor in explaining that the mission of the museum is "Joy, Creativity and Curiosity." In her words,

> If we are not joyful, creative and curious at least at one point during the day, then we are not doing our job because we have to translate that downstairs [to the exhibit area]. And even though we are in this little room, and we are in a money crunch, we can still find time to be humorous….Kids' lives are not at risk. We are talking about things that we think are essential, but keep it in perspective."

There must be some success at keeping humor a part of their daily living and working, because they had just hired a facilitator to do their strategic plan. When she asked the group about the strength of the organization, the number one response was humor.

Safety

In querying Julia about how she creates safety for the many discussions, her response was "What could we possibly talk about that would not be safe?... Ideas are just ideas. They are not etched in stone. Everyone has different ideas. And you can learn from different ideas and what's the big deal." Julia values passion. So if someone is really attached to an idea, she will frequently defer to that person's position. For example, Julia did not want *joy* to be a part of the mission statement for some philosophical reasons. But another staff member felt so strongly about including *joy* that Julia deferred and said that she could live with that. Now her staff jokes frequently that Julia is "living with joy."

Personal Openness

As I sat with Julia, I experienced her disclosure as open and engaging, asking questions of me, answering my questions and interacting with staff members who dropped in. At one point, I commented to her that this open disclosure style seemed to be very much a part of her. I asked her how she came to this style of leadership. She answered quickly that it came from her dad. She said,

> My dad just has that way about finding connections wherever he went. And I guess I inherited it. My husband finds that same thing that I work at trying to find the connection and I don't know why. You know, I think it's fun….I don't know why---the six degrees of separation. My husband always says that I have three or less, to everyone in the world.

In addition to being a natural connector, Julia wondered aloud if the openness from others comes from something on her face. People tend to tell her things. She really doesn't always encourage it. There is a mixed experience for Julia with all of the sharing. In her words,

> …I am pretty open and I will talk a lot about my kids and my family. I think it is healthy to do that. It is always good to connect on a personal level. But people really get into it. You're like—too much information….I mean it's nice when they feel that way but there are times when I am like—narrow it down.

Julia described her openness as not only including who she is, but also about the process of what she is doing. The museum is going through some difficult restructuring in which a few positions will be lost. Julia had a meeting with one of the department heads and said that she had been able to think of four options that would save the required monies. But she offered that there might be other possibilities. The department head was then able to come back with a fifth option which would save the money and would work better for her.

Executive Director

Although she described herself as open, Julia realizes that the title of Executive Director is "off-putting." Sometimes she walks around the museum and realizes that people don't get her at all. She is sometimes alerted to a situation in which a young employee may want to talk to her and is nervous about doing so. She is always surprised by those situations.

Julia is willing and able to draw the line, and make the hard decisions required of the Executive Director. She believes that that part of her style comes from her mother, explaining that as children they would never go to Mom for things they didn't think that they were going to get. She reported saying to one of the museum directors, "If you don't make the decision, I will make the decision….I like discussion but, at a certain point, you have to say, 'That's it.' At some point, you have to stand up and take responsibility." She explained that she so rarely takes the "I am the Executive Director" position that, when she does, she "really shocks the hell out of everybody." But at times, a decision simply must be made so that they can move forward.

Board of Directors

Julia also explained that working with the Board may be her greatest challenge. She describes her disclosure style as "pretty open with everybody," although she is "a little less open with the Board" (2/28/06). She feels that she is realistic when it comes to those relationships. When one woman on the Board suggested that they were going to be deep and long friends, Julia explained clearly that this was her job. "As much as I like you, we can be professional friends. We're not going to be this deep personal [friendship]."

There are times when she has been too open with the Board. On one occasion, Julia was very up-front with the Board saying that "most museum directors do not survive after about three years after the opening" (2/28/06). They had just opened a new museum, so she felt as though she was being realistic, suggesting that in three to five years they might be pretty "doggone tired" of her. But that conversation sent up all kinds of red flags to the Board and they began insisting that they hire a Deputy Director, only

so that they would have someone to run the museum if Julia should leave. In her words, "I was a little bit too honest with them about how things usually go."

Personal and Professional

The sharing that occurs crosses professional and personal issues. However, Julia clearly does not confuse the two. She explained that she talks a great deal about the museum to her husband and her sons. Conversely, from the beginning when she first took this job, she told everyone that she would go home by 5:30 or 6:00 P.M. because she has kids. She said that she would do "extraordinary things every once in a while," but that her kids were important and that she thought everyone should have a life outside of work. Sometimes Julia walks around and tells people, "Go home, go home, go home." Part of Julia's stressing the personal as well as the professional comes from her observation that some of her colleagues in other museums "actually become the museum, and the funny thing is that the museums just never love you back."

Boundaries

Julia explained to me that clarifying the boundary between the museum and her sense of self came from watching others. In watching her friends in situations "where they became the museum and the museum became them, they got burned every time, every time. Because it ends."

Creating appropriate boundaries with the Board took Julia a longer time to learn. For some time, she was "just poking at it and testing it." She told me that she got a great piece of advice from a British friend when she first accepted the position of Executive Director. Her friend urged Julia to remember that she was the "vicar at the table." There

are times when Julia is sitting with the Board and she thinks of something she might say, but then monitors herself with the mantra that she is the vicar.

Julia described her boundaries as flowing, not rigid. During the time when they were preparing to open the new museum, the museum conversation drifted into her family life a great deal. But that balance has now gotten better. She explained that, if there is a family crisis that you have to talk about, the balance may tilt in the other direction.

Disclosure Corrections

I asked Julia to talk more about what she did when she had disclosed something that did not serve her well. She said, "For the most part, move on." She added that, on one occasion, she wrote a note of apology because she had said something that was probably unkind and she regretted having said it.

Another situation occurred when she asked a Board member for a particular contribution of some furniture for the staff lounge. The Board member was insulted by the request because she had not been invited to bid on the full job for furniture throughout the museum. Julia met with the woman and apologized, saying that she didn't understand that her business included supplying large establishments. The woman responded with some very personal and insulting statements to and about Julia, and then the woman went off of the Board. Julia had attempted to remedy the mistake of the original request with further discussion. But when other members of the Board wanted to pursue the woman's return to the Board, Julia did not further disclose the dynamics of the conversation and the woman's insults. She recognized that further disclosure would not be helpful or professional and she chose to "step out of the circle" because it began to get personal.

Gender

Julia stated with great certainty that her disclosure style is related to her gender. This connected her to her statement that, in leadership, you should just be yourself. She emphasized that she is a woman so she is not going to act like a man. She said that, in her disclosures, she invites people to talk about their personal lives; she also tells them her own stories. As an example, she said that she was meeting with the head of a major hospital. She told him with great laughter and in detail, about a situation that had occurred a few days prior in her own home. Julia has three sons. She was telling the hospital executive that they are so physical (she then made sound effects for me to describe their physicality). She had told the boys and her husband to settle down. Her husband grabbed one of the boy's legs and was then pulled off the couch and onto the coffee table resulting in her husband getting a cut and a black eye. The hospital executive was then able to share his stories about having three daughters who get into emotional squabbles with their mother. Julia and the executive then compared stories about dealing with the emotionality of the girls or the physicality of the boys.

Julia's point to me was that they connected personally. "Everyone has a story." She believes that the sharing of those stories, as well as the probing questions that she might ask about other's stories, are part of being a woman. "I don't see too many men doing that."

The gender issue that presents itself when she functions as a leader with her Board is that many of the female Board members are stay-at-home moms. In Julia's words, "I don't really care whether you stay at home or go to work, but do we have to keep beating

up on each other?" Julia believes that there is tension because Julia is a working mom. When I inquired whether she talked about those issues with the Board, her clear answer was, "Oh, no."

She further believes that there is an annoying aspect about the city in which she lives. "It's not broad enough to see all of the possibilities. There are so many possibilities and so many ways of living your life and…just let people do what it is that they want to do….But it's kind of an odd dance that everybody's doing."

ELLEN

Ellen currently owns a networking business. I met with her in my office for a single interview.

Leadership

Ellen's early career was in banking. As a very young woman living in California, she first became a bank teller. It was unusual in the 1950s for a woman without a college degree to be awarded this position. Her early promotions in the banking industry came from being "a snoop." She made a point of learning how the business worked. It became her job to teach new supervisors the procedures of the bank, so in time she became the operations supervisor. Eventually, she became the first woman manager of the bank and moved through the banking industry until finally becoming the Assistant Vice President in the personnel department. At a later point, Ellen and the vice president with whom she worked left the bank and began a consulting business. Ellen's responsibility was to teach the soft skills of personnel work, including interviewing and hiring practices.

When the man with whom she worked died, Ellen returned to her home town in another state and began a networking business. The purpose of this business is to create a community for networking, to duplicate what used to occur on Main Street, USA when folks referred each other to the local merchants and service providers. People who join Ellen's organization meet regularly, give and receive referrals and participate in some business development training. Ellen currently has franchises of her business in Connecticut; Philadelphia; Pittsburgh; Erie; Belair, Maryland; Dayton; Indianapolis. She has several different organizational relationships with those who run the various chapters.

Some license a territory from her, but own their operations. Others work directly for Ellen and do not own their businesses.

She functions differently among the various regional managers. For the ones with which she is most involved, she offers training seminars and develops incentive programs for their membership.

Ellen described her leadership style as "pretty directive." But she has learned that making a demand is not the best way to accomplish her goals. Presently, she is much more inclined to share an idea or ask a question rather than to impose a demand. Over the years, Ellen has learned to "mellow out". "A person who walks in a room and says, 'You will do this and you will do that and I expect this of you'…I have found as a leader that it is not as well accepted as one that comes in and says, 'What do you think?'"

She further described herself as being "closed minded." Ellen stated that she tries but it is hard for her to change that characteristic, probably because her father was a German truck driver. His philosophy was "my way or the highway."

Self-Disclosure

Little Disclosure

When I asked Ellen who she talks to, her immediate response was, "No one. No one." She lives with her significant other who is a psychologist, but Ellen believes that he is difficult to talk to "because he is a man." She said that, in her conversations with him, he begins to tell her what she should have done in any given situation and "it's just not as easy to do what he says [she] should do."

Ellen is especially clear that she doesn't share feelings. And she noted that, although her significant other is a clinical psychologist, she perceives him as believing that "feelings are not important in a person's life."

Ellen traced this lack of disclosure to an experience several years ago. She had a regional director who stole her business from her. "Just completely took it away. Even though he was under a non-compete, the courts let him get away with it." As a result of this situation, she has been financially devastated with huge legal fees. And she said, "I don't trust much anymore."

She believes that one of her biggest weaknesses with regard to this difficult situation was "being too open. That's what allowed the guy to steal [her] business…he knew too much…because [she] openly shared with him."

When talking about the managers currently working for her, Ellen differentiated the degree of trust she had with them. She is much more likely to be helpful and could be a bit more open with the Dayton manager. She asks for Ellen's help and invites Ellen to dinner with her and her husband. Ellen has been willing to help her and appreciates that she is a "bright lady." But even with the woman in Dayton, Ellen said that they don't talk in any detail. The managers who work with Ellen in closer geographical proximity are much more problematic to Ellen. She is not likely to share much at all with them.

Reconnection with Support

Because Ellen described herself as person who used to be open, I asked her what she now does about her need to talk. Her answer was simple. "Stuff it." She went on to explain that it does not feel good. In the course of our interview, she recognized that two

of the places she used to disclose were at church and at AA meetings. She is no longer attending either and began to describe how helpful they were to her. In her words,

> I found that to be a good outlet and I…part of me says for my own personal…because I really don't share very much any more….probably I should get back to the program….This is just bringing it to the surface for me again for me to get off my tush and go do what I should do.

Gender

Ellen does not feel that her disclosure is related to her gender. Years ago she may have said that the two were connected. She has been told that it is difficult for a woman to get established in her city. She believes that it is difficult for anyone to get established in her city because it is a "good ol' boy shot and a beer town." She said that, if she chose to see the gender difference, there would be a whole list of things to observe. But Ellen would say that gender has not really been an issue for her.

BARBARA

Barbara is 42 and the Vice President of Publishing/Editor-in-Chief of a popular magazine. Her editorial skills became evident even before we met in that she made careful queries about my research and academic affiliation. When meeting her, she apologized if her process seemed unduly skeptical. On the contrary, I perceived it as the careful research of a good editor. Barbara and I shared one interview.

I waited for my appointment with Barbara in the lobby of the large building in which her operation is located. She came down to the lobby to meet me, then escorted me to her office through a circuitous route of many halls, through rooms and across a bridge-like structure. We settled into her office for the interview; each of us on either side of her desk.

Leadership

Barbara has been Vice President of Publishing/Editor-in-Chief of this magazine for three-and-a-half years. She tells her staff that the staff listing at the beginning of the magazine is the only place where she appears at the top of the organization. In no other place does their relationship exist in a straight line. Her leadership involves a lot of consensus building. In her words, "There are many times when I feel very strongly about something, but there are many more times when I want to know what everyone else thinks about an issue before we make a decision on how to proceed." When describing her relational style of leadership, Barbara explains that "there isn't a formula. You can't expect people to act in way you think they should." Barbara frequently checks with the Office Manager to get a sense of how people will feel about a certain decision.

Barbara attempts to be "lifestyle friendly" in her leadership. There are currently two women in her organization who have new babies and they have created alternative work arrangements so that they work at home a couple of days a week.

Barbara also explained that she can "be a real stickler for certain kinds of behavior." She was not comfortable with the time that the workday started when she first began at the magazine, and she put a new policy into place.

Barbara has been communicating her vision for the magazine at weekly department meetings. However, she has recently taken on some new areas of responsibility and has turned over the daily operations to the Editorial Director. She has had some difficulty in separating herself from the operations of the work that she loves, but has had to do that. Barbara sees everything before the magazine goes out. She and the Editorial Director may have some give-and-take discussion about what to include. They are likely to have more discussion about what seems right after the magazine is published. Barbara is not likely to impose her view or make changes midway through the production cycle.

Barbara learned something about leadership from the experience of working for a particularly good editor in her previous job. He "was absolutely fabulous. He was younger than me. He was a brilliant journalist. And he had just a lot of fun and was really smart, knew what he was doing, and everybody loved him."

Self-Disclosure

The tone of Barbara's self-disclosure has been formed by her working through the staff ranks of a local newspaper. She "remember[s] what it was like to be the intern or

the researcher or the copy editor or the section editor or the real estate reporter…" The clear statement that came from having those positions is that Barbara "never talk[s] down to people." Her success at the newspaper came, in part, because she "figured out the tone." Describing that still further, Barbara said,

> People responded to me. Not that I didn't have some personal issues and problems but, in general, you know, our meetings were fun. I had a lot of energy. I had a lot of daily contact with the reporters and the editors, a lot of managing by walking around and chit chatting, laughing and commenting….We are a newsroom, there is only one newsroom. And after 13 years, I had to move into the office and move out of the newsroom. So I missed that. I didn't really want to be in a cage, my office.

Disclosure with Boss

Barbara described in detail the style of disclosure that she shares with her boss. When Barbara first came to this position, she didn't talk to anyone for a period of time. But now she shares with her boss like a friend. They spend regular one-on-one time together and talk about their families and their husbands and what they did over the weekend, as well as talking about the job. They connected easily from the beginning. Their husbands are comfortable together when they have found themselves at work-related functions.

However, it was Barbara's choice not to pursue a social relationship outside of the office. She explained to her boss that "at some point, something is going to happen and you are going to be mad at me about something. Something is going to go wrong in the business; things do go wrong. You are going to be annoyed with me and it is going to make it awkward." By saying this, Barbara set a boundary that protected them from the awkwardness.

