

CHAPTER 11 - DISCUSSION OF THE GENERAL THEMES

The above discussion of Rachel's psychotic episodes illustrates how man will alter reality in order to create a way of being-in-the world which meets his needs. This creates an illusion which provides meaning and stability in a world of chaos and fear. Most importantly the discussion highlights that man lives in relationship and needs to adapt to being-in-his world with some degree of comfort.

This section deals with the major themes that have been dominant and critical in Rachel's life and psychotherapy. The significance of the phenomenological and dialogal approaches is explored as these principles are clearly highlighted in her journey to healing. Her path to integration, a more cohesive sense of self and the beginning of relating to the world in a healthy manner are the major focus.

PSYCHOLOGICAL AUTONOMY:

Man lives in relationship. It is in the person's manner of relating, therefore, that the answers to his problems must be sought. Hycner (1991) states that the disturbed person's trusting relationship to others has been injured and is not whole and this is clearly the case with Rachel. The healing of the problems and the patient's world is to be found in the meeting between two people in relationship (Buber, 1958). However, to develop a true relationship the person needs to be psychologically independent (Buber, 1965). Winnicott (1963) and Laing (1969) support this when stating that a firm sense of one's own autonomy is required in order to relate as one human being to another. To feel autonomy, one has to realise one is a separate person. Otherwise every relationship threatens the individual with a loss of identity as there are no boundaries to protect the self.

This is especially true of the fragmented or psychotic person. Buber (1965) states that this type of person is at extremes of distance and relatedness or closeness where either the whole or nothing of the real self is shared. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to relate in a balanced manner with another. These extremes are apparent in every relationship Rachel had until she started to form boundaries. Her tendency to expose her innermost thoughts and feelings and become completely emotionally involved with people immediately resulted in her risking annihilation of the real self. For example, Rachel had voluntary sexual intercourse with the man at work whom she then felt abandoned by as if he had walked in, raped her and left.

When there has been little sense of a cohesive self developed in childhood it further exacerbates the inability to connect in a relationship as a separate and meaningful I (Gendlin, 1964). Buber (1958) states that meeting someone in an I-Thou manner involves fully connecting in a meaningful relationship in which the whole human being is met - body, mind and soul. The I-Thou is spoken with the whole being and hence is the primary word of relation. Rachel had never had the experience of being met as a Thou before psychotherapy. Her feeling of being a film negative on whom other people imprinted their lives and experiences highlights this statement. An I-It encounter treats the other as an object and a means to an end which devalues, dehumanises and alienates the person by viewing them as a separate object. This kind of separateness creates barriers between people, hence Buber's view that I-It is the primary word of

separation. Rachel experienced herself more and more as an It in life due to the complete lack of regard for her worth as a human being.

If one is not relating as I-Thou in the world, events are perceived as literal and there is little felt-sense of living. Experiencing is no longer a process. The individual ends up living in an isolated and almost autistic world with few connections to other people and a common social reality. Ebner (as cited in Friedman, 1985) believes the damaged person speaks past people and is thus unable to communicate with a "concrete Thou" (p. 185). Thus, the I-Thou connecting is faulty and impoverished. The lack of ability to feel separate and communicate effectively hindered any sense of forward momentum in Rachel's life and increased the feelings of isolation, helplessness and dependency. For example, she could not make her own decisions and relied on her mother's views to guide her journey in life.

THE SENSE OF BEING A SEPARATE PERSON:

One has to experience oneself as separate in a healthy manner in order to relate. And one must be confirmed at the core as worthy in order to gain a sense of a cohesive self and separateness. Buber (1958) views psychopathology as the absence of confirmation. Both Winnicott (1960) and Laing (1969) agree with this and it is the most basic and powerful factor in Rachel's fragmentation and lack of a cohesive self.

Buber (1965) emphasises the importance of relatedness but does not equate that with conformity. However, the fragmented person desperately strives for confirmation and acceptance. When the family structure is disturbed, the individual will conform if that is equated with acceptance and confirmation (Winnicott, 1960). Rachel's whole sense of being relied on conforming to her mother's standards and demands. Her conformity also reduced the violence and punishment she so regularly received at the hands of her mother. Even her father "*hated*" not having his needs met so the pressure to conform was great. Relating as her real self was not even an option let alone a choice. The attempt to receive confirmation became the total focus of her whole being and life. In the absence of confirmation there is a sense of emptiness and futility. False confirmation is viewed as better than none at all despite the whole self being at risk (Laing, 1969).

Laing's (1969) view that the False Self can become "compulsively compliant to the will of others" (p. 102) is an accurate description of Rachel's facade. The compliance of the False Self is linked to fear but also to hatred at having to be what others want and having to risk annihilation to gain confirmation. One has the sense of anger with Rachel's first description of having to comply with the spirit council's desire that she remain in a human form and not share her higher knowledge at that stage of her life. The compliance is also seen throughout Rachel's life in her interactions with others. For example, Rachel was unable immediately to turn down the invitation by a married man at work to go away for the weekend as she did not want to offend him. The fear is clearly indicated in her compliance towards her mother's demands that she live according to her standards and expectations. She felt as if her very life depended on complying with her mother to gain confirmation and avoid punishment. Her mother's demands, desires and wishes became the foundation upon which she based her own principles, values and assumptions about the world. The False Self tends to assume "more and more of the characteristics of the person or persons upon whom its

compliance is based" (Laing, 1969, p. 106). Rachel became just like her mother and lived the image that had been required of her. This was evident not only in her belief and value systems but also in the dress code and the genteel and proper manner of behaviour she displayed.

Rachel always expected punishment if she did not conform or if she displayed any negative emotions. This was evident in most interactions with her mother. An excellent example of her mother's punishment is the reaction to Rachel's decision to stay in psychotherapy against her mother's wishes. Her mother's attempts to annihilate her emotionally were powerful and horrific. The expectation is also shown by her fear of punishment and abandonment from me when she followed her own intuition. For example, she feared my disapproval when she called her ex-fiancé after he had ended the relationship. It was again evident when she timidly advised me that she had resigned from her new job in finance without even going into the office on the first day. In that instance, my immediate response was a form of disconfirmation for her. Unfortunately, Pieter always punishes her and threatens abandonment which fuels her belief that she is unworthy. She has always been punished because she lived in an alternative reality. As stated, the mentally ill have generally been punished over the centuries with few exceptions. Rachel is no exception. I have been the only person in her world who has simply accepted her hallucinatory experiences without judgement or disconfirming her.

