A qualitative exploration of clinical psychologists' understanding

of spirituality in psychotherapy

by

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Declaration

I, *Juan-Pierre Carstens*, declare that this research project entitled: *A qualitative exploration of clinical psychologists' understanding of spirituality in psychotherapy* is my own unaided work.

All of the sources I have used or cited are indicated and acknowledged, using the American Psychological Association (6th edition) referencing guidelines.

This research project is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Clinical Psychology at the University of Pretoria, Gauteng. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

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Signature: Juan-Pierre Carstens   Date

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Abstract

Spirituality as investigative topic has been a construct often classified as nebulous and difficult to explore scientifically. When specifically relating spirituality to psychotherapy there are a number of identified authors who wrote on the subject but few specifically addressing the South African context.

This qualitative study aims to investigate spirituality in psychotherapy focusing on clinical psychologists' understanding and experiences with spirituality in psychotherapy. An interpretative phenomenological analysis as methodological lens specifically focuses on the participants' lived world and the purpose is to attempt a rich understanding of their experiences. The study is grounded in existentialism and its themes and assumptions.

Participants were identified and selected making use of purposive sampling. Three clinical psychologists participated. The method of data analysis was adhered to as prescribed by interpretative phenomenological analysis. From this method of analysis a picture of descriptive overlapping themes emerged which is then provided as results.

Themes that emerged were *attunement to spirituality*, *conceptualisation of spirituality*, *the structure of the therapeutic unfolding*, *spirituality as a process of becoming*, and *the therapist's journey of embracing spiritual obstacles*. The research found that although there are many factors associated with the construction of spirituality it is made accessible for investigation through the unfolding process of the rich narrative brought by the person in therapy. The therapist facilitates a process of authentic connection to the person's experiences which leads to shifts in awareness and engagement.

Key words: Clinical psychologists, psychotherapy, spirituality, existentialism, interpretative phenomenological analysis.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In this qualitative study, the purpose is to explore clinical psychologists' experience of spirituality in psychotherapy. In this chapter, the rationale and perspective of the study are introduced. Thereafter the foundation for the study is explored, outlining the research statement, the aims, objectives, scope and significance of this study. Once the research statement has been clarified, the structure of the report is provided in the form of a brief summary of each chapter, followed by a conclusion.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 Description and rationale of the research statement

The subject of spiritualty and its link to psychotherapy is a fascinating field with a long history of enquiry (Slife, Hope, & Nebeker, 1999). Nelson (2009) stated that:

The nature of the human person has been a subject of fascination since ancient times. We desire to understand ourselves and our place in the world, and at times we also look at broader human questions: Why am I here? What is the meaning or purpose of my life? Why do people suffer? (p. 3).

People practising the disciplines of religion and psychology have attempted to answer these questions. According to Nelson (2009), there has been a continuing dialogue between psychologists and religious practitioners about the meaning of life and how to deal with matters in our daily lives relating to these fundamental questions.

When tracing the historical development of literature, specifically relating to spiritualty, it became evident that it has been extensively researched in fields ranging from philosophy, anthropology, theology, and medicine. According to Thoresen, Harris and Oman (2001), spirituality has been viewed by various culture groups during the course of history as being interwoven and linked to health both psychologically and physically. According to Johansen (2010), religion has been studied in scientific psychology since the beginning.

There are, however, limited studies available in the field of psychology relating to spirituality, and even fewer that specifically examine the construction of spirituality and the intricacies of its presentation in psychotherapy (Plante, 2007). According to Gutsche (as cited in Crossley & Salter, 2005), spirituality is still one of the most unexamined topics within the field of mental health.

For some researchers, the phenomenon of spirituality cannot be proven empirically and it is seen as an inappropriate field of study (Bartlett, Piedmont, Bilderback, Matsumoto, & Bathon, 2003; Fahlberg & Fahlberg, 1991; Jordaan & Jordaan, 1990; Swinton, 2001). Others, however, found spirituality a very important aspect of psychology and wrote extensively on it (Frankl, 1955; Jung, 1933; Karasu, 1999; Peck, 1978).

Interestingly, Rowe (1991) found that in her experience, psychiatric patients openly share intimate details regarding their sexual life and fantasies, but become hesitant or afraid when asked about their religious beliefs. Although most people regularly ponder thoughts about life and death, the meaning of life and mortality, guilt, anxiety, sin, good versus bad, punishment and reward, fear and courage, forgiveness and revenge, anger and acceptance, jealousy and sharing, love and hate, and the belief in a supernatural being, very little is scientifically known about the seat of the soul and personal spirituality. What is even more interesting is that the word *psychology* is derived from the Greek words *psyche* meaning *soul*

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and *logos* meaning *to speak,* which literally translate to *speaking about the soul* (Mish & Morse, 1997).

Although some of these aspects are covered in existential theory and philosophy, the depth of personal experience and intimacies regarding making sense of events, spirituality, or religious content, are however rarely explored beyond diagnostic inclusion/exclusion criteria; most psychologists report that they do not enquire about their patients' spiritual and religious issues at all (Hage, 2006).

Spirituality within the field of psychology and the therapeutic context is, however, a growing subject of interest (Hefti, 2011) to which the research statement speaks and relates. According to Bartoli (as cited in Johansen, 2010), the number of articles addressing religion and spirituality in psychological literature has more than doubled from the years 1900-1959 to 2000-2006, indicating a growth in the interest of the topic. Mizock, Milner and Russinova (2012) further stated that continuous efforts are made, within the broader health perspective, to incorporate and emphasise spiritual perspectives in psychotherapy.

There is a growing interest in spirituality and religion among psychologists and other health professionals. According to Miller and O'Hanlon (as cited in Plante, 2007), these psychologists are continuously seeking ways to integrate spirituality into psychotherapy to reach a better and more holistic understanding of their patients.

Ongoing research into spirituality as theme in the field of psychology becomes especially important in the South African context. Kourie and Kretzschmar (as cited in Robertson, 2006) stated "there has been renewed interest in spirituality in South Africa since the advent of democracy" (p. 3). According to Robertson (2006), this interest indicates that spirituality and religion are a very important and growing field in the South African culture.

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The inclusion of a multidimensional view towards spirituality becomes especially important within the rich and diverse South African population's culture, which offers a broad spiritual understanding to explore. The study will thus contribute to broadening the limited but growing body of knowledge.

1.2.2 The researcher's perspective

The researcher's interest in spiritualty grew from his own religious background and early experiences as trauma counsellor. As adolescent continuously questioning the meaning of life, thoughts became restricted by traditional religious thinking. Themes such as individuality, guilt, punishment, and good versus bad continued to resonate. As volunteer counsellor working in the trauma unit of a state hospital, the researcher further observed that the majority of patients, when confronted with their own mortality, were forced to confront and question fundamental issues of death and meaning of life. Many of these patients reflected on their past experiences with judgemental interpretations and were searching for purpose and relief from a state of hopelessness.

