

**PEAK EXPERIENCE AS AN ACCESS TO INNER DIRECTION:
THE ULTIMATE GUIDING PRINCIPLE**

A Contextual Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Diploma Program
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by

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Abstract

Peak Experience as an Access to Inner Direction: The Ultimate Guiding Principle

by

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This was a creative and educational project exploring how a peak experience and open mind can serve as access points for connecting individuals with their inner direction, a force within each of us holding the capacity to navigate challenging situations, and find purpose amid the zig-zags and bumps of our life journeys. The research was based on the delivery of an in-person pilot workshop with a group of 11 young women (aged 11-14), the facilitation of a training in an organizational context, as well as my personal journey of feeling connected and disconnected from my inner direction. Simply, I discovered that the moments which touch us most deeply hold a state of being, and an essential energy with the capacity to connect us with our emerging potential and enhance our overall state of being. Suggestions for cultivating such moments are included.

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another resource on inner direction, please see Julia's new book in the reference section of this paper.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
The Peak Experience	2
Open Mind	6
Inner Direction	7
The Transcendent Function	8
The Self-Organizing Principle	10
Method	11
What Is Processwork?	13
Chapter 2: Literature Review	15
Evoking Vision	16
Adolescents	21
Staying Connected	24
Shifting States	29
Chapter 3: Approach	34
Preparation: The Workshop	35
Preparation: The Trainings	38
The Pilot Workshop	39
Chapter 4: Findings and Discoveries	44
Discussion	44
Reflections	51

Discoveries.....	52
Contributions to the Field	53
Limitations	54
Next Steps	55
References.....	57
Appendix A: Pilot Outline	59
Appendix B: Exercise	60
Appendix C: Training: Eldership and Communication	61
Appendix D: Reflective Exercise: Eldership / Inner Direction	62

Chapter 1: Introduction

Over the course of my life, there have been moments in which inspiration filled my being and my perception extended beyond my everyday mind. I felt I had entered a field of immense potential, in which new possibilities were revealed. Experiencing these moments ignited a spark within me, casting light on a vision of cascading possibilities. With this spark glowing inside me, each of my experiences became illuminated with a new significance; life became more meaningful as my soul connected with an innate purpose and sense of direction. It was as though I was able to tap into the mythic source from which reality springs. Staying connected to this spark opened my being to a current of motivation and inspiration that guided me through the world. In the glow of the spark, experiences I had previously perceived as obstacles became an opportunity for growth, as I felt more capable and connected to a larger force.

For most of my childhood, I grew up on an island in the Puget Sound, off the coast of Seattle, Washington. When I was 13-years-old, I went to Seattle for the night to see a concert with a friend, and stay the night at her father's house. That evening, once we had returned to her father's apartment, I stood out on the balcony overlooking the sky scrapers and grid of streets downtown, and on to the sea beyond. I could hear the honking of horns, zooming of traffic, mingling with the buzz of the city in a hum pulsing with energy. Beneath me, I saw a web of twinkling lights, all blinking and flashing in a disjointed harmony. Standing there with the wind on my face, I realized that each one of those lights and sounds were connected to people, animals, and machines, each one was alive and part of a greater life. Everything was moving together. I could see the togetherness and feel it. Standing

there, I felt alive. Just by being there, I was connecting to something greater, that I was a part of a giant network, and yet at the same time, I was outside watching it.

Inside, I felt a mixture of exhilaration and deep peace as my being opened to the moment, drinking it in. I basked in this experience for the following days, months, and years to come. I can still recall the nuances of feeling that enveloped me in that moment. Yet, I wonder why that moment, and others like it, touched me so much? There have been many highlights along my journey that stay with me to this day. Some have been small—the taste of a ripe mango, the rush of energy on a run—and others have come through travels, the exhilarating rush of working through a challenge, or the appreciation of an exquisite place in nature. To this day, I can still evoke the textures and mood, as though the feeling qualities of these moments were imprinted on my psyche. When I reflect back on this moment of looking out over the city, I feel close to something much larger than my own being. Recalling this feeling experience evokes an intimate connection within me to something far bigger, simultaneously igniting a spark that shines well beyond my everyday viewpoint, nudging my being toward a vast horizon and perceptual framework.

The Peak Experience

Through my studies in processwork, I learned that these moments fall under the umbrella of peak experiences. Along the path of working toward a diploma in processwork, peak experiences often showed up in exercises that the faculty at the Process Work Institute or the Deep Democracy Institute created. In my experience, these exercises stood out and often had the most significant impact on me. Re-accessing peak experience connected me to a greater capacity to be with whatever issue I was exploring, and it also evoked a state of possibility as well as the ability to see each aspect of my current situation in a new light.

Secretly, I longed to stay with the perspectives I accessed through these experiences, or find a way to re-access them throughout my everyday life.

Maslow (1968) described the peak experience as the moment of highest happiness and fulfillment. Peak experiences may include: “the parental experience, the mystic or oceanic, or nature experience, the aesthetic perception, the creative moment, the therapeutic or intellectual insight, the orgasmic experience, certain forms of athletic fulfillment . . .” (Maslow, 1968, p. 73). Through his research, Maslow found that his subjects described their peak experiences as “the ultimate goals of living and ultimate validations and justifications for it” (p. 80). On a similar note, psychologist Edward Hoffman (2009) described the peak experience as “an accessible avenue for optimizing our clients’ self-regard, personal responsibility and motivation for positive change.” The peak experience tends to evoke a reaction of awe, wonder, bliss, or connection to something greater.

Maslow (1968) described the peak experience as a doorway through which the “average being” (p. 76) could access a perceptual awareness which transcended ego and perceived the world “in its own Being (‘endless’) rather than as something to be used or something to be afraid of, or to be reacted to in some other human way” (p. 76). As a result, the peak experience evokes a perspective that extends beyond the individual, allowing them to enter a larger perspective through their own experience. Often this larger perspective can enhance the individual’s sense of purpose and meaning, as well as evoke a collaborative attitude in which they can attend to the focus of their experience while seeing the greater picture. Maslow stated that the peak experience is “imbedded in its relationships with everything else in the world, and as *part* of the world” (p. 75). I take this to mean that the peak experience is an integral aspect of worldly experience. According to Hoffman (2011),

toward the end of his life, Maslow began developing exercises to help people achieve the transcendent state of consciousness associated with peak experiences. These exercises were based on very worldly experiences such as, “gazing at a tiny flower intensely and with total attention, or at a familiar family member or friend and imagining ‘that you [or he / she] is going to die soon’ . . .” (Hoffman, 2011). Maslow proposed that these exercises could “break the dull, habitual way we relate to others and help us to see the world once more with freshness and delight” (Hoffman, 2011). In other words, re-evoking the state of consciousness associated with peak experiences shifts the individual’s awareness, re-awakening a sense of wonder, possibility, and open mind, a term I expand upon further into this chapter.

Processworker, teacher, and therapist, Salome Schwarz described the peak experience as “a shift in the individual’s consciousness to a wider, more inclusive, and spiritual orientation” (S. Schwarz, personal communication, May 19, 2016). She elaborated, stating that the peak experience was helpful developmentally as it gives people an experience of bliss, oneness, or being a part of something greater that they may otherwise be missing in their lives. “It holds the potential to make consciousness bigger” (S. Schwarz, personal communication, May, 19, 2016). The peak experience can also bring you closer to processmind: “the supersensitive self-reflecting awareness [and] ‘pilot wave’ or guiding pattern” (S. Schwarz, personal communication, May 19, 2016) behind all experience, giving the individual a taste of their own essence and deepest nature. Physicist David Bohm (1980) refers to the unseen organizing principle behind process as the implicate order. Arnold Mindell (2010) called this force processmind. I see peak experience as a doorway that opens one’s perception to a wider perspective, and facilitates a connection with oneself, the

implicate order, processmind, a deeper level of meaning throughout one's experience, and the world at large. Later in this paper, I elaborate on the concept of processmind through the lens of the self-organizing principle.

For my research, I was interested in the attitudinal and perceptual shifts resulting from the peak experience. Is it possible that touching on our happiest and most blissful experiences changes our attitude, perception, and enhances our overall engagement with the world? Can the peak experience connect us with our innate power and gifts? In itself, "the peak experience is felt as a self-validating, self-justifying moment which carries its own intrinsic value with it" (Maslow, 1968, p. 79). Yet, what happens when we harvest the intrinsic value embedded in the peak experience that Maslow speaks of, and bring it into our daily lives? I believe the moments that we cherish, and reflect upon again and again, stay with us because they contain the very qualities that we need more of. By remembering these experiences, a part of us is striving to connect with an energy containing the capacity to enhance our awareness and state of being.

Maslow (1968) stated that through the peak experience, "the whole of Being is being perceived" (p. 74) and as a result, "all those laws obtain which would hold if the whole of the cosmos could be encompassed at once" (p. 74). I understand this to mean that in accessing a peak experience, the very laws through which the individual relates to the world around them expand to a wider, even cosmic potential. The peak experience also holds the capacity to give the individual a taste of their whole being. In other words, the peak experience can be seen as a portal that builds upon and enhances the normal laws of being, evoking new possibilities and patterns of behavior, often extending beyond the person's everyday identity. Further, the peak experience serves as an entry point to connect with one's personal power, a

source of knowing, sense of ease, or connection to something greater that extends beyond the given moment and can be carried into a variety of contexts. In *Power: A User's Guide*, Diamond (2016) described personal power as, “one’s inner self-sourced sense of authority that remains stable and durable regardless of the outer situation” (p. 222). Personal power, inner authority, and knowing are resources under the umbrella of one’s inner direction, a concept I introduce shortly. Each provides a sense of grounding, faith, and increased capacity, enhancing one’s capacity to navigate challenging circumstances.

Open Mind

Have you ever had a sudden insight or burst of inspiration while brushing your teeth or taking a shower? There is another state of perception that arises when we create space for what is inside of us to emerge. For this project, I called this state, *open mind*. I have experienced countless epiphanies in the shower, walking through the city, or washing a stack of dishes in my kitchen sink. In these moments, the quieter voices and tendencies within me move to the forefront of my awareness, making themselves known through a burst of clarity, or as an impulse to follow an idea that suddenly pops forward. I view these impulses as stemming from my inner direction. When I allow space, my inner direction emerges and nudges me forward along my path. It is as though it is always there, lingering just beneath the threshold of my everyday awareness and waiting for the space to make itself known. More often than not, these nudges appear in irrational and surprising forms. Over time I have learned to recognize the certain clarity and suddenness with which these signals appear and trust in their direction. Later in the paper, I expand upon how open mind can be used to connect with our inner direction.

Imagine if this portal of potential were available to you at any time, and that the perceptions, viewpoints, and attitudes contained within the peak experience and your open mind, could be accessed continuously. Further, consider that the resources from these states could be transposed onto other areas of life where you experience difficulty, and in this way transform various aspects of your life. In daily life, it can be easy to get caught up in the logistics, lose sight of the bigger picture, and fall out of touch with the original zest and passion. For my project, I was interested in strengthening an individual's connection with this portal, the spark of aspiration, as a source of clarity and support. I call this portal your *inner direction*.