Barbara furthered that she and her boss have been able to have some of those tough talks about judgment calls where they might disagree. They have been able to talk openly. Before Barbara's last promotion, her boss came into her office and said, "I don't want you to hold anything back. Is there anything between us, any issue or problem? Are you being totally…? And then she [gave Barbara] a chance to have this real meeting of the minds." As a result of that invitation, Barbara was able to air anything on her mind, but also to tell her boss how important their relationship was. Her boss was able to say that she wanted Barbara to be one of her key people in the organization. Barbara described this relationship with her boss as unique, not one she has had in other organizations.

Disclosure with Director

Barbara also discussed her disclosure in relationship with the Editorial Director whom Barbara supervises. Barbara perceives the Director as holding back and not being as direct as she might be, particularly in a recent conflict with someone whom the Director supervises. Although Barbara coaches her Director on being more direct, she does not get in the middle of exchanges with the staff. Barbara does, however, go into the Director's office to discuss situations (as opposed to calling her into Barbara's office) as a way of modeling the style in which she believes.

Barbara was able to be more open with the rest of the staff after the initial adjustment to her early beginnings with the organization. Several people were counseled out of their jobs in the early months, so people were interacting with Barbara carefully. Currently, Barbara tries to stay at a medium point in terms of the amount of conversation and chatter she shares. There is a lot of food and kitchen chatter in the organization.

Barbara will stop in and have a "few laughs, make a few comments, ask some questions and then leave so that [she is] not the one who is there for the whole duration of the discussion."

Live it

Part of what Barbara believes about her disclosure style is that it is more important to live your philosophy than to state it. She does not "make these fortuitous statements." She is more likely to tell a story of her eight year old daughter and tell of staying home with her when she is sick, than to say that she is a family friendly manager.

Marinate

When she is sharing her ideas, she realizes that they have to "marinate for a day." Barbara described her reactions to things as generally delayed. Her boss has asked her if she can't make it happen a little faster. But no, that is the way "her brain works."

Gender

When I asked Barbara if she thought that her gender affected her disclosure, she replied that she really does not think so, although she used to believe that it did. When she was first named the editor of the newspaper, there was a press release saying she was the first woman in that position. One of her fellow editors from another city saw the release and asked if we weren't past that. And although Barbara didn't think at the time that it was inappropriate to have included it, she feels embarrassed now that it was.

On the day of our interview, Barbara had a discussion with a woman on her staff about an email that was going out to announce this staff person's promotion. In writing the email, the woman mentioned having daughters and included their names. She then

called Barbara with second thoughts about having included that saying, “Men would never do that.” Barbara suggested to her that they are no longer living by men’s rules. In this particular organization, women dominate the ranks. Barbara’s point of view is “Let’s take advantage of it….You know the old boy network is always going to be there. Fine. Let them have it. We will create our own. We don’t need membership in theirs.”

JACK

Jack is the 47-year-old president of an engineering consulting firm. I learned of Jack through a friend who works in the organization and believes that Jack stands out as a leader. Jack's business is located in a new building in a fast-growing area of the suburbs. The office area is open and airy. Individuals work in large cubicles. I met with Jack in his office, which is at the rear of the space and is fully enclosed. I had one interview with him. For our time together, Jack left his desk and sat with me at a large table. Soon after we began the interview, his child's school called on his cell phone. He took the call and made arrangements to deliver a forgotten homework assignment. We then proceeded with the interview.

Jack's leadership in his industry seems to be important. However, his words were fewer than some of the other participants. The relatively smaller attention that I have given to Jack in this chapter and in the ones following is a result of having fewer descriptions of his process of self-disclosing.

Leadership

Jack said that I wouldn't understand anything about his leadership and his business without first understanding his family and his wife. He comes from a long line of entrepreneurs. So he was familiar and comfortable with the concept of starting his own business. He did not feel any fear. His father is 73 and works with Jack in the business. They had worked together back in the 1970s, had created a business that grew

quickly, and then when there was a recession, it went Chapter 11. Jack has been a part of both successful and difficult business ventures.

Jack met his wife at an EST seminar. She is also very entrepreneurial and has a background in accounting and finance. She meditates regularly; he described her as very spiritual. She has worked in the business and still understands it intimately. She is his source of grounding, idea sharing and information gathering.

The driving value in Jack's leadership is his humanitarianism. He returned to that cornerstone over and over again in our conversation. "People are important, first and foremost. You're not going to develop a company that the dollar is the most important thing." And then later, "People are people. They aren't machines. They aren't throw-aways." He has been a part of many organizations in which the dollar was the only bottom line, and he believed that didn't serve them well in the long run. Sometimes he has conflicts with some of his staff because, if someone has to be replaced, Jack is in favor of giving a much larger severance package than some of his advisors suggest. Another example of his humanistic approach is his inclusion of an employee's gay partner in office parties. In Jack's opinion, it is simply not an issue. "It just is what it is."

Continuing with that humanitarian theme, Jack said that, if he has a choice about whether to "screw this person" or not, he simply isn't going to do it. It is the way he is "hard wired." He is clear that "you don't compromise your ideals, the old adage about staying true, man to himself be true."

Jack described himself as a collaborative leader, but also one who works smart. There are times when he simply has to make a strong decision. Although he is interested

in others' points of view and wants to take their needs into account, in Jack's words, "My fiduciary responsibility is to make sure to protect the company."

Jack has won the notable Entrepreneur of the Year Award. Part of his participation in the process that resulted in this award was that he believes you have to "get on people's radar screens that you are a winner and they want to be with you." Throughout the interview, Jack combined the leadership experience of being competitive in the marketplace, making hard decisions and continuing to live true to his humanitarian values.

Self-Disclosure

Spouse

Clearly, Jack's wife is the primary target of his disclosure. She has intimate knowledge of the company, and he respects her knowledge and her spirituality. In his words,

> I always have the ability to talk with a very reasoned and sensible person, my wife, who's a real calming influence. I mean the fact that she's meditated for as long as she has, I think it actually lends a little bit of her here to this business.

Network

He also talks to a number of people in his network when he is making a decision. His attorney is next door and he talks to him frequently. He also reaches outside the corporation to discuss issues, "some people in the industry, some people just as friends." Because he is fairly young in this business, he is especially interested in talking with those who are older than he and who have more years of experience.

In considering the topics of disclosure, Jack described himself as "pretty open." If he is talking with someone about a business issue, he will probably keep it focused on

that domain. But as people get to know him a little better, he is inclined to share his story and talk about his wife. He might not talk about personal issues immediately, but he will get to that if a relationship develops.

Boundary with Children

Jack described some privacy in his disclosure when he talked about his children's view of his monetary success. He does not want to talk to them about his financial success. He wants to instill a "hunger" in them "to make sure they are going to work to find what they like to do, and it isn't material….You want to make sure that they are hungry for exploring and building and creating and really doing what you want to do." Jack described communication of those values as a concern with which he is struggling.

Gender

Jack's made a singular statement about gender. "I don't know if the gender, if that would make any difference or not." He did not talk any further about the influence of gender. It seemed to be a non-issue for him.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this chapter, I have told the stories of four women and two men. I have presented the hermeneutic circles of their understanding of their experiences of self-disclosing. In some cases, they have described their experience of leadership or of self-disclosure as being influenced by their gender. In other cases, they did not make those connections. In all cases I have uplifted multiple realities and have attempted to report their experiences with clarity and integrity.

In Chapter Five I will present the themes that have emerged through this process. Those themes provide a structure for understanding the experience of self-disclosure. The themes have emerged from and remain aligned with the voices of the participants.

Chapter 5

"I think if you don't talk about those things that you will become full of despair or hardened or hopeless. So I think you need a place to put it."
Anne, 2006, research participant

The purpose of this study is to describe the leader's gendered experience of self-disclosing. All of the participants, four women and two men, have been defined as leaders by those around them. I pursued three lines of inquiry. I did not impose any particular order or priority in presenting these lines of inquiry. The participants responded according to their interests. The first line of inquiry was the participants' description of their own leadership as an influence relationship as defined by Rost (1991). The second was a thorough exploration of their experience of self-disclosure. Third was a consideration of their gender and whether or not that affected their self-disclosure.

In this chapter, I provide what Moustakes (1994) called "the direct conscious description of experience and the underlying dynamics or structures that account for the experience" (p. 9). In presenting the "underlying dynamics or structures" of self-disclosure, I have organized the discussion into the general themes of relationship, place, topics, purpose and authentic voice. I have presented deeper layers of meaning within each of the themes. My consideration of these leaders' conscious experience of gender as it relates to their self-disclosure does not confine itself to a particular theme, but may transcend all areas of disclosure.

The use of these themes creates some ambivalence for me. There is power in the emergence of the themes. The detailed descriptions of these themes allow me to glean greater understanding of the essence of the self-disclosure experience. Further,

separating the original interviews into these themes is helpful to my digestion; it would be entirely too difficult for me to absorb the totality of the interviews in their original transcribed form, or even in the summaries that I have presented in Chapter Four.

However, as helpful as these themes are, I have felt some resistance to their use. All participants generously offered their conscious knowledge of their own experience. Each person's story is unique. Each story is whole. The themes are imposed on the stories and, as such, are artificial. The themes define the story, they analyze the story, they interpret the story, but they also interrupt the story. In their imposition, the themes are not discrete. Some overlap and require a degree of repetition.

In presenting this analysis, I have attempted to quiet my own dissonance by preserving the voices and the unique points of view of the participants. My goal is to offer a detailed review of these interviews so that the readers might be able to generalize some greater consciousness to their own experiences of self-disclosure.

The themes I have presented on the following pages represent my interpretation of these stories. The process of selecting these specific themes has been one of combining careful attention to the words and stories, with the intuitive experience of creating space for the themes to emerge. The process relies on both craft and art. As described in Chapter Four, I carefully went over each transcription multiple times. I took extensive notes on each interview. I reviewed my field notes describing the context of the interviews. I relied on member checking to ensure that my summaries represented what was actually expressed by the participants. I looked for similarities in topics among the stories. I purposefully did not go back to the literature presented in Chapter Two because I wanted to create space for original themes to emerge. However, I could not completely

divorce myself from my knowledge of the literature. On some level, that knowledge informed the intuitive part of my process.

I took walks and reflected about what the stories had told me. It was through this quiet reflection that I began to realize I had heard something of the relationship, place, topics, purpose and authentic voice of the disclosures. Further, I learned something about the participants' perceptions of gender.

SELF-DISCLOSURE AND RELATIONSHIP

Audiences for the Disclosure

The participants with whom I spoke all differentiated the audiences for their disclosures. They told varying groups of people about different aspects of themselves based on their specific relationships with those groups.

Levels of Management

Several participants spoke of the differing levels of management and their discernment in speaking with those levels. Anne described herself as "sandwiched" between her staff and upper management, saying that what she aspires to do as a leader is "to be the best advocate for those below [her] and those above [her]." Anne described her disclosure to her own staff as being very open. They tell their stories to each other. Anne has shared with her staff the story of her own family, her health and her personal concerns. Additionally, Anne discloses quite openly to her staff about the management style she uses with them and her personal agenda for professional growth. Anne is less comfortable disclosing to her staff when the topic is *about* upper management or decisions that have been handed down from that level.

Anne is considerably less open in her disclosures *with* the upper management. She monitors her disclosures. Even in exercises when they might be asked to share something no one knows about them, Anne described herself as choosing something "that meets the criteria, but doesn't really cut into something about [her]."

Julia's comments about her immediate staff (the management team) and the upper level management (the Board) have a theme similar to Anne's. Julia described herself as "pretty open with everybody" and "a little less open with the Board." She enjoys an open door policy with her management team. People drop into her office and chat. She shares willingly with them. They have traveled together and have shared stories and great humor. Their problem-solving is a give-and-take process through which Julia speaks openly about her opinions. Others are free to disagree. There is an ease about the process because "ideas are just ideas. They are not etched in stone." Julia has learned by trial and error to be more careful in sharing her thoughts with her Board. Her past openness has not always served her well.

Barbara has a slightly different situation with the hierarchy in which she works in that she shares "up" more completely than she does with her immediate staff. She is quite open with her immediate supervisor and she shares with her "like a friend." From the beginning of their relationship, they connected easily and are able to talk directly about their families and personal lives, as well as their differences of opinion on work-related matters. In comparison, when the staff members whom Barbara supervises are chatting and eating, she is likely to stop in and have "a few laughs, make a few comments, ask some questions and then leave so that [she] is not who is there for the whole duration of the discussion."

Ellen talks with her managers to some degree, but she is quite guarded about what she shares. She does not share her feelings and she does not share details about the business.

Anne, Julia, Barbara and Ellen described the various audiences for their self-disclosure in ways that put voices to the paradox of disclosure. As I discussed in Chapter Two, Kenny's (2005) interpretation of Bakhtin's work includes an understanding of language as being at the core of the force that both brings us together and drives us apart. As Anne, Julia and Barbara choose wisely what they will share with various levels of management, they are, in fact, using language to provide greater intimacy in some places, and as a construct for creating distance in others. Ellen situates herself in the paradox in a position that creates more distance than the experiences described by the other women. She makes language choices to protect herself, to create distance.

The stories of Anne, Julia and Barbara seem to exemplify what Cozby (1973) reported about disclosure in that, among females, liking someone leads to disclosure and greater disclosure leads to more liking. The lively give-and-take that these three women described in their work environments, as well as the fondness they seemed to have for their colleagues, suggested that their processes created more disclosure and more liking.

Rather than focusing on creating intimacy or distance as the women participants described, Ted talked about the various audiences with whom he speaks and on adapting his language for arts administrators using "arts-speak." Over the years, he has found that he listens carefully and has learned to use his "creative intuition" to connect meaningfully with those in charge. He works with committees of people who may or may not be in charge, but are involved in the merger of two large arts organizations. When working

with these committees, Ted's disclosures reveal his process. He asks many questions and then bounces potential ideas around with all of the people involved.

Family

Many participants talked about disclosing to their families and significant others. Jack was notable in this regard. Although he uses his legal advisor and his professional network, he relies most heavily on disclosures to his wife. He said, "I always have the ability to talk with a very reasoned and sensible person, my wife, who's a calming influence." He went on to describe her as a very spiritual person and one who has keen business understanding. "[T]he fact that she's meditated for as long as she has…actually lends a little bit of her here to this business."

Julia reported talking a great deal about her work with her husband and sons. When she was busy getting ready to open the new museum, she talked with them quite a bit. Now that the opening has occurred, she has shifted the balance of that conversation somewhat so that the museum does not absorb so much of her time at home. Throughout our interviews, Julia referred frequently to her husband's comments or point of view.

Ted suggested that the direct disclosures of his vulnerabilities occur with only a very few people, including his wife. He further described his family as not really asking about his art, but he feels safe enough there to have "show and tell at home" whether or not they ask for it.

The commonality that Jack, Julia, and to a lesser degree, Ted shared is that they rely on disclosure with their families to help manage their work environment. I was aware that their families were intimately aware of the details of their work.

In contrast, Anne talked more of using her family to support the issues in her personal life. She noted that, when she learned of her health issues, making decisions with her family became very important. When some children in her program lost their mom, she talked of needing to be with her own mom.

Ellen talks with her significant other, but experiences him as too eager to tell her what she should do in a particular situation. She also stated that, although he is a clinical psychologist, she believes that he thinks that "emotions are not important in a person's life."

Professional Help and Support

Some, but not all, of the participants talked about disclosing to a support group or a mental health professional. Ted referred a number of times to his years in analysis. He believes that, at this point, he has internalized his analyst. He consciously refers himself back to the process of analysis. "The person who was an analyst is still up there somewhere…What would Charlie do? Like, 'what would Jesus do?' I suppose he is my conscience in some way. But it's not a moral compass. It's an analyst compass."

Anne began going to a therapist as a place to discuss her health issues. She became aware that, although she was sharing her concerns with her staff, she did not want them to be her primary source of support. She sought that support from her therapist.