These observations and professional challenges resonated on a personal level. Death is the inevitable consequence of life, and as these patients struggled with inner conflict it became clear that there is something to be said for the rich internal representation of spirituality, which surpasses religion, and which is then outwardly reflected in the relational connectedness to others. It is thus from the intricate web of meaning attached to experiences that the researcher's interest in the topic of spirituality grew.

1.3 Justification, aim and objectives

The research question asks what an interpretative phenomenological analysis would reveal about clinical psychologists' understanding of spirituality within psychotherapy.

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From the literature reviewed, several justifications and motivations have been noted. The study will firstly contribute to an existing body of knowledge. A study such as this will build on the understanding of spirituality in psychotherapy within the South African context. Interest in spirituality as an important aspect of cultural diversity continues to grow (Constantine, Lewis, Connor, & Sanchez, 2000; Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999; Richards & Bergin, 2000; Smith & Richards, 2005). By specifically examining the experience of spirituality among South African therapists, the study will broaden the understanding of the topic in this unique environment.

Furthermore, as noted, through the literature review it has become clear that different methodologies have been used in identifying and investigating this topic. The rationale behind this research is then primarily to outline these difficulties and encourage creative methodologists to continue exploring possibilities for accessing religious and spiritual experiences, and analysing them in ways that are psychologically useful and non-reductionist.

This research is exploratory, and thus the aim is not to evaluate therapeutic techniques but rather to contribute to an understanding of the phenomenon of spirituality within psychotherapy.The aim of this research is specifically to employ an interpretive phenomenological lens to investigate and explore spirituality in therapy. This was conducted by interviewing psychologists to establish what they have experienced in their therapy sessions. In conducting interviews with psychologists to establish their experiences, the following objectives served as means of attaining the aim:

- The occurrence of spirituality in therapy as identified by them.
- The manner in which psychologists engage with clients' spirituality or spiritual needs in the therapeutic setting.
- The meaning of spirituality in therapy.

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Possible participants for the study were identified and contacted through an internet database. From this initial participatory letter of invitation a lively interest of thirteen possible participants responded positively to the invitation. This initial pool of possible participants were contacted telephonically and reduced based on the inclusion criteria as discussed in the methodology, chapter three. As the study is situated in the clinical psychology therapeutic setting a number of potentially valuable contributions had to however be excluded.

From this screening process three practicing, registered psychologists have been selected based on an exploration of interest to participation. After this discussion, the selected candidates were sent an information letter and a consent form before a semi-structured interview followed. The conversation was tape recorded and then transcribed for data analysis. The idea was to collect experiences of rich quality for the data analysis.

The study is grounded in existential theory, and the data is analysed applying an interpretative phenomenological approach. General themes are identified and presented as results of the study. From these themes, conclusions and recommendations follow.

1.4 Research statement

In this qualitative study, the purpose is to explore clinical psychologists' experience of spirituality in psychotherapy. The aim is to investigate questions such as how to recognise spirituality in therapy; what therapists think about the use of spirituality in the context of therapy; and whether general themes will emerge relating to existential questions such as meaning and connection to self and others. The focus is specifically on investigating the complexities of spirituality and the unfolding process in therapy, and its link to broader existential theory and themes relating to death, freedom, responsibility, the finiteness of our existence, and the creation of meaning through personal experience.

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1.5 Outline of the mini-dissertation

Apart from this introductory *chapter one* the study further consists of the following chapters:

- *Chapter two* focuses on reviewing literature relevant to the topic and identifying relevant constructs. It further grounds the study in the theory of existentialism and clarifies the theoretical assumptions of this approach. This review of literature substantiates the research question and further informs the method applied.

- *Chapter three* highlights the methodology of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and stipulates the rationale of how this specific methodology is appropriate for the study. It further indicates the process of data collection and broadly indicates the steps followed in data analysis. It includes the ethical considerations and measures to ensure the validity and quality of the research.

- *Chapter four* gives a detailed account of how the results and themes manifested from the narratives of the participants. The chapter focusses on method application and on stipulating the detailed steps of the analytic process. The transcript of psychologist A and detailed tables are included to expand and highlight the various themes, showing how they emerged from the narratives. An integrative report and discussion of the themes follows these tables.

- *Chapter five* integrates the results, providing an account of both results and examined literature. It then concludes with limitations and recommendations. The discussion revisits not only the theoretical viewpoint but develop ideas on the significance of spirituality in the therapeutic encounter, also focusing on the important role of the therapist in creating a constructive environment. The discussion will also offer some idea on the personal experiences of both the therapist and the dialogical nature of patient/client engagement.

- The *Appendix* section includes the letter of invitation sent to participants, the exploratory participatory interview guide, the interview guide and consent form, and both the interviews of psychologist A and B to outline and demonstrate the application of the method of data analysis.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL GROUNDING AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The paradigmatic point of departure for the study has its roots in existentialism and existential theory. The following section begins by tracing the roots back to the early development of existential philosophy and building gradually to more recent contributors to the theoretical framework. As discussed in detail existentialism is not considered a specific approach to therapy, but rather a way of thinking about therapy. The agreed upon themes and assumptions that emerged from the various existential thinkers, are then discussed. These themes ground and inform the definition of spirituality that follows.

The development of existential psychotherapy that emerged from existential philosophy is then discussed. This is followed by an examination of the cultural shift towards spirituality in psychotherapy. Previous research on spirituality and psychotherapy that relates to the study is then reviewed, before concluding with an integration of the research findings and literature.

2.2 Existentialism as theoretical movement

Existential psychotherapy, as it is known today, is grounded in existential philosophy that evolved from the work of various authors. The aim here is to trace the roots of existentialism through time as it evolved from philosophy and a different way of thinking about life.

Existentialism, which is seen more as a movement than a school of thought, emanated from the work of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche who both "did not set out to write philosophy or

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psychology" but "sought only to understand, to uncover, and to disclose human existence" (May, 1958, p. 24). They believed that the real goals of philosophy are self-knowledge and freedom and that neither of these could be found in conventional methods of their time (Burston, 2003).

Kierkegaard (1813 – 1855) emphasised that truth should be discovered subjectively by each individual and that Christian dogma and the 'objectivity' of science are both ways of avoiding the inherent anxiety present in human existence. He made philosophy personal and his work centered on themes such as the absurdity and forlornness of life, the importance of free choices, and the need to live authentically (Kierkegaard, 1941, 1980). "Kierkegaard's philosophy placed radical emphasis on subjectivity, individuality and the overwhelming freedom and responsibility that went with it" (McDonald, 2005, p. 56).