Inner Direction

The inner direction is a force within each of us that holds the capacity to navigate the most challenging situations and creates an innate sense of purpose and direction amid the zig-zags and bumps of our life journeys. The inner direction often operates from a place beyond our everyday rational mind. It is the same quality that brings each of us to do things that other parts of us may feel are impossible, scary, or beyond our current capacity. The inner direction can be experienced as a background sense of trust amidst turbulent moments, an internal spaciousness, spontaneous insights, an ability to flow with sudden changes, increased inspiration, creative impulses and energy, as well as the pervading experience of feeling well in what you do.

I understand the inner direction as a vector; the subjective sense and orientation within each of us toward what feels right. Vector is the mathematical term for arrow, derived from the Latin word *vectus*. According to Mindell (2007), “*vectus* means carrier [...] with a given length (or magnitude) and direction” (p. 49). Vectors are often employed to graph the

direction and forces acting upon an object, such as a boat at sea. Mindell (2007) suggested that vectors can also “graphically represent subtle body feelings and earth directions” (p.50). Mindell (2007) stated that vectors are both real and imagined, “they indicate a literal north, south, east, and west. At the same time, they are imaginary, as in your dreamlike sense of where your feelings are headed” (p.50). Vectors are organized by “physical forces such as gravity and magnetism, and partially by spiritual, earth-based [subjective] experiences (Mindell, 2007, p.50). Mindell (2007) emphasized the later meaning of vectors “in light of the word’s root meaning, *carrier*: as a spiritual force, vectors carry us...” (p.50).

When we align with the vector of our inner direction, we can connect with a force that carries us, and accelerates or amplifies our experience of progression toward a given point or aspiration. Through the vector of inner direction, we can connect with the potential of processmind, the self-reflecting awareness and guiding pattern behind all of our experiences.

During the 5th Deep Democracy intensive, a cross-cultural and conflict facilitation training in Berlin, Germany, the morning after an open forum that took place as a part of the training, Max Schupbach, one of the lead facilitators, was given some flowers. After graciously accepting the bouquet, Max proceeded to divide the flowers out, and offer them to other individuals in gratitude. He offered the first to Arny and Amy Mindell, the founders of processwork, the next two went to our group and the facilitation team. Max then separated out another flower and held it up to his chest: “this flower is for the part in me that leads me to do things, I would otherwise never do” (personal communication, Berlin, Germany, October 10, 2016). This moment stayed with me, for in it I saw Max acknowledging his inner direction; that unrelenting force that continues to drive our actions and work in the world, even when the direction seems impossible, and other parts of us are resisting. Seeing

Max give his inner direction a flower, woke me up to my deep appreciation for my own inner direction, as well as the inner direction of all those around me. Thank goodness there is a determined spark that glows and persists, continuing guide us through life's complexities and bouts of doubt, with a quiet, persistent, and graceful force. In watching Max, I also learned that it is important to acknowledge our inner direction, to give it flowers, to affirm that it exists, and to appreciate our innate capacity.

The Transcendent Function

Our inner direction holds the capacity to bridge levels of perception and transcend the borders and edges of certain belief systems. In this section, I introduce the transcendent function as an aspect of this capacity. In *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, Jung (1969) introduced the transcendent function as arising from the union of the conscious and unconscious. Jung stated, "there is nothing mysterious or metaphysical about the term 'transcendent function.' It means a psychological function comparable in its way to a mathematic function of the same name" (p. 69). Similar to a mathematic function, the transcendent function serves as a bridge between the input of the conscious and unconscious, facilitating a complementary attitude between them, and the output of a third level of perception. According to Jung, "[w]e need the unconscious contents to supplement the conscious attitude . . . those people who are least aware of their unconscious are the most influenced by it. But they are unconscious of what is happening" (p. 78-79). These individuals often feel subject to strong forces outside of themselves, and at the mercy of powers with which they do not identify.

I see the unconscious as a realm of immense possibility that holds insights and solutions beyond the often limited frame of our everyday mind. Becoming conscious of

unconscious material, such as that which is embedded in the peak experience, dream, or fantasy, not only remedies “the interference of the unconscious and its unpleasant consequences” (Jung, 1969, p. 79) but also increases our agency and the range of possibilities and material we can access within our psyche at a given moment. The inner direction creates a bridge, which like the transcendent function, facilitates the collaborative exchange between conscious and unconscious material, strengthening the individual’s connection with the self-organizing principle and evoking cross-pollination between realms of information, resulting in increased awareness, perceptual deepening, and enhancement.

Jung’s (1969) motivation in exploring the transcendent function was largely to consciously access and unfold unconscious material. To do so, he encouraged his patients to go consciously into their moods and fantasies. Here he stressed the importance of allowing for the “freest play possible” (p. 82) as it encouraged the contents of the unconscious to bubble forward without inhibition or interpretation. I see this encouragement of freedom as mirroring the state of *open mind* I described earlier. Jung stated that through deepening, play, and exploration, clarification of the unconscious contents and their effects on the psyche would arise. While this work in itself carries an enriching value, it also creates new patterns and frames of perception, as the contents of the unconscious are unearthed and related to. According to Jung, this unearthing of unconscious material, and bridging between the conscious and unconscious mind, is the beginning of the transcendent function. In exploring and unfolding a peak experience, as well as connecting with one’s inner direction through open mind, I advocate for an approach similar to Jung; consciously exploring what is less known with a sense of freedom and playful curiosity. In this way the depth of experience can be honored, as the everyday mind explores the nuances of sensory

information that emerge from less known realms of awareness. I also see the transcendent function and inner direction as perceptual muscles that with strengthening, increase in their capacity to transcend the limits of our everyday mind to encompass a wider range of possibility, and draw upon new levels of information.

The Self-Organizing Principle

Behind all of what we perceive is an intelligence that gives rise to our experience. Earlier I referred to this force as processmind, however, it can also be known as the self-organizing principle. As a daughter of Jungian psychology, processwork's concept of the self-organizing principle builds upon the Jungian idea of the unconscious: a background intelligence that informs and gives rise to all of our experiences. The self-organizing principle not only arranges our individual experience, but also those of relationships and groups. Processwork teacher, coach, facilitator, and consultant, Max Schupbach stated that our relationship to, and engagement with, the self-organizing principle plays a vital role in our sense of wellbeing (personal communication, Berlin, Germany, October 3, 2016). For example, when we choose to engage and co-create with the experiences we are presented with, rather than resist or feel oppressed by them, we shift our position from one of sacrifice to one of possibility. Choosing to collaborate with the self-organizing principle opens us to receive the teachings from the future arising in the present. Opening to what is emerging also enables us to position ourselves as creative explorers and change agents in the face of the unknown. When framed and evoked with intention, the self-organizing principle can also reveal the inner direction of individuals, groups, and teams, as well as bring us back to our mythic path and deepest nature. I believe that the inner direction is the manifestation of the

self-organizing principle within each of us, serving as an access point through which we can maintain a sense of direction while navigating a myriad of experiences.

Method

My inner direction reveals in aspiring, striving, working through challenges, and translating concepts. For this final project, I chose to lead a mini pilot-workshop with a group of young women between the ages of 11 and 14, as well as a couple of trainings for staff and a leadership team, in a care provider organization. The idea of running the first workshop as a pilot was to create a space in which I could try out my ideas and learn from the experience. I chose to work with adolescents, as they are at the developmental level of immense physiological, emotional, and psychological transformation. On the brink, or already in the early stages of puberty, they are learning to navigate the world and their relationships through a “new” body. According to teacher and author Betty Staley (2001), during this time “thinking, feeling and willing move in different and opposite directions . . . as the axis of identity shifts and ideals and values adjust” (p. 14). Staley described a strong desire to be seen as strong and independent coupled with a longing to be cared for as being characteristic of this age. Fantasy merges with reality, as strong desires for adventure spark dreams of leaving one’s family, or entering a new world. At times the desire is so strong that the lines between reality and fantasy become blurry (Staley, 2001). At a crossroads between childhood and adulthood, fantasy and reality, security / care, and autonomy / power, I believe that this is a time ripe with potential for connection to one’s inner direction.

In facilitating the workshop with the young women, my hope was that the participants could learn creative methods for tapping into and connecting with their inner direction, by re-accessing a peak experience. The workshop was incorporated into a 5-day nature based yoga

camp on Whidbey Island, Washington. Drawing upon processwork, the workshop explored ways of staying close to the essence of one's peak experience, or inner direction, in order to discover the power or hidden gift embedded in that experience. Through strengthening the individual's connection to their inner direction, my intention was to frame it as a resource that they could draw upon and live in different areas of their life. It was also my intention that in accessing the gift within the peak experience, participants could begin to create a bridge between fantasy and reality, as well as dreaming and action.

Both the workshop and the trainings were presented from a coaching perspective, which affirmed the innate power within each individual, and emphasized the development of skills through exercises. The workshop supported the 11 participants to strengthen their connection to their inner direction and awareness, as foundations from which they could develop new patterns of behavior for engaging with challenges. The trainings incorporated skill drills to support individuals to practice honing their awareness in areas where pieces of information were presented and perceived through the sensory channels of movement and voice, in addition to self-reflection exercises, in which individuals could connect with their inner direction. The trainings also included moments when the group was given space to self-organize, providing the opportunity for the inner direction of the group to emerge.

What Is Processwork?

Processwork, also called process-oriented psychology, is an awareness-based practice that follows the nature of individuals, communities, and eco-systems. As an evolving, trans-disciplinary approach, processwork supports individuals, relationships, and organizations to discover themselves. In *The Leader as Martial Artist*, processwork founder Arnold Mindell (1992) stated that processwork stems from the viewpoint that there are no "permanent

constants in life . . . [and that] all experience is impermanent and absolute” (p. 71). Mindell elaborated that the only constant in physics, psychology, and life as a whole is awareness. Processwork uses awareness to “track psychological and physical processes that illuminate and possibly resolve inner, relationship, organizational, and world issues” (p. 71). In following awareness, the practitioner’s focus is on “the moving ground, of the flow of events around and within us” (p. 71). Paradoxically, following the flow of awareness includes being unconscious, and according to Mindell, being constantly aware is not the goal. In other words, following nature extends beyond the agenda of the individual, and supports the flow between varying states of consciousness. From this perspective, being unaware, or momentarily forgetting something, can be seen as part of a larger process. As the emphasis within processwork is on following nature, the paradigm provides an approach for working with complex and nonlinear dynamics. In following nature, the process itself reveals surprising solutions for how to facilitate various experiences just as nature itself holds and facilitates immense complexity. The processworker uses their awareness to track what is emerging and facilitate the unfolding of the individual, couple’s, or group’s experience. Processwork is currently being used across the globe to work with extreme conflicts, individuals, and teams undergoing all manner of experiences. Although I specifically describe aspects of processwork here, I will include additional processwork concepts throughout this paper related to theories I am exploring.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

There are many approaches for evoking a sense of inner direction and staying connected to one's awareness in the face of challenges. Within this chapter, I outline several approaches that have informed my thinking around this project. I begin by exploring methods for evoking vision, and go on to outline a few awareness-based techniques for staying connected to one's self in challenging moments. The concept of personal vision stems from psychologist Carl Gustav Jung's concept of "life myth." Jung (as cited in Diamond & Jones, 2004, p. 148) coined the term "life myth" to describe a patterning for life-long personal development. According to processworkers Diamond and Jones (2004), Jung

found that childhood dreams, which often stayed in a person's memory into adulthood, revealed an archetypal or mythic pattern for a person's life. Like an astrological chart, the childhood dream was not a predetermined path, but a picture of tendencies, represented symbolically. (p. 148)

Years later processwork's founder, Arnold Mindell, extended Jung's work on life myth and childhood dreams to encompass chronic body symptoms, addictions, and relationship challenges, proposing that mythic underlying patterns exist within each of these areas.