Although Ellen stated that she talks to "no one, no one," she realized during the course of our interview that she used to get a great deal of comfort from her disclosures at her AA meetings and at church. Those connections were missing from her life at this

point. In our interview, she suggested that she should go back to the program as it was helpful to her.

Interviews with Me

Of course, each of these participants also disclosed to me in the interviews. Because I shared between one and three interviews with them, the depth of sharing was varied. During each interview, I had a clear sense that I was hearing the authentic voice of the participant. There was a range of reported openness among the participants from Julia, who may have only "three degrees of separation from anyone in the world," to Ellen who said that she talks to "no one." But I was gifted with a sample of each person's genuine self-disclosure during these interviews. I have reported my observations of their disclosures in a later discussion in this chapter when considering self-disclosure and authentic voice.

Boundaries

Each of the participants disclosed to varying audiences, using those audiences for different kinds of listening and telling them different things. The implication of those varying audiences is that the speakers have created boundaries to identify what they say to each audience. Integral to their descriptions of their varying audiences of self-disclosure were their discussions of what they did and did not disclose. It was in the context of these discussions that their boundaries began to emerge.

Anne was explicit about many of the boundary decisions she has made. Unlike some people who manage a staff, Anne was very open about her family history, but somewhat less open about management issues, at least those issues attached to upper management.

With regard to the families with whom Anne works and, to a lesser degree the volunteers, she is quite careful in sharing her story. Any information she shares about her own life is about creating a safe atmosphere in which the families and volunteers can be open. She tells her staff and her volunteers that they "are the sponge. We disclose very little to families." She stated that she has learned from her training and experience as a psychologist that boundaries help her to be "effective and protective." She spoke of the boundaries she employs when she is with the families. "I'm not there to socialize and share stores. I'm there to listen to stories. And that's very clear in my mind."

Anne's clarity about her boundaries in this setting relates to Petronio's (2000) description of the rule-based management system that drives boundary regulation. The dimensions that define boundaries, according to Petronio's theory, are control, ownership, permeability and levels. Anne takes clear control of her personal story because she has complete ownership of that story. Although the boundary might be somewhat permeable when talking with her staff, it is much less so in relationship to the families and volunteers with whom she works. She has determined the level of disclosure through her training as a psychologist which guides her to monitor her disclosure with families in order to be "effective and protective." She guards those boundaries carefully.

Julia's disclosure is more permeable than Anne's in that she described her boundaries as "flowing, not rigid." She learned to have a sense of her boundaries with the Board by "just poking at it and testing it." She said that, when she first took the position of Executive Director of the museum, one of her British friends gave her some advice that has helped her maintain the boundaries she employs with the Board. That

friend reminded her that she is the "vicar." When Julia is meeting with the Board and thinks of something she might say, she monitors herself with the mantra that she is the vicar.

Not specific to her self-disclosure, but relevant to her general boundaries, Julia reminds herself and those around her that she and the museum are not one. She has made a point of leaving early enough to care for her children and encourages others to do the same. She has watched some of her peers give all of themselves to the museums and has learned that "the funny thing is that the museums just never love you back."

Ted told me that he discloses when it is safe and when he is asked. He described a situation when he was asked for greater intimacy in an unacceptable place. He was clear about the boundaries. Being in analysis for a number of years has affected Ted's boundaries. Having already revealed much of what he knows of himself aloud to another, privacy may have a different meaning to him than it does to others. He may also have a different need for a public sounding board than others. But he is absolutely clear when someone infringes on that private space and he stops anyone who gets too close.

Ted believes that the boundaries around his personal disclosures may affect him negatively in business. If he were more willing to share with his clients, it might be easier for him to stay in touch with them, to call them just to touch base. His comments relate to Lynn's (1978) equitable exchange theory which emphasizes initiating disclosures as a primary determinant of a disclosure response. If Ted shared more with his clients, he might, in return, gain a greater understanding of his clients from their return disclosures.

Although Barbara described her disclosures to her boss as being quite open and although their husbands seem to enjoy each other at official functions, she was careful to impose a boundary around their social relationship. Barbara explained to her boss that at some point something would go wrong and she would be unhappy with Barbara. Barbara believed that if she and her boss had a close social relationship, it would make those difficult work situations "awkward." Barbara seemed to be protecting future disclosures by creating a boundary around their socializing that might affect the openness of their relationship.

Jack, whose wife was key in many of his disclosures, talked of his boundary concerns in relation to his children. He does not want his children to perceive him as wealthy, even though he displays some obvious material well-being. He wants his children to find work that they like. He wants them to be hungry to explore and create. He is concerned about their perception of the importance of material wealth and is struggling with how to talk with them about that.

Discussion

As I described in Chapter Two, there is a great deal of discussion in the leadership literature about storytelling, narrative, voice. But none of this literature grapples with the complexities of the multiple audiences for those stories. We are told that leaders and followers create "full, sharing, feeling relationship[s]" (Burns, 1978, p. 448), but we are not told about the nuances of the differing relationships.

Gardner's (1995) discussion of story is intriguing to me in regards to the issue of audience. Gardner acknowledges that the leader's story is not static, it evolves chronologically. Leaders present "not just a headline or snapshot, but a drama that

unfolds over time" (p.14). My research adds dimensionality to Gardner's perspective in that the leader's story evolves *differently with each audience over time*. Further, Gardner describes the tension that may develop if there are inconsistencies between the story told and the embodied story. Although I would certainly concur, I am curious about Gardner's presentation of story in the singular. Clearly, the participants in this study have demonstrated that the leader has many stories, all may be equally authentic, but those stories are crafted for the audience that hears them. The challenges of telling and embodying an authentic story become more complex when we consider the leader's boundaries and the creation of those boundaries with varying audiences.

SELF-DISCLOSURE AND PLACE

Creation of Environment

Several participants spoke about intentionally creating an environment where both they and their staff members could disclose comfortably. Julia talked about that environment, and modeled it during our interviews. She talked about the importance of traveling with her team and the effect of those adventures. At one conference, four women had to share one room with two beds and one bathroom. On another occasion, the management team went to a mountain retreat and met with one mishap after another. Julia believes that they "are a different team because [they] spent that night in the cabin." She believes in creating situations in which they can all be human. One result of their many times away is that they have "created myths and stories that have lasted a long time." Further, the middle-of-the-night chaos in the cabin allowed them to have a spontaneous, but helpful, discussion about their fears for the coming year when they were

to open the new museum. Julia explained that part of creating these experiences was having plenty of food and wine. Additionally, she believes that it is important to choose people who can put up with these "cauca-mamy ideas."

In addition to traveling with her staff and creating adventures, Julia also works at creating an environment of sharing on a weekly and daily basis. During both of our interviews, we sat at a small round table with her door wide open. At one point, a woman who is on the management team dropped in to comment on Julia's funky skirt. They engaged in a lively discussion about what Julia might sew from the fabric that she had brought along with her. Julia's assistant also came in. Julia immediately asked for her insights on some of the things we were talking about. Julia easily shared her own thoughts as well.

Each week, the café manager of the museum cooks breakfast for the entire staff. Included in those weekly meals are several staff members of other nonprofit organizations that rent space in the museum, but do not work for Julia. Julia described those breakfasts as a time when they all hang out together and talk about new ideas that work in everyone's behalf.

Anne also has intentionally created an environment where sharing can occur. She strives to develop a culture where she can "elicit [the staff's] thoughts, dreams, experience and point of view." Anne's words resonate with Burns's (1978) description of transformational leadership in which leaders and followers share their values, motivations, wants, need, aspirations and expectations.

On one occasion, Anne's staff members were about to have a difficult discussion about their policies to decrease the waiting time for families needing their care. She told

the staff to “eat their Wheaties,” and she set aside ample time to stay with the discussion; this could not occur at an hour long staff meeting. Her planning allowed the team to be psychologically ready to dig into the discussion and to stay with it until resolution. Additionally, members of her staff tend to be physically nurturing so they brought snacks to share during the meeting.

Barbara has come to her present work environment by way of her newspaper background in which there was a newsroom, and only one newsroom. She believes that her success at the newspaper was due in part due to the fact that she “figured out the tone” of the newsroom discussions. She misses that space; she “didn’t want to be in a cage, [her] office.” In her present situation, her staff members have a kitchen in which they congregate, share food and chat. Barbara will stop in and laugh with the staff but, as I have mentioned previously, she does not stay for the entire discussion.

All three of these women, Julia, Anne and Barbara, have created what Gibson and Hodgetts (1985) have described as a problem-solving environment. As I discussed in Chapter Two, Gibson and Hodgetts believe this type of environment is one of the essential elements in disclosing effectively in the work environment.

Safety

Ted did not talk about creating an environment for disclosure. He did, however, talk about assessing any environment in which he found himself. Ted has to perceive the environment as safe. Because he is the son of a holocaust survivor, he travels through life knowing that there could be a Nazi around every corner. He described himself as paranoid in this search, but he also described himself as brave because he does move forward. He also said that he is lucky because he has not yet run into that Nazi. But his

assessment of the environment remains key to his disclosure. He "will make sure before [he] take[s] the plunge in a lot of ways. In a new situation, [he'll] peek first."

Anne said clearly that her sense of safety is what determines where and how she will share. She said that safety transcends any issues of gender in monitoring her disclosures.

Discussion

This description of the themes associated with place invites a discussion of two concepts from the self-disclosure literature. The first is the position of Holtgave (1990 as cited in Derlega, Metts, Petronio & Margulis, 1993) that self-disclosure is not an individual phenomenon. Self-disclosure relies on "joint contributions of the interactants," and what is disclosed is a "collective, emergent phenomenon" (p. 196). It is illustrative of this point, then, that these participants described those around them when describing their own self-disclosure. Their disclosure emerges from the collective process, and conversely, these participants created an environment in which this collective process was most likely to occur.

In Chapter One, I described the evolution of this study from my pilot study. In that initial study, I asked about the leader's experience with *self-disclosure*. Much of what the participant in that study described was her response to other's disclosures. In my subsequent interviews, I refined the inquiry to spotlight the leader's experience with *self-disclosing* as a way of focusing on the leader's own disclosures. Although this proved to be a helpful approach in moving the attention to the words of the leader, it became quickly clear to me that those words could not be understood without also including a discussion of the disclosures of those who surround the leader. Most of the

leaders whom I interviewed intuitively understood that they could not limit themselves to their own stories. Their stories were intertwined and entangled and co-created with others in their environment.

A second concept from the self-disclosure literature that reveals itself here is Smith and Berg's (1987) explanation of the paradox of self-disclosure in which an individual must know the group in order to disclose; and one comes to know a group through the process of disclosing. Ted's "peeking" or Anne's assessment of safety gives life to this paradox. The testing of those environments requires some cautious disclosures to determine the level of safety. It is through those self-disclosures that the environment becomes safer.

These theoretical concepts of Holtgave (1990) and Smith and Berg (1987) can be imposed upon the stories of these participants and might serve an explanatory purpose. Additionally, however, these stories add depth and meaning to the theoretical concepts. The theory comes to life through hearing the voices of these leaders who have carefully crafted environments for workplace disclosure. They have used their voices to assess the safety of a situation for further disclosure. We begin to hear that leaders' processes are as unique as their voices.

TOPICS OF SELF-DISCLOSURE

Several of the participants talked about the contents of their disclosures. As well as choosing the audiences and defining the boundaries of where they disclosed, they were mindful about what they disclosed to the various audiences. Greater degrees of intimacy are evident in the topics that they chose to share.

Leadership Process

Ted had a great deal of energy in describing his disclosure about his leadership process. In fact, in his opinion, it is the sharing of the process that has caused him to be seen as a leader. He begins to ask questions to solve a particular problem. When he gathers opinions, he formulates possibilities and then bounces those around with people. He is very open in his thinking and in his pursuit of answers. It was in the disclosures to pursue the potentiality of leadership that Ted was seen as a leader.

Julia also talked about being open about her management process. The museum is going through some restructuring in which a few positions will be lost. Julia has shared her ideas about how to restructure with a particular manager whose department will be affected. But in sharing, Julia also invited alternative ideas to save the necessary funds. The manager was then able to come back will a creative plan that seemed to work better.

Anne talked about having a discussion with her staff members about their use of adjusted time off. She acknowledged that the difference between adjusted time and vacation time had gotten too lose for her, and she needed them all to gain a greater understanding of the use of adjusted time. At times, Anne has talked with her staff about some of her own challenges as she develops her management style. Further, in developing this style, she has learned that she "can have an unpopular view and put it out there and it can sit side by side with someone else's viewpoint…."

Barbara both talked about and modeled her leadership process with the Editorial Director who reports to her. Barbara has talked with the Editorial Director about going

into the office of someone with whom she is in conflict and not waiting for that person to approach. Barbara talked about the importance of directness in those types of conflict situations. When Barbara wanted to talk about where the Editorial Director was in this process, she modeled her belief by going into the Director's office and asking directly and specifically about the issue.

Mixing the Personal and the Professional

Julia was intentional about sharing her personal life in her work environment. She actively asks questions of others to encourage them to do the same. She believes that it is important to connect personally because it is healthy to do so and "everybody has a story." She illustrated her point by telling me of a meeting she had with a hospital executive. She made a point of telling him a funny story about her three sons and her husband, and how physical their home environment was. The executive, in turn, was able to share stories of his life with three daughters and how emotional their lives are.

In considering the personal and professional, Anne's disclosure situation is somewhat reversed from what one might normally expect. She shares deeply and earnestly with her staff about her family history and her personal experiences. She is much more guarded in her discussions of management issues, especially the ones that come from higher levels of management. This choice is reasoned and thoughtful. Because Anne's staff members work with families in grief and crisis, for sound therapeutic reasons they have to know each other's stories and be mindful of the ways in which the families might touch their personal chords. The difficult upper management

issues do not touch them in the same way. Therefore, she has chosen to be more careful in protecting her professionalism.

Barbara makes a point of sharing her work philosophy with her staff, but she is off-put by the announcing of "fortuitous statements." She would be more likely to share a story about staying home with her sick eight-year-old daughter than to philosophize about having a family-friendly workplace.

This particular aspect of Barbara's disclosure can be referenced in the literature in two different ways. First, Baumeister and Hutton (1987) stated that people's self-construction can include an effort to match their self-presentation with their ideal self. In Barbara's avoidance of making casual statements about her work philosophy, she presents herself consistently with her ideal: a person who does not make fortuitous statements.

Secondly, Barbara's story of caring for her sick daughter exemplifies what Erkut (2001) called "good mother leaders" who paid attention to their staffs and demonstrated the ability to balance work and home. By nurturing her sick child and sharing the story, Barbara is simultaneously nurturing her staff by providing a model for their own life balance.

Both Ted and Jack talked of disclosing about their families in the context of work. Ted said that he might make reference to his children because they are "part and parcel" of who he is. He might also see a picture of children on someone's desk, ask about them and mention that he also has children. Jack describes his business conversations as staying pretty much within that domain until he gets to know people a little better. At that point, he may begin to talk some about his family.

Although both the men and the women in this study talked about disclosing content related to both their personal and professional lives, the women devoted more interview time and attention to that topic. With the exception of Ellen, the integration of the personal with the professional was one of the topics that they talked about most. Like the women managers in Helgesen's (1990) study, these women tended to the relationships both inside and outside their organizations.

Emotions

Several people talked about emotions—either their ability to express them or their inclination not to express them. Julia both demonstrated her emotionality and talked about it. Both of our interviews were seasoned with her rippling laughter, her telling of stories replete with sound effects and her rolling eyes and facial expressions. Additionally, when talking about her openness with her management team, she made a point of talking about sharing her anger with a director about a decision that had been made.

Anne was also specific about sharing emotions. She talked about sharing her anxieties and fears with her staff with regard to her difficult health situation. She also talked about openly sharing the sadness that she and her staff sometimes experience in relation to the families' stories. One of the issues that Anne articulated clearly was her hope to share her anxiety as an honest and authentic statement of who she is, and her hesitancy to share her anxiety if it made her staff anxious, or if she were in some way relying on them to manage that anxiety.