Nietzsche (1844 – 1900) had similar ideas and developed the existential themes of freedom, choice, responsibility, and courage (Nietzsche, 1966; Nietzsche & Kaufmann, 2000). Nietzsche believed that people should discover their own free will, and that the idea of God was limiting and outdated, saying "God is dead". Nehamas (as cited in McDonald, 2005) wrote: "Nietzsche strongly believed in the capacity of human beings to 'create' (as opposed to discovering) a personally significant (meaning) and committed life (purpose) in the face of universal chaos and meaninglessness" (p. 63).

Husserl (1859 – 1938) elaborated on the earlier work of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche and established a philosophical movement, known as phenomenology, an approach that concentrates on the study of consciousness and the objects of direct experience, as a systemic method of enquiry that provided a way to study the work of Nietzsche (Husserl, 1931). Husserl was concerned with going "back to the things themselves" which entails going back to existence as it is lived (Husserl, 1931). He proposed that the subject and object should not be

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studied separately and that the only way to grasp the essence of things is not by explaining and analysing them, but by learning to describe and understand them.

Husserl's work inspired Merleau-Ponty (1908 – 1961) who spent most of his career further developing and refining the notion of phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Husserl's work on phenomenology as a qualitative method of investigation is discussed in greater detail in Chapter four.

Heidegger (1889 – 1976) followed and applied the phenomenological method to understand the meaning of "being". He recognised the importance of time, space, death, and human relatedness (Heidegger, 1962, 1977). Heidegger spoke of two modes of being. The first mode is called an "everyday" mode and is to some extent a way of escaping or avoiding our existence. The second is called an "ontological mode" and a state of mindfulness where we live authentically; it is in this state that change is possible from an existential perspective (Yalom, 2000).

Heidegger's work was later expanded by Jaspers (1883 – 1969) and Boss (1903 – 1990), who developed existential analysis (Jaspers, 1951; Boss, 1979). Heidegger's work also inspired and influenced Gadamer (1900 – 2002), who developed hermeneutic phenomenology (Gadamer, 1975).

Sartre (1905 – 1980), who was a student of Heidegger worked on other ideas of existentialism such as emotions, imagination, and the person's insertion into a social and political world (Sartre & Mairet, 1948; Sartre, 1956). Sartre said that *existence precedes essence.* This notion formed an important basis for his existential work on freedom of choice. According to Burston (2003), Sartre importantly introduced the term *existentialism* in 1941. Another notable figure, who was Sartre's colleague, friend, and lover, was De Beauvoir (1908 – 1986) who wrote on existential feminism and ethics (De Beauvoir, 1948, 1952).

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Marcel (1889 – 1973) was a noted opponent of Sartre's atheistic existentialism and was considered to be a theistic existentialist. He is well known for his conception of freedom and his important contribution to the philosophical themes of participation, creative fidelity, exigence, and presence (Marcel, 1951a, 1951b). His view of freedom was that all people are free but do not experience freedom in the same way. According to Marcel, freedom is always about the potentials of the self, understood within the boundaries of relationships with others, and not merely about fulfilling one's desires (Marcel, 1951a, 1951b).

Marcel's *"ontological exigence"* refers to the person's need for transcendence, a search for understanding his/her own place within the universe. It is not purely a wish for coherence but is rather an interior urge or appeal. "What defines man," claims Marcel, "are his *exigencies*" (Marcel, Jolin, McCormick, & Rocoeur, 1973, p. 34). "Otherwise stated, the ontological exigence is not reducible to some psychological state, mood, or attitude a person *has*; it is rather a movement of the human spirit that is inseparable from being human" (Keen, 1984, p. 105). He further elaborated on this, stating that it is evident in our connections and relationships with others and in our search for wholeness.

In the 20th century "Existentialism became a popular movement as people reclaimed philosophy as being of personal relevance." (Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997, p. 1).

Frankl (1905 – 1997) developed existential therapy, called logotherapy, which focuses specifically on man's search for meaning (Frankl, 1946, 1955). His work forms an important basis for linking spirituality to existential themes, as discussed later in this chapter.

Rank (1884 – 1939) was another important contributor to the development of existentialism. According to Koole (2008), Rank emphasised "people's personal responsibility in the here-and-now" (p. 2). Rank further had an important influence on the work of May (Koole, 2008).

Other notable figures considered to be existentialists are Buber (1987 – 1965), and Laing (1927 – 1989).

These authors extensively addressed the notions of inherent anxiety present in human existence, the need to create meaning in a meaningless world, and the importance of autonomy in decision making that relate to personal authentic desires (Koole, 2008). Their philosophical emphasis was on the nature of being and existence through self-knowledge and commitment (Graber, 2004).

While existentialism had its origin in Europe, it also developed in America. According to May, Angel, and Ellenberger (as cited in Burston, 2003), it was only after World War II in the late 1950s that May joined with Angel and Ellenberger to introduce Americans to existential psychiatry.

May (1909 – 1994) established the *Journal of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry* in 1959 that further expanded the existential movement (May, 1960). The *International Journal of Existential Psychology and Psychotherapy* still contributes to literature on the topic.

Yalom (1931 –) is another important contributor to the way existentialism is understood and applied today. The writings of Yalom (1980, 1989) focuses on what he refers to as the four 'givens' of the human condition: isolation, meaninglessness, mortality, and freedom. He was the first to write a comprehensive overview of existential philosophy and its application to therapy called *existential psychotherapy* as an attempt to bridge theory with practice (Yalom, 1980).

In summary, Barrett (1958) described existentialism as: "a philosophy that confronts the human condition in its totality to ask what the basic conditions of human existence are …" (p. 126). According to May (1962, p. 185), "Existentialism is an attitude, an approach to human

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beings, rather than a special school or group". May (1958) importantly stated that: "The term 'Existence', coming from the root *ex-sistere*, means literally to *stand out,* to emerge" and that existentialism seeks to "portray the human being not as a collection of static substances or mechanisms or patterns but rather as emerging and becoming, that is to say, as existing" (p. 12).

Existentialism is thus concerned with studying how individuals exist in relation to the world. In other words, existentialism is concerned with how we make sense of our existence through examining and questioning who and what we are.

2.3 Formulated assumptions and themes

Each of the authors mentioned above had made an authentic contribution to the development of existentialism as it is viewed today. Although their work is unique, there are certain overlapping and complementary themes and assumptions that could be grouped together. These themes are not all-inclusive or ranked in any specific order. However, they highlight the most important foundations of existential thinking that later guide and influence the therapeutic stance. These themes states how the individual is viewed from an existential perspective which later links to the definition of spirituality.