Evoking Vision

Life myth can be seen as a map, outlining patterns, themes, and the larger mythical journey of an individual's life path. Framing the individual's life in a larger context, the life myth allows new meaning to emerge from a variety of situations and supports the individual to rediscover a deeper vision and sense of purpose behind their actions and experiences.

Connecting with this purpose is one way of aligning with one's inner direction. In the face of life challenges, connecting with the deeper purpose and potential meaning beneath these experiences invites the wisdom and guidance of the inner direction. According to Diamond and Jones (2004), the life myth can be understood as,

the basic blueprint behind life's meandering path . . . It not only locates personal history in the context of a broader archetypal drama, but also adds a spiritual dimension to self-exploration by addressing questions such as, "Why am I here? What am I meant to learn or do? What is my purpose in life?" (p. 147-149)

In evoking such existential questions, the life myth invites the individual to become an active player and participant in the co-creation of their life journey. Stepping into a perspective that values experience as a "part of a mythic pattern can relieve feelings of [being stuck] or failure that often accompany chronic problems" (Diamond & Jones, 2004, p. 149). In this way, the life myth can provide relief from the problems an individual may identify with, as well as bring an element of learning and meaning to difficulties. Through evoking meaning and contextualizing experience, life myth can also ignite a deeper vision or sense of purpose within the individual, creating a mythical attitude toward life.

As part of my training, I have been studying with *Leaders Empowered*, a training based on processwork that focuses on working with leaders in organizations. Founded by processworker and consultant Lukas Hohler, *Leaders Empowered* strives to support individuals to raise their awareness and access their inner power within leadership roles. Within the training manual for *Leaders Empowered*, Hohler (2014) reframed the concept of life myth through his idea of basic direction: "the basic alignment or direction of your personality that is a crucial element in the course of your life and in your way of living" (p. 9). Basic direction can also be understood as your personal myth, "a tale that wants to enter the world . . . be lived and told through you" (p. 9). According to Hohler, the more you know about your basic direction, the more you will emanate a sense of authenticity through your presence, and inspire a sense of direction in yourself and others. Awareness is the key to understanding oneself, and the basic direction provides the perfect door to unlock and enter.

The basic direction colors each individual's character and disposition and orients their engagement with life.

According to Hohler (2014), the basic direction is omnipresent and organizes your life. It is the constant force in the background of the zig-zag of daily life. Hohler stated,

The zig-zag movement of everyday life is created by decisions we have made in our private and professional lives. Many of our decisions still leave us more or less in the realm of our basic direction. However, the more we move away from our basic direction, the more strained life becomes. (p. 10)

To rediscover ease and delight in our lives, we need to return to our basic direction.

Understanding your basic direction will highlight strengths you bring to your profession, community, and relationships. The basic direction can be understood as the energetic tendency or vision, behind many of your actions that makes you feel well. Hohler (2014) suggests that many of us followed our basic direction early in life, "in the beginning, we were full of fire. How did we do this? [...] We followed our curiosity and sense of *vitality, of feeling fully alive*. We did what we enjoyed doing" (p.10). According to Hohler, we can return to this simple principle to identify our basic direction. Similarly, I advocate for revisiting peak experiences; the highlights in our life, moments when we felt immense joy, bliss, love, or connection to something greater, to identify our inner direction. The basic direction and inner direction, can be re-accessed through an image, body sensation, posture, as well as movement or song. Each of these experiences provides sensory anchors for remembering and orienting from the quality or mood encompassed in the basic direction.

Returning to the basic direction can also clarify why you do things the way you do, and provide options for how you engage with situations in the future. Hohler's basic direction provides an accessible entry into the powerful mythical dimension of life myth. I

see the basic direction as a short cut to life myth, which enables the individual to reconnect with their essential nature and deeper vision, within the context of their career and professional role. The inner direction I introduced in this project is a sibling of the basic direction. The inner direction is different from the basic direction, in that it is a vector and navigation tool for the individual, which forwards their connection to processmind, and facilitates shifts in their perceptual awareness. While basic direction helps identify the vision guiding us in our actions, inner direction is the force that moves us through life and the innate knowing that processes and assimilates information at a quantum level, before our everyday mind can even track what is happening.

In a world filled with complexity and details, it is far too easy to lose sight of the larger picture and the deeper vision and motivations that are driving our actions. In *The Art of Possibility*, composer B. Zander and family therapist and executive coach R. Zander (2000) likened losing sight of one's vision to a performer losing "his connection to the long line of the music when his attention rests solely on perfecting individual notes and harmonies" (p. 116). Zander and Zander went on to state that while "a narrow emphasis can produce a dull and numbing performance . . . the music soars when a performer distinguishes the notes whose impulse carries the music structure from those that are purely decorative" (pp. 116-117). Applying this analogy to life as a whole, Zander and Zander reflected that in putting our attention on the larger patterns of which we are a part, life flows. Remaining connected to the long line is similar to living close to your basic direction; each action becomes part of a larger dance carried by the vital energy streaming through the individual.

I found *The Art of Possibility* to be a field guide, outlining valuable insights around shifting perspective, enhancing potential, and evoking possibility in all manner of

circumstances. Later in the book, Zander and Zander (2000) introduced their idea of vision as “a framework for possibility” (p. 169) which can “release us from the weight and confusion of local problems and concerns, and allows us to see the long clear line” (p. 169). Zander and Zander went on to define the criteria of a vision. The one element that resonated with me spoke of vision as “a long line of possibility radiating outward [inviting] infinite expression, development and proliferation within its definitional framework” (p. 170). From this perspective, a vision can be understood as a hope or dream of what could be, a springboard from which one can manifest and build upon their reality, as well as a never-ending source of energy and inspiration. The act of sharing a vision aloud holds the capacity to open the speaker’s eyes to universe of possibility. In this moment, “barriers to the realization of the vision disappear” (p. 170). Connecting with a vision at this level is both motivating and inspiring. Seeing the world through a vision provides a sharp clarity that can instill immense creativity and courage within the individual.

Similar to processwork’s teleological framework which studies nature, emerging patterns, and strives to find meaning in all of our experiences, including those which disturb us, Zander and Zander’s (2000) vision and model also appreciates the richness and potential meaning in “complexity, tension, and dissonance” (p. 172). Returning to a vision in moments of seeming chaos can provide a sense of coherence amid fragmentation. Taking a musical analogy, vision can serve as a baseline upon which all the other harmonies can be woven. Reading this book has helped me broaden the way I think about processwork concepts and to dream of new ways to incorporate various processwork skills into my project. These skills include employing the visual and proprioceptive sensory channels to unfold an experience, and supporting the emerging process of an individual or group by

framing the creating a space for it to land and evoking possibility through re-accessing a peak experience. As the teachings within the book are woven through narrative and a series of examples, I found it somewhat challenging to remember the main points after completing the book. In light of this, I was inspired to create a few clear exercises for this project, the basic elements of which can be remembered and accessed again and again. It is my hope that the exercises (see Appendix B and D) delivered in the workshop served as a catalyst, awakening participants to the possibility of employing their awareness as a resource in all manner of situations.

The process phase model from Arnold and Amy Mindell's recent work, is a tool for tracking the evolution and flow of process (Mindell & Mindell, 2015). There are four process phases within the model. The first phase is about identity or vision. For an organization, phase one is about finding its identity and creating a vision and a mission statement. For an individual, it is about the "I," telling a story centered around their own experience, and gaining a sense of oneself. Phase two arises when the identity or organism recognizes outside forces and enters into conflict with them. Phase two can also be perceived as an awakening to others or outside forces. Phase two can often arise around power differences. While phase one is cruising along in one's own world and vision, phase two is the bump or crash into another entity or experience. Phase two can be viewed as a conflict as well as an opportunity to learn about diversity. In phase two, Mindell and Mindell described the organization or individual as "u" and the other as "X." Phase two can often manifest as a polarity, colliding viewpoints, a small disagreement, or in an extreme scenario, war. According to Mindell and Mindell, 95% of the world is in phase two.

The third phase arises when positions free up and individuals are able to step into and move between different viewpoints. Phase three can be recognized as an open forum, external or internal, in which participants are able to step into different perspectives and understand and empathize with each of them. Finally, phase four is an overview in which the individual is no longer in one position, or moving between several and has enough detachment to see all positions from a distance without feeling tugged between them. Phase four can be related to feeling close to a larger perspective. As process flows like water and is always changing, the process phases are not always crisp and clear and can occur in any order. I believe that connecting with inner direction can support individuals to stay connected to an overview, as they navigate through the other phases along their life path.

Inner direction can also serve as a catalyst for intrinsic motivation, an enduring source of energy and inspiration. Ryan and Edward (2000) described intrinsic motivation as “a natural motivational tendency and is a critical element in cognitive, social, and physical development” (pp. 56-57). From this perspective, connecting with a vision and evoking intrinsic motivation can be seen as assisting in an individual’s developmental process. I hypothesized that having a purposeful vision is good for your health as it evokes hope, creativity, and intrinsic motivation. In recent years, Motivational Interviewing (MI) has become popular as an approach that draws on intrinsic motivation to evoke change. According to Handmaker, Miller, and Manicke (2001), MI is “a method that works on facilitating and engaging intrinsic motivation within the client in order to change behavior” (p. 86). Through engaging an individual’s intrinsic motivation, MI strives “to change a particular behavior that is not consistent with a client’s personal value or goal” (Hanson & Gutheil, 2004, p. 49). In this way intrinsic motivation was used to support the individual in

changing behaviors and achieving their goals. I understand MI to dovetail with Hohler's (2014) basic direction. While MI is focused largely on behavioral change, basic direction holds the capacity to connect an individual's intrinsic motivation with living their highest potential. In the next section, the developmental phase of the population with whom I ran the pilot workshop will be used as a focus to continue the literature review.

Adolescents

For my final project, I chose to lead a mini workshop with a group of 11 young women between the ages of 11 and 14. In her book, *Creating a Culture of Awareness*, author Betty Staley (2001), director of Waldorf High School Teacher Education, and founder of the Sacramento Waldorf High School, outlined some aspects of the developmental phase around the 9th grade. According to Staley, at these ages individuals are beginning to experience themselves strongly in feeling and action, "they want to be seen as strong and independent, but they actually long for comfort and emotional security" (p. 14). During this time there can be a tendency to treat the rest of the world harshly, "while they are hypersensitive to how the world treats them, this sensitivity does not carry over to their choice of language, tone, or gesture . . ." (p. 14). This phase is largely about becoming aware of one's power, impact in relationships, and on the world at large.