Ted reported that he does not share his emotions much. He and his wife are "better with business than with emotions." When he talks with other male artists they are likely to talk about process, but not how they feel about their art or their art process. Although Ted is not aware of much disclosure about his emotions, he conjectured that he must do some emotional sharing because he couldn't just be "putting it away."

Ellen was every clear that she does not share feelings. She does not feel safe with her managers. As I mentioned previously, although her significant other is a clinical psychologist, he seems to believe that "feelings are not important in a person's life."

The Final Word

Although a number of the participants described themselves as collaborative leaders, they also acknowledged that there were times when they made authoritarian decisions, offering the final word. Jack described himself as a leader who works smart. Although he elicits input and is interested in others' points of view, sometimes he has to make a clear and strong decision for the protection of the company. In Jack's words, "My fiduciary responsibility is to make sure to protect the company."

Julia stated that she so rarely takes the authoritarian position of "I am the Executive Director" that it is shocking to her staff when she does so. Although she enjoys discussion and free exchange, "at a certain point you have to say, 'That's it.' At some point, you stand up and take responsibility." She has sometimes invited a manager to make a particular decision with the caveat that, if she doesn't make the decision, Julia will make it.

Anne believes that one of her strengths is knowing whose opinion to elicit for a particular decision. However, she also recognizes that her responsibility in the corporate setting is to "make a decision, to hold someone accountable, to put something in writing. And some things can't be negotiated." In finding her management voice, Anne has learned that she can articulate an unpopular point of view which exists beside someone else's point of view without demeaning or diminishing either.

Barbara described herself as being "a real stickler for certain kinds of behavior." She has made some policy changes in her organization that have not always been popular, but she has certainty about their importance.

Ellen described herself as moving away from the more authoritarian approach. She is more "mellow" at this point in her life and is more likely to ask a question rather than issue a demand. She did, however, also describe herself as "closed minded" and said that she has a hard time changing what she identifies as her father's attitude, "It's my way or the highway."

Regrets or Mistakes

The participants acknowledged the irreversible quality of the spoken word by talking about the disclosures they had made in error. In some cases, they said things that they believe they really should not have said. In other situations, they may have said something in good faith, but changes in circumstances caused them to regret that disclosure later.

Ellen had a profound experience in which her regional director stole one of her businesses from her. She believes that this occurred because she was "too open." She

told the manager all of the details of her business and he "knew too much," thereby allowing him to take over the business.

Anne described several situations in which her disclosures did not serve her well. In general, Anne would describe herself as "blurty" and someone who sometimes says things with "wit and sarcasm." She occasionally says things too quickly or with what she intends as humor, and then worries about how her remarks might have been received. On one occasion, she had to meet with other managers to explain her understanding of the computer system because she had made a joke to one manager saying that she knew how to "cheat the system." She was referring to her knowledge of shortcuts to gain access to necessary information.

Anne also believes that, in some cases, it is does not help to disclose her mistakes because, "you are vulnerable if you say you are vulnerable." In some cases, she believes that she has compounded her error by admitting aloud that she has "screwed up."

Anne does not have a sense of safety in her disclosures to upper management. Part of the difficulty for her is that the Director to whom she reports was once her colleague and a person in whom she confided. Anne felt a sense of betrayal concerning the events that led to her colleague's promotion to Director and, as a result, has very little trust in her. Anne wishes that this woman did not know her personal story.

Julia believes that she has made some disclosures to the Board that were not in her best interest. On one occasion, she informed the Board that most Executive Directors leave after about three years of an opening of a new museum. Her intention was to suggest to them that they might get "doggone tired" of her. But that information

concerned the Board members who began to suggest that Julia hire a Deputy Director which, in Julia's mind, makes no organizational sense.

On another occasion, Julia asked for help from a Board member because the museum was in need of a couch for the staff. This request caused a conflict, because that Board member's business had not been asked to bid on the entire furniture project. Julia disclosed that she did not know the Board member's business worked at that level. At Julia's suggestion, the two got together to talk over coffee. The Board member was again irritated because Julia did not know about her business. As a result, the Board member made some personally insulting remarks to Julia and then went off the Board.

Mistake Correction

Once the disclosures have occurred, there is no way to retrieve them. Participants expressed a variety of strategies for dealing with errors. Ted was very clear. His response to my query about what he did with mistakes was, "Nothing much. Remember. Learn." He said that once his words are in the world, he no longer has control over what happens with them. His disclosure process is organic, he contributes to the "organic-ness," but recognizes that it has a life of its own.

Ted furthered that, if he has an opportunity to apologize or unruffle someone's feathers, he will. If that opportunity does not exist, he is willing to trust the "leap of faith and the willingness to let the process have its own life."

Julia similarly said, "for the most part, [she] move[s] on" after a disclosure error. On one occasion, she wrote a note of apology because she said something that might have been unkind. In the example given previously, in which Julia's

disclosures about needing furniture caused a conflict, her first correction was more disclosure. She told the Board member that she didn't know her business did such extensive projects (which caused more conflict), and then she arranged to meet the Board member to talk further. Julia apologized. When her efforts did not soothe the situation, and the woman made some cutting personal statements about Julia, she chose not to further aggravate the situation. She did not disclose to the Board the personal assaults; she did not pursue the woman further.

Anne's process is somewhat different than Julia's and Ted's. If she says something that she later thinks she should not have, she "beats herself up from here to kingdom come," she "ruminates," and she is "upset by things like that." She sometimes corrects by clarifying the *content* of the disclosure. When Anne made a joke on a staff person's voicemail that she thought might have been misinterpreted, she was quick to call him and clarify her remarks.

Another strategy Anne uses is to talk about her disclosure *process* as a way of monitoring it. When she is with her management team and she is uncomfortable about the discussion, she might say something like, "I'm really trying to watch my professionalism, so I want to share what I am thinking and feeling, but that felt over the edge."

An additional strategy Anne uses is to retreat after an uncomfortable disclosure. After she has expressed her feelings, Anne may become uncomfortable and then she becomes very closed. With upper management, she sometimes finds herself vacillating between the opposite poles of sharing and shutting down.

Ellen's correction for having told too much about her business is simply to "stuff it." She described herself as once being open, but that has changed. However, in the course of the interview, Ellen identified AA and her church as helpful places where she had disclosed in the past. The correction she may make in the future is to "get off [her] tush" and "get back to the program."

Discussion

The topics that these leaders shared can be seen as related to the level of intimacy that they choose to share. Disclosing about their leadership process is undoubtedly less personal than sharing about their personal life. Talking about emotions may take them to a yet deeper level. Disclosure mistakes or regrets may occur within the context of the topic of greatest intimacy, the least, or anything in between. However, either correcting those mistakes or deciding to let them go moves the leader to a very deep level of awareness and/or relational intimacy.

The topics that these participants spoke about and the resultant intimacy that they shared is directly related to their leadership. Many of the theoretical constructs presented in the leadership literature are directives about the openness and intimacy that a leader shares:

Wheatley (2002) encouraged leaders to be brave enough to have meaningful conversations.

Erkut's (2001) advisement is that leaders know themselves and let others know.

Burns (1978) stated that the "search for wholeness" is in a "*full, sharing, feeling* relationship" (p. 448, emphasis in original).

In Bennis's (2000) explanation of the management of trust, he said that knowing where the leaders are coming from and what they stand for creates reliability which is essential for trust.

Senge (1990) discussed the importance of openness in creating team learning and shared vision.

Kouzes and Posner (2002) directed leaders to allow their emotions to surface as they told their stories.

Bushe (2001) challenged leaders to develop their Descriptive Selves in which they tell the truth of their experience.

My joy in interviewing these leaders was that the directives of the literature came to life. I have a greater understanding of how a leader might create openness in team learning (Senge, 1990) when I hear of Julia's adventures with her staff in the cabin. I can imagine that Anne's staff members are transformed by her "*full, sharing, feeling* relationship" (Burns, 1978, p. 448) with them as they struggle to support families in crisis. When Barbara talks to her supervisor openly and directly, she is brave enough to have important conversations (Wheately, 2002).

Further, these directives from the leadership literature are not easy. Leaders make mistakes. Disclosures slip by our internal censors that do not serve us well. The leaders in this study offered a repertoire of responses in the eventuality of words spoken in error. The leaders' description of their corrective

processes allowed those mistakes to be normalized and invited the repair to be part of the rhythm of their leadership.

THE PURPOSE OF SELF-DISCLOSURE

Part of what some participants talked about was why they disclosed. They described the purposes served by their disclosures.

Influence

Rost's (1993) definition of leadership which I have utilized for this study, is "an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes" (p. 102). Therefore, I would suggest that, by definition, all disclosure among leaders and followers is for the purpose of influence. It is the quality of influence that defines the relationship as leadership.

At the onset of each of the first interviews, I gave the participant a written statement of the purpose of this study which included Rost's definition of leadership. In an effort to bracket my own understanding of influence, I neither challenged the participants' descriptions of their use of disclosure to influence, nor returned them to Rost's definition. Some participants had a broad understanding of their use of disclosure to influence, others seemed to have a narrower view.

Ted was clear about his use of self-disclosure for the purpose of influence. He said that everybody has an agenda. In most of his leadership capacities, Ted's agenda is to become more known as an artist. Because he believes that his

leadership and his person are inseparable, any time he is facilitating a meeting or solving a problem, he is becoming more known and is therefore advancing his agenda. The outcome of whatever project he is working on is the agenda of the organization, not his own. He is free to work toward any agreed upon outcome. He does not have to be tied to a particular outcome. His agenda is met as long as he is leading authentically and becoming known.

Ted described his leadership process as similar to our interview process. Just as he interacted with me, if the environment is safe, he answers people's questions with an example from his own life. These disclosures are then directly related to the influence strategy of his agenda. As he becomes more known to others, he is becoming more known as an artist.

Ted spoke directly about his disclosure process and his ability to sell himself as an artist. He said that, "[T]he true art of salesmanship is nothing but self-disclosure. And genuineness." When he is talking to people, whether in a social setting or in an arts organization, the message is the same. He talks about what he does or about a problem he is solving. And he listens to the answers. But all the while he is, on some level, promoting himself and making himself known as an artist. This description harkens back to the research of Jacobs, Hyman and McQuitty (2000) in which they related the use of self-disclosure in successful sales efforts.

Jack did not speak directly about influence but alluded to similar sales strategies as did Ted. He was willing to participate in the process that allowed him to win the Entrepreneur of the Year Award. He participated because he believes that "you have to get on people's radar screens that you are a winner and they want to be with you."

Sharing of himself “on the radar screens” and getting people to “want to be with you” sound to me like self-disclosure and influence.

When Anne considered using her self-disclosure as an influence strategy, she said that, although she may have done that at some point, it “rings false” to her. She wonders how people use their disclosure to get ahead. In referring to her Myers-Briggs style, she said that she would rather be “right than relational.” And she perceives herself as wanting to gain influence more by crafting a cogent argument than by sharing a personal story.

Although Ted, Jack and Anne did not discuss their influence strategies as connected to their gender, Carli’s (2001) research is worth considering in this respect. Carli suggested that there is congruence between male influence behaviors and gender appropriateness. For women, competence can simultaneously increase influence while decreasing likeability.

Ted was of a single mind when talking about his influence: everyone has an agenda and his is to sell himself as an artist. Jack similarly was clear that the goal is to “get on people’s radar screens” so that “they want to be with you.” They seemed to be living Gardner’s (1995) directive that stories of identity can be “the most powerful weapon in the leader’s arsenal” (p. 43). (The masculine language of Gardner’s war metaphor cannot be missed.)

Anne does not entirely fit the feminine stereotype in preferring to be “right than relational.” However, her position does indicate more ambivalence which may come from Carli’s (2001) assessment of the lack of alignment in her gender roles. Using her

story to get ahead rings false; using a clear argument is the legitimate way to gain influence.

Barbara talked about using her self-disclosures to influence her staff with regard to her management philosophy. As mentioned previously, she is more inclined to talk about staying home with her sick eight-year-old daughter than she is to make "fortuitous statements" about the family-friendly workplace. Further, Barbara's openness with her boss includes direct points of view when they disagree. They are able to share a "real meeting of the minds" where each is free to influence the other by clarifying her opinion.

Although Julia did not talk directly about influence, she implied it in her first statement describing her leadership style. "It is all about getting people on the same page." Again, she implied something of the connection between her influence and her disclosure in saying that, when getting people on the same page, moving toward a common vision, you may find that some people don't have a vision. So Julia uses that opportunities to disclose, saying, "Well, how about this one?" This implies that Julia's disclosure influences their buy-in of her vision.

Both Barbara and Julia gave voice to what Petronio (2002) the social control benefit of disclosure. By telling people how we feel about a topic, we may be able to influence their position.

Sharing our Burdens

Anne was impassioned when she described the process of her own disclosing and that of others for the purpose of lifting the heaviness of the hard times. She described the human condition as one in which if we can share our pain outside of our internal self, it

becomes more manageable. She believes that if you give me half of your burden and I give you half of mine, somehow we both feel lighter.

Anne furthered her point of view when talking about creating a place for families, staff, volunteers and herself to share the stories of their pain. "I think if you don't talk about those things that you will become full of despair or hardened or hopeless. So I think you need a place to put it." This statement echoes Wheatley's (2002) words, "[I]f we can tell someone our story, we find it easier to deal with our circumstances" (p. 88).

Finally, Anne told me how powerful it was to be able to share the personal information about her health with her staff. She did not feel that she had to have "a stiff upper lip" or be silent about what was going on. Anne seemed quite moved by the experience and that sharing through this extreme crisis helped her to feel that she was not alone in her fear or pain.

Ellen talked semi-directly about the importance of having a place to lay your burden, by describing the difficulty of not disclosing. After the legal and financial difficulty with her manager, she just doesn't "trust much any more." With regard to her feelings, Ellen simply has to "stuff it," but she acknowledged that that just didn't feel good. As mentioned previously, she remembered that going to church and to AA was very helpful in that it gave her places to share. She "found it to be a good outlet."

Discussion

Both the self-disclosure research and the leadership literature give some consideration to self-disclosure as social exchange. Cozby (1973) presented his

penetration theory as a series of rewards and costs of disclosures. Petronio (2002) wrote of managing our privacy boundaries by balancing the risks of disclosure against the gains. Gardner (1995) called stories "a uniquely powerful currency in human relationships" (p. 42).

The voices of these participants describe the many ways in which leaders might share their stories to gain influence or to share their burdens. There is evidence of social exchange in these stories. The exchange might be that Jack tells his story and in return is voted the Entrepreneur of the Year. Or the exchange might be that Anne tells her staff of her health problem and they then help to carry her burden. The descriptions that these participants offered give color, texture, tone and depth to the exchange. If this exchange is, as Anne suggested, basic to the human condition, it is helpful to hear the humanness of the voices in these exchanges.

In addition to adding flesh to the social exchange, the stories of these participants move the discussion beyond quantitative measurement. In the world of self-disclosure, there is no unit of measure. It may be accurate that people balance the risk of disclosure against the benefits. But that balancing process is both personal and subjective. The balance is deeply embedded is one's world view. That view looks very different to Ted, the son of a holocaust survivor, than it does to Julia whose father knew no stranger. These stories allow us to see the nuance and the depth of the social exchange.

SELF-DISCLOSURE AND AUTHENTIC VOICE

The style and tone of the participants' disclosures became an important part of our interviews. Both the words and the paralanguage that carry the message affect the experience.

Humor

Some of the disclosure that participants reported had been delivered using humor. Humor may have numerous functions. Its use as a disclosure style was mentioned by several participants.