From an existential perspective, a person is an *individual* who is free to make his/her own choices. This *freedom* however comes with an awareness of *responsibility* that leads the person to make *authentic* choices based on intrinsic motivations. The awareness of our own existence stems from the fact that we are aware of our own mortality and *death*, an awareness that causes great *anxiety* and distress. We realise that ultimately we are *isolated* and alone in moments of *despair* and search for connections to others, and try to create *meaning* in a *meaningless* existence.

The logical flow and order of these interacting themes are discussed in detail below.

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2.3.1 Individuality

The first agreed upon theme in existentialism is that the focus should be on the individual. The focus is on how the person 'exists' in the world. Questions such as: Why am I here? What is the meaning of life? And, is there a God? all relate to existential themes. This is an important distinction from other approaches in that existentialism recognises, and emphasises, that humans are the only beings that are aware of, and have to deal with, their own existence.

Sartre's famous saying, "Existence precedes essence" relates to the belief that there are no predetermined rules about life but that it is rather shaped by each individual. Existence or the being of living is not determined or preceded by essence or predetermined principles which make it a life. In other words, the essence of life is existence. In this way individuals shape their own lives according to their choices and free will.

2.3.2 Freedom and responsibility

The second theme, which logically follows on the first, originated with the work of Nietzsche who claimed "God is dead" and emphasised that our choices are not bound by social norms such as politics or religion but are rather personally shaped. Josselson (2008) emphasises this point when he writes that the universe has no inherent design and that we are the authors of our own lives and are responsible for the choices we make. In this way, individuals are not determined by their past experiences and have the ability to shape their own future based on personal choice in all situations. Personal choice plays a significant role in who we are and what we become. Frankl also places great emphasis on this theme in his development of logotherapy after surviving, and studying others, in the concentration camps during the Second World War.

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Because freedom of choice shapes the individual's future it carries a great responsibility. Yalom (1980) said, "To be aware of responsibility is to be aware of creating one's own self, destiny, life predicament, feelings, and if such is the case, one's own suffering" (p. 218). Freedom, responsibility, and choice are, furthermore, determining factors in the fulfilment of who we are.

The first and second theme are linked in that "freedom and necessity (destiny) meet and fuse not only in my present and future choices but in the very individuality of my existence" (May, 1999, p. 96).

2.3.3 Authenticity

Authenticity, the third existential theme, evolved from the second theme of freedom, responsibility and decisions based on personal choice rather than external influences. The third theme extends these by saying we make 'authentic' decisions congruent with our internal desires and needs.

To act authentically requires integrity in that the individual is true to his/her inner self. This is no simple task and most individuals constantly struggle with anxiety and isolation. Kierkegaard (as cited in Steiner & Reisinger, 2006) explains being authentic as follows: "Being in touch with one's inner self, knowing one's self, having a sense of one's own identity and then living in accord with one's sense of one's self is being authentic" (p. 300).

Sartre (as cited in Steiner & Reisinger, 2006) points to personal will in this: "To be authentic, people need to make themselves as they want to be. They must assert their will in the choices made when confronted by possibilities" (p. 300).

Other authors highlighted that individuals create an authentic self when leaping towards their freedom and responsibility, in a uniquely distinctive and personal way (Golomb, 1995; McDonald, 2005).

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2.3.4 Death, anxiety, isolation and despair

Death, anxiety, isolation and despair are discussed together as they deal with similar ideas. We realise that as an individual we are alone in dealing with the awareness of death. An existential crisis arises when individuals grasp that they always define their own lives through choice and struggle to find personal meaning. It is further exacerbated when we are confronted with our own mortality through death and the meaninglessness of existence.

Death is inevitable, and human beings are the only living creatures that can grasp this truth (Dahlbach, 2013). This realisation brings forth anxiety and despair. To alleviate death anxiety, most individuals ascribe meaning to their existence through a belief in their own sacredness and a belief in a higher destiny, calling or power (Yalom, 1980). Most people strive to attain, or live in accordance with, this meaning, and constantly struggle with who they are and what they want to be.

This internal struggle leads to feelings of guilt. Heidegger presented ideas on guilt which were expanded by Yalom, who offered the notion of *"existential guilt"* that emanates not only from transgressions against others but also from not living authentically and fully (Yalom, 1980). "The discrepancy between what one is and what one could be, generates a flood of self-contempt with which the individual must cope throughout life" (Yalom, 1980, p. 279). From this state the individual then either continues to defend the self against this guilt and anxiety by searching for a different meaning, or makes decisions freely and authentically with internal desires which bring a different meaning to existence.

In the words of Zafirides, Markman, Proulx and Lindberg (2013), "Existential isolation refers to the individual's true 'aloneness' in the world … it refers to the reality that all of us enter and depart from existence alone, regardless of our relationships or how close we feel to one another" (p. 468).

Yalom (1980) noted that people can endure three types of isolation: interpersonal isolation (from others), intrapersonal isolation (from self), and existential isolation (from an individual's relationship to a meaningful world).

Although the realisation of death may lead to a great deal of anxiety it dually holds various opportunities. "We flee from death through all the everyday things that we do and fail to notice that death is our greatest potential" (Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997, p. 41). Yalom (2000) further said that: "Though the physicality of death destroys us, the idea of death can save us" (p. 11). "All passions and strivings of man," writes Fromm, "are attempts to find an answer to his existence" (Fromm, 1956, p. 27).

2.3.5 Meaning and meaninglessness

The fifth and final existential theme to be considered is that of personal meaning. We search for meaning through spirituality. We have a need for connectedness to something larger, greater than ourselves. "Meaning provides us with the sense that our lives matter, that they make sense, and that they are more than the sum of our seconds, days, and years" (Waterman, 2014, p. 35). For various writers, meaning became a focus within psychology (e.g. Baumeister, 1991; Frankl, 1946; Maddi, 1998; Mascaro & Rosen, 2008; Maslow, 1968; May, 1983; Wong, 1998)), and they all formed various definitions of the meaning in life.

According to Medlock (2014), an essential need for meaning as human motivation includes creating a sense of purpose for oneself and an appreciation of the interconnections and interpretations of experience that bring a sense of coherence to one's life. In this way the construction of meaning is linked to the other existential themes of authenticity, freedom, death, and isolation.

Personal meaning, however, is by definition very vague and subject to various interpretations (Medlock, 2014). Wong (as cited in Waterman, 2014) extracted the following

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common elements: "(a) Who am I? (b) Why am I here? (c) Where am I going? (d) What is the meaning of suffering and death? and (e) How can I find significance and happiness?" (p. 35).

Waterman (2014) further stated that meaning has been conceptualised in multiple ways, all of which emphasise purpose (Klinger, 1977; Ryff, 1989), significance, or a higher calling (Baumeister, 1991; Yalom, 1980), perceptions of order and coherence in one's existence (Reker & Wong, 1988), and ultimate concerns (Emmons, 1999). According to Henry (2003): "meaning includes the things that shape experience and create attributes of hope, authenticity, trust, courage, perseverance and other ways of being in the world" (p. 2).