If one is not confirmed but punished for being real, a strong sense of unworthiness develops. The frequent punishment Rachel received, both emotionally and verbally, reinforced this belief. There is a continuing thread throughout the psychotherapy of Rachel believing she was bad. This was based primarily upon how she believed her mother to perceive her and subsequent reactions from people in the world - especially Pieter. She had been told she was bad because she caused her mother unhappiness and stress. The fact that her mother could even threaten to kill her felt like a statement that she was bad and worthless. This felt like an annihilation of the self for her - it highlighted her worthlessness and was one of the most disconfirming experiences in her life. Rachel described the helplessness and how she made no attempt to fight back. This passive behaviour in the face of even a life-threatening attack was to set the pattern for the future.

Previously Rachel had experienced her overwhelming and all-consuming pain as a punishment for her being "*bad and wicked*". Her mother's repetitive message that she was bad had resulted in a guilt and lack of worth which was so profound that she often felt death was the only option. This is where the dynamics of Rachel's guilt and taking responsibility for others' behaviour started. For example, she often felt guilty when she behaved in a manner that did not match her mother's standards or values or felt responsible for her mother's moods. An excellent example of this is her feeling responsible for her mother's anger when her mother beat her so badly at the age of eight. And her mother reinforced this belief until she died. Rachel never questioned this - it was simply how it was. The first time she ever consciously thought about who she really was occurred when she stated she was bad and I asked her if she really was. Her response of "*only a little because I want Pieter to be able to support my son and me*" indicates how deeply this judgement had struck at her core. To believe one would be judged as bad for desiring protection and support from a life partner highlights the

pain and despair she suffered in her quest for confirmation.

In order to reduce the punishment and sense of being bad, the facade or False Self becomes very powerful in protecting the core. But the facade is felt as inauthentic. The inner self may even hate the characteristics of the False Self and its compliance but it also "fears being engulfed by the spread of the identification" (p. 109) with the person it is conforming to (Laing, 1969). The individual does not only identify with the outward manner of appearance and behaviour. The influencing person's belief and value system can also be internalised as was the case with Rachel. Furthermore, the characteristics of the person on whom the compliance is based may be absorbed. For example, Rachel began to observe her own behaviour through her mother's eyes. Where her mother had been judgemental, so Rachel began to judge herself.

Rachel hated her cold, hard, bitchy presentation when she was at the peak of her career and she resisted this facade when she was invited to return to that world a few years later. This was partly due to an active dislike of herself when she was behaving in that manner but also because it represented everything her mother had stood for and which she now feels to be false. Her change in appearance also indicates her stepping away from conformity to her mother's dress code and the necessity for the presentation of the perfect image. This was a major step as the False Self and the all-important image had as much of a dominating influence for Rachel as it had for her mother. Her mother had role modelled the image as being the necessary presentation for survival. For example, at no stage was Rachel ever allowed to wear long pants or to fail to have the full regalia of clothing and make-up on. Minor infringements of these rules were punished verbally right up until her death in 1995 which was early in Rachel's third year of psychotherapy.

By conforming and presenting whatever facade Rachel felt would meet others' needs, she hoped to be confirmed. But, although Rachel appeared to be in relationship, she was never authentically interacting with others and thus was never really met and confirmed at her core. She could only be herself in isolation but that came with a sense of emptiness and unreality. The more she kept the True Self hidden, the more compulsive the need to present the False Self became (Laing, 1969). This conformity occurs because the infant is able to identify with the powerful other with ease. As Winnicott (1960) says, the mother's impingements result in the infant learning to meet the mother's needs and never identifying his own needs and thus sense of self. Rachel's lack of a cohesive sense of self is clearly illustrated by her compliance to her mother's wishes most of her life. As a child and adult, she presented what ensured psychological and emotional survival. Rachel has never been in touch with her needs but only her mother's. As stated, she had believed that her needs changed from person to person and situation to situation and if the needs were new the other needs became invalid. As she has been confirmed in psychotherapy and begun to feel more of a cohesive sense of self, she is beginning to identify her needs. She has always been clear about her need to have a deep, fulfilling and meaningful relationship. She had no knowledge of what this entailed or meant, but the desire was and is strong. She even recognises that this goal is an extremely difficult one to reach due to her damage.

THE SENSE OF BEING AN AUTHENTIC PERSON:

To live effectively in the world it is not only critical to be separate but authentic in relationship. Laing (1969) states that there is a strong need for one's total existence to be recognised and confirmed. In the empty and isolated inner world of disconfirmation, Minkowski (1933, as cited in Laing, 1969) states there is a "loss of 'vital contact' with the world" (p. 148) because relationships are the product of the facade. So, the individual may appear normal but, as Laing describes, "what was designed ... as a guard or barrier to prevent disruptive impingement on the self, can become the walls of a prison from which the self cannot escape" (p. 148). When these defences fail, anxiety increases, nothingness overwhelms and the inner self is experienced as "split and dead" (p. 148). This makes it impossible to relate to the world in a normal way as the person is disconnected from others. The person who cannot sustain his sense of identity from within may feel that he is only real when he is experienced as such by another. Thus, there is a constant need for others to affirm his identity. "The self can be real only in relation to real people and things" (p. 152). There has to be a meaningful and authentic connection to be real.

An immediate sense of authenticity and real connection to the world cannot be sustained by the False Self system alone as it cannot put reality to the test. Testing reality requires an independent self that can make choices. The True Self cannot adapt and continue to respond to what is socially acceptable so it withdraws leaving the False Self to adapt and establish a defence system. However, the mask of sanity people wear is not always good for them and can even be destructive. Rachel's mask when she worked in the high world of finance was very destructive as she was totally disconnected from any sense of her real self. Instead of simply protecting the True Self, it began to smother it. When this occurs there is frequently a sense of dissociation of the self from the body which lends itself to the psychotic position (Laing, 1969). There is no reciprocity in relationship and psychosis may develop. This is when the individual may begin to experience his perceptions and thoughts as not being his own. This is highlighted throughout all Rachel's hallucinatory episodes. For example, the feeling that God's thoughts were coming through her when she felt compelled to sit and write endless screeds of religious writings and when she received the Judas message.

In this isolated space the person feels as if he is only being related to as an It. Laing (1969) speaks of the terror of the fragmented person when he is treated as an It. As stated above, he then requires constant confirmation from others of his own existence as a person. Rachel described herself as being "*only a response to other people*" with no identity of her own. There is a constant sense of being different and not quite connecting for Rachel.

Exploring what this world was like for her brings to mind Van den Berg's (1972) description of pathology as the science of loneliness and isolation. Rachel has lived the tremendous sense of this isolation and aloneness characteristic of the fragmented or psychotic person. The feelings she describes about her psychotic experiences highlight the unbearable loneliness she experienced. Her words at the end of the description of her visions, after seeing the three-dimensional film at Disney World, highlight the sense of isolation. " ... *'that' is how my visions are ... they are there when I see them, but not in any sense of any reality that is tangible, explainable or logical in terms of any physical*

reality. That is and has been the huge pain and sorrow and aloneness for me". This is similar to the description given by Chessik (1996) of severely mentally ill patients who describe the "unendurable state ... as a sense of nothingness, meaninglessness, chaos, or a 'black hole', a falling through space into a void" (p. 581). In this space there is the experience of extraordinary isolation and terror as the individual is disconnected from any meaningful relating.