Julia talked in detail about the importance of humor and her belief that humor has a lot to do with leadership. When she described her work at the museum, she set the tone for humor by saying that this museum is a place for fun, that no one is dying. Her comments suggested at least six ways in which humor functions to serve their disclosures at the museum. First, in affirming her mother's adage, "more truth is spoken in humor than the world will ever know," Julia suggested that humor allowed people to speak their reality.

Second, she said that humor lent perspective for decision-making. "We run a museum. You know, we are not finding peace in a dark world. We run a museum and we have to remember that in whatever decisions we make. And I think humor helps make those decisions."

Third, Julia suggested that humor takes the "tension out of things." If there are touchy or difficult things to be said, humor smoothes and soothes the process. This use

of humor was suggestive of the research of Crawford (1995) who stated that people use humor to test messages and to do serious work in the context of the conversation.

The differing senses of humor of everyone on the management team represents the fourth function of humor. They are able to disclose the uniqueness of who they are through their special kind of humor.

Fifth, Julia's staff shares some side-splitting stories of their travels and adventures together. These stories have become part of their myths and shared history and are the adhesive that bonds them and gives them identity as a team. "[They] just have to say, 'Stop, drop and roll' in front of Lois and [they] all burst into laughter because these are funny moments that are hard to explain to anyone outside the circle." This shared history describes what Crawford (1995) identifies as an important component of female humor in that the storytelling is a collaborative process.

Finally, joy, not the same as humor, but potentially related, is part of the museum's mission of "joy, creativity and curiosity." In Julia's words, "If we are not joyful, creative and curious at least at one point during the day, then we are not doing our job…." So experiencing joy does not just help them do their jobs, joy *is* their job.

Julia's emphasis on humor has made its way throughout the museum staff. They have recently hired a facilitator to do their strategic plan. When the facilitator asked the group to identify the strength of the museum, the number one response was humor.

Anne also talked about the humor of her disclosures. Like Julia, she indicated that humor allowed Anne and her staff to disclose difficult information. On one occasion when Anne was talking to her staff about their transition to the new Executive Director, she asked if they had a final word. One staff person answered simply by singing "Slip,

Sliding Away." Another staff person has been known to communicate her feelings about a situation by singing "If I Had a Hammer."

Anne's discussion about revealing oneself through humor centered most notably around the issue of trust. "I think of disclosure, humor, risk—they all kind of play with one another. So in order to joke about things there has to be a high level of trust." Anne described her staff as a place where there is enough safety to disclose within the humor.

Anne described a situation in which her staff presented some important and complicated information to other departments, but decided to do it in a fun way by creating a newscast with a great deal of humor. Anne talked about the risk for her and her staff in approaching the presentation this way. In relation to this skit, she recognized another use of humor. She identified that she sometimes manages her own anxiety by using self-effacing humor.

Risk and Anxiety

How the participants disclosed and, in some cases, if they disclosed at all, was related to their perception of risk and their management of anxiety. The discussion of Anne's understanding of humor, which I related previously, alludes to this. She stated that "disclosure, humor, risk—they all kind of play with one another." Anne was willing to analyze her disclosure strategies in a great deal of detail and was able to talk deeply about the anxiety of risk.

When Anne is working with upper management, there is a level of risk. She is aware that she does not enjoy the same level of safety as she has with her own staff. She is "always trying to figure out how much to share with them." Even in group building

exercises when she is asked to share something of herself, she is careful to meet the criteria, but not tell much of herself. This underscored London's (1995) work that stated, "People use self-descriptions of their personal characteristics and feelings to influence how others see them" (p. 99).

Anne also described a swinging back and forth of her disclosure process. After making herself uncomfortable with too much sharing, she is inclined to pull back and "back peddle." Anne was experiencing what Petronio (2002) called role risks in that the disclosure can jeopardize one's standing or position.

Anne recognized that, in some situations, there is a connection between her anxiety and her self-disclosure. Her humor is one of the ways that she leaks her anxiety. She talked about her inclination to disclose when she is anxious. "I am anxious. I comes out….People don't realize how anxious you are, especially if you don't let on. Let it go."

Anne also disclosed quite intentionally to her staff when she had a great deal of fear and anxiety about her health. She wanted them to know what was going on because it was such a big thing for her, but she did not want to "dump" her anxiety there. She found a therapist to talk to as a way of not using her disclosures at work to manage her stress. Anne presented herself as a differentiated leader. Bushe (2001) described differentiated leaders as being connected to others, but as not having the fuzzy boundaries of those who are fused and who therefore expect others to manage their anxiety.

Anne's anxiety sometimes comes out in what she call her "blurts." She was able to contrast the authentic disclosure about an anxious situation from the vulnerability of the blurts. She described a situation in which a person might be making a decision based on their thoughts, feelings, experiences and crises. There is a very authentic way to share

the fullness of who you are without being "blurty." She said that is the goal to which we all should aspire. She contrasted the genuineness of that disclosure to a situation in which you might be sharing a part of yourself that is developing, but not fully formed. They are the childish or anxious or undeveloped parts of yourself, and Anne's assumption is that they can be recognized as such. These are the disclosures that make her feel vulnerable.

Ted was also extremely articulate about his assessment of risk in a disclosure situation. As the son of a holocaust survivor, Ted described himself as paranoid because he believes that there is "a Nazi around every corner." In a new situation he peeks nervously around that corner first, because someday he is going to meet that Nazi. "That's the paranoia part."

But Ted also described himself as both lucky and brave. He is lucky because he has not yet run into that Nazi. He is brave because he continues to participate in many change projects and social events. He continues to be the "natural salesman" in spite of the fear of the Nazis.

Ellen and Julia might represent the outside points on the continuum in terms of assessing the risk of disclosure. Julia's perspective can be best understood through her own words. "What could we possibly talk about that would not be safe?....Ideas are just ideas. They are not etched in stone. Everyone has different ideas. And you can learn from different ideas and what's the big deal?"

On the other hand, Ellen shares with no one. She attributes that to the experience of losing her business to the manager with whom she was too open. Her current position

is, “I don’t trust much anymore.” And, when she is considering self-disclosure, to “stuff it.”

Slow Down

Both Anne and Barbara talked about their need to slow down the communication process in order to give themselves more time to think through their disclosures. Barbara said that she has to “marinate for a day” before sharing her ideas. Her boss has prodded her on this timing, asking her if there isn’t a way she can come up with these ideas a little faster. But no, Barbara assures her that this is the way “her brain works.”

Anne believes that she sometimes loses her voice in the presence of other opinions. Her strength lies in her ability to really hear and appreciate others’ points of view. But that same gift contributes to her losing her own point of view. She recognizes that this is happening when she loses her words or cannot regain her thoughts about her point in the discussion. Sometimes she manages this loss by being quiet. Other times, she “blurts” in the face of this confusion. The best strategy Anne learned was modeled by her Director. This woman manages to slow down the discussion and delays making a decision by acknowledging that she has heard good information from the group but that she will have to get back to them at a later point. Anne described this style as “layered” and said that her Director “holds her place and then she’ll back away.”

Modeling

I was able to glean some information about how the participants disclosed through my own experiences with them. This is a substantially different discussion than the

topics in this chapter because it is based entirely on my perception, as opposed to my perception of the participants' perceptions.

Jack met with me at a table beside his desk and immediately got a call on his cell phone. He checked the caller ID and said to me that he needed to answer because it was his son's school. Jack then had a brief phone conversation about delivering a homework assignment. He jotted down a note to himself, offered a few words of explanation and then was fully present for the interview. Jack went on to say that I wouldn't understand anything about his leadership without understanding his wife and his family. At a later point, he described his humanitarian values, expressing his belief that people matter first. To some extent, his immediate response to the call from his son's school demonstrated his disclosure behaviors around those values.

Julia also modeled the disclosure practices that she described. She talked about the importance of humor in the work environment. Throughout our interview, she told funny stories and engaged me in laughter throughout the process. Her belief that "everyone has a story" was supported by asking me if I had children and about their relationship with each other. In doing so, she became what Derlega and Berg (1987) called a "high opener," one who initiates conversations as a way of using the environmental press to move the disclosure in a desired direction. Her "What's the big deal?" belief about the ease of the disclosure process was brought to bear in both interviews. Her door was open, and people strolled in and chatted. She introduced me to the people who dropped in. On one occasion, she engaged her assistant in the topic we were discussing. It was all breezy and easy. Her staff was clearly used to this open door style.

Anne demonstrated the good listening that she offers to her families when she met with me. During all three interviews, we sat in a comfortable room with the door closed. I offered probes and sometimes asked clarifying questions. Anne listened and asked me for further clarification when she did not understand. When she described her own disclosure, she was intensely focused. She was able to dissect her process in great detail. Her analysis was quite thoughtful.

Ted put language to the modeling of his disclosure. He said that his disclosure during his leadership process is much like the disclosure I had experienced: he answers people's questions with examples from his own life because his self and his leadership are inextricably linked, and because making himself known is part of his personal agenda. When I asked Ted to talk about the openness he shared with me and, presumably, with his analyst, he said that the requirements for his disclosure were that it needed to be a safe place and he needed to be asked. Both of those criteria were met in our interviews.

Although Ellen reported that she did not talk to anyone, she was remarkably open with me. As the interview progressed, that openness expanded. She indicated to me that she had really enjoyed our interview, and her decision to get back to AA and to church where she had an opportunity to share may have been a response that came from her pleasure in the sharing.

Barbara described her style as direct and, as such, talked about going directly to a person with whom she needs to speak. She demonstrated this immediately to me by coming to the lobby to meet me herself, escorting me through a long maze of hallways and stairs to get to her office, and then escorting me out at the end of the interview. She

talked about the disclosure issues directly and specifically, and brought herself back to task if she felt that she had wandered.

Developing a Unique Voice

Several participants talked about how they have found, or are finding, their authentic voice. Anne's analysis of her voice included her knowing what was not her most developed voice. As described previously, she sometimes leaks her anxiety through self-effacing humor or ill-timed "blurts." She sees these as unformed parts of herself. She was able to compare these situations to other times when she places herself "out there," the emotional, spiritual and cognitive part of who she is, including her vulnerabilities. Putting all aspects of herself forward in a thoughtful and authentic way "does not seem blurty to [her]. It just seems very authentic."

Another aspect of Anne's authentic voice exists in its alignment. There are times when there are too many competing voices. The politics of her organization sometimes cause her to lose her voice, to be unable to voice her position. But when working in her own department, in a therapeutic setting, she experiences coherence and alignment because "you work at being a safe person, a good listener, an authentic person. And the role is aligned."

When describing that voice that comes from her centeredness, Anne said, "I guess it's like when you have an instrument and some instruments have different timbres. Like a bell tone is very clear…It's a very clear line. Reed instruments have a lot of static. And there's an internal sense of a bell tone. It's a clear voice." Anne further described

that the bell tone comes with a more developed voice. It still carries playfulness and humor, but it is more highly developed.

Anne's description of the clear tones of authentic voice sounds very much like Maslow's (1950 cited in Burnard and Morrison, 1992) discussion of self-actualization. Maslow stated that self-actualization does not imply self-satisfaction. Self-actualizing is a process of self-acceptance including frailties and problems.

Ted's search for his voice is connected to his identity as an artist. He feels a sense of privacy in sharing too much of himself. He is not likely to be "ostentatious" because, as his father's son, he must "blend in, be careful, don't stand out" in order to avoid the notice of the Nazis. He uses his art as a statement of his uniqueness. Calling attention to himself through his words may be too dangerous.

Ted searches for voice, his and others', by using a process parallel to that of his photography. In photography, the figure is visible only in relation to the contrast of the background. Figure and ground are inseparable. In dialogue, the kernel is discernable only when it is possible to sort through the noise. Searching for the kernel amid the noise is somewhat like adjusting the contrast between figure and ground in order to make the figure more or less visible. When Ted is involved in a problem solving process, he uses his voice to engage others' point of view. In so doing, he creates an opportunity to sort through the noise and to speak the kernel that he discovers.

Julia points to several people in her life when she explains the development of her style of disclosure and engagement. She was clear that her style was much like her dad's. As children, they used to laugh at their dad for finding connections wherever he went. As an adult, she finds herself actively doing the same. She thinks "it's fun…the six degrees

of separation." Her husband suggests that Julia has no more than three degrees of separation to everyone in the world.

Another aspect of Julia's disclosure style comes from her mom. She has the ability to be "The Executive Director," to make a tough decision and to speak the final word. This, she believes, is much more like her mother. As children they would never go to mom with something that they weren't sure they would get.

Finally, Julia points to Fred Rogers as one of her early mentors. She learned that "you should really just be yourself." It appears that this message is very much a part of Julia's voice.

Ellen also pointed to a parent as part of the development of her style. Her dad was a German truck driver whose philosophy was "My way or the highway." As a result, Ellen described herself as "closed-minded."

Barbara was able to develop her voice, both from a valued editor and from her years in the newsroom. She worked through the ranks of the newspaper and developed in an environment where everyone shared the newsroom. Her success came from "figuring out the tone" of that culture and from remembering each of her positions so that she "never talks down to people." Barbara was influenced by an editor who, although he was younger than she, was "a brilliant journalist" as well as being "really fun."

Discussion

Throughout this entire chapter I have provided details of leaders' disclosure process that may help to describe the transactions of the practice of leadership. I have shown evidence of Denning's (2005) patterns of the use of storytelling. We can see

examples of Bushe's (2001) Descriptive Self in these leaders. The participants engage in what Kouzes and Posner (2002) called "modeling the way" by clarifying their values and expressing themselves.

When considering the authentic voices of these leaders' disclosures, I also move to a level that goes deeper than transactions and into the transformation of the leader. I return to Couto's (2004) use of MacIntyre's (1999) frame. In order to answer the question "What am I to do?" the leader must first answer the question "Of what stories do I find myself a part?" The leaders in this study have offered the stories of which they are a part. Ted, Julia, Ellen returned to the stories of the families of origin. Jack began his interview by telling me that I couldn't understand his leadership without first understanding his wife and family. Anne and Barbara developed the cast of their stories to include close relationships with colleagues.

When considering of what stories these leaders find themselves a part, I reveal the deepest layer of the essence of their self-disclosure. For example, Ted's disclosures may be seen on a transactional level as a good model for creating change within and between arts organizations. Moving to another horizon, we can see those same disclosures as advancing his agenda for selling himself as an artist. Another level in the hermeneutic circle helps us to understand those disclosures as an effort to wave his hands behind his father's raised newspaper to win his attention. Moving still more deeply, we learn that the development of his particular voice has been an attempt to avoid the attention of the Nazis while simultaneously winning applause for his art.

We can understand the depth of Anne's disclosures by similarly uncovering the many layers of her responses. I have learned behavioral strategies for managing my own

anxiety by hearing Anne describe how she attempts to slow her responses in order to clarify her thinking. On a deeper level, we can understand that Anne's gift of listening to the other so intently has contributed to the dilemma of losing her own position. Unpacking her experience still more, we can see that she sometimes blurts her anxiety as a way of ridding herself of it. But at the deepest level is the voice of Anne's clear bell tone in which she reveals herself with her vulnerabilities and anxieties, offers them as a pure statement of who she is, without apology or expectation.

Revealing the layered meaning of the authentic voices of these leaders marries scholarship and practice, transactions and transformation, being and doing. The hermeneutic circles of understanding lead us to the essence of the experience of self-disclosing.

GENDER

As mentioned in Chapter Two, there is great debate about the concepts of sex and gender. In general, *sex role* refers to whether people live as a male or a female, and *gender* refers to how they live that sex role. I must acknowledge that these definitions do not address the complexities of sex and gender. My purpose in this research was to hear about the participants' experience of gender in relation to their self-disclosure.