During this time there is a tendency for individuals to grapple with their power, and search for ways to express their independence. This expression often manifests through their clothing, attitude, and behavior (Staley, 2001, p. 14). The creative capacity of this age group is vibrant. Dreams of adventure, and leaving one's school or family, color their imagination. According to Staley, "it is not unusual that they may write things in a diary that actually did not happen because at times they don't clearly differentiate reality from fantasy" (p. 14).

They are able to dream up new possibilities powerful enough to be partially identified with, a feat many adults struggle with. For this project, I utilized this creative capacity to support them to get in touch with their innate power through re-accessing a peak experience.

Another characteristic of this time is a desire for agency in directing one's life and influencing the way things happen. Staley (2001) elucidated, "although they often don't align their will with their ideals, they actually mean to do so" (p. 14). It is helpful to clarify their vision and ideals; often they may have a strong desire to serve their ideals without fully knowing what they are. To clarify their ideals, Staley recommended bringing their thinking into connection with their will. I would elaborate on this with the additional recommendation of bringing awareness to their innate gifts and power. In working with this age group, Staley highlighted the importance of clear direction, and outlining the task at hand so that they can orient themselves accordingly. Based on this recommendation, the exercise for my workshop employed clear directive prompts.

Staley's insight into the psyche of the ninth grader helped me to orient my approach to the developmental phase of the group. Re-accessing a peak experience engages thinking and one's will in a collaborative dance, while also engaging the body and senses. In re-accessing, the individual was asked to recall the images, sounds, movements, and sensations, all nuances of the experience, and in this way became immersed in the sensory reality of that moment. The exercise was introduced with clear direction and followed by a discussion, which engaged further thought and encouraged possibilities for future action. I see this as being connected to Staley's teaching around aligning thought and will. As a processworker, I also see this as an important aspect of anchoring and deepening a new experience, and creating a home for a new way of being / seeing within one's psyche.

Staying Connected

The spaces we move through and environments we occupy play a significant role in the coloring of our internal experiences. Having techniques for engaging with these influences can be extremely helpful in navigating these fields and remaining close to oneself. In *Learning Organizations: Developing Cultures for Tomorrow's Workplace*, coach / consultant Kendall Murphy (1995) introduced the idea of shifting individuals' "structure of interpretation" (p. 207) to evoke new possibilities within their role in an organizational context. Working with the structure of interpretation allows individuals to move past confining belief systems, re-engage with difficulties with a new perspective, and broaden their perception. Working from the ground up, intervening within a structure of interpretation holds the potential of creating a new launching pad from which the individual can re-orient themselves, see new options, and feel their agency within a given scenario or system. Understanding where you are, and imagining what could be through a structure of interpretation provides the opportunity to access perspectives, ideas, and energies that would otherwise remain further from our identity. Intervening within a structure of interpretation allows individuals to access new concepts and patterns of behavior that can serve as sources of empowerment in their role at work, as well as in their personal lives.

Continuing with the theme of shifting perspective and increasing an individual's agency, MIT professors Fred Koffman and Peter Senge introduced the concept of servant leadership, a model in which the team is encouraged to pick up their power as a means of supporting each individual in order to bring their strengths forward, work collaboratively, and ease the pressure that is placed on those in the leader role. Senge and Koffman (1995) stated that "the concept is an ideal, appealing to deeply held beliefs in the dignity and self-

worth of all people and the democratic principle that a leader's power flows from those led" (p. 35). In supporting individuals to pick up their own capacity to lead within their role, as well as to understand their limitations within it, awareness can be cultivated, providing options for engaging with a role, relating to others and oneself within it.

Living close to one's inner direction can also have the effect of expanding one's identity. In *Mindsight*, Daniel Siegel (2010) described a kind of wellbeing rooted in meaning, connection, and equanimity as *eudemonia*, a term the "ancient Greeks used to refer to 'inner' or 'true' happiness" (p. 259). Similar to the way in which connecting with a peak experience facilitates interactions that transcend the ego, expanding identity and seeing ourselves "as part of an interconnected whole" (Siegel, 2010, p. 259) has been scientifically proven to enhance our wellbeing and happiness. Relating from a space of expanded identity redefines the individual beyond the boundaries of their body and their relationships as part of "an interconnected world" (p. 259). Later on Siegel brings to light the challenges around expanding one's identity, speaking to how "fixed mental perceptions created along the brain's firing patterns [are] reinforced relationally within our cultural practices" (p. 259). According to Siegel, the ideas of identity a culture holds are limited by nature and thus impose these limitations upon the individuals existing within that context. In light of this, it is important for individuals to cultivate a connection to their inner direction and vision as a support in navigating the surrounding culture. For me, this connects to personal vision and learning to stay close to one's vision and path amidst the difficulties that arise in our relationships and the world at large. By connecting with a peak experience of bliss, joy, love, power, and so forth, the individual can connect with a sense of feeling well within their being. Further, in remembering this moment, they also re-experience the corresponding

feelings, which when trusted and supported, can provide internal support as well as a foundation and perceptual framework for relating to and engaging with one's culture and the world at large.

Shifting one's awareness can open a myriad of perspectives and allow an individual to access new levels of information. Creating a shift requires a degree of accountability and a willingness to engage with whatever is arising in the moment. In *The Leader as Martial Artist*, Mindell (1992) explained that because "the world is a mixture of our objective and subjective experiences" (p. 6) in many instances we may best be able to deal with "our outer reality by beginning with our inner experiences of it" (p. 6). In the face of turbulent moments, Mindell advised reacting consciously to these forces and went on to outline several options for doing so. He introduced detachment as an underlying attitude for maintaining awareness in the midst of chaos and confusion, and used death as an analogy for reaching this level of awareness. He encouraged, "becoming aware of all of our parts so we can die, so to speak, before we are killed, and protect ourselves from attack" (Mindell, 1992, p. 55). In this way "dying" can be seen as a means of protecting one's awareness as well as picking up the attack and processing the affects internally before the attack or whatever is most frightening, happens on the outside. One can gain an overview of their internal landscape through exploring their internal landscape with awareness. By noticing and exploring all of one's subjective experiences and possible reactions to external forces, both real and imagined, one can better acquaint and orient themselves with their emotional terrain. In noticing how all parts exist within their being, the individual can momentarily let go of their identification with only one part, letting their attachment to a previous aspect of their being die, and in doing so, reach a greater sense of detachment. Processing an attack ahead of time

can also be explored through imagining the event itself, for example, seeing oneself being accused in front of a group. By consciously going into the moment that is disturbing or threatening, the individual can pick up the attack internally before it manifests on the outside. At times one can imagine dying: letting go, dissolving, or disappearing, and in following these fantasies all the way, reach a new level of insight. This practice increases one's awareness around the event itself, and provides options outside of one's default pattern for how to respond when the attack or disturbance takes place.

Continuing with the theme of detachment, Mindell explained another path to reach this state, which he calls burning wood. Burning wood refers to consciously feeding the fires of your own difficult emotions. Mindell (1992) stated, "you can be cool in conflict if you are not interested in the battle, but this can only be achieved if you have already fed the fires of your own rage" (p. 55). He goes on to explain that burning your wood leads to detachment. "You have more feeling for everyone in the fight . . . [and] the issues are no longer burning ones for you" (Mindell, 1992, p. 55). Burning wood can be seen as a means of cultivating emotional resiliency. Through time and conscious immersion in hot experiences, an individual can obtain a greater capacity to be simply present with difficulty.

Continuing with the theme of agency, Goleman (2005) highlighted how even amid challenging and emotionally charged moments we can gain access to a "choice point" (p. 2) within ourselves. In *Develop Your Inner Radar to Control Turbulent Emotions*, Goleman stated that we can begin to cultivate our choice points by questioning our reactions. By bringing awareness to our response, we gain agency to change. Building from Goleman's awareness of the reaction, processwork goes further to value the reaction itself. The processworker brings curiosity and holds the teleological notion that there is meaning in the

disturbance. The underlying theme at both levels is awareness and the choice that comes with it. For my project, I was interested in bringing awareness to reactions and exploring ways of being with the reaction as well as going into it. While Goleman framed a strategy for working with unexpected challenges, I understand that strategies are limited and individuals also need awareness of their process so that they can develop their own strategies through their own lived experience, thus supporting and empowering themselves from the inside out.

In moments when we feel weak, we can call upon the power from another moment when we felt strong. In *Alternative to Therapy: A Creative Lecture Series on Process Work*, Amy Mindell (2006) introduced the concept of transposing: "...a term borrowed from music, transposition means focusing on the same pattern but expressing it in a different position or area" (p. 142). For example, if a client is struggling to identify with or access a less known energy, they can transpose the experience elsewhere, perhaps focusing on it more broadly, a method which Mindell referred to as "zooming out" (p. 142). With zooming out, you can also place the energy being explored "within a special 'frame' so that the person can view the process [and] experiment with it, in a satisfying or kind way" (Mindell, 2006, p. 147). Alternately, you can choose a specific area in a person's life, notice how the less known experience is already happening there, and bring this to the individual's awareness. Exercising provides another analogy for transposing. Imagine you are exercising and a muscle group becomes fatigued. With awareness you can engage another group of muscles, shift your approach, and regain your strength. For my project, I was interested in exploring transposing experiences of inner knowing or power from one process to another, exploring how a person can access their power consciously and increase their fluidity when evoking it

in challenging or stressful situations. For example, before engaging in relationship conflict where I might feel tense or afraid, I could recall a time in my life when I felt deeply connected to the earth or a wider perspective. Taking time to unfold this experience, re-access and live the qualities it evokes within myself, shifts my state, attitude, and worldview. Once this shift has occurred, I could anchor this experience through a posture, gesture, or visualize an imagine that symbolizes the essence of this experience for me, perhaps a mountain or tall tree. I could then re-enter the relationship conflict and transpose the experience of a wider perspective into this dynamic. Having access to this perspective would likely change the way I engage in the relationship, perhaps allowing me to see both sides, and facilitate the entire interaction rather than remaining solely on my own.

Shifting States

Learning to relax and access an outside perspective amid tension is another source of support. In *Dance of the Ancient One*, Mindell (2013) introduced his recent method of space-time dreaming, an inner work technique that supports individuals to access detachment and insight in difficult moments. Drawing upon concepts from quantum physics such as field theory, gravity, and entanglement, Mindell related these ideas to human dynamics, framing how these forces affect us all. Mindell applied space-time and field theory to explore facilitation methods. *Dance of the Ancient One* revealed the power of accessing an essential or nondual perspective to unite opposites, facilitate polarities, and bring groups together.

Mindell (2013) outlined exercises that highlight the space-time approach to inner work. This method involves relaxing, imaging oneself to be up in space and moved by the forces there in predictable and unpredictable ways. Through relaxing and allowing oneself to

be moved, the individual will often experience stochastic movements while having an irrational thought, or sudden insight. Harvesting these experiences as sources of information, Mindell then applied what is gleaned back to the original conflict or challenge the individual is facing. Often through these methods an individual will gain a new perspective and is often able to get unstuck. Space-time dreaming can also bring a person back to her or his inner direction.