To avoid the terror she presented the facade. The more the facade presented, the more isolated she became. Corin and Lauzon (1994) support the sense of isolation when an individual is unintegrated and there is an initial lack of boundaries. They state that the sense of where the self ends and the other begins is blurred and this openness to the world and experience can result in a frightening feeling of the loss of the self, or invasion and a threat of annihilation. This can lead to an inability to maintain a sense of mental space to allow the internal ordering of experience to occur efficiently (Eigen, 1993). Furthermore, at the level of the person's experience of themselves as an embodied self, there is a sense of a split between the self and the body.

Isolation may provide a sense of safety for the individual by preventing disconfirmation. If no-one is allowed close, there will be less ridicule, judgement, rejection and pain to contend with. Isolation may also be perceived as protecting the other. In the early days of psychotherapy Rachel had a fear that I would be damaged or annihilated if I connected fully with her chaotic world. This made her initially wary of opening her core and telling me of the psychotic episodes. It also had the effect of keeping her in the lonely and isolated space. Rachel tentatively tested my reactions to her altered reality experiences. Finding no other response than the usual respect, care and acceptance, she was able to open more and more in all respects. Freud (as cited in Eigen, 1993) is accurate in his belief that the ability to be out of contact is more common than believed and that the "ability to be in touch richly and accurately with ourselves and others is a precious capacity and one not to be taken for granted" (p. 367).

Rachel's need for confirmation, the lack of boundaries and the resultant loneliness is also shown by her sexual life which has not been for mutual sharing or to gain physical satisfaction but to seek security. Rachel opened her inner core to relative strangers simply because they were having sexual intercourse with her - and, in exposing her inner self too quickly in those situations, she risked the core every time. And she was damaged every time. Rachel has never experienced an authentically close and genuine sexual encounter. She shared a moment with me recently in therapy where she stated that she did not know, until very recently, that sex could be a warm, intimate, sharing and caring act. This was not because she had experienced it as such but because I explained that it could be so. We explored her pattern of relationships, especially with men, and she could see that the repetitive pattern was a self-fulfilling prophecy which further objectified and devalued her as a human being. Part of the dynamic is that she has always chosen men who were unavailable in both the literal and emotional sense. This may partly be because of her fear of and inability to commit her real self in genuine, authentic relationship. By selecting unavailable men she may unconsciously be trying to protect herself as there cannot be a mutual commitment if the man is not interested in that level of relating. In fact, this damages her even more as she is constantly disconfirmed. Nothing is learned either as no-one has truly given

themselves to her so that she can experience a fulfilling and sharing sexual encounter. Her inability to relate in a whole, authentic manner to others thus fulfils the prophecy and the feelings of isolation and the loneliness of her world are perpetuated. Very recently she told me that her father has been seeking confirmation in relationships with much younger women. She feels sad as she can see the same pattern in herself in her past behaviour with men. This insight has been a major step forward in the recognition of her own dynamics and past behaviour.

Rachel's sense of herself and of her world has thus been damaging and negating. The frequent abuse from her mother, the lack of protection from her father and the disbelief of her altered experiencing resulted in her becoming passive to survive. The meaningless sexual encounters, the lack of genuine friendship or interaction in life, the abuse from Pieter, the incident in the hotel where the man held her over the balcony all perpetuated the disconfirmation. The passivity of her youth continued to provide a sense of protection. But, just as her perceived confirmation was false, so was the protection. Her passivity inhibited her interactions in the world as there was the necessity for constant vigilance in order to ascertain what was required of her to be acceptable to the other. A good example of her passivity and need for confirmation was when she was having sex with the married man and with Pieter and no-one was taking responsibility for preventing pregnancy. Rachel seemed unconcerned about pregnancy and who the father might be and whether she would contract AIDS. The passivity that she learned in childhood was playing itself out in a dangerous way in the present. Any spontaneous behaviour from the inner core had been suppressed unless it fitted the image required and it seldom did. Any sense of authenticity was smothered. Allowing her to connect with her inner core to discover who she really was became an even more critically important aspect of the psychotherapy in order for her to dialogue with any real meaning and begin to relate as an authentic being in the world.

Unfortunately this passivity often resulted in her taking responsibility for other people's actions as she viewed their behaviour as a reflection of her unworthiness. Or she flipped into the other extreme of perceiving herself as the victim. This has left her open and vulnerable to other peoples' influence which has resulted in her frequently being emotionally and at times physically abused. She would go into a relationship and become completely emotionally involved immediately and people did not respect this and often abused it. Her whole attitude of not being worthy spoke to others in her behaviour, attitude and manner. For example, her fiancé would frequently cancel or simply not arrive for appointments they had arranged. She never drew a boundary or indicated that this was unacceptable behaviour so he continued to do it without apology. Part of the continuing disrespect in that situation may have been that he had ended the relationship but she was always available for more. Maybe his own guilt or attraction to her kept the relationship limping along. At one stage within that relationship, she believed she may as well go into prostitution and *"allow myself to be abused"*. In some way she was giving a message that *"I'm worthless, useless and only good for abuse, so abuse me"*. Her experience in psychotherapy has shifted the sense of always being a victim: *"My experience gives me the handle to rise up out of my pain into understanding and into the direction opposite to being the victim. I am feeling less and less like the victim as I continue in therapy"*.

In order to gain some confirmation and avoid punishment Rachel has always attempted to please people. An important fact is that Rachel believed that if she did not give all of herself immediately in a relationship, she would lose the other person. And in a sense, herself. This highlights her lack of separation of the self from others. This belief and her inability to form clear boundaries between herself and others resulted in her exposing too much of herself too early on in any interaction let alone relationship. This often resulted in her being rebuffed or misunderstood. Then she would withdraw in pain. Withdrawal is a technique used to protect the self, find peace and settle things within. Rachel and I explored the concept of how people can only damage one if they are emotionally close and have some influence. I explained that a stranger's reaction need not affect one negatively and one does not allow any person to simply walk into one's inner sanctum. The understanding that one could take baby steps to know someone, each opening a little to test if one was met with respect, and slowly build a trusting healthy relationship was initially alien to her. As stated earlier, Rachel's distance and relatedness tended to be at extremes and there was no comfortable balance of shifting along the spectrum according to the given situation. My behaviour in drawing boundaries helped Rachel gain some perspective on what this meant. For example, when I drew a firm boundary to prevent Rachel's older sister from invading the psychotherapy space, this showed Rachel how boundaries can be kept firmly yet gently and how often people do respect the boundary drawn. Her older sister made no further attempt to intrude. Thus, my way of being with her and living what I was trying to help her understand showed her a balanced manner of being.