It was not my assumption that participants would connect gender with their disclosures in any particular way, to any particular degree, or even at all. I attempted to honor the participants' description of their own awareness and perceptions of gender. I am interested in labeling an experience as gendered, or gender-related, *only* if the participants see it as such. The conscious perceptive quality of these descriptions is important to note, because as one who uses gender as a lens, I could argue that all

interactions, indeed all behaviors, are gender-related in that they occur within the context of one's defined gender. But my intention was not to impose that perspective, but rather to allow the participants to describe their own definitions and experiences of their gender.

This discussion invites another consideration of bracketing, particularly my own experience with bracketing. In LeVasseur's (2003) analysis of the problem of bracketing, she stated that some hermeneutic phenomenologists "hold that prejudgments can be used positively as part of the data of conscious experience and help establish the horizon of meaning" (p.417). In some ways, we bracket prior knowing simply by becoming curious about the world. This curiosity can allow us to suspend our theories and knowledge temporarily for the sake of new discovery. It is not a definitive denial of our previous understanding. Therefore,

> in the hermeneutical circle, we make progress toward sense and meaning by questioning prior knowledge, thus expanding into new horizons of meaning by questioning prior knowledge, thus expanding into new horizons of meaning. Yet, we never fully arrive, because to arrive would merely represent another stage of pre-understanding. Instead, each turn in the circle opens new horizons and possibilities yet resists dogmatic conclusions, because the ongoing project of reflective questions keeps the possibility of new experience and understanding alive. (LeVasseur, 2003, p. 418).

In approaching these interviews, I have earnestly attempted to suspend my use of the lens of gender in order to give deep listening to the participants' experiences. There were some situations in which I had to consciously quiet my own perceptions in favor of curiosity. At times, this was a struggle.

In one case, I asked Ted for clarification on his statements about gender. In reviewing the transcript, I realized that my queries may have actually been a subconscious leading of him to a gender perspective. In our next interview, I went

to great lengths to clarify my understanding of Ted's perspective in an effort to portray him accurately. By the second interview, he also had given gender more consideration and had some additional thoughts.

In other cases, I may have failed to ask questions that might have been clarifying in an attempt not to lead. Initially, some aspects of Barbara's and Ellen's descriptions of gender seemed contradictory, but I chose not to question them. I decided to allow their stories to speak for themselves.

In all cases, I worked hard at bracketing my own experiences and holding the tension. My process was not perfect, but it was genuine. The difficulty that I experienced in my own listening and bracketing, mirrors the complexities that exist in all aspects of discussions about gender.

The descriptions that follow represent a new horizon in my own thinking. In the hermeneutic tradition, these perceptions also incite my curiosity to move more deeply into the next circle of meaning.

Gender and Disclosure

Julia spoke with certainty about the connection between her disclosure and her gender. She openly shares personal stories and asks questions of others as an invitation to do the same. She believes that that style comes from her identity as a woman. "I don't see too many men doing that." She illustrated her point by telling me of a meeting with a hospital executive where she shared a story of her husband and sons and, in so doing, invited him to tell a story of his wife and daughters.

Julia's style is exemplifies the work of Moltz and Borker (1982 as cited in Kramarae, 1990) who asserted that women are more inclined to ask questions to encourage more conversation. Further, Julia's point is underscored by the work of Tannen (1990) who suggested that women were more likely to share personal stories in an effort to establish connection and build rapport. Tannen (1990) also indicated that many women, like Julia, mix business conversations with the seemingly trivial, like clothes or dinner plans.

Jack was also fairly clear about the relationship between gender and self-disclosure, but was on the other end of the continuum. His statement was simply, "I don't know if the gender, if that would make any difference or not, to tell you the truth."

Moving Beyond Gender

Both Barbara and Ellen stated that their disclosure styles used to be influenced by gender more than they are now. Barbara told two stories to make her point. One occurred many years ago when she was named the first woman editor of a particular newspaper. An editor from another city challenged the inclusion of her sex as part of that press release, suggesting that we were "past that." Although Barbara does not feel that it was inappropriate for the time, she presently feels somewhat embarrassed that it was included. She compared that press release to a situation that occurred on the day that we met. An email about the promotion of a woman on her staff was being released. The notice reported that the woman has daughters and mentioned their names. The woman began to have second thoughts about this because "men would never do that." Barbara

said that they were no longer going to live by men's rules. "…[T]he old boy network is always going to be there. Fine. Let them have it. We will create our own."

Ellen also said that years ago she might have seen gender and disclosure as connected, but not so much any more. She had been told that it is difficult for women to get established in our city. Ellen's current belief is that it is difficult for anyone to get established in this city. It is a "good ole boy shot and a beer town." She referenced the perceptual quality of gender by saying that, if she chose to see the gender difference, there would be a great deal to observe. Ellen chooses not to let gender be an issue.

Gender and Leadership

Several participants indicated a more indirect relationship between gender and disclosure. They did not necessarily relate their disclosure to their gender, but they suggested that their particular leadership was gender-related.

In some ways, Ted sees himself as a nontraditional male. He does not see his disclosure style as being particularly male, except perhaps in the way he focuses on problem-solving which some people see as male. As I alluded to previously, I initially pursued this statement further because the problem-solving sounded to me like an indication of leadership as being instrumental (Pillon, Degauquier, and Duquesne, 1992), which is associated with males, as opposed to the more female socio-emotional leaders. I then quieted my (feminine!) questioning and allowed his story to speak for itself.

Ted remembered two screen memories from his early childhood which shed some light on his gender and his leadership. He remembered his father as a businessman, hidden behind a raised newspaper, concealed from Ted's view. Because Ted is male, his

father was his gender role model and the person whose attention he wanted. Ted believes that he has taken on leadership positions in his adult life as a way of symbolically waving his arms on the other side of that newspaper, trying to get his father's attention. Ted said that every barrier he has confronted in his life is an attempt to break through that newspaper.

Ted also remembered an earlier time in his childhood. Before his father was a businessman, he was an academic. He remembered his father sitting on the couch, reading blue books. His father was open and available. On some level, Ted imagines that he did something to move his dad from the openness of the blue books to being hidden behind the newspaper. Ted takes on leadership in his adult life in an attempt to "get him back." He said that being a leader means, "Hey, look at me."

Anne described her sense of self as being inextricably linked to being a woman and furthered that she is a traditional woman in that she is "very aware of feelings, almost more than thoughts." But she believes that her disclosure is modulated by her sense of safety, not her gender.

When I asked if her gender influenced her assessment of the safety of a situation, she said that was "only indirectly" true in that "more women are likely to be relational than men."

Anne furthered that gender may be one of the filters defining who chooses the field of psychology in the first place. However, she said that if you have that personality style that is drawn to deep relational work, the voice of your work is no longer about gender. What brought Anne to her work may have something to do with gender, how she does her work is not about gender.

In addition to seeing gender directly affecting her disclosures, Julia also talked about the affect of gender on her leadership, especially with the Board. Many of the females on her Board are stay-at-home moms. She described the tension between those women and herself as a working mother. She was clear that this is not something that they talk about directly among the Board members.

Like Ellen, Julia sees our city as affecting women's leadership. The culture of this city "is not broad enough to see all of the possibilities. There are so many possibilities and so many ways of living your life…."

Discussion

Eakins and Eakins (1978 cited in Bloemer, 1997) state that because men have enjoyed a position of dominance in the hierarchies of family, employment, economy and politics, they have been able to dictate what is considered normal in the course of conversation. Kramarae (1990) stated that "since gender-ranking locates everyone within a hierarchy, it is an important shaping factor even in single-sex interactions" (p. 350).

I considered this research when hearing the perspective of Jack and Ted. Jack seemed to have not given much thought to gender; he saw it as not really affecting his disclosure. Ted was willing to consider gender as affecting his leadership, but did not see much impact on his disclosure. It is possible that as men, they had enjoyed the freedom of dictating the norms conversation. It is by violating the existing norms of conversation that women sometimes become aware of their different conversational style and of the gender. I am curious about whether it was their gender and its position of control in

dictating the norms that influenced Ted and Jack to be unaware of gender in their disclosure.

But even in considering this interpretation of Jack's and Ted's remarks, I underscore the importance of perception. Gender is a lens through which we can choose to view the world, or not. Both Barbara and Ellen said that they chose not to be dictated by the confines of gender. Ellen expressed it well by saying that if she chose to see gender, there would be a great deal to see.

Because gender is important in my feminist perspective, I use it as a lens. But in more fully embracing the feminist position, I allow for multiple realities, including those that do not consider gender. It is a complex issue that has invited me, perhaps hurled me, into deeper circles of hermeneutic awareness.

It is clear that the leaders in this study have varying degrees of awareness and consciousness about their gender. This raises a number of questions for me. I wonder if one is not making conscious choices about the expression of gender, if the gender expression that then occurs is dictated the cultural norms, the physiological make up or some combination of both. And that leads me to re-visit the question of sex and gender, nature and nurture where I began this research. This begs questions for future research which I address in Chapter Six.

CONCLUSION

I have explored the themes of the leader's experience of self-disclosing that emerged from my interviews. The themes have emerged from a careful and systematic process of interviewing and member checking and the art of an intuitive process of

walking and reflecting. I have worked hard to bracket my own experiences and to use them as a catapult for further understanding.

I identified the themes of relationship, place, topics purpose and authentic voice in relationship to self-disclosure. I have presented the participants' experience of the effect of their gender on their self-disclosure and their leadership. I have described the experience of those who do not see the effects of gender. I have allowed for multiple realities in all of the themes and in the understanding of gender. I have revealed, as accurately as I was able, the depth of the essence of the leader's disclosure experience.

In Chapter Six I present a discussion that moves toward the future. That discussion includes the implications of this study for the theory and practice of leadership, the implications for my own leadership, the limitations of this study and implications for future research.

Chapter 6

"I am pretty open and I will talk about my kids and my family. I think it is healthy to do that. It is always good to connect on a personal level."
Julia, 2006, research participant

My purpose in Chapter Six is to step back and reflect. I consider why this research makes a difference. I discuss the implications of this research for leadership theory and practice. I describe the profound impact this has had on my own leadership. And finally, I consider limitations and implications for future research.

IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP THEORY

Fills the Gap in Current Literature

There are a number of implications of this research which advance the theory of leadership. First, the qualitative design of this research begins to fill the gap in the existing literature. As I indicated in Chapter Two, there is a great deal of quantitative literature on the subject of self-disclosure. That research provides data points and important pieces of information. However, this research provides a holistic approach and provides a description of the flesh and feeling that created the data. This research offers congruence in that it uses the narrative form to understand the leader's use of story.

Secondly, this research considers the experience of self-disclosing specifically for leaders. The leadership literature is replete with topics that relate to self-disclosure. The literature reports the importance of such concepts as storytelling, narrative, finding voice and creating models in a way that might have implications for self-disclosure. This research goes beyond implications and offers both the richness of the qualitative

experience and the consideration of that experience particularly for leaders. The detailed description that I have provided allows the reader to move beyond conjecturing about the leader's experience of self-disclosure.

For example, Anne lends wisdom to the leader's experience for disclosing in the presence of anxiety. She was very specific in discerning the difference between disclosing her anxiety as an authentic part of herself, and dumping her anxiety in a way that requires those around her to manage it for her. She stated, "I think there is a way of sharing [crises and vulnerabilities] with people saying this is who I am, and being very authentic." And she also said, "[The staff] can't carry you. Ultimately, the goal is to get [the anxiety] out of here. You don't want it to be dumped here."

The third contribution of the research is in the consideration of the complexities of gender in relation to the leader's self-disclosing. The concept of gender is difficult to define, so the experience of gender can be elusive. I have begun to amplify the voices of leaders who were willing to consider their gender and its influence on their disclosure and their leadership.

Julia for example, claims what she considers to be her feminine style and engages everyone on a personal and professional level. She shares her story openly and asks questions to encourage others to do the same.

This research is unique in that it is qualitative, it specifically connects leadership and self-disclosure and it considers the possible impact of gender. This research adds new knowledge to our understanding of leadership.

Gives Voice to Leaders

This research also adds to the existing literature in that it gives voice to leaders. I have used the leaders' words to describe their experiences. I have attempted to capture the essence of the experience. The reader is not left to imagine the voice of the leader. The leader is heard.

As a child of a holocaust survivor, Ted has learned not to be "ostentatious" in his disclosures. He must "blend in, be careful, [not] stand out" because "behind every corner is a Nazi."

Julia has created a staff that can grow from her "cauca-mamy ideas." As a result, they have adventures that produce "myths and stories that have lasted a long time. [She] think[s] they are important to the relationship."

Jack underscored his humanitarian values repeatedly. "People are people. They aren't machines. They aren't throwaways." And then, "You don't compromise your ideals, the old adage about staying true, man to himself be true."

These are rich and powerful words, each unique to the leader's style and personality. It is powerful to hear such depth and profound insights.

Women's Voices

This research specifically uplifts women's voices, as well as men's. In a culture where women have not always been heard, it is important to amplify those voices that have been silenced. The quality of those voices and the variety of their messages is at the heart of this research.

Anne gave focused concentration to her answers. She spoke of working to find her most authentic voice, the voice that comes from her centeredness. "I guess it's like when you have an instrument and some instruments have different timbres. Like a bell tone is very clear."

Julia laughed and told stories during our time together. Her words about her work and her leadership are, "How serious can it be?...No one is dying. Everyone is happy when they come here."

Ellen gravely reported that she talks to "no one. No one."

Barbara does not make "fortuitous statements" about her leadership style but is much more likely to model the family-friendly workplace by telling stories of being home with her sick eight-year-old daughter.

The Leadership Relationship

Finally, this research lends greater understanding to the leadership relationship. In the context of Rost's definition of leadership, "an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes," the relationship is the initial and primary unit of change. Although this is just one aspect of the relationship, it is an important one. This research revealed how six leaders managed their self-disclosures in the context of their work and their life. All six leaders serve as models. Their various styles create some understanding of how leaders might reveal themselves through their words and their work in the world. It is in understanding the leadership relationship that we can begin to understand organizational and societal change.

IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP PRACTICE

This research can raise the leaders' consciousness of their use of self-disclosure. For many of us, our disclosures are not conscious. We do not fully consider the implications of what we share and the impact on our leadership. Although all leaders use disclosure to varying extents, the reading of the experiences of these six leaders may help others to reflect on their own experiences. In reading this research, leaders can be mindful of making careful and effective choices about the situations in which their own styles of self-disclosure might enhance their leadership.

This research may also serve to guide leaders, not only in whether or not they disclose and where they might do so, but also how they might resolve their own disclosure dilemmas. My hope in providing detailed descriptions is that others might identify with the stories told here. Other leaders might read these narratives and relate to the themes and issues. As a result of reading this work, leaders might be encouraged to reflect on such areas as their own issues of trust, their use of humor or their sharing of personal stories. Further, leaders might be encouraged to sort through the layers of their own history and of what stories they are a part (Couto, 2004) to attain the clean, clear sound of their authentic voice.

This research also contributes to leadership practice by supporting the paradox described in Chapter Two in Kenny's (2005) analysis of Bakhtin.

> Bakhtin embraces the paradox of human existence as a struggle between the forces that attempt to bring us together and the ones that drive us apart. He understands that language is at the core of this struggle and presents a theory or model for narrative and discourse which validates this struggle and helps us to rise above it. (p. 419)

Although, by definition, the paradox may not be resolvable, understanding the use of language in the form of disclosures helps leaders find their own places in the tension between coming together with one another and staying independently apart. Again, consciousness becomes very important. Maintaining a conscious awareness of the paradox may help leader to exist more mindfully in that paradox.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MY LEADERSHIP

I am profoundly and fundamentally changed by the experience of having conducted this research. I have experienced the verisimilitude of these stories. They echo and inform the reality of my own life. I have learned from Anne how to manage my own anxieties through the use of disclosure and the restraint of "blurts." I have learned from Ted how to look for the chiaroscuro, the edge between figure and ground, the kernel amid the noise. I have learned about the power of humor from Julia. I have learned more about the risk of disclosure and letting go of words spoken in error. I have learned to listen for the clean, clear bell tone of centeredness in my own voice.