In *Processmind: A User's Guide to Connecting with the Mind of God*, Mindell (2010), described the processmind / quantum mind “as an aspect of our psychology that corresponds to basic aspects of quantum physics” (p. 5). According to Mindell, the quantum aspect of our awareness contains a “supersensitive self-reflecting awareness [as well as] a kind of ‘pilot wave’ or guiding pattern” (p. 5). Citing physicist David Bohm, Mindell (2010) elaborates on the pilot wave aspect of quantum mind: “David Bohm suggested that the quantum wave is a ‘pilot wave’ (or quantum potential) that guides particles through their trajectories. This sense of ‘guidance’ is basic to psychology” (p.244). Mindell goes on to explain that the piloting function of quantum mind can be experienced as “an accidental or unintentional ‘field’ that moves us... [yet] with awareness the quantum mind becomes an ‘intentional field’ or ‘force of silence’” (p.244). This force moves us throughout our lives, and with awareness, can be acknowledge and engaged with in a collaborative manner. This level of collaboration is the home of inner direction; a conscious intention and framework, from which we can engage with the silent force/pilot wave and quantum level of our experiences.

Reflecting on the individual’s ability to move between dreaming and everyday reality, Mindell goes on to conclude that the quantum mind is also bi-local, holding “the ability to be

in two states or two places at the same time, just as quantum physics suggest the material particles can behave” (p. 5). Building on the concept of quantum mind, Mindell introduced his concept of processmind which “[is] related, not just to general physical characteristics of the quantum universe, but to particular earth-based characteristics experienced as, or associated with . . . ‘power spots’—special places on the earth that we love and trust” (p. 6). According to Mindell, the processmind is “a force field” (p. 7) that can be identified with certain places on the earth that we have a special feeling toward or that move us in a certain direction and bring us back to our inner direction. Direction can be both physical, when you feel moved toward a certain area in the space around you, as well as occurring at a more feeling level as an inclination toward an area where you feel called, following a spark of curiosity, intuition, or sensation in your body, that leads you in a certain way.

Working with these power-spots, or *earthspots*, is another method within processwork for gaining awareness and shifting perspective. Earthspots can be any place on the earth, real or imagined, where the individual feels well, and are also a metaphor for a state of mind. They translate what is not translatable and open us to a variety of energies. When we have access to the earthspot state of mind, being with a variety of energies and disturbances becomes easier. Earthspots help our everyday mind remain open to various energies. For example, if I am in a phase of my life where I identify with ease and flow and suddenly an obnoxious colleague starts to create waves and disrupt my flow, I could go to my earthspot. For me this is a bay on Orcas Island, in the San Juan Islands, in Washington State. At this earthspot, I notice my state of flow and ease in the ebbing tide, and simultaneously I notice the obnoxious quality I associate with my colleague, in the waves crashing on the shore. As I imagine being there, I can begin to experience and study how this

place holds and dances both energies: the one I identify with and the one that disturbs me. Furthermore, if I begin to identify with this earthspot, imagining that I am the land, sea, and elements of this place, I can also begin to experience how both aspects, the waves and ebb and flow of the tide, are both a part of me, and co-exist and dance within my own being. From here I can gain a new understanding, which in turn can inform the way I engage with my colleague in future interactions, as well as with the obnoxious wave tendencies within myself. In *Processmind*, Mindell (2010) described the earthspot as “the power and presence of that area that is our home base, the equilibrium position to which we can always return” (p. 45). In cultivating our connection to this “home base” (p. 45), we can learn to swing with more fluidity.

In *Re-imagining power and care: A Practical Inspiration for Practitioners, Leaders and Teams Transitioning from Custodial Care in Residential Settings to Self-Powered People and Communities*, Wolfson (2016), explored power within custodial care models.

Highlighting issues of marginality, neglect, and safety, Wolfson revealed how harmful power dynamics can play out in a context where individuals are dependent on the care the system is providing. Drawing on her lived experience with Camphill communities and care providers around the world, expertise as a facilitator and trainer, and studies in processwork, Wolfson outlined new ways for shifting the custodial care system toward person-centered models. She described approaches that sought to empower the individuals living within these systems. Wolfson framed power as an innate capacity to self-direct. “The innate forces within people to self-direct are powerful, and the innate forces of the times are unstoppable. When we align with them, rather than resist them, we ride on their waves and even hard work feels easier . . .” (Wolfson, 2016, p. 199). When an individual’s power and vision falls into

alignment with the greater potential around them, the momentum behind the vision will increase. Speaking to the potential of aligning personal and collective power, Wolfson painted a picture of communities in which individual and collective experience can exist symbiotically.

At the end of each chapter Wolfson (2016) incorporated self-reflection activities that provide the reader with an experiential taste of the themes outlined in the chapter. I admire Wolfson's clear and succinct writing style, as well as the accessibility of her exercises. For my workshop, I created exercises that enabled participants to ride the waves of challenging moments, and strengthen their connection to the innate visionary force within them, which then allows them to surf through turbulence, and discover ease amidst moments of difficulty.

Connecting with one's inner direction can evoke a current of intrinsic motivation as well as the capacity to guide the individual through moments of turbulence and uncertainty. Connecting with a peak experience is one method of accessing the motivational spark within the individual, helping them to stay close to their power and vision. As an experiential snapshot, the peak experience holds a taste of what could be. The inner direction is reflected in the peak experience through the individual's contact with their innate strengths, connection to a bigger power, and sense of being part of something greater than their everyday self. As described in the previous paragraphs, there are various techniques for staying close to one's experience amidst moments of difficulty. As awareness is the key to understanding oneself, awareness can be accessed continuously to return to one's purposeful vision and inner direction. Later in this paper, I outline several methods for re-accessing one's inner direction.

Chapter 3: Approach

This project was creative and educational. The purpose of my project was three-fold: to explore how a peak experience and open mind can serve as access points for connecting individuals with their inner direction; to deliver an in-person pilot workshop with a group of young women; and to facilitate a training in an organizational context. Given my own inner direction, that has inspired me to translate the notion of inner direction to different audiences, I chose to deliver the workshop to a group of adolescent girls, between the ages of 11 and 14. A few months later, when the opportunity arose to lead some trainings in an organization with a colleague, I chose to extend my exploration of the inner direction into this context as well. While the content of the workshop focused on a peak experience and personal power as sources for finding one's own innate gifts, the trainings focused on connecting individuals with their inner direction and eldership. Eldership can be understood as a feeling attitude, regardless of age, that cares for the entirety of a situation as well as all of its' parts, and supports the interactions to move forward. Eldership is an effective feeling skill for working through communication challenges, relationship tensions, and inner critics. It can be understood as the ability to care for any individual, situation or group as though it were your child, and from this place support the whole scene to unfold and deepen. I will begin by explaining the workshop first, as it occurred before the trainings.

The workshop supported individuals to connect with their inner direction through re-accessing a peak experience. Given that I delivered the workshop to a group of young women between the ages of 11 and 14, the exercise took a creative approach, using visual media and imagination, in order to deepen their experience and connect them with their innate gifts. The innate gift is a more crystallized aspect of the inner direction, framed as a

figure or super power embodying the qualities of the inner direction. The intention in framing it as a gift was to give them an anchor, a way to ground the learning from this experience within their being through a gesture, posture, image or object, so that they could continue to draw upon throughout their lives. Anchors are helpful in remembering and re-accessing dreamlike or new experiences, they provide a sensory access that triggers the memory and experience of the associated state.

Peak experiences widen our perception to encompass a broader scope of possibilities. Delving beyond the cognitive level, peak experiences provide moments of sensory immersion that imprint possibility onto our being at a psychic level. The imprint opens new ways of seeing, being, and engaging in all that we do. The opening and shift resulting from a peak experience is often associated with the context in which it occurs; the objects, place, and individuals that were present. While context plays a role, one's sensory being is the instrument through which the music of the peak experience can sound. In light of this, the individual holds the capacity to create this music within their being through remembering or imagining the chords and harmonies associated with the melody. For my project, I was interested in connecting individuals with this melody, the state behind their peak experience, by first supporting them to re-live that moment at a sensory level, then by exploring the power of the state, and subsequently building a bridge between the power of that state and their everyday reality. Ultimately, my hope was to ground the wisdom and perceptual shifts resulting from a peak experience within the individual, and in doing so, connect them with their inner direction. In other words, by identifying more closely with the peak experience, I imagined that the individual would be less likely to reach outside of themselves to try and

simulate the experience through substances, relationships, and other means of shifting one's experience to reach a blissful or ecstatic state.

Preparation: The Workshop

In creating the workshop, I drew upon my experiences as a fieldworker during the 2016 Processwork winter intensive, where I studied how different faculty translated processwork concepts through their own unique style. I also drew upon my own experiences of leading workshops, creating exercises, and the feedback I received from each of these. Additionally, I incorporated my own reflections from participating in workshops at PWI, the Processmind Center, the Deep Democracy Institute, and Leaders Empowered. I also met with Salome Schwarz and two colleagues on a monthly basis for a processmind study group, in which we explored how to stay connected to processmind while working with clients, and facilitating groups. This group became a lab in which I was able to experience my own process around connecting with my inner direction, and remaining close to it in my work as a coach and facilitator. Learning through direct experience was helpful in understanding what could be useful in helping others find their connection to processmind or the innate power within them. In the following paragraphs I will share some of the experiences that supported my preparation for the workshop.

In early March, I assisted facilitator Adam Rosenthal in hosting Late Nite Art in Portland and Seattle. Late Nite Art is a social enterprise that “works to unleash the creativity of groups and teams. Rosenthal utilized collaborative art making, provocative conversation prompts and a locally-sourced meal, to ignite stimulate learning and support organizations and teams deepen their sense of community and evoke a creative culture. Through assisting and participating in LNA, I saw how Rosenthal incorporated visual art, movement, and food

into a facilitative experience that supported participants to engage creatively with one another and venture out of their comfort zones in a fun and safe way. Assisting Rosenthal, I was inspired by the way he created a fun and inviting atmosphere, which supported participants to relax and feel more at ease. For my workshop, incorporating some of Rosenthal's methods, I used humor and a chatty atmosphere to welcome the participants and build relationship as well as visual media such as pencils and crayons, to explore their experience. I also used humor as a metaskill, to work with the critic atmospherically, namely, engaging with the implied presence of critical thoughts and doubts, modeling how to playfully confront these voices and continue to take an adventurous step and try something new. Amy Mindell (1995) defined metaskills as a feeling attitude with which you apply a skill.