THE SENSE OF BEING A WHOLE PERSON WITH BOUNDARIES:

To relate as an authentic human being requires not only a sense of separateness but also a sense of wholeness. The distance between the reality of the inner core and the presentation of the facade is indicative of how disconnected the person is from the real, inner core. As Winnicott (1960) states, the individual is an actor playing roles with no sense of self. Rachel's physical presentation highlights this. When she needed the protection of the facade, she became the elegant, magnificently attired and coiffured presentation. When she first met me and was in a state close to psychological and emotional death, her attire was casual and under-stated. As time passed and she connected with and started to live her real self more, her attire was generally casual-smart with the occasional move to either extreme as the situation demanded. She was at her most casual in terms of attire in the first year that she was a mother. And this was the most authentic relating I had ever witnessed from her - the bond she had with her child was deep and genuine. Her clothing definitely represents her state of being.

Her presentation of the facade was most obvious in her work in the financial field or when her mother was visiting. Until she learned to draw psychological boundaries the clothing and her manner provided the strongest boundary. Then she started to draw physical and emotional boundaries. Her ability to draw a boundary had not been existent in her life until two years before and had not developed much since then so it was a healthy sign to see this happening. Not only did she find herself more worthy of protection but she now had a child and she wanted his world to be a more positive, nurturing and confirming one than her own had been. A clear boundary was drawn when she slapped Pieter just after Mark's birth to stop him becoming violent with her. This was a complete change from the usual passivity. She was no longer tolerating

either the physical or emotional abuse from Pieter. She was attempting to change the pattern of her life and was not accepting the so-called scissor treatment from anyone. Initially this led into the opposite dynamic where she began experiencing the desire to be violent. Her violent images indicate her tendency for all-or-nothing responses. In her mind, if she was not passive, she would be full of anger and thus bad. There was a strong desire to annihilate all the people who had hurt her. This was indicated by her being assertive with her father for the first time. The growth and strength in Rachel is indicated by the fact that she has never gone back into appeasement mode with her father or family. This indicates her own sense of worth. One of the more recent signs of her worth is shown by her decision not to run in front of the cars on the highway in America. She knew she was too valuable to die because of Pieter's damage.

An interesting point was that although she had no sense of boundaries when she entered psychotherapy and would walk right into situations with other people with no concern, she almost never over-stepped the boundaries with me. Despite the beatings and verbal abuse, she did not call me at home unless she felt it to be an absolute emergency - clearly what she and I defined as an emergency was different. She has never displayed the manipulative and often abusive behaviour of some fragmented people who will call at any time of day or night regardless of one's privacy. I have wondered whether this was partly due to her need to please and/or keep the sanctuary she has in therapy whole and whether that was a stronger dynamic than allowing the chaos to reign. But, as I have heard and understood her demands on others, my sense is that our relationship has been one of mutual respect and that she has not had a need to manipulate, demand and abuse me precisely because this is a sanctuary for her. She stated recently that she has always had a great respect for me because of how I have responded to her.

There was only one incident when I felt uncomfortable with a boundary with Rachel. She began to use endearments with me which she had experienced as confirming for herself and which she felt showed her appreciation to me. I felt this could be shifting the psychotherapeutic relationship onto a more friendly basis. The words sounded incongruent in the situation. Aware of the dynamic of her difficulty with finding the balance in the extremes of distance and relatedness, I asked her not to use those terms. Knowing her fragility and the likelihood that she would feel abandoned I tried to be as gentle as possible. However, she still experienced it as abandonment at one level. My next step was then to role model and show her that one could confront and deal with issues without it meaning the end of the relationship. Her words poignantly describe the feelings. *"Cathy explained to me that it did not have the same effect on her at all to hear me call her 'sweetie'. She explained that such language was reserved for the appropriate relationship. I felt she was very adamant and that hurt. I felt hurt because I was trying to show Cathy appreciation. It felt like I had lost Cathy. It felt like she was not there with me. I have never used the casual endearment language inappropriately again not because I felt bad but because I learnt something. I realized that words have meaning and should be used accordingly. Trying to show appreciation to Cathy by calling her 'sweetie and dear' was not doing the job ... Cathy did not leave my hurt feelings unattended ... Cathy asked me if I was feeling hurt by what she had said to me in the previous session. She explained that she sensed I was hurt. This felt like Cathy was seeing that I had been hurt and was returning me to myself. She had*

not changed her position about not wanting to hear me call her sweetie. Knowing that it was hard for me to experience a boundary, Cathy gave me the sense that she was back with me. Her kindness was back. She was listening and hearing my pain. We were not even talking about boundaries at that stage. It is only in hindsight that I can assume that Cathy was seeing my response to boundary setting. I could not handle it very well. A few more boundaries and I can assure you, I would not have survived. I needed to be heard. I needed to learn to hear myself. More than that was beyond me".

The dangers of the fragmented person experiencing openness as friendship are real. Rachel later experienced me as a "professional" friend but this never affected the integrity and professionalism of the psychotherapeutic relationship as she had a more cohesive sense of self. I kept the boundaries firm and never allowed it to shift to that state and we have continued to work at the same professional levels. Later on in psychotherapy she had an experience with me that gave her a perception of what love should be like. This occurred when I reduced her fees and reassured her that I would not abandon her. She explained that *"in both instances of feeling what friendship should be and what love should be, Cathy did not personify herself at a personal level. I never felt that Cathy intended herself to be the focus of my need for love and friendship. Cathy offered nothing of herself at a personal level. I still did not know Cathy. She was an example. Her example gave me hope that I could experience love and friendship outside therapy one day".*

Overall, drawing boundaries and connecting with me and with her child authentically allowed us to deepen the exploration of her dynamics. We were then able to discuss why she was still in the relationship and she admitted to fearing that she would return to *"what I was before"*, that is, a woman who moved from one sexual encounter to another. She was recognising at some levels her fragmented way of being-in-the-world and seeking a stability and constancy in one relationship albeit a destructive one.