I have been changed personally and professionally by the use of the methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology. As a therapist and teacher, the experience of deep listening is not new to me. However, the listening that I do in those roles always has an agenda. Clients or students come to me because they want to change, or they have a problem or need further growth. So I listen with an ear for their concerns and for possible solutions. Through the practice of this methodology, I have learned to listen differently. I have worked very hard to hear the stories of the six participants and to capture their experience as accurately as possible. I have not evaluated their stories. I

have not attempted to change their lives or to help them repair a problem. They have painted the picture of their own reality. I entered that reality. I sat with their words and in their worlds.

In my life and leadership, I have worked with people who caused me some difficulty because I have questioned their ethics or their motivations, or believed their perspectives to be unduly skewed. I now have a much greater ability to sit in these people's reality, just sit there, no evaluation, no judgment. It is an amazing experience of freedom and peace.

I am pleased to have described the essence of self-disclosure. Uncovering the layers of meaning has moved me. I now have a greater understanding of the experience of self-disclosure, but I also have a greater belief in its importance to leadership. If leadership is an influence relationship, and if self-disclosure is at the heart of influence, then clearly self-disclosure is central to all leadership applications.

Finally, this research has affected my understanding of some of the basic existential questions. Like many Antioch students, I would choose to embrace Horace Mann's challenge to "win some victory for humanity." Until I conducted this research, I had imagined that my victory, whatever it may be, would be big and splashy. I imagine that no longer. I now believe my primary offering to humanity is to create places where people can disclose openly and I can listen to their words without judgment or evaluation. It's a quieter victory than the ones of my fantasies, but the power of that possibility will be my lifelong challenge.

LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

As is always the case, there are limitations in this research. First, according to design, the purpose of this research is to describe the leader's experience. I have not attempted to explain present behavior or predict future behavior. Although I make no apology for my research design, I can see that some future quantitative measures might be interesting.

Additionally, even in the context of description, this research has been limited to the experiences of six leaders. There is some similarity among their demographics: all are Caucasian, five of the six are in their forties, all work in Pittsburgh and all would be defined as middle class. Because self-disclosure is culturally defined, additional research capturing the stories of other voices would be important: other races and ethnicities, other nationalities, additional ages and those working in other parts of the country.

I would also be intrigued by an ethnographic study of workplace disclosure. I would be interested in research which includes participant observations of a group of employees who disclose in their holding environments. I would be interested in their own disclosures and their interpretation of others' disclosures. I would like to observe how they experienced the impact of self-disclosure on a shared time of transition and change.

My curiosity about the effect of gender on self-disclosure has not been entirely satisfied. This research has begun to shed some light on the participants' awareness of their gender in relation to their disclosures. I am pleased that I have created space for a description of gendered experiences, while inviting descriptions that did not include

gender. I am interested in knowing more about those who did not see the influence of gender, as well as those who believed their gender affected their disclosures.

But in this and all research related to gender, it is a slippery and elusive concept. It is difficult and probably not accurate to untangle sex and gender, nature and nurture. I embrace the position of Webster (2002) in her refutation of the sex/gender distinction because it fails to acknowledge the social construction of sex and the embodiment of gender.

I have some concerns about this research because I have used the language of oppositional binary, because we currently have no other. My earnest hope is that the discussion of gender creates a description that may be illuminating for some. But I also have a desire not to impose these descriptions. I wish to avoid Matthis's (2004) concern that when we as women or men "fail to conform to the (general) theory about what we are supposed to be (female or male), it is usually *we* who are in trouble, not the theory" (p. 1). There is no such general theory implied here. I urge the reader not to interpret it as such.

In Lakoff's (1975) early research on gender communication, she defined one of her explicit purposes to be to goad further research. I would hope to do the same.

I also continue to be curious about the impact of self-disclosure on the leader's influence. The participants in this study varied in their understanding of the relationship of self-disclosure and influence. But leadership *is* influence. Future research might move to a greater level of specificity by asking "How do you disclose in order to influence people?"

Conducting this research has been a rich journey that has affected my awareness, my knowledge and my skills. I end by reiterating the powerful words of Wheatley (2002):

> I believe we can change the world if we start listening to one another again. Simple, honest conversation, Not mediation, negotiation, problem-solving, debate, or public meetings. Simple, truthful conversation where we each have a chance to speak, we each feel heard, and we each listen well.
>
> The simplest way to begin finding each other again is to start talking about what we care about. If we could stop ignoring each other, stop engaging in fear-filled gossip, what might we discover? (pp. 3-4)

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APPENDIX A
Ethics Application

Ethics Application

Antioch University
PhD in Leadership & Change
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

1. **Name and mailing address of Principal Investigator(s):**
   Dee Giffin Flaherty
   123 Montana Street
   Pittsburgh, PA 15214

2. **Departmental status**

a. **Student _X__ Faculty ___**

3. **Phone Number: (a) Work_**412-951-1728 **(b) Home--** same

4. **Name of Core Faculty Advisor** Al Guskin

5. **Name & Contact Information of other Program Faculty Involved in this Project**

a. **Antioch Faculty and/or Primary Evaluator for Learning Product:**
   Carolyn Kenny

b. **Others, e.g., mentors or committee members (specify name, institution, email address, phone number)**
   Al Guskin, Antioch
   Laurien Alexandre, Antioch
   Martha Ezzell, Carlow University, 412-903-7574

6. **Title of Project:** Telling Our Stories: A Phenomenological Study of the Gendered and/or Non-Gendered Experiences of the Leader's Self-Disclosing

7. **Source of Funding for the project (if applicable):** NA

8. **a: Expected starting date for project:** February, 2006

9. b : Anticipated completion date for data collection: August, 2006

10. Describe the proposed participants- age, number, sex, race, or other special characteristics. (Up to 250 words)

The participants in the study will be adults who can be defined as appointed or emergent leaders. The researcher will begin with six participants who have participated in leadership activities in the domains of the arts, business, not-for-profits. They will be both men and women. The participants will have the ability to express themselves verbally in an interview setting and will possess the ability to reflect on their own experiences of self-disclosing.

11. Describe how the participants are to be selected and recruited. (Up to 400 words)

The participants will be selected from within the informal network of leaders in the Pittsburgh area. They have been recommended by others as leaders who have created change. Of the long list of recommended participants, the researcher will select six participants based on their ability to self-reflect and articulate those reflections, on their openness to participating in this research topic and on their availability. They will be invited into the research process first by an email, followed by a telephone conversation and then, if they are willing, by scheduling a face-to-face conversation with the researcher.

After the first round of interviews the researcher will continue to do additional interviews with those participants who are most able and willing to articulate the complexities of their experience of self-disclosing and are willing to continue being interviewed. Each successive round of interviews may net a smaller number of participants when selected from that criterion of "willing and able to articulate the complexities of the experience of self-disclosing."

NOTE: If the participants are to be drawn from an institution or organization (e.g., hospital, social service agency, school, etc.) which has the responsibility for the participants, then documentation of permission from that institution must be submitted to the Board before final approval of the project. This document should be emailed or faxed to Chair, IRB Committee, Elizabeth Holloway.

12. Describe the proposed procedures, e.g., interviewing survey questionnaires, experiments, etc. in the project. Any proposed experimental activities that are included in evaluation, research, development, demonstration, instruction, study, treatments, debriefing, questionnaires, and similar projects must be described. Continue your description on following page if necessary. USE SIMPLE LANGUAGE AND AVOID JARGON. Please do not insert a copy of your methodology section from your proposal. State briefly and concisely the procedures for the project. (500 words)

Each participant will be invited to participate in the process of in-depth interviewing. When he/she agrees, a mutually agreeable time and place for the interview will be determined. The researcher has a private office space that can be used for these interviews if it is convenient for the participant. Each participant will be given an informed consent and will be assured of confidentially and of his/her right to withdraw from the research at any time. The interviews themselves will be tape recorded.

The researcher will define both leadership and self-disclosure and will ask the participant to reflect on these three topical areas:

Please describe some of the influence relationships of which you have been a part.

Please describe your experience of self-disclosing in your leadership.

Are any of your self-disclosures influenced by gender (your or the targets)? If yes, please describe.

The researcher will follow with probing questions to uncover further levels of meaning.

The interviews will be transcribed and analyzed for themes. As the researcher uncovers themes, she will then invite some of the participants to repeat the interview process in order to uncover yet deeper meanings of the self-disclosing experience.

The interviews will be again transcribed and analyzed. The final written form of this research will change the name and the identifying information of all participants.

13. Project Purpose(s) and Benefits: (400 words)

The general purposes of this research are to (1) complete the dissertation requirement for the attainment of a PhD in Leadership and Change from Antioch University and (2)add to the existing body of knowledge about leadership.

The specific purpose of this study is to understand the essence of the leader's experience of self-disclosing.

14. If participants in this proposed research may thereby be exposed to an elevated possibility of harm—physiological, psychological, or social—please provide the following information: (UP to 500 words)

a. Identify and describe the possible benefits and risks.

NOTE: for international research or vulnerable populations, please provide information about local culture that will assist the review committee in evaluating potential risks to participants, particularly when the project raises issues related to power differentials.

Benefits. The process of self-disclosure in the context of the interview can bring feelings of satisfaction to the leader. The process of being interviewed may also serve to bring clarity or new meaning to the experiences of the leader. Further, there may be some positive feeling for leaders who wish to contribute to the creation of new knowledge in the field of leadership studies.

Risks and Voluntary Participation. While describing the experience of self-disclosing, the leader may re-visit feelings or experiences that are uncomfortable or even painful. The leader may choose at any time to discontinue the particular area of exploration. Furthermore, the leader's participation in this study is entirely voluntary. He/She may end the interview or withdraw from the research at any time with no consequences.

b. Explain why you believe the risks are so outweighed by the benefits described in (13) as to warrant asking participants to accept these risks. Include a discussion of why the research method you propose is superior to alternative methods that may entail less risk.

The risks are minimal. Each participant can choose to share or not share issues that may be associated with discomfort or pain. Those who are selected to participate in this study have had the experience of self-disclosing, so further disclosing in the context of the research interview will not be entirely a new experience. Should the participant uncover unsettling or upsetting information the researcher can provide him/her with a list of therapists and/or refer him/her to his insurance company's therapists.

More likely, a participant who volunteers to be a part of this research, fully understanding that it will involve in-depth interviews, will benefit from speaking his/her experience out loud and gaining the satisfaction and meaning that comes from that process.

c. Explain fully how the rights and welfare of participants at risk will be protected (e.g., screening out particularly vulnerable participants, follow-up contact with participants, etc.).

All participation will be fully voluntary. Participants can withdraw from the entire study or discontinue the sharing of any particular memory at any time. There is no penalty for withdrawal.

15. Explain how participants' privacy is addressed by your proposed research. Specify any steps taken to guard the anonymity of participants and/or confidentiality of their responses. Indicate what personal identifying information will be kept, and procedures for storage and ultimate disposal of personal information. (400 words)

The confidentiality of all participants will be protected. All names and identifying information will be changed in the written analysis of these interviews. The researcher is committed to maintaining all forms of confidentiality (written and oral).

Tapes and transcriptions of interviews, signed consents and all identifying information will be stored in a locked file cabinet.

16. If questionnaires, tests, or related research instruments are to be used, then you must submit a copy of the instrument, or a detailed description (with examples of items) of the research instruments, questionnaires, or tests that are to be used in the project These copies will be retained in the permanent IRB files. Submit documents via email or fax.

17. Submit via email or fax the informed consent statement if one is used. If information other than that provided on the informed consent form is provided (e.g. a cover letter), attach a copy of such information. If a consent form is not used, or if consent is to be presented orally, state your reason for this modification below.

18. Will electrical or mechanical devices be applied to participants?
YES _____ NO __X___

a. If YES, describe.

I agree to conduct this project in accordance with Antioch University's policies and requirements involving research.

Principal Investigator Dee Giffin Flaherty Date February 9, 2006

Please submit from your FC personal email account

Primary Evaluator or Committee Chair: _____ Date _____

Faculty are requested to send an email indicating their approval of the IRB application submission as representative of the *approved* student's research proposal.

Members of the Institutional Review Board will deliberate and make a decision on your IRB application within two weeks of your submission.

Applications should be directed to: Elizabeth Holloway, PhD, Chair, Institutional Review Board, eholloway@phd.antioch.edu

APPENDIX B
Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent

The Leader's Experience of Self-disclosure
Dee Giffin Flaherty
Antioch University
PhD Program in Leadership and Change

This study involves research using a process of in-depth interviews with leader/participants. The purpose of the research is to uncover the leader's lived experience of self-disclosure. The leader being interviewed will be asked to describe his/her experiences of self-disclosure. The interviewer will ask probing questions to further uncover the meanings of that experience for that the leader. Each leader may be asked to participate in the interview process for at least one hour, but may be asked to participate in several interview sessions.

Benefits. The process of self-disclosure in the context of the interview can bring feelings of satisfaction to the leader. The process of being interviewed may also serve to bring clarity or new meaning to the experiences of the leader. Further, there may be some positive feeling for leaders who wish to contribute to the creation of new knowledge in the field of leadership studies.

Risks and Voluntary Participation. While describing the experience of self-disclosure, the leader may re-visit feelings or experiences that are uncomfortable or even painful. The leader may choose at any time to discontinue the particular area of exploration. Furthermore, the leader's participation in this study is entirely voluntary. He/She may end the interview or withdraw from the research at any time with no consequences. If there are subjects that are uncovered that might require therapeutic input, the researcher will provide the leader with a list of referral sources and/or will direct him/her to his/her insurance company's list of therapists.

Confidentiality. The leader will share only that information that he/she chooses to share All information shared by the leader is confidential. When the researcher reports the information in written form, she will change all names and identifying information. The researcher understands the importance and the values connected with the exact practice of confidentiality.

Questions. The researcher, Dee Giffin Flaherty, can be reached at 412-951-1728 or d.flaherty@verizon.net. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Dr. Elizabeth Holloway, Professor of Psychology, Ph.D. in Leadership & Change, Antioch University, eholloway@phd.antioch.edu, 805-898-0114.

APPENDIX C
Introduction to First Interview

I am interested in the leader's experience of self-disclosing. I am interested in the positive, negative and neutral experiences that you have had with self-disclosing. I am interested in your experiences with self-disclosing as a process for defining self. I am interested in your experiences with self-disclosing as an influence strategy. I am interested in your experience of your gender as you consider your experiences of self-disclosing.

Leadership is defined as an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes.
Please describe some of the influence relationships of which you have been a part.

Self-disclosing is defined as making yourself manifest through a verbal process, showing yourself to others including your thoughts, feelings and experiences.
Please describe your experience of self-disclosing in your leadership.

Are any of your self-disclosures influenced by **gender** (yours or the target's)?
If yes, please describe.

APPENDIX D
Transcription of Third Interview with Anne

D—Now this is just a little side bar, you said sort of in passing that your role is to advocate for people if they have other aspirations, other than staying here. Do you do that out loud? How do you do that?

A—The caveat there is that it does sort of depend on the willingness of the company too. But in my mind every year when we do our annual plans about what we want to do, and what are our goals and objectives there are certain things we actually write down about what has to happen and how we have to demonstrate growth. But also related to someone's current job would be what are your wishes for this job, and then there's a whole other section of where do you see yourself in five years and that can lead to a set of questions and answers where they don't want to be here. That's relevant for everyone on our staff right now. We have one who is retiring. We have to think about how to level the work off and maybe go part time about how they can do that, which I think is invaluable because I would want them to mentor the new people coming in. One person is working on a dissertation and it is in senior care and issues related to senior care. How can you look at this company and think---this is someone who is going to be critical to this company with the work she is doing and her interests. We have to figure out not only how to do this work but who in the company is going to see her work. I haven't been as successful as she has in terms of just stomping through the different areas and telling people what she is doing. She's done a very good job of advocating for herself. At the same time we talk very openly about this and we've used some staff time—she did a power point presentation of her proposal that we also listened to it and talked about and

asked questions. And the secretary I hired here has a lot of other skills besides secretarial skills and she is interested in graphics and art work. She said, "I'm not interested in doing anything right now. I want to learn my job right now." But I said, "In five or ten years, in this company we have a graphics department and creative services and there are supposed to be courses that you can take and experts in the field here that you can talk to."