2.4 Summary: existentialism

The above outline of existentialism from its roots to recent developments is a brief summary in which emphasis was placed on the main themes and assumptions. This paradigmatic point of departure sets the tone and groundwork for the literature review that follows.

The basic ideas of existentialism portray human beings' ultimate aloneness (alienation) and their having to face an absurd and meaningless existence which, in turn, induces both anxiety and the possibility of an authentic response. Existential thinkers share the firm commitment to keep their research and therapeutic work grounded in the existence and concerns of people (Craig, 2008; May, 1958, 1983).

The key concept or idea is that the existentialist movement proclaims that the human condition is structured and defined by an implicit and pervasive knowledge of one's own 'finitude' (Heidegger, 1962). And so, existential philosophy encourages the individual to stand resolutely as a finite being capable of making choices (Bugental, 1976; Solomon, 1974).

2.5 Existentialism as therapeutic approach

Existential philosophers not only examined similar themes but also proffered different humanistic approaches to therapy. "Existential psychotherapy is the only established form of psychotherapy that is directly based in philosophy rather than psychology" (Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997, p. 2).

Earlier authors wrote comprehensively on the incorporation of existential-phenomenological theory into psychotherapeutic practice. These include Bugental (1976, 1987), Frankl (1955), Marcel (1951a), May (1958), Sartre and Mairet (1948), and Yalom (1980), who was considered the first to have written a comprehensive overview on existential psychotherapy.

More recent authors who focused on existential psychotherapy include Cohn (1997), Condrau (1998), Du Plock (1997), Van Deurzen-Smith (1997), Strasser and Strasser (1997), and Spinelli (1997, 2001). The field continued to grow into the 21st century, as can be seen from the work of Schneider (2008) and Craig (2008).

Existentialists believe that, similar to dynamic therapy, the focus should be on studying the defence mechanisms that arise as a result of this confrontation with death and the meaninglessness of life. The therapeutic aim is to allow people to examine their embodied attitudes, values, beliefs, choices or assumptions regarding what it means for them to exist and engage with themselves, others and the world in general. "It regards people's struggles and associated anxiety and alienation not as dysfunctional, but rather as an inevitable consequence of the human condition" (Koole, 2008, p. 3).

An existentially focused approach to psychotherapy can expose, examine, challenge, confront, clarify and reconsider the patient's experienced problems in relation to his/her world-view or understanding of life, and free him/her to appreciate the true significance of life (Koole,

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2008; Spinelli, 2006). This awareness is intended to enable the person to achieve a new freedom and responsibility to act. May (1958) further said that existentialism "... seeks, rather, to analyse the structure of human existence – an enterprise which, if successful, should yield an understanding of the reality underlying all situations of human beings in crisis" (p. 7).

It follows therefore that existential therapy, based on the fundamental view of human existence, has no set way of doing therapy, but rather, is an approach to therapy with an emphasis on the individual's experience and the unfolding of the relationship between the therapist and the patient or client.

The role of the therapist is to facilitate such an environment without preconceived ideas, and an openness towards the person's world-view. From an existential perspective, the therapeutic process is an unfolding of experiences and circumstances specific and unique to the individual. The therapist facilitates this by keeping an open mind, without preconceptions or a set way of going about doing things (Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997). Each therapeutic relationship is unique and will be guided and informed by both the therapist and the person in therapy.

The therapist is guided by existential principles but does not follow a set way of approaching therapy. The aim is to be sensitive to, and aware of, the person's experienced difficulties, which can be presented in numerous ways ranging from relational and interpersonal, to spiritual. These difficulties may then be related to existential themes such as guilt, anxiety, despair, or searching for meaning. The therapist helps the person by unpacking and examining these defences and the meanings attached to them. The person gains insight and can choose authentically how to shape his/her future.

As was outlined above, persons in therapy may present their difficulties in various ways. The focus of the present study is to examine the nature of the therapist's experiences that specifically relate to the spiritual content presented in therapy. The construct of spiritualty

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should therefore be examined, clarified, and descriptively defined within the specific context of this study, placing it within the existential theoretical frame and approach to therapy as delineated here.

2.6 Definition of spirituality

An attempt to define spirituality and to distinguish it from religion is no simple task. Part of the dilemma is that, when spirituality is considered separately from religion, it does not have a substantial history of scientific inquiry (George, Koenig, Larson, & McCullough, 2000). Coyle (2008) stated that: "Even religion, which might appear to be the more concrete term, has evaded attempts to define it satisfactorily and in a way that achieves consensus" (p. 56). Hill et al. (2000) further wrote: "Both spirituality and religion are complex phenomena, multidimensional in nature, and any single definition is likely to reflect a limited perspective or interest" (p. 52). The two constructs are however not synonymous and although it was not possible to examine and describe all the various definitions and interpretations of each construct within the scope of this study, it remains important to examine and clarify what is meant here when referring to either.

According to Hill et al. (2000), "the word 'religion' comes from the Latin root *religio* which signifies a bond between humanity and some greater-than-human power" (p. 56). It speaks of a connection to a higher deity who is organised in some form of order and connection with others. This organised belief system is "sustained by a human institution, ethnic group, tribe or culture and involves definite rules of behaviour, practices and rituals" (Pathak, 2011, p. 11). Religion thus encompasses a collective belief shared by many individuals.

Religions probably originated as a way of addressing humanity's possible innate need for spirituality (Mohandas, 2008). Religions offer community-based worship, each faith having its own set of beliefs and sacred traditions. In this way, religious experience and practices form

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part of a person's spiritual quest (Pathak, 2011). Religion as a practice of the individual's spirituality is exclusive to a particular cultural group and is not necessarily shared universally. Different cultural groups may share religious beliefs but may differ in interpretation and practice of that religion, based on the shared cultural identity.

Although spirituality and religion are seen as overlapping constructs, spirituality is viewed as encompassing religion (Canda, 1997). "In other words, a person may be spiritual but not necessarily religious" (Hodge & McGrew, 2005, p. 2). Spirituality is seen as a broader concept that goes beyond religious or cultural boundaries (Delgado, 2005).

Spirituality is further understood as being a personal experience and not necessarily an organised social phenomenon. Each person's spiritual path is unique and speaks to the "more personal, subjective, and experiential aspects of religion" (Hadzic, 2011, p. 229). Religion, which is seen to be more specific, links people to others through a particular faith, institution or tradition, whereas spirituality is more wide-ranged in that there are many individual differences (Pathak, 2011).

The use of the term *spirituality* as apart from *religion* has a surprisingly short history (Hill et al., 2000; Sheldrake, 1992; Wulff, 1997). Although various studies have attempted to provide a working definition of, or a consensual meaning for, spirituality, there is still no universally agreed upon definition, according to Hadzic (2011).