In developing the workshop, I incorporated creative methods, employing visual media for engaging with the material. The process of developing the workshop evoked my own creativity as I envisioned the exercises, ran through them as inner work, and revisited my adolescent self, to dream into how the content would land within me. My inner direction served as a guide throughout the entire creative process. Following the motivation that stemmed from my inner direction was a new experience. My previous experiences of conducting research or working on a larger scale project had been driven by a critical push and sense of obligation, which led me to relate to the work as an external project I had to complete in order to arrive at my goal, the destination of completion. In contrast, this project has been carried out through the pull of my inner direction, a state of expansion, portrayed through a glowing sunset with a blood red sun, hovering above the infinite horizon of the ocean and a feeling of expansion and glowing light through my entire being. This state

moved me to carry out the project, evoking a seemingly infinite motivation that stemmed from the core of my being.

The planning and preparation phase lasted until early July 2016. During this phase, I developed the exercise, and went over it with friends and colleagues as trial runs. I also met with therapist Brooke Noli, who has years of experience working with adolescent youth. Together we brainstormed ideas for connecting with this age group, reframing some process-oriented concepts and terms to reach that age group and, if possible, make them fun and relevant. Brooke was extremely helpful. She engaged me in a fun and playful manner, which reconnected me with my 11-year-old self, and reminded me of what felt juicy and important to me during that phase. In writing the exercise, I grappled with finding the language to support the deepening of experience. I noticed that I gravitated toward reflective language that engaged the mind and was often oriented toward someone who was interested in personal development. Through re-accessing my 11-year-old self, as I ran through the exercise with colleagues and friends, I realized the exercise wasn't so teen friendly, and did not directly evoke the experience I was aiming for. Finding language that encouraged the direct deepening of experience and asking questions that furthered experience rather than reflection or interpretation were challenges for me. Yet, with the help of Brooke and others, I was able to reformat the exercise so that it could land with ease and meet the participants.

Preparation: The Trainings

In preparation for the trainings, I let my inner direction choreograph my approach and collaboration with my colleague, Julia Wolfson. This choreography emerged through finding a dream symbol for the training. I did this by first making a gesture to capture the quality I imagined for the training itself, and then making a sketch to convey this quality visually. The

symbol that emerged from the collaboration between my inner direction and the content of the training was a peony. In the gesture, my wrists were nearly touching, palms facing each other and turned slightly upward, with a space of four inches or so between them. With my fingers slightly bent, maintaining their shape and the space between, I moved my hands in opposite circular motions. As I made this gesture, Salome asked me what image came to mind. When she asked me this, I immediately saw the image of a peony, and shared this with her. The image of the peony further grounded the feeling sense I had around my hope for the training. By bringing in the sensory channels of movement, visualization and proprioception (body feeling), I could unfold the information from my inner direction into a symbol that I could remember and draw upon as a guide in my continued preparation.

My teacher and mentor, Salome Schwarz, supported me in this discovery. In developing the content, I continually returned to the peony, which reminded me of the importance of having all the concepts, connect back to one underlying theme of inner direction. In other words, the concepts were all petals extending from a shared root and stem. Remembering how all the parts were connected, helped me weave the content together. The peony also guided me to reach out and engage with the group from a space of delicacy, as well as to support the group and each individual to bring out their inner direction, and in this way blossom.

Julia and I chose *learning in the now* as an underlying focus and theme for our trainings. For us, *learning in the now* meant using what was emerging in the moment to deepen interaction and learning in the group. We also incorporated collaborative learning, by engaging the group in skill drills, and smaller break out groups. The idea behind the collaborative element of our focus was to share the “knowing” role, to enable participants to

access their own expertise on the topic, navigate from their inner direction, as well as to self-organize, and experience the innate wisdom forwarded by the self-organizing principle of the group.

Whenever we began to feel weighed down in our preparation, we realized that we were doing too much, and would shift our agenda to engage the group more and make the format more interactive. A few weeks before our trainings, we both attended the Deep Democracy Intensive in Berlin, Germany, where we had the privilege of experiencing a variety of inner work exercises, and had the opportunity to facilitate a large group process together. Sharing this experience strengthened our relationship and created a space in which we could brainstorm and try out different ideas. The umbrella topic for the week of our trainings was communication. In following my inner direction, eldership emerged as the entry point for the week. For me, eldering a situation entails being open to the unknown, and a willingness to collaborate with whatever emerges. As a feeling attitude, I believe eldership lays the foundation for the inner direction to emerge. In my own experience, being open to the unknown creates a space for my inner direction to emerge, guiding me into spaces within and around me that I might otherwise not venture into. When evoked at a moment-by-moment basis, this openness creates continual expansion at a foundational level into which I can move and grow, thus broadening the perceptual framework from which I engage, and enhancing my scope of possibility for future directions. Similarly, a foundational capacity for ongoing learning and discovery is fostered when engaging with whatever arises from a willing and collaborative attitude. In this way eldering creates spaces into which my inner direction can emerge. It also nourishes the attitudes that support it to guide me.

The Pilot Workshop

Due to the focus of this project, I emphasize the workshop more than the trainings, as the workshop was the initial focus of my research and the trainings happened later on. The workshop happened at the end of July at Dancing Goat Yoga Camp, an earth-based yoga summer camp for young women ages 11-14. The camp took place at Full Moon Rising Farm on Whidbey Island, Washington. I had attended camps at Full Moon Rising farm as a child and have a close relationship to the land and Anne Petersen, who runs the camps. On the afternoon of the second day of camp, I gathered the campers in a circle outside, on their yoga mats. Each camper had an eye pillow they had made the day before, as well as a piece of paper, some colored pencils, and a board to draw on. I presented the exercise as a self-reflective art activity, in which the campers could discover something new about themselves. After passing a bottle of rose water around, and spritzing it on their faces, I invited the campers to lie down on their backs and place their eye pillows over their eyes. I encouraged them to connect with their breath, bringing their awareness inside to their heartbeat and to proprioception—the sensory channel of body sensation and feeling. After allowing a moment to connect with their breath, I began the exercise.

Campers were invited to recall a highlight from their life; one of their happiest moments that still brought them joy. If they could not remember a moment, they were invited to invent one. Once they had recalled or created a moment, they were to notice everything about it; the sounds, colors, smell, movements, and any other sensations. Once they were fully in that moment, I had them notice what about this moment made it so special and magical to them. After they had identified this special aspect, they were invited to roll onto their side, and with their eyes still closed, let this quality move itself out through their

hand and arm onto the paper. This was a challenge for some of the campers. Many opened their eyes and began drawing what they wanted to portray, rather than sketching the quality of the energy. Here, I clarified for them that the drawing was about capturing the quality rather than making it pretty. I told them that if their drawing looked like a bunch of scribbles, they were on the right track.

The next step was to open their eyes slowly, look at their energy sketch, and find a face, figure, or scene in the drawing. During this step I invited them to imagine that they were looking at the clouds and let a creature emerge through the lines, as it would up in the sky. Once they had found something, they highlighted this aspect and brought it out with further drawing. This drawing was then used as a sketch for them to create their own talismans from an array of materials. At this point they got up from their mats and went over to a table that was set up with all manner of arts materials, and objects from Nature. The campers used the beings / creatures that had emerged out of their energy sketch, as guides, allowing this being / energy to guide them to the materials through which it would be expressed.

The campers worked for a while on their creatures. Some needle felted, while others drew and created collages or sculptures. During this phase I remained busy helping at a logistical level with glue guns, questions about the materials, as well as offering words of encouragement around edges—moments of doubt or hesitation in the creative process. Once they had completed their talismans, I went around to each of them and asked them to imagine who this being was, and what kind of world it lived in? What was its attitude toward life, and if it carried a gift or superpower what would that be? After this they broke into dyads and shared their beings with one another. In walking around, I noticed some participants

were deeply engaged with one another as they shared the story of their being in elaborate and imaginative detail with their partner.

Once everyone had shared their talisman with their partner, we returned to the large group. I invited individuals to share their talisman with the group. All but three participants shared their talisman and spoke about the strengths it carried. There was an atmosphere of shyness in the group, yet with each person that spoke this relaxed and more people raised their hands. Each sharing was followed by murmurs of appreciation. I saw this as a beginning recognition from the world of the gift that the individual had harvested from the experience. In hindsight, I wish I had framed these moments as such, and honored the sharing and the underlying acknowledgement that was unfolding in these moments, at an individual and collective level.

After everyone who wished to share had spoken, I reflected on how the gifts they had discovered were also a part of them. I said,

these are your gifts. I know I took you on a crazy path to get there, and often in life it is a crazy path that leads us to our gifts. Remember it all emerged out of you, and from those moments in your life that are so important. These moments are important to us for a reason. They are reflective and symbolic of a bigger gift in you. Life is a process of starting to believe in our gifts.

I then reflected how often other people will see and appreciate the gifts before we ourselves are able to recognize them, and encouraged them to keep an ear open for the recognition of their gifts as they continued along their path. I then spoke about the meaning of talismans, that they are sacred and lucky objects that can continually be used for support. I encouraged them to keep their creation somewhere special and to hold it or spend time with it if they were going through a difficult time of felt like they could use some additional support.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discoveries

After completing the workshop, I did not feel satisfied. While the exercise went well in so far as the campers had delved deep into creating the talismans and had meaningful insights along the way, something in me felt incomplete. In hindsight, I felt as though I had rushed the workshop in the excitement of getting somewhere, and in the process had forgotten my own inner direction. In attempting to facilitate others' experience of connecting with their inner direction, I had lost touch with my own. Being in the dual role of facilitator and logistical overseer, as I assisted campers in creating their projects, was a challenge for me. Working with this age group was also new learning, as I am less accustomed to this developmental level.

In speaking about the project when we had all gathered back together, I noticed a quality of stillness in the group. This led me to feel shy and speed up what I was saying. Thinking back, I believe this was due in part, to my own growing edge around identifying with, and speaking from my inner direction, as well as believing in the wider perception and subtle states that stem from it. Further, once we completed the journey and our time together had ended, I was left with a question around integration, namely, how this experience would influence each participant over time? Or not? Due to the structure of the workshop, the idea of running it as a pilot program, and ethical issues around consent, I did not have a means to follow up with individuals. As a result, I found myself in a haze of questions and doubt as I attempted to unfold my learning and the impact this workshop may have had on the group.

Discussion

After sitting with my own dissatisfaction and feeling of lack around the workshop, and asking what it was that was truly missing for me, I realized that in order to feel satisfied,

I needed to have the experience of connecting with my inner direction and truly believing in the experience. After all, this whole peak experience as an experiential reality was still quite nebulous to me. I then asked myself, “What does it take to believe in an experience”? I reflected that for me believing involves studying an experience from the inside out, gathering the sensory grounded information that lays the experiential groundwork, and understanding the steps that can get me from one state or place to another. Through the process of facilitating others, and feeling dissatisfied, I learned what I wanted more of on my own journey and research quest. In a paradoxical way, it seemed my inner direction guided me to another layer of inquiry that was momentarily beyond the comprehension of my everyday mind.

My inner direction operates from an innate place within my being beyond the rationale of my mind. I noticed it as a felt sense within my being, of feeling in flow toward a greater sense of purpose, as well as through a broadening and amplification of my awareness. The shift in my awareness was noticeable through sounds, colors, smells, and all other sensory experiences intensifying. Interestingly, when I reflect back to each of my peak experiences, every one contains a similar sensory intensity. This leads me to believe that each of those experiences was organized to wake me up to my inner direction and guide me to live more closely to it.