D—So even if the person's personal aspirations are nowhere, or even counter to the growth that is going to be here, you talk about that out loud?

A—Yes. The expectation is while you are here I expect the highest standard. There's a lot going on in this foundation. I think maybe me more than anybody, I come from a background of scholarship. I find that each of my staff members have different levels of interests in self-development, reading, taking classes. Everyone on site here is accredited in whatever their respective fields are. There is an association for [related field]. I insist that we maintain our credits. I could even do more, but I think that's very important. You have your coursework that you need to take within our company. We want to make sure that you know about our policies and our integrity policies. So every citizen of this company has to take a certain courses to stay on top of things. Then there are things within our field that we need to stay on top of. And then layered onto that is how we start thinking about what else we might want to do.

D—One of the things you talked about (this is on page 6 if you want to read it), you were talking about not focusing on your own anxiety, but on your team when you were doing this skit for the other managers. And it sounds like you made that shift successfully. But

my question is, what then happens to your anxiety?

A—I don't know how successful I did it. I mean some of it leaked out. And it comes out in humor; it comes out in self-effacing humor. I don't remember what comments I made after the fact, but things like, "Oh god we never want to do that again." And it's tongue in cheek in the sense of sure, we'll do it again. I mean I have to be careful about that. It's a leaking of the anxiety; it goes somewhere.

D—So even when you turn your attention to staff, it feels comfortable to you—or at least you mange to—make some illusion to your own level of discomfort.

A—I'd prefer not to, but it comes out regardless. I think though, it could be worse. Because it was a conscious statement to myself to focus on what this might mean for them. This was a risk for them. Don't self-efface what we all did because actually what we did do was a funny but very informative talk. The lore that came out of that from some of the other sites was, well you are a strong enough team to take those kinds of risks. There was some appreciation from some of the staff members. I didn't hear much from the managers. The underlings appreciated it. I don't have a good answer for your question. I think that it's a constant struggle for me. I am anxious. It comes out. I want to do it anyway. And then sometimes what I can do is give myself a self-talking to, to say, "Let's look at the bigger picture here. People don't realize how anxious you are. Especially if you just don't let on. Let it go."

D—Can you talk about why you don't want to let it out?

A—At its worst, anxiety just makes other people anxious. If you are anxious and it's

about you, and it's something you can't manage, and it spills out to a high degree, I think you just force it on other people to somehow manage it for you. It's not professional and it's not helpful.

D—I'm interested in knowing about how you lead during personal crisis. However, if this feels too personal or too hard to talk about, we can skip it. You talked about having some heart problems. Can you talk about how you continued to lead as you were learning about this? Did you talk to your staff? How much did you tell your staff? Where else, outside this institution are you able to put some of that?

A—Wow. There is a difference between being in the crisis of it all, as opposed to living chronically with this. In the midst of the crisis of it all, when I was going through a lot of tests and there was a lot of bad news and a lot of scary news, I did a little bit of everything. I absolutely told my staff what was going on. And at that time I had a secretary under me who I was in a lot of conflict with, she wasn't someone I got along with, she wasn't someone whose work I thought was adequate. There was just a lot of conflict around that. So I told her just enough so that she knew I had doctors' appointments. I didn't want to share with her. But I absolutely did share with my staff because, again, they are peers they are colleagues, they are mentors. I think we all play different roles with one other. But every one of them has been through very deep hard-ships in life. I felt I wanted them to know what was going on with me. So I did get some comfort in some respect from that. Even more so than with some of my friends. People I am really close to. So I would tell them that. How did I manage through that? You know, it's this weird thing. I worked very hard during that time. It was a startling thing

to have my yearly evaluation—which I have to write myself, but that's another story. But I had everything that I had accomplished and we both sat back and said, I can't believe that I did all of this in the midst of all of this. So there was a sense of, as much as I was going through all of these awful tests, I physically could work. So it was a reprieve to come here and focus on what I had to focus on. So I don't know how I managed. I did not feel I had to be stiff-upper-lip. I didn't not feel that I had to be silent or secretive about it. I had, again, a lot more trouble sharing with my upper level management. At that time we had a different Executive Director and it was very uncomfortable to have to share up. So what I did, I only disclosed enough to let them know that this was very serious. And I needed to make some changes in my schedule to account for different—I had all kinds of blood tests—like routine things that were just going to be ongoing. And I said some set backs. And the anxiety—I remember one day, I got a very bad blood test back that showed my iron was so bad that they were going to make me go in for these 6 hour transfusions. And I was still working 50 hours a week. What was I going to do—sit around? I was crazed about it. I got the news, I had to come back to work, and it was just all over my face. And it was just all there. The Executive Director at that time, who I didn't have a good relationship with, I didn't get along with—it was just not good. I told him about it, because it was just right there. And he quickly wanted to drive me home and comfort me. And I thought, "Uh, not you." And interesting enough, my staff member, I collected her and said, "We need to not let him take me home. I would feel very uncomfortable with that." And she literally—my staff member stopped him at the curb and said "You're not taking her home." I don't know how to say that. Is that a

leadership role on my part? No, she led me. She just said—I don't even remember—she's somebody you don't mess with. When you manage people who are so strong like that it's not an authoritarian kind of thing.

D—Did you do your primary sharing here or did you do it elsewhere?

A—Well, it was in very distinct places. It was with this group of people. These are people—we deal with death every day, we deal with sickness every day. And now it's happening to me. So how can you not say? This is happening to me. It was extremely powerful thing to have such insight into what this must feel like for families. And so, how scary to be confronted with this, to think about your relationships. To have that sense of—and we talked about this—oh my god I'm going through this but I don't want to feel alone with this. And being aware of who was important to me--my staff, my family. And it was after that that I went into therapy. You can share what's going on here, but they can't carry you. They heard about it. I would come in when I had horrible days and say, "Oh god I just got back from the doctors." But ultimately, the goal is to get it out of here. You don't want it to be dumped here.

D—Are you saying that you disclose to keep it out of the way?

A—I disclosed here to an extent—I disclosed because this was such a big thing for me. They needed to know what was happening to me. I was beginning to try to work through what was happening to me. But then at the same time, it is not appropriate for your co-workers, your staff members to support you—to be your source of support. So ultimately what you need to do is to bring it outside the work place. So I went and got a therapist. I am not going to burden everyone with whatever I am working through as I face this

devastating illness. So how do I manage now? Well, I'm out of the crisis—for now. And it makes you more aware of—I don't how much you do about it—but I am much more aware of making sure that---adjusting time and people doing what is meaningful, self-development, all that kind of stuff. You this place is not the be all and the end all for people. Do you know what I mean? So it's humbling. I've had to take certain days off regularly to manage my health. While I have always given staff members the time to do that, I'm just more aware of how important that is. So that's the way it has changed me—it's not even empathy--it's just more of an awareness of the balance in people's lives and the sacrifices they make for this job.

D—Thank you. Thank you for that. At another point you talked about working with the staff and families. And then on the other side there's the whole management that you do. But you talked about the bridge in between and that gray area. Can you talk more about that gray area, how you link those two things, or not?

A—What did I say?

D—It's on page 8 [of the transcription].

A—[reads] I didn't explain it very well, did?

D—No I thought you explained it really well. You were talking about your leadership and you were saying on one hand you do this work with children and families and your staff. On the other hand, you have this whole management…

A—You know what I think it is? It seems easier, or maybe there is more coherence in how you think about leading in this therapeutic setting because you work at being a safe person, a good listener, an authentic person and the role is aligned. You bring out a very

caring, empathic, child-focused kind of self. And there you go. And in so far as that is a model for your volunteers, in so far as the children see you as safe, you're a leader. But then I do think that there's another aspect of leadership in the company where there is more coaching, there's more persuasion, there's more spinning. There's more aligning yourself with someone else's values. And so I think it's a much more difficult fit to line yourself up. It's just different that way.

D—*Align* is a great word. So there's more congruency?

A—There's more congruence when I think about the way I can be a leader in groups. Even in a difficult situation. Let's say a child is acting out or a parent is acting out. It is very difficult to know what to say. You have to lead, you have to keep it safe, and you don't want to offend. It's potentially volatile. Still your perspective is, I need to do what is safe you and what is safe for everyone here. So as much as the words are hard, and it's hard to convince people who are having mental health issues, whatever you need to do manage the situation, your stance, your directive in whatever you're trying to accomplish, still is in line with everything about the philosophy of the program.

I think within the corporate world, you get a sense of all kinds of different agendas and things that are not spoken and things that are hidden. And it's a much less comfortable situation to be needing to carry out other people's objectives. You don't quite know where they're coming from. You don't quite know how you feel about it. You can kind of do what's asked of you. And it's just harder. So how do you act authentically, lined up, congruent, when I'm all too aware of being rubbed different ways, like different egos, different opinions. Part of it is that there is this hierarchy. There

are certain people you defer to because of their position. I do much better when something has been earned or something just makes sense, versus following a hierarchy.

D—I get that. So are you saying that the goals and objectives on the managerial side of it are more competing? They're not so clearly focused on a singular focus?

A—(Nod. Nod.)

D—This is really great. This really helps me in my life. Okay, this was another one that blew me away. You said you are vulnerable because you make yourself vulnerable, page 17. I love this. And you were talking about you make yourself vulnerable because you sort of put it out there. You say this is what I've done, or you give a lot of information or you blurt. I would love to hear more about that. How does that self-disclosure make you more or less vulnerable?

A—I guess I see different kinds of expressions. And I can imagine a deeply feeling person who tries to make decisions based on what their thoughts are, what their personal experiences are, maybe even the crises in their life, the feelings they have. I think there is a way of sharing that with people saying this is who I am, and being very vulnerable. And that to me seems what the ideal is. That you somehow put all yourself out there—it's your emotional, your spiritual, your cognitive, whatever it is, out there. That doesn't seem blurty to me. That just seems very authentic. And if the world wants to then decide that some of that is weak, that makes you vulnerable in some way, I can deal with that. All the more harm for you; too bad for you. That's a goal I think we should all aspire to.

There's a different kind of vulnerability when I talk about blurting. I keep coming back to this idea of anxiety. There is something, when you put your whole self

out there, but if you're not comfortable with what your whole self is, or it's not formed yet….It's developing. You are reacting to some concern about how you are going to be perceived by someone or someone's more important than you. I'm not sure what all of these little examples are. But there are times when you put yourself out there that's not a coherent whole. You feel unformed parts of yourself, or childish parts of yourself, or anxious parts of yourself—when they are expressed, I assume that people can recognize that as such and what they choose to do with it minimally is to say, "You're an immature person. You're not a trustworthy person. I can't count on you to contain yourself." And so that's the way you make yourself vulnerable, I think, where you become less trustworthy, you become a lose cannon, you become less than. Someone can then put you down. So I think that when I told my staff about my illness and this what I am struggling with and this is what I think about it, this is what I am going to be needing, there's a very authentic self coming out to a group that I trust. I even did put that out to people that I trusted less because this who I am, this is what I need, this is very real for me. I think there are other times when I am much less comfortable with my relationship with that person or my position or how I feel about something. And it's just a different kind of disclosure that I think makes me vulnerable—not in a good way, not in a helpful way.

D—So if has to do in part with your level of comfort with how formed the pieces are that you are putting out.

A—Yes, yes.

D—That is exactly my next question. You said that knowing what your voice is, is your

battle. So tell me about the process. How do you find your voice?

A—I don't know. It's almost like you don't know that you found it until after the fact sometimes. That's not completely true—I think you can put yourself out there the best you can. I guess I think of two things that are happening. There are times when there is a qualitative sense that this feels lined up and congruent for me. I've thought about it. I might feel emotional about it but I feel centered about it. It's very experiential. It could be something I feel very powerful about. It could be any emotion. It just feels more centered. I guess that other thing is, I think for me the thing that I recognize is too many competing voices. That's the battle I am aware of. Taking things in and then very quickly losing my argument. Or quickly having a feeling and not being able to identify it. Or getting confused in my mind. That there is a sense of someone else's voice taking over mine. You can sense when you've lost your voice—you lose your words, you can't get back into the argument, when you do you find you are arguing from a more immature standpoint. What I'll do is that I will recognize that what I am coming back with is not suitable to say, so I'll shut up. And then even that's a sign is that I am not figuring out what my adult voice is. It's an internal and external battle. You can hear what you are saying and how you are feeling, you're aware of not being aware of what my message is anymore and I have to back up and think about it and sort through it and get some perspective. And then hopefully you get a chance of coming back to it. An example would be a very, very high senior vice president volunteers here. And she's a woman who I admire and like. I don't even know how to make sense of how high up she is in the company. It's almost like you're looking up at the old World Trade Towers (tilts head to

be looking straight up). I trained her and I sat next to her in our groups as we practiced. She has this kind of droll sense of humor. I just think the world of her. And she came into volunteer one day, it's not a night I normally volunteer on. And I said something like, "We just think the world of you." And she said, "Well everyone says that because I hold the purse strings." And I was so taken aback by that. I spent the rest of the night back paddling, like "oh no, no, no, don't feel that way, and why would you think that and we like you despite that and …" And I thought oh my gosh you are not making any sense here. There's an awareness of this is not a nice solid voice. And I happen to back up and thought about it. The voice in me was "how sad for you, that you can't figure out what's genuine any more because of your position." That's what was really in there where I could not access. And so when do you recognize that as your voice? Well that was like ah-ha. That's what I wished I had said. But in the midst of it I was embarrassed. I was taken off guard. I was taking her anxiety probably. And it confused me. So I don't know what that is. It's a perception in yourself of unclear, confusing, not centered. I guess it's like when you have an instrument and some instruments have different timbres. Like a bell tone is a very clear—I don't know how you would draw a bell tone but it's not a fuzzy line, it's a very clear line. Reed instruments have a lot of static. And there's an internal sense of a bell tone. Okay. It's a clear voice.

D—Are blurts part of finding your voice? Or do they detract from finding your voice? Or is there no relationship?

A—My first answer is that they are recognition that there is something getting in the way of my voice. I think that's awfully harsh. And I think if I were to think about that more,

the blurts are probably some message to me that I need to learn from. Right now they feel like a sense of oh—someone's got you. Hopefully I'll be in a place where I'll say, "oh, information." I'm not there yet.

D—And when you talk about that clear bell sound or you are talking about your adult voice and I heard you say, compared to an immature voice, so this voice feels like part of the maturing process?

A—Developed. It's more of a developed voice. And I would say that…I have to be careful because when I think of an adult voice I still think you carry playfulness, I still of humor—it could be a lot of those things but…but it's still a more developed voice.

D—I cannot tell you how moved I am by your ability to think about your thoughts and your actions on so many different levels. And of course that's incredibly helpful to me. But also just the way you do your work, it's profound and it's been really helpful to me. I keep thinking as I hear you that I wish I'd known that ten or twenty years ago. Your personal development is remarkable. Everyone should do this—think about their own behaviors—it would be a better world.

A—It's been interesting talking with you because there certainly is difference between—I know I have a sense of myself and—well it's still not all of it, is it? I struggle with these things—It's not where I want to be. And I'm impatient to get to where I need to be. So it's interesting to be acknowledged for this ability to articulate, but that's separate from aligning the paces to be a kind of leader and a risk taker in the uncomfortable context—that's the next step.