Within psychological literature, Coyle (2008) identified as many as nine dimensions in the definitions of *spirituality* that differ from those of *religion* and cites the following authors: Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf, and Saunders (1988); Emmons (1999); Gorsuch and Miller (1999); Zinnbauer, Pargament, Cole, Ryle, Butter, Belavich, Hipp, Scott and Kadar (1997). These dimensions of spirituality as grouped by Coyle (2008, p. 57) include:

- Relating to meaning and purpose in life;

- A sense of mission or calling in life;

- A transcendent dimension involving external and internal factors such as deities, spirits, inner guides or higher selves;

- A belief in the sacredness of life;

- An emphasis on wholeness and connectedness;

- The notion of an essential and perhaps eternal soul;

- The idea of a spiritual journey or path;

- A belief that pain and suffering are an inescapable part of life and may be meaningful;

- A belief in personal transformation.

Spirituality is concerned with existential questions pertaining to the meaning of and purpose in one's life, a sense of belonging, and a search for wholeness (Hage, 2006). "It is about acceptance, integration and wholeness" (Pathak, 2011, p. 10). Spirituality addresses people's pursuit for understanding something about the decisive questions about life, meaning, and a relationship with the transcendental (Koenig, McCullough, & Larson, 2001). Swinton (2001) pointed out that spirituality stems from the "internal world" of the individual. Spirituality is individualistic, subjective, and emotional, and motivates us to search for meaning and purpose in life (Hill & Pargament, 2003). Hence it is clear that spirituality has different meanings in different contexts, and a context-specific definition of the term is needed (Hadzic, 2011).

Following may be regarded as a working definition of spirituality: "The activity of developing a deep relationship or sense of connection with the wholeness of being" (Blatner,

2004, p. 1). It motivates us to search for meaning and purpose in life, a sense of belonging and wholeness. In short, it encompasses the notions of acceptance, integration, and wholeness.

The definition is importantly embedded in the existential themes discussed earlier in that the individual enforces free will to authentically create personal meaning in an attempt to understand the ultimate questions about life, meaning, and a relationship with the sacred or transcendent. It is thus not only a reality in therapy but an important aspect/dimension to consider when attempting a holistic understanding of the person's world.

The shift towards research that has specifically examined the link between spirituality, existentialism, and therapy are discussed below.

2.7 A socio-cultural shift towards spirituality in psychotherapy

A major sociocultural shift in the values of the general population occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. This well-documented shift was towards a more pluralistic society in which terms such as *tolerance* and *multiculturalism* began to characterise a new social morality (Meyers, 2000). This also resulted in some people shifting their attitudes towards religion. The term *religion*, because it was often exclusive in its truth claims and intolerant in its views of morality, gained a negative association with prevailing dogma and ritual. From this development a shift in religious association consequently occurred.

By the early 1990s, religion fell into disfavour, whereas spirituality, referring more to the personal, subjective experience, became preferred among laypersons and researchers alike (Hill & Pargament, 2003). With the emergence of shifting cultural trends, in the multicultural approach to therapy, religion and more specifically spirituality, were reintegrated as central concepts in psychotherapy practice (Worthington, 2011). Embedded in this shift was also the idea that all religions are essentially variations of similar social phenomena or equally valid individual spiritual truths (Hick, 1999).

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Authors as early as Cousins (1986) already acknowledged the importance of a greater rather than a lesser spiritual domain. He wrote: "It may well be that the meeting of spiritual paths – the assimilation not only of one's own spiritual heritage but of that of the human community as a whole – is the distinctive spiritual journey of our time" (p. 14).

This shift towards spirituality as opposed to religion had numerous implications on research that investigated the topic relating to specifically therapy, mental health, and the individual. A shift in research trends became evident.

2.8 Research on spirituality within psychotherapy

According to Bartoli (as cited in Johansen, 2010), 3 803 articles were published between 1900 and 1959 on religion and spirituality in psychological literature. This number more than doubled between the years 2000 and 2006, to 8 193. Despite the fact that there is no clear distinction between the two constructs there was a considerable growth during the 21st century in people's interest in religion and spirituality within the field of psychology.

Although there is a cultural shift towards spirituality in psychotherapy, a difficulty lies in the fact that very few of these studies make a distinction between spirituality and religion. Another difficulty in research on spirituality was pointed out by Miller and Thoresen (2003), namely that the assumption that spirituality cannot, and should not, be studied scientifically, has greatly hindered the progress of research in this domain. They did however prove that spirituality can be studied scientifically and supported their claims with a large existing body of scientific research on spiritual processes (Hood, Spilka, Hunsberger, & Gorsuch, 1996; Koenig et al., 2001; Larson, Swyers, & McCullough, 1998). The link between spirituality and mental health has since been supported extensively in literature (Hill & Pargament, 2003).

An inspection of the literature that focuses on spirituality and how it has been examined in relation to psychotherapy reveals that there are a number of relevant studies such as those

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by Coyle (2008), Murray, Kendall, Boyd, Worth and Benton (2004), Suarez (2005), and Walton (1999). These researchers all used various methods to explore spiritual meaning for individuals in different settings. Others have made various attempts to configure existential phenomenological theory into psychotherapeutic practice (Cohn, 1997; Condrau, 1998; Du Plock, 1997; Spinelli, 2006; Strasser & Strasser, 1997; Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997).

Even though the methodology chosen differs from study to study, i.e. from phenomenology to narrative techniques, the researchers have been able to gain an understanding on spirituality with relevance to their studies. Three studies that are particularly useful and relevant to the present study are those of Wright (2003), Suarez (2005), and Crossley and Salter (2005).

Wright (2003) conducted phenomenological research to explore the meaning of spirituality among African-American women recovering from substance abuse. The study consistently and vividly reports on and interprets participants' accounts of religious/spiritual beliefs and experiences from within their phenomenological worlds.

Suarez's (2005) research focused on therapists' views and experiences of integrating spirituality into psychotherapy. "Some therapists reported being illuminated or guided by 'spirit' in therapy. "They described these occasions as moments of 'connection', 'spiritual intimacy', 'understanding', 'insight', 'clarity' and 'healing'" (Coyle, 2008, p. 62). In such moments the clients' spiritual experiences were said to have revealed to the therapists the clients' emotional states, the nature of the clients' core pain and/or what the client needed (Suarez, 2005). These therapists said that "other therapists who did not have a spiritual interpretative framework might interpret the same phenomena in terms of high quality empathy and good therapeutic attunement" (Coyle, 2008, p. 63).