THE MIND-BODY SPLIT:

Being whole requires functioning as a unity of mind and body as well as relating in the world. Phenomenology states that one is one's body and how one carries oneself as an embodied being expresses the personal meaning that events have for one. If there is a mind-body split, the individual experiences himself as dissociated and fragmented. Laing (1969) states that when the False Self rules, the body is "felt more as one object among other objects in the world than as the core of the individual's own being" (p. 71). Thus, the body is experienced as the core of the False Self and not as being connected to the True Self. Rachel's inability to be a connected whole in experiencing is indicated by the mind-body split she experiences in her sexual encounters. She experiences no sense of emotion in the interaction. Rachel only ever experiences her physical body in the sexual act. That she cannot give her whole self in the encounter highlights the meaninglessness of the act for her as a whole connected human being. Gaining confirmation is the sole aim. She states, in her account of psychotherapy, that *"sex was a way I tried to obtain approval and affirmation of myself. I did not know that was what I was doing and I did not know how to stop either"*. After her lover at work had made it clear that he was involved and thus uninterested in her, the True Self had to remain well hidden behind the magnificent facade of the False Self which she continued to develop more strongly. Relying on this facade of image as an indication of who she

was highlights the phenomenological view that the body is a living, experiential, active body, dynamically involved in relationship in the world. Rachel was living and interacting only in a superficial, false manner which was contradictory to the fragile being she was.

Rachel's disociation at the time when she was pregnant and being beaten by Pieter, is an excellent example of the mind-body split. She could not remove herself physically from the event. Her only option in dealing with it was to remove herself mentally. Likewise the separation of body from mind when she attended the Reikie course. She began to feel ill, heavy and wanted to detach from her physical body and then fainted.

Rachel also shows the mind-body split in her tendency to suppress emotions and intellectualise. This intellectualising is a defence to block the feelings of pain, betrayal, rejection, disconfirmation and abandonment. To be in touch with those powerful feelings threatened her with annihilation as has been indicated throughout her life. For example, when she did spill out her emotions regardless of appropriateness and timing, this frequently caused problems in relating with others. When she did fully connect she would speak in a dramatic, passionate manner describing herself as being "*raped and betrayed*" or that Pieter was "*utterly bewitched by that woman*". She would be equally dramatic in her gestures. So, she learned that safety lay in not feeling or expressing the emotions.

However, remaining in the head only increases the terror of what effect the feelings may have. Gendlin (1964) states that connecting with the full meaning of any event will only occur when the intellectual understanding is connected with the felt-sense in the body. One must be attuned to the feeling process, that is, what is concretely sensed and felt in the body. It is not enough to intellectually understand the process - one also has to feel it. The therapist needs to respond to what is implied in the patient's words and not simply to the words. Thus, the therapist pays attention and focuses on the felt-meaning of the experience which the patient may not yet be able to articulate. Once the feeling is identified and felt within the body, the individual will feel a sense of relief even if it has not been clearly conceptualised. As the felt meaning becomes more congruent with the intellectual understanding, so there will be forward movement in the process. Not only do mind and body become linked but the process of positive growth and change continues.

The split between Rachel's emotions and intellect started at an early age. She described in psychotherapy how she had disconnected her emotions from a bodily-felt sense since she was a child. The connection would be brief and she would then cut the process out of a fear of a loss of control and punishment from her mother. The split was initially highlighted in psychotherapy in her first description of sexual encounters. For example, Rachel spoke in a disconnected manner about her need for self-stimulation. It was also evident in the early years of psychotherapy when I felt that she was so disconnected from emotions that she could not even bring them into the psychotherapy space let alone share them with me. When she did connect, the rapid shift from emotion to emotion indicated the splits within herself - hence the feeling of being like "*lots of pieces of broken glass*". The quick shifts in emotion also indicated her fear of being overwhelmed and shattered by connecting with emotions. For example, when Rachel described the event at the hotel where she was held over the

balcony, she connected with emotion at a very deep level. However, she almost immediately flipped back into the safe space of being totally disconnected from emotion. This prevented her from connecting for long enough to process the emotions. It also highlights her typical life-long pattern of suppressing emotions.

Because Rachel seldom connected with emotions and had no clear boundaries, she was unable to identify which emotions were her own. So, if she did connect, she felt everyone else's emotions in the interaction as if they were her own. This accentuated the confusion within her. If she could not identify her own feelings, how could she react to and control them? As she learned to stay with the emotions and hold them, so she began to identify them. She was also more able to experience the felt-sense in her body. She identified that she feels anger in the pit of her stomach and then her throat as she has sometimes wanted to "scream with rage". A lifetime of silence wanting a voice. Rachel says I taught her *"that it is okay for me to feel anger also. This gives me another positive sense of my own value ... I have not been able to master being angry as I would like to but Cathy is reassuring that it is natural not to be able to master anything at the first attempt ... Cathy showed anger and indignation on occasion towards many of the things I expressed. Her indignation and anger were not at me. That helped. It gave me a sense of what was okay to be feeling. I had lost touch with feeling anger and indignation. Cathy showed me that it was okay. She felt what it was like for me at a level I had lost touch with. Cathy joined up my consciousness with my reality"*. The time she became angry and made a rude finger sign and swore at the driver of another car also highlights the linking of feelings, body and mind. The incidents where Rachel connected with the violent images just after Mark was born indicated the strength of a lifetime of pent-up emotions suddenly surfacing. On exploring this, we came to the realisation that she had never been allowed to express anger as she would get punished. Her mother's anger also resulted in her being punished. For example, her mother viciously attacked her in a rage when Rachel was eight years old because her mother was in an emotionally poor state. This explains the passivity in Rachel's responses but also highlights that she was required to split emotions from any bodily link in order to survive. Her mother's acting-out behaviour and the strength of her emotions made Rachel fear a loss of control when connecting with emotions. Her own desire to jump out of the moving car on many occasions and the time she ran towards the highway with the desire to throw herself in front of a car reinforced that connecting with emotions could be dangerous for her life.

The experiences of allowing the violent images a space and realising that she did not have to follow through with action, controlling the foul language by thinking it and not vocalising it, has made a vitally important connection for her. This connection of the felt-sense and mind has shifted her to realising that the emotion-intellect split does not have to exist to keep her safe. The mind and body can operate as a whole without annihilation being the result. Being able to express her emotions in the safety of the psychotherapeutic space without judgement, punishment and disconfirmation has been a major factor in healing the mind-body split. My laughter and the following exploration when she first verbalised the foul language assisted this process. She stated that my response affirmed her and allowed her to view the event from a different perspective. The issues were dealt with seriously but there had been a shared moment of lightness. The new understanding helped empower her to have the control of expression or

silence.

Rachel herself recognises the above splits. It was early in psychotherapy that she stated that she realised she only saw herself in relation to other people. She comments in her notes that she believes that *"with continued therapy I shall feel more comfortable about the distance I feel between my emotions and intellect"*. As described above Rachel has begun to connect the mind-body and emotion-intellect splits within her. Over the years in psychotherapy she began to live the emotions in her body. For example, her behaviour when she was asked to leave her dying mother's bedside indicates a time when she lived the connection between mind and body. She was thrashing around so violently that she had to be tranquillised. This signifies how she was bodily living the agony and devastation of that loss. Her whole psychological self had died in some way as she had lived according to her mother's standards and rules. I also had a sense of her being more connected generally. For example, the anger when she strides into my room, the heaviness and slowness of movement when she is sad or despairing and the lightness in her step and voice as she begins to excitedly live life as a whole human being all display this connectedness.