After the workshop, I began to notice when I felt connected to my inner direction and when I did not. With this awareness I asked myself, “What was at play when I felt connected?” Being connected, I felt an internal spaciousness and sense of ease and relaxation amid the tasks of daily life. I experienced this spaciousness inside my being as a fabric of support that I could lean against and relax into as I continued with what needed to

be done. When I was connected with my inner direction, my attention operated on a dual level in tracking my experience and interactions while also simultaneously observing myself in action, as if in a play or movie. Even if things were unfolding in way that diverted from my hopes and expectations, I felt a sense of trust that things were unfolding as they should within the broader context. When I felt disconnected, I noticed that I felt a pressure of having to get somewhere and that the task was solely on me. The attention resulting from the pressure held a tension that was also palpable in my physical body, as more often than not my teeth would be clenched and my posture was tense.

Over the following weeks, I discovered two ways for me to connect with my inner direction. Will and aspiration by evoking desire or following longing was one. Through a sense of excitement for the very state of inner direction and surrender to it was the second. Mindell (2013) described a similar quality to surrender, as either being moved, or letting space-time move you. This way can also come through bowing down to the immensity of life, relaxing, trusting the process, and letting something far bigger wash over you. The more I focused on the state evoked through the peak experience, the more possible ways of getting there seemed to open up. Further, the more I reflected on previous peak experiences, and allowed myself to believe in these moments and the state they evoked within me, the closer I felt to my inner direction.

Another factor in remaining connected to my inner direction relates to my relationship to my current reality. In *Tales of Power*, Carlos Castaneda (1976) wrote about don Juan Matus' teachings of the *tonal* and *nagual*, two parallel worlds that affect our experience (p. 140). The *tonal* can be understood as the material world, while the *nagual* encompasses the nonmaterial and dreamlike aspects of our experience. Don Juan stated that

“the tonal begins at birth and ends at death, but the nagual never ends. The nagual has no limit. The nagual is where Power hovers” (p. 140). In my experience, the tonal needs to be attended to for me to unfold the nagual. I need to feel that things are more or less in order and safe before I can fully allow myself to enter the nagual, and be moved by my inner direction. For me, safety refers to having my basic needs met, and being aware of the time and context I am in. Similarly, with the age group I was working with, they too were at a developmental level in which supporting their awareness at both the tonal and nagual levels was important. “At this age, it is important to support ego strength as well as the individual’s connection to dreaming” (S. Schwarz, personal communication, September 1, 2016). For me, the inner direction bridges the tonal and nagual. Both need support and care in order for me to feel in sync with my inner direction.

I have found that overly focusing on the tonal can lead to a sense of disconnection from my inner direction. This raised a question for me around how I can reconnect with my inner direction when I am feeling disconnected. I brought this question to my teacher Salome Schwarz. On a cloudy Thursday morning in Portland, Oregon, sitting on the floor of her living room I asked her, “*how can I remember my connection to my inner direction in moments of tension and stress?*” Salome smiled and said, “*like that.*” As she said this, she lifted her hands mirroring a gesture I was making, yet had been completely unaware of until that moment. I looked down to see my all of fingertips touching to form one broad point. With Salome’s encouragement, I focused on this signal, exploring its energy and specific qualities. I noticed that all parts were coming to one point. This felt important yet mysterious to me. Staying with the sensation, I let it grow bigger allowing my arms and whole body to join the experience. Again, I noticed that all of me was engaged in focusing in

on a point. I experimented and found the focus could be sharp and direct, or more gentle as gazing and an open curiosity toward a certain area or point, within or around me. In exploring this way of engaging and focusing, I sensed ease, calm, and immense possibility flooding my being, a feeling that was akin to that of my inner direction and reflected in so many of my peak experiences. Being with this feeling, I felt well and deeply connected to myself.

Through the experience of asking a question and finding that my body held the answer, I realized that even in the act of asking a question, a potential answer could already be there in the process of asking. Even if the answer is slightly beyond the threshold of our everyday awareness, the doorway to a deeper knowing is there, opening and beckoning us into another realm of knowing. Recognizing the signals, body gestures, or other sensory information that arise around a question also illuminates the possibility that an individual's process already knows the best way to support the individual in connecting with their inner direction. These signals are aspects of the self-organizing principle / processmind that bubble up into the threshold of our awareness, alerting us to the vast current of creativity and intelligence that is constantly flowing beneath. When the young women drew an energy sketch of their peak experience with their eyes closed, the sketch captured a certain quality or atmosphere essential to the state of that experience. I believe that similar to asking a question and being open to receive an answer, re-accessing a peak experience and making an energy sketch from that state with eyes closed, facilitates an openness through which we can connect to the innate knowing within each of us, namely, our inner direction.

Because the path for connecting with the inner direction is unique to each person, I realized that facilitating this connection would likely need to happen on a case by case basis,

in order to honor and follow the individual's signals, and emerging wisdom from the natural realm. I still hold a dream of focusing on supporting groups of people to access this potential, yet for now, I feel my inner direction is signaling me to work with myself and other individuals on connecting with their inner direction in the manner that their process is suggesting. One way of doing this is through open mind, giving the individual permission and space to connect with the innate answers present within them, through their inner direction. Asking a question already opens us to the answer.

In the training I saw participants ask a question, and with encouragement to believe in what arose, and trust their inner direction, they arrived at an answer. Similarly, in the workshop with the young women, when I walked amongst them while they were creating the talismans to represent their inner direction, I overheard conversations of how the being/creature/scene they were creating would respond in different scenarios. More often than not, their talisman had a certain power or gift which reflected an emerging quality within them. When I heard how the talisman would respond to different situations, I could see how the quality it represented could support them in other areas of their life as well. In other words, the talisman was providing innate and creative solutions to various situations in their lives and modeling an embodiment of an emerging power that was growing within them. These talismans were answering questions, and creating a character or symbol through which the individual could connect and relate to their inner direction.

Intention follows attention, and vice versa. Questioning holds the potential for us to widen our perception and access new levels of information. In the weeks following my session with Salome, I began to notice how many of my clients were answering their own questions, as they thought aloud or explored the scene, the roles, energies, and dynamics,

around the question itself. I saw this as a signal of their inner direction at work. In instances when the answer felt near, yet not quite attainable, we would re-access a peak experience and from the state behind that experience, look back at the question and find a new kind of answer. The “newness” of these answers was noticeable in that they often reflected the diversity of the issue itself. In other words, the answer was not simply a *yes* or *no*, but rather process-oriented in nature, suggesting next steps, or a new way or attitude to be with the entire situation. I began to see that facilitating the individual to arrive at her or his own answers was a key aspect of affirming their connection to their inner direction.

While a peak experience serves to widen our perception and connect the individual with a sense of wellbeing which evokes the inner direction, the inner direction can also be invited out through affirming and supporting the opening of an individual’s awareness. A few months after running the first pilot with the young women, I was invited into a care provider organization, with my colleague, Julia Wolfson, to run some trainings and facilitate a few different teams. The organization works with individuals with special needs and is based on the east coast. In our time there, we ran several trainings, facilitated some interactions amidst the leadership team, as well as between staff and residents. In the trainings, we worked with open minds to connect individuals with their inner direction. The method we used was to look up at the sky, and ask the sky a question. This method was inspired by a reflection activity that processwork founder Arny Mindell posted on his Facebook page back in May 2016. Amidst the turbulence of current world events, Arny invited individuals to look up at the sky and ask why they were here. I found that looking at the sky created space for the inner direction to emerge, by affirming the individual's experience and supporting them to follow, and trust whatever insights arose. I ran this exercise with more than 50 individuals in

multiple groups, leadership teams, and staff in varying roles, and was amazed by the results. Although the exercise was very simple, the results were profound. In multiple cases, individuals reported finding the answer to a conflict they had been struggling with in their role, while others shared an increase in confidence.

My own experience with the trainings was that I was left feeling energized myself. I believe this was due to the format creating space for on the spot learning, encouraging me to stay close to my inner direction each step of the way. Further, with the focus on the present moment, my awareness tuned into what was emerging in front of me rather than racing ahead to reach some goal. Having led the workshop months before and having learned from that journey, I felt my tonal reality was more in order, allowing me to delve deeper into the nagual during the trainings. In other words, I felt more freedom and permission to follow my inner direction. Further, Julia and I built space into each day and gave ourselves permission to flow with whatever arose which was immensely relieving to me. I experienced these trainings as an integration of my learnings from running the initial workshop. Based on my learning, here are some ways I discovered to access one's inner direction.

- Re-accessing a peak experience
- Open mind, washing dishes, taking a shower, going for a walk . . .
- Imagining you are at your favorite power-spot in nature, perhaps a place where you had a peak experience
- Creating space for what is emerging, notice what form the emerging experience takes, and ask how it is relevant to the questions you are asking or theme you are currently exploring
- Asking the sky for advice

- Imaging you are in space and letting the universe move you until you sense an inclination or direction, and allowing that to unfold
- Noticing a movement tendency in your body in a direction that feels right, trusting this feeling and following it
- Using your body as a pendulum, placing your question into the space around you, swaying toward each option and noticing what experiences or insights arise as you move.

Reflections

For the purpose of my project, in the workshop, I used a flow-state, through creativity and drawing, to re-access and anchor a peak experience. I chose to run a pilot workshop with a group of 11-14-year-old youth to try out my ideas. After the workshop, I realized that while I had led others through an experience of unfolding their peak experience and harvesting an innate power in the process, I did not feel satiated. In search for satisfaction, I began to explore what it is that makes me feel connected to a greater capacity and wider perception within myself, and what methods and processes support me in cultivating this connection.

In the *Art of Possibility*, Zander and Zander (2000) described the long line as a vision of possibility that extends beyond current circumstances, and weaves the parts and pieces of our experience into a cohesive and harmonious whole. For me, the peak experience itself provides a pattern like the long line, upon which I can thread my current experiences, actions, and reactions in the direction of a greater whole. Relating back to Mindells' (2015) process phases, connecting with the long line through a peak experience evokes a phase four state; a state that widens the individual's perception, often providing a degree of detachment, and an

overview of the individual's current circumstance. In running the workshop, I learned that in order for a group to connect with their own inner direction, it is vital that the facilitator also be able to connect with her own, for in doing so, a field of possibility is evoked into which the group can move. In other words, by connecting with her / his or their own peak experience, believing in the wider perception evoked and following their inner direction, the facilitator models a pattern and way of being for the entire field. This, in turn, creates permission for others to do the same. After running the pilot workshop with the youth, I realized my desire was to connect both others and myself with a greater potential. Having experienced the impact of my own inner direction over time, and the way it has aided me in times of difficulty, I chose to explore this area further.

Discoveries

I discovered that the moments that touch us most deeply hold a state of being that is wanting to be lived in our daily lives, and hold an essential energy that enhances our overall being. The essence of this state is our inner direction, mythic path, or guiding principle. Connecting with the inner direction can widen our perception, increase our capacity to navigate challenging situations, and evoke a sense of feeling well in what we do. The inner direction is constantly flowing within each of us, and can be rediscovered and connected with by affirming its existence and creating a space for it to emerge. There are several other points of re-accessing the inner direction that I have outlined in this paper. The point of access can be extremely simple. This was a big learning for me, as I entered the project believing that I needed to create exercises and delineate multiple steps that outlined how to connect with the inner direction.