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Some of the clients had difficulty disclosing their spiritual experiences early in the interview and only shared details thereof much later in the session (Coyle, 2008). This is indicative of how a good therapeutic relationship, as well as sensitivity towards the person's world-view, may guide the session towards authentic disclosure.

The study by Crossley and Salter (2005) examined clinical psychologists' experience of addressing spiritual beliefs in therapy. It was found that spirituality was experienced as an elusive and nebulous concept and that it evoked feelings of confusion; there was also a lack of professional engagement with the construct.

These authors claimed that because of the ambiguity and lack of understanding surrounding spiritualty it may go by unnoticed in sessions. Unfortunately this in turn creates a gap in the understanding of spirituality and of what might be needed in terms of clinical psychologists training programmes to not only better understand but more importantly to engage with the individual's spiritual aspects in the therapeutic session (Crossley & Salter, 2005). This specific aspect of their findings is relevant to the rationale for the current study.

By viewing spirituality as a multidimensional construct, Crossley and Salter (2005) found that it is possible to avoid the difficulties inherent within attempts to integrate the distinct dimensions of spirituality into a discrete concept which, according to them, would promote greater engagement with spirituality within the realm of clinical psychology (Crossley & Salter, 2005).

After these studies, authors such as McMinn and Dominquez; Miller and Thoresen; Sperry and Shafranske (as cited in Plante, 2007) wrote on the subject and were of the opinion that: "psychology and spiritual integration in psychotherapy is likely to continue to evolve and develop in ways that will hopefully benefit psychotherapy clients" (p. 900).

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More recently, Cohen and Koenig (as cited in Hadzic, 2011) claimed that "training programs in both psychiatry and psychology are beginning to highlight the importance of addressing spiritual issues as a part of mental health care" (p. 227-228). According to Lopez and Snyder; Miller; Miller and Thoresen (as cited in Plante, 2007) "it is only more recently that psychology as a profession and as a discipline evolved to better accommodate and accept spiritual and religious perspectives into its professional work" (p. 900).

2.9 Integration and conclusion

In conclusion, existential theory highlighted the importance of studying how the person exists in relation to the world, placing strong emphasis on the individual's world-view. It grew from philosophical thinkers who were all concerned with similar ideas. The shift from religion towards spirituality over time is reflected in a similar shift in social trends that emphasise the personal differences in 'being' and the importance of personal choice, free will, and authenticity in being. The existential therapeutic approach is appropriate as it invites the therapist to be sensitive to the unfolding process without setting boundaries or rigid ways of 'doing' therapy. It highlights the importance of authenticity and the unfolding of information that relates to existential themes. This way of approaching therapy allows individuals' spiritual aspects, as they relate to themes of authenticity, death, isolation, anxiety, and the way of creating meaning, to be integrated and pronounced in the relationship. The person in therapy is encouraged to come to terms with death and the inherent anxiety that accompanies it. The relevance of the work discussed above is that the individual is inspired to make sense of his/her existence in some way, of which spirituality forms a significant aspect. Patients or clients bring the entirety of their self into the therapeutic setting where the existential therapist's stance allows this struggle to come to the fore to be examined, exposed, and reconsidered in a process that will allow the person to redefine the relation to his/her world-view or understanding of life, and free them to appreciate the true significance of life (Koole, 2008; Spinelli, 2006).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, literature relevant to spirituality and psychotherapy was reviewed, and a definition of spirituality was grounded within the theory of existentialism. In addition, the theoretical grounding of the study in existentialism was established and underlying themes and assumptions were explored.

The methodology of the current study is phenomenological in that the researcher sought to understand the subjective experiences of clinical psychologists' understanding of spirituality in psychotherapy. This chapter elaborates on the methodology and provides an outline of the paradigm, its theoretical assumptions and research methods as they were applied in the study.

Phenomenological methodology aims to produce descriptive data that can assist researchers in understanding the world as the research participants experience it, by focusing on the person's experiences in specific contexts.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was specifically selected for the present research as it aims at a holistic immersion in the data by exploring in detail how the person makes sense of his personal and social world (Smith, 2004).

In this chapter the application of these methodological principles, grounded in the phenomenological paradigm, is discussed. This is followed by descriptions of the method of sampling, data collection, data analysis and the measures taken to ensure research quality and ethical standards.

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3.2 Research design

The research project focused on clinical psychologists' understanding of spirituality in psychotherapy. The nature of this study suggested that an investigative approach, which values the lived experiences of participants, would be the most appropriate approach.

Quantitative methodologies focus on prediction, control, and measurement, whereas qualitative methods focus on discovery, description, and meaning. Qualitative research further gives attention to meaning, that is, how people make sense of their circumstances and experiences and hence helps the researcher to gain insight as to how they cope with situations (Willig, 2009). Thus a qualitative approach is fitting for exploring the phenomenon of spirituality.

The phenomenon, in this case the experience of spirituality within psychotherapy, according to psychologists operating within a qualitative paradigm, is regarded as 'real' or 'authentic' in itself. In this way, the experience is studied on its own terms, rather than being reduced to mechanistic concepts taken from the physical or biological sciences (Giorgi, 1985). The researcher is primarily concerned with phenomena as they are experienced by the participant rather than seeing it as physical realities (Willig, 2009). Qualitative research encompasses a natural, holistic and inductive process (Durrheim, 2006), as it is generally engaged in exploring, describing and interpreting the personal and social experiences of participants (Smith, 2004).

There are various study designs in qualitative research, which, according to Larkin and Thompson (2012), include existentialist-informed hermeneutic phenomenology, grounded theory, discourse analysis, narrative psychology, ethnomethodology (conversation analysis), and interpretative phenomenological analysis. Qualitative methods in psychology thus cover various methods of understanding and exploring participants' experiences.

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3.3 Phenomenology

Spiritual experiences might best be approached by adopting a phenomenological, as opposed to a physical, definition of reality as it provides a descriptive approach for investigation. From phenomenological and existential methodologies, the focus is placed on attempting to understand the experience of a person in as pure a form as possible (Hoffman, 2012). Heidegger follows the original Greek etymology of the term *phenomenology*, meaning "to show itself, to bring to the light of day, or to put in the light" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 51). The starting point for investigation was the 'life-world' as it is immediately experienced by people (Keen 1975).

Although Husserl is considered to be the founder of the phenomenological approach (Polit, Beck, & Hungler, 2001), other phenomenologists such as Marcel, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty helped build the method into an existential approach (Roberts, 2013).

Phenomenological inquiry importantly notes that only those who have experienced the phenomena can communicate it to the bigger outside world (Todres & Holloway, 2004), and researchers therefore seek to understand the meaning of experiences from those who have actually experienced them. These descriptions, which are obtained through first-person accounts, make use of semi-structured one-on-one interviews, which are then transcribed and analysed for themes and meanings (Moustakas, 1994). Such interviews have a subject-directed focus but allow the participant to guide the discussion.