Rachel speaks of the beginning of a connection with feelings: *"I had never felt what it was like to have a person respect my pain. The little I was feeling of my pain, Cathy was able to magnify for me like no-one ever had. It felt good. I was only saying what I felt on the verbal intellectual level. Cathy was listening. And in that moment when I said something very significant, Cathy pulled it into reality by responding. In that way I could start to feel what I was feeling. Up until that moment when Cathy gave feeling to my expression of her hand reaching down to me in darkness, I could not really connect to what I was feeling in any emotional way and it was very self-defeating. It made me doubt myself terribly to be able to articulate what I 'felt' was going on inside me and not to fully connect emotionally to the feeling. I felt like a contradiction. I felt dishonest and worthless. This state of being was extremely hard for me. It had brought me to the suicide 'solution'"*.

Rachel felt that my acknowledgment that I would also have been afraid in some of the psychotic situations gave her a right to her feelings. She could then own them. It was a similar situation regarding her sexual encounters. *"I really had some very sensitive issues regarding sex. Cathy never made me feel bad about how I felt about myself even though I was out of control. Cathy explained, very gently and sympathetically that my sexual behaviour arose from my seeing myself in others, rather like looking into a piece of a mirror. Cathy did this in a very accepting, gentle but at the same time matter of fact way that made my feelings of revulsion and hatred for myself experience something quite different - compassion and authentic understanding. This direct understanding expressed compassionately to me by Cathy felt like a blanket of understanding over a very cold self hate"*. Over time she has been able to view herself with more empathy and recognise the same dynamics in her father's recent behaviour.

The major split between her real, inner core and her outer facade has healed considerably since she made the comment that she hoped to learn to be more comfortable with the split between her emotions and intellect. One of the most obvious signs of Rachel's growth was her decision to stay in psychotherapy despite her mother's desire for her to leave. Another clear sign is when I made the mistake of not hearing

her terror of returning to the false and superficial world of finance. The one safe place where she felt most accepted and confirmed was suddenly perceived as threatening. She experienced it as "*rejection, disapproval and failure*". She acknowledged that I was afraid and concerned for her and then went on to say that these feelings were "*not coming from Cathy, it was coming from inside me ... I have however started to distinguish this ... identify these feelings in myself and explain that this was so like the feelings impaled in me by my Mother*". I did not meet her and yet she remained firm in her resolve not to return to work in that field. She was deeply upset at my initial reaction but remained true to herself. It was a test, albeit an unintentional one, that she sailed through with flying colours. A definite sign of integration within. Of even more value is that she was able to recognise that these were the same feelings that her mother engendered in her. This allowed her to process and start differentiating feelings, that is, that all the feelings were not being projected by me but were similar feelings she was feeling as a result of her childhood experiences.

The fact that she made the decision to stay in psychotherapy despite her mother's punishment and remaining true to herself by not returning to the world of finance also made her more congruent. I believe this has enabled her to step forward into the world with more determination to be a connected whole. After her mother's death she was able to stay with the emotions and experience them in a deeper manner and was less inclined to leap from emotion to emotion. She states: "*Cathy returned me again and again to how she saw me as being a piece of a mirror. The aim being to draw those pieces together. This effort is ongoing as I grow in the consciousness of my self*". This also signifies the increasing cohesion within.

As Rachel moved further towards inner integration she had the dream of falling into the mud hole. She did not want people to be ignorant of why she had died if she allowed herself to drown. If she drowned she believed her life would have been a waste for herself because it would have meant that she was behind her own annihilation and that was not her aim. Her pain has been "*in trying to avoid annihilation and not authenticate it by committing suicide*". This has been "*the whole struggle*" as the messages she received from her world were that "*I was nothing. That has been my 'sickness' and still is to varying degrees and different angles*". This is reinforced by Pieter who constantly tells her that she is nothing by his behaviour towards her. "*When I know that I am not nothing, the struggle will be won*". In the dream she was able to pull herself out of the mud without my assistance or even the need for it, as she had hoped I would do in the quicksand dream. This highlights the desperate struggle within Rachel to prove she is worthy and indicates a newly discovered inner strength. The description where she takes off her soiled and ruined outer garments of the facade to reveal the value of the real, inner core is wonderful. Finally she has started to realise that she is a worthy, valuable human being simply for who she is. This was a profoundly important dream as Rachel was able to recognise this herself. This increased her commitment to growth. The fact that she dreamed this the night before her 40th birthday is also significant as Rachel's birthdays are always important for her and she had not believed she would be alive by then. To be alive and growing was a highly important event for her. Rachel had felt many instances of confirmation from me. For example, she feared abandonment because she could not pay me the full fee and my reassurance that I would continue to work with her at a suitably agreed reduced fee was accepted by her.

This was her first experience of anyone indicating to her that she was important enough not to simply abandon at the first signs of difficulty. However, it was shortly after the mud hole dream that Rachel was able to experience a sense of full confirmation for the first time in her life. It is almost as if having survived, she could finally allow herself to really feel my confirmation at deep levels. Her parents and people had constantly invalidated her feelings and thus her sense of reality and ability to judge for herself what was real or false. The fact that it had taken four years of psychotherapy to achieve this demonstrates the length of time that it can take for a fragmented person to really begin to feel confirmed. Her fears in the quicksand dream had been unfounded. She now knew that I could meet her at those deep levels which has freed her to grow further. This confirmation at the core also changed the reasons for her drawing boundaries and being assertive. It was no longer just the new way of surviving and protecting a core she felt **may** be of value - now the core was without doubt worthy of protection. Sadly, this belief in her worth fluctuates and it is a constant battle to consolidate that sense of worth.

THE MAN-WORLD SPLIT:

As human beings interact and relate in the world, the fragmented person also experiences a split between himself and the world he lives in. When the sense of I is lost or heightened due to the split between the self and the world the person is incapable of experiencing a common, shared reality (Eigen, 1993). This lack of shared meaning and the resultant withdrawal to protect the inner core results in strong feelings of isolation.

The most obvious split between Rachel and her world is displayed by her hallucinatory experiences. Altering and creating a new reality is the most effective way to separate oneself from an unbearable world. Rachel's whole being-in-the-world was experienced as dangerous. The story of her life that unfolded in psychotherapy abounds with examples of this. For example, the very real physical and psychological dangers suffered at the hands of her mother and then Pieter; the emotionally abusive behaviour in her relationships with men; being the victim and needing to turn to suicide as an option and her fear that the violent images would result in her hurting her child, highlights the dangers. Two important factors which added to the split between her and the world were the disconfirmation and condemnation received from her family and the church. Thus, there was little sense of being connected to a shared world of safety and care.