Over the course of my research, I discovered that more often than not, believing that the inner direction is already present within the individual or group, can support it to emerge ever more fully. Another key learning was around re-accessing my own inner direction, how I experience this connection, and how it influences my engagement with others. I entered this project focused on what I needed to unfold and achieve outside of me, only to learn that ultimate learning came from within, and the synthesis of the realms of inside / outside, in Jung's words, conscious / unconscious and effort / non-effort. I discovered that the path begins within; re-accessing my inner direction allows me to better facilitate the inner direction as it emerges in others. Ultimately, re-accessing my inner direction brings ease, a sense of flow, and deeper meaning to whatever I do. Letting my inner direction facilitate encourages me to step out of the directive role. This can be a dance and a challenge when facilitating, yet simultaneously is relieving, liberating, and inspiring in allowing new forms and insights to emerge.

Contributions to the Field

This project has built upon the theories and practices of peak experiences, transposing processes, and unfolding processes in the visual and proprioceptive channels. It contributes to the field of processwork through outlining how peak experiences can be explored with adolescents. This project also introduced the concept of inner direction, and outlined different options for how it can be accessed. I have included my exercises and outline for the workshop, as well as the exercise from the training in the Appendixes of this paper. (Appendix A presents the pilot outline. Appendix B contains the exercise used in the pilot workshop. Appendix C outlines the material used in the training on eldership and communication. Appendix D offers the reflective exercise on eldership / inner direction used

in the training.) This project also reframed the connection between a peak experience and life myth, presenting the inner direction as a bridge between these experiences, as well as a source of support, and connection to the individual's mythic path. Another contribution to the field of processwork is the framing of a peak experience and personal power within an exercise for youth ages 11-14.

Limitations

Running through an exercise with a group of people limits the depth of experience that is possible to achieve on an individual level. In going through the exercises, there was a range of pace between participants, as some worked very fast and others took more time. The tension of attempting to stay on track with time and following the necessary steps, while allowing sufficient space for deepening into the experience, was challenging for me to balance. Again, the format of using an exercise felt limited as it outlined steps to go through that did not fit each process present. I sensed edges arising at different points in the exercise with the young women, yet found I was unable to attend to these as I was in a facilitative role at the experiential and logistical level. To address this limitation, I would slow down in running through the exercise and build in time to assist each individual who needed support. Perhaps, I would also bring in a co-facilitator, who could assist in this capacity so that ideally, each individual could feel met, while the whole group was being held and attended to. If I could do the pilot workshop over again, I would run through it at least twice prior to giving it. Expecting myself to stay connected to my inner direction while facilitating a group of 11, 11-14 year olds for the first time on my own was a tall order. Time was another limitation within this project. For both the workshop and the trainings, I had a limited number of hours with each group. More time with each group would have allowed me to

explore multiple ways of connecting with the inner experience, as well as studying how the inner direction can be noticed emerging in individuals and groups.

Next Steps

After my project, I am left with a question of how peak and other mystical and dreamlike experiences can be deepened and unfolded over time, in a way that supports the individual's overall development. In creating the exercise for the pilot workshop, it was my intention to give individuals a taste of the power embedded within their peak experiences. The exercise did achieve this, yet the context in which the power could be lived and incorporated later was lacking. In hindsight, I wish I had created space for individuals to practice relating with one another while also engaging with their power. This may have been challenging as most of the group were between the ages of 11 and 12, and were far more interested in the creating and imaginative aspects of the exercise than the reflective ones, yet perhaps I could have brought the relating in with a playful frame. As a next step, I am curious how a peak experience can be unfolded and integrated with adults, and what steps or processes would support this deepening.

As mentioned previously, the next step in this project would be to explore how a peak experience can be integrated over time. In my view, this would include research on how integration happens. In other words, what practices or frameworks help the psyche assimilate new information, especially when it is coming from a peak or mystical level? If integration takes time, like learning a new skill, or training a muscle, what exercises or awareness practices could be used to cultivate the corresponding neural pathways, and support individuals to begin identifying with the experience? As another possibility, I could further my research by creating an illustrated handbook for a wider population in order to

introduce the concept of inner direction and to outline various stories, frames, and exercises for connecting with one's inner direction. I am also interested in exploring how the inner direction can be supported and forwarded in the context of individual coaching sessions.

Inner direction will forever fascinate me. This project only scratched the surface of what I feel to be a huge area, rich in possibility. I see this area as encompassing processmind, the self-organizing principle and the vital, dynamic, and perceptive force behind all of our experiences. Looking ahead, I can imagine creating and exploring various ways of cultivating an individual's connection with their inner direction. To do so, I anticipate developing exercises that support the connection with inner direction, as well as foster an environment within the individual in which this innate knowing can thrive. I am also curious how identifying with our inner direction can shift our engagement in relationships, and the world at large. If we could identify with the widened perception and awareness embedded in our peak experience and open mind, who and how would we be?

In the current zeitgeist of globalization, the information flood of the media, immense diversity and coalescing of worldviews, people may experience extreme bouts of overwhelm. I have seen this with clients as an inability to make decisions, paralysis, and heightened sense of anxiety, or panic. In these instances, I believe that inner direction can provide a source for reclaiming agency, honing our discernment, and tapping into a sense of awareness-based autonomy, in support of living closer to the field potential that moves each of us along our paths. I believe there is an extra-ordinary level of knowing within each of us, and I am excited to be exploring inner direction as a modality for tapping into this knowing.

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Appendix A: Pilot Outline

We each come into this life with unique gifts. Others may sense this about us, yet often we do not realize just how gifted we are. In exploring our innate gifts, we can get in touch with our power. Today we will explore creative ways of connecting with our gifts so that we can use them along our life journey.

There are moments in our life where we feel close to our inner power, through feeling free, filled with joy, fully alive, or unstoppable. These moments can help guide us in our lives.

In school, we are trained to learn from the outside, yet our greatest teacher is within . . .

I believe that the moments when we feel the best, have the most fun, love, or excitement hold a special teaching for us as individuals.

Have you heard the expression of following what feels good?

Unfold critic . . . there are voices around that say, "Oh, that is silly!"

Exercise with Visual Component

*Afterwards share with the group

After exercise: These are your gifts. I know I took you on a crazy path to get there, and often in life it is a crazy path that leads us to our gifts. It all emerged out of you, and from those moments in your life that are so important, these moments are important to us for a reason: they are reflective and symbolic of a bigger gift in *you*. Life is a process of starting to believe in our gifts. Other people will see our gifts more clearly than we will.

I wanted to give you the experience of seeing these gifts in each of you, to know that you can access these at any time . . .

To anchor: These figures / masks you created are talismans, an object that is thought to hold special powers and bring luck, place them somewhere special they will remind you of your gift. If you ever feel lost, you can hold your talisman and it will remind you of your gift and who you are.

Even though I don't know a lot about you, I already see these powers in you and want to challenge you to do the same. These are gifts you hold. I bet in the future you will hear echoes of these gifts in the way people complement you. So, keep a look out for how your gifts shine.

Appendix B: Exercise

Have some colored pencils or crayons ready and a piece of paper ready.

1. Remember a highlight from your life: a moment you really loved, one that you look back on that still touches you, or brings excitement. If you can't remember one, imagine one!
2. Remember it and notice how it feels. What is so special and magical about it? What makes it stick in your memory? Does it have a rhythm to it? Sounds? A movement? Swaying? Does it have sparkles, or colors? A smell? Go ahead close your eyes and feel this moment and all of its qualities. Let it fill your being and move you.
3. A. Now, I am going to have you do something crazy . . . staying with this feeling, pick up a pencil or crayon and let that energy come through your body onto the paper. Draw / scribble that special energy you just found.

B. *(If there is hesitation)* Just trust me, it is going somewhere . . . *Show drawing I made "the last time I did this exercise, here is what I did" "I was doing an energy and it just looked like this!"*
4. Look at the drawing through squinty eyes, so it's a little bit blurry, and find the most obvious face or figure in your drawing. Let yourself be surprised, a creature you have never seen before may emerge! Now, highlight these features and bring them out.
5. (45 minutes) Now, looking at this being / face, go ahead and gather some materials to bring it into being. Let *it* choose how *it* would like to be expressed. Create a mask or figure from this.
6. Now imagine this is a being with special gifts or a super hero. What is its power? What kind of world does it live in? What is its attitude toward life? Allow yourself to be creative and trust what comes. It may be totally irrational!
7. Now, hold the mask / figure in front of your chest. Feel the power and the indigenous dance of this figure. Look at the world through its eyes.
8. In dyads, show the mask and the power of it. Talk a bit about your mask.
9. Exchange masks / figures and show each other the power behind the mask.
10. Now in the group everyone show their mask and the movement or say a word.
11. Talk about how the mask is a part of their own power, or how the mask of another person might be expressing a part of their power.
12. Introduce a bit about the diversity of power, some are strong, others are kind . . .

Appendix C: Training: Eldership and Communication

Biography of Organization. Now, shifting from elder located in one individual, to awakening and growing the elder in each of us. Qualities of eldership are attitudes. Today we will explore three:

Detachment—from a helicopter view—Big U

You feel the whole space, hearing your voice, the other voice, the feelings that aren't always expressed, and the gift you are bringing to the table. Connected to something bigger—an ideal, belief, a spiritual perspective

Optimism—[regardless of age] coming from your deepest self and its direction, such as a feeling of optimism and generosity that things will turn out alright, even when the chips are down. Ibrahim, a dear friend we met in Berlin who is a refugee from West Africa, talked about his family being killed in front of his eyes when he was 8 and he has been alone ever since. He now has asylum in Berlin, and is building an organization for other refugees to help them integrate. Ibrahim expressed his gratitude and optimism around his current situation and future.

Holding and caring—For the whole with all its complications and mess. Sensing the invisible fabric that holds us together, and the force that moves us forward with all our differences. **Nelson Mandela**

Lessons for humanity from history

There are also entire groups who have something to teach us, for example, people with an intellectual disability, who as a whole group have been invisible, and experienced oppression. Now just coming out, **they** have important things to teach about humanity and community.

Appendix D: Reflective Exercise: Eldership / Inner Direction

We are going to do a little inner work to get in touch with the wise elder inside you.

- Go outside 5 minutes
- Look up at the sky, ask the sky: why did you put me here on this earth?
- Believe in the answer.
- Come inside, make a note.
- How is this meaningful for you in your life right now?

Eldering in Interactions

Our inner elder is always present within each of us. Remembering to access this part of ourselves can help us with communication. Eldering is a feeling attitude that helps any interaction unfold.

How to bring more of your deepest self as a quality, into your interactions and all you do, not only occasionally or when you remember?

Today, we will address 3 practices to nourish and grow our eldership.

Drills:

- Escalation / de-escalation
- Inner critic

Noble Role—*You in alignment with your inner direction*