Beginning to relate in a meaningful manner to others requires the individual to step out into the world. Public contact contributes significantly to the reorganisation of the patient's world. It may fill the person's empty world but it also provides the opportunity to learn. Religion may offer this whilst still allowing a distance to protect. Thus, it is frequently used as the first step in entering the realm of relating. Sadly, the church did not offer Rachel the space to learn to interact with safety but frequently made her feel judged and disconfirmed. Rachel also has no real, deep friendships and only a few acquaintances. She experiences difficulty in forming relationships. As stated, she does not have the basic understanding or skills required to enter into a relationship in a healthy manner. Her naivete in these areas is expressed by her frequent comments throughout psychotherapy that she did not know that people can feel, behave or think

in many different ways. Everything has been based on her mother's statements and her own experiences. Our mutual exploration of relationships towards the end of the case study highlights her ignorance.

Ordinary social situations are experienced as daunting for Rachel. Superficial, social chatter is experienced as alien, awkward and extremely difficult. Her naivety about the basic rules of interacting highlighted the complete lack of healthy relating in her early years. When Rachel joined the mother/toddlers group for Mark's sake we also saw this as a golden opportunity for her to learn how to interact in a more authentic way. She has struggled to do this. Firstly, she opened herself too quickly and the other mothers withdrew. Then she moved to the other extreme and was aloof. The women in the group seem confused by her and are polite but not very welcoming. Her natural response to that is to withdraw completely. Another woman she had dealings with recently also withdrew from her and she felt like the bad girl again as "*no-one likes me*". We explored how she may give the wrong impression when the facade is up and how demanding she could be when only interacting as one fragment of glass from the shattered mirror. Together we have explored what people's perceptions of her might be and this has helped her understand and continue with the group in a more relaxed manner.

By giving her a different experience of the world in psychotherapy she has developed a sense of self and strength with which to step out into the world. For example, by my drawing a boundary with her older sister to keep her psychotherapy space safe, she was able to see and experience how that was done and what it felt like. That it protected her was the important aspect - no-one had ever protected her interests before. She felt that no-one had ever cared enough or found her worthy enough to defend so she must be of some worth if I did safeguard her. Likewise, my not ending psychotherapy due to financial issues gave her the message that she was worthy. And she has responded to that by keeping her promise to pay the full fee. As she experiences a sense of worth, her whole being is stepping forward into relating in the world. This is, however, a slow and uncertain process as long as she continues to live in relationship with Pieter.

Overall, the fragmentation within herself and with her world have healed considerably. In October 1999 Rachel described how she had identified an emotion immediately after a fight with Pieter. He had withdrawn and not come to placate and soothe her as quickly as usual. She felt "*fear*" as he has hurt her so much in the past and still has the power to do so in the present. She was able to hold the emotion, process it and feel that she was still going to be who she is and was not going to change to suit him. This made her recognise some of the strength within herself. A while ago I had shown her a computer screen saver which I felt depicted her situation in the reverse. There is a picture of a kitten seeing a lion in the reflection of the mirror and the caption reads "It's not important how others see you, but how you see yourself". I had explained that she was a lion seeing a kitten in the reflection as she finds it extremely difficult to recognise her own strength. In a recent session she stated that when Pieter was trying to hit her and when she drew the boundary she had imagined me sitting in my chair and talking about the lion. For the first time she was able to connect with being strong. I acknowledged this and suggested that maybe it was partly because she was no longer

ingesting the "gunge" Pieter threw at her but throwing it straight back at him. This was what she had stated she would do if he literally threw gunge in her face. Now she is doing it psychologically. He finds it startling but it disarms him. He has been in complete control either through aggression or by presenting the hurt, little boy she has to stay to protect. Now he is confused but is calming down. Possibly he is trying to assess the situation. It seems that there is also a fear that she will leave him fulfilling his prophecy. In the past he knew she did not have the strength to leave. Now she is clearly indicating her intolerance of his unacceptable behaviour and he can see her strength.

This episode led her into feeling like a "separate person". She was very excited and feels that now she can be separate and yet a whole person and thus more authentic in her interacting. She made the insight and spontaneously remarked "*I see it ... it's a paradox ... you have to be separate in order to be able to be close to people*". She is beginning to like who she is and is feeling the boundary firmly protecting the core. "*I want more of this*" was her excited comment. This shift and recognition that she needs to be separate in order to relate fully is one of the most important steps in her growth.

Throughout the unfolding of Rachel's life story and time in psychotherapy, I have always experienced her as naive, innocent and totally honest at the core. The savagely destructive behaviour of her family and subsequent experiences of her life have hammered and battered her. Her soul, however, appears to remain uncontaminated which has been an amazing phenomenon to observe. Laing's case study of his patient, David, has an interesting similarity to Rachel. Laing (1969) found an inner honesty in David just as there is in Rachel. This indicates that Rachel's life experiences did not destroy the true, inner core of her and suggests that the presentation of the False Self and the withdrawal of her True Self were successful in protecting her core.

HEALING THE PAST WITH TIME:

Another important factor in Rachel's integration and growth is that she has been healing the past by living it differently in the present. The abusive experiences with her first husband and Pieter were similar to the whole dynamic of her living and mirrored her childhood. This inhibited her from growth as she continued to use the same patterns of behaviour to survive. As phenomenology indicates, the child learns dysfunctional ways of behaving and perpetuates the same pattern in adulthood. Rachel repeated the same patterns endlessly until she was given the space and opportunity in psychotherapy to explore and learn new ways of relating to herself and the world.

Rachel's experiences with Pieter and his family proved to be the most powerful test of her sanity and new growth. During the next few years his attempts to annihilate her emotionally and psychologically, coupled with frequent physical attacks, was to mirror her childhood and marital experiences. His mother's attacks and his father's failure to protect her completed the mirror of her whole childhood. By re-experiencing her childhood as an adult and being able to deal with it differently she has been able to change the meaning the past had for her. She even stated at one point during this process, when she too recognised the similarities to her childhood experiences, that she sensed she needed to stay in the relationship with Pieter to be able to heal the past damage.

When Rachel dreamed of falling into quicksand and the sand closing over her head, she was experiencing strong fears of punishment and abandonment. She had failed to be the good girl and her emotional abandonment as a child was being lived out in the present. She was feeling helpless, out of control and terrified. She was expecting me to save her in this dream and I had failed. No-one had ever been there to save her and she had to learn, via her good experience of not being abandoned in psychotherapy, to do this for herself. That is, not to be dependent but to begin to rely on herself.

Another good example of Rachel reliving and changing her past in the present was when she attempted to substitute Pieter's family for her own. Rachel realised she was viewing Pieter's mother as the "*fantasy mother*" in an attempt to have a good-enough mother but that this mother was destructive too. This elicited huge anger in Rachel which was a relatively new emotion as she had always been punished for this in childhood and thus suppressed it. She had not been able to be angry at her own mother but, over time, has stood up to her mother and Pieter's, drawn boundaries and survived. Pieter's father also did not protect her when Pieter hit her, which was reminiscent of her father's lack of protection. Likewise Pieter did not protect her from his mother's verbal onslaught or her one physical attack but actually sided with his mother against Rachel. It was like a cycle of abuse and lack of protection from each member of her new family mirroring the pattern of her own family. By allowing the anger to emerge and experiencing the huge disappointment and pain, she began to realise that she needed to create her own family unit which could be different in the future. This has been extremely difficult as Pieter's violence and emotional abuse also mirrored her childhood. But she is learning from this experience how to handle the situation differently. She is no longer tolerating the abuse and protects the valued, inner core of herself. This is the complete opposite of the passivity and need to please of her previous way of being.

The violent images also allowed Rachel to connect with the abuse and lack of caring in her own infancy and childhood. She was healing herself through changing the pattern in rearing her own child. Her fears that her childhood experiences had negatively influenced her way of being-in-the-world and that she would continue to emulate her mother were partly justified. Much of her manner in dealing with Mark is based on the values and principles instilled in her by her mother. She had not been taught many basic skills especially about relating. With few friends over the years she has not absorbed and learned by proxy and her whole life continues to offer her poor examples. Due to his experiences at home Mark started to react in a physically aggressive manner with his peers. She was generally over-protective but occasionally she found herself being critical and punishing as her mother had been. We discussed the similar dynamics and how to change them by trusting her own intuition and not blindly following her mother's role modelling. Rachel began to be firm but loving, reprimanding him for his behaviour but not punishing him as the whole child. For example, she and Pieter recently fought and Pieter again pushed her. Rachel was able to recognise her own dynamic in Mark when he announced "Mark a bad boy" with distress during the incident. She gently and simply explained that a person can become angry but this does not mean he is bad. He beamed and put his arms out to hug her. We explored how important it was to prevent the same dynamic of the bad child developing in Mark and haunting his future life. She was also able to see that by

preventing this and soothing her child she is able to start healing the inner child who is experienced as a bad girl. This made her feel she was shattering the shackles of her past by making it different now and thus for the future. Overall, the lengthy discussions about raising children in a balanced way have assisted her to gain some confidence in her own parenting skills.

By changing from passivity as the answer to survival to action and drawing boundaries, she also changed the past. This has been a critical factor in her own growth as it has allowed her to step forward into the world with some sense of confidence and faith in herself. Her assertiveness and strength are still facets that require much encouragement and bolstering but she is determined to function in the world in a psychologically healthy way.

The above examples clearly illustrate the phenomenological view of how the past is actively lived in the present. They also highlight how the past, present and future are inexorably bound into the current, lived moment in the present. As Van den Berg (1972) states, "the present is an invitation from out of the future to gain mastery over bygone times" (pp. 91 - 92). Rachel has accepted that invitation.

GUILT AND FORGIVENESS:

Rowe et al. (1989) stress the need for forgiveness of the past and significant others to prevent progress and growth becoming stunted. To forgive requires one to step back to gain some perspective of the events. If this is attained, the clarity reduces bitterness, resentment, anger and blame. Forgiveness changes one's relationship to the past and provides a sense of renewal for the future. Many authors agree that "there is a restoration of the order that previously had been violated" (p. 236) when forgiveness is granted (Rowe et al., 1989). This is a liberating experience as it involves an acceptance of the self as well as the other which allows one to move forward.

As Rachel has processed and integrated, she has made some peace with her father. As stated, she has drawn firm boundaries with him and interacts on a friendly but superficial level which is comfortable for her. She chooses what issues she will discuss or not. Sadly this has resulted in her father and older sister turning their destructive attention onto the younger sister who is being damaged severely by this behaviour. Fortunately, the father no longer has the power to affect Rachel's sense of inner balance. This is a profoundly important step forward for her. It signifies that she no longer allows anyone, even family, to simply step into her inner world and create havoc. Events may upset and hurt her, but they do not have complete control of her being as they did in the past. The presence of her deceased mother warning Rachel to remove herself from the damaging relationship she was in and the dream highlighting some of her mother's good points, highlights how Rachel has begun to connect with her mother in a positive way - albeit small at this stage.

Rachel has been able to step back and view the family dynamics as extremely dysfunctional and damaging. As she has gained perspective she has begun to talk of forgiveness and how liberating this feeling is. She stated that when one is bitter, sulking or judgemental, one is in the control of the person one has not forgiven. So, she was forgiving her father and their relationship has calmed although never deepened. Overall

there is a sense of sadness and the beginning of forgiveness for the whole family. This will free her to move and grow further as she will not be stuck in the past.

RE-ENTERING THE WORLD OF RELATIONSHIPS:

In psychotherapy Rachel has experienced an I-Thou relationship. She has experienced a genuine dialogue in an authentic manner with me and been met at her core with respect. This has allowed her to feel the depth and reality of connecting at this level without the need for the facade. It has also given her the hope that this can occur in other relationships in the real world.

As Rachel consciously draws boundaries to avoid annihilation and experiences herself as stronger and having a more cohesive inner self, she is feeling herself to be a separate person. This has decreased some of the sense of isolation. As the isolation and loneliness decrease, the ability to look outward to the world increases. The blinkers of psychosis have almost totally been removed and the need for complete focus on emotional survival has reduced considerably. This has allowed her to start exploring the richness and diversity, not only within herself, but in the world of relationships.

It has taken six years of psychotherapy to reach this point. She is still fragile and vulnerable in many ways and her sense of worth and belief in herself still fluctuates. Her curiosity about life and the world and her desire for growth is enormous. This enhances her forward movement in healing. With the foundation of a more cohesive sense of self, Rachel can only now truly start moving into authentic and healthy relationships with others in the world. The next leg of her arduous but worthwhile journey is beginning. She has stated that she has no intention of leaving psychotherapy until she feels she is functioning in the world in an adequate and satisfactory manner. She will move to a new position in the margins of social life and I hope become a comfortable participant in society. This may not necessarily be defined as normal within the social context and she does not need to conform totally. Her uniqueness is what makes her a special, interesting and valuable member of society. Above all she must be true to herself and find a comfortable balance within herself and with her world.

Her words written in her notes on psychotherapy in January 1999 (see Chapter 13) reflect the recognition of her value as well as that of the psychotherapy: *"I have come a long way from this point of feeling so very lost and worthless because therapy gives me a completely different experience of myself. The experience of myself through therapy makes me briefly at a time, glimpse and experience myself as being very precious"*.