From this perspective the emphasis is placed on the 'life-world' as it is experienced by people within particular contexts and at particular times (Willig, 2009). The goal of phenomenological research is for the researcher to enter into the individual's lived world in an attempt to understand the phenomena that were created or encountered between the object and

the participant, or between the psychologist and their experiences with spirituality in psychotherapy.

3.3.1 Descriptive and interpretive phenomenology

As was discussed in the previous chapter, both Husserl and Heidegger were pioneers in the field of existentialism and they both significantly contributed to the development of phenomenological methods in research. Husserl's transcendental phenomenology was the first method developed. Heidegger subsequently developed hermeneutics phenomenologically. The difference in their methods is essentially the difference between descriptive and interpretative methods in phenomenology.

Husserl focused on understanding phenomena. Husserl saw phenomenology as a way of reaching true meaning in a deep sense by examining people's personal 'subjectivity' regarding 'reality' (Laverty, 2003). Laverty (2003) stated that the main focus for Husserl was to study phenomena as they appeared in dualism of object and subject instead of separately from each other. According to Laverty (2003), "Husserl was interested in acts of attending, perceiving, recalling, and thinking about the world, and human beings were understood primarily as knowers" (p. 7). In other words, Husserl would have been interested in *describing* the experience of spirituality as it occurred.

Heidegger in turn focused on the mode of being human (Laverty, 2003) and believed that *interpretation* of an experience is necessary for understanding. He also claimed that a person's background adds tremendous value to the discovery of understanding within a specific context (Laverty, 2003). In this way Heidegger's method, which makes it possible to interpret phenomena based on pre-existing knowledge about the person's background, does not seek to describe the phenomenon as Husserl did. Heidegger (1962) stated that: "The meaning of phenomenological description lies in interpretation" (p. 37).

As an investigative method IPA is essentially interpretative. However, it also makes use of descriptive phenomenology by allowing participants to give a reliable account of the phenomenon from their perspective (Roberts, 2013).

Interpretative phenomenology contends that meaning is created when the researcher hermeneutically interprets the individual's descriptions. "The aim is to select participants in order to illuminate a particular research question, and to develop a full and interesting interpretation of the data" (Brocki & Wearden, 2006, p. 95). In this approach, the researcher is not excluded from the phenomenon but rather his aim is to interpret the descriptions in an insightful and reflective manner. This particular aspect of IPA was appropriate for the current study as the researcher is interested in how psychologists incorporate or integrate spirituality in psychotherapy.

3.3.2 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) has its origins in psychology and phenomenology (Brocki & Wearden, 2006); it recognises "the central role of the researcher" in making sense of the personal experiences of research participants (Smith, 2004).

IPA is further informed and grounded in three key areas of philosophical knowledge, namely phenomenology, hermeneutics and ideography (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). It draws on each of these approaches to shape its unique epistemological framework and research methodology (Shinebourne, 2011), and it is fitting to discuss the contribution of each.

Firstly, phenomenology provides an IPA with a rich source of ideas as to how lived experience should be examined and understood. Phenomenological research, which systematically and attentively reflects on everyday lived experience, is an interpretative process.

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Secondly hermeneutics, which follows on from phenomenology, provides opportunities for interpretative analysis. It contextualises both participants' reflections and relevant theoretical material, thus making it possible to link the findings to psychological literature. While phenomenology uncovers meanings, hermeneutics interprets the meanings (Bäckström & Sundin, 2007). However, Heidegger (1962) claimed that hermeneutics should be deemed a prerequisite to phenomenology.

Finally, ideography or individual nature constitutes the third theoretical underpinning of IPA. Ideography aims for an in-depth focus on the particular and is committed to a detailed finely-textured analysis of data (Smith, 2004; Smith, Harré & Van Langenhove, 1995). Allport (as cited in Shinebourne, 2011) first used the term *ideographic* to refer to 'knowledge' as knowledge about unique events, and entities. The ideographic commitment of IPA retains a focus on the detailed examination of particular instances rather than on drawing general conclusions. This notion applies to both single case and small group studies.

In practice IPA, "which is specifically concerned with the construction of meaning within both the social and personal world of individuals" (Cassar & Shinebourne, 2012, p. 134), holds that "human beings are not passive perceivers of an objective reality, but rather that they interpret and understand their world by formulating their own biographical stories into a form that makes sense to them" (Brocki & Wearden, 2006, p. 88). According to Willig (2009), the aim is to capture the quality and texture of personal experience, and then to interpret it using a specific method of analysis to guide the findings. In other words, the goal of IPA entails deriving meaning through discovering common thematic elements across individuals' experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

To achieve this goal researchers need to identify and reflect on their own experience and assumptions in order to engage with other people's experience, and to illustrate, inform

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and master themes by firmly anchoring findings in direct quotes from participant accounts (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

IPA provides flexible guidelines that can be adapted by researchers in accordance with their research aims (Smith & Osborn, 2008). This means that the method can be specifically adapted and applied to the investigation of the phenomenon of spirituality within psychotherapy.

3.4 Participants of the study

IPA studies, which use semi-structured interviews, are conducted on small sample sizes. The transcripts are then transcribed and themes are extracted (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Emphasis is placed on the quality and richness of data obtained relating to the phenomenon rather than on the number of participants: The richer the information retrieved, the fewer cases needed to saturate the theme.

Interview questions are generally described as open-ended and the interview style as non-directive. In an evaluative study on the use of IPA in health psychology, Brocki and Wearden (2006) found that in a review of 52 papers, "all the authors expressed a desire to use the interview schedule to facilitate the participants' ability to tell their own story in their own words" (p. 90). Alexander and Clare (2004), who also made use of IPA, described their interview process as: "collaborative, emphasising that the participants were the primary experts" (p. 82).

3.5 Sampling in phenomenological research

Sampling methods in phenomenological research are based on the non-probability sampling method of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling entails that members are selected on the grounds of certain predetermined characteristics (Nieuwenhuis, 2010).

The aim of this study was to recruit between three and six clinical psychologists who were working in government and/or private practice. Participants, between the ages of 35 and 65 with at least 10 years' experience in psychotherapy and who were working from an existential paradigm, were selected. Clinical psychologists were identified through a refined internet search that focused on certain criteria: their qualifications, age, language of preference, type of therapy and interest in spirituality. If any of the above-mentioned criteria were not met the participant was excluded from the study. The participant's specific view of spirituality within psychotherapy was not considered in the exclusion criteria.

3.6 Data collection

A letter was sent to potential participants inviting them to participate in the study (see *Appendix A* for the letter of invitation). A telephonic screening interview was then conducted with each of the willing participants. The aim of the interview was to discuss their alliance with the existential frame and their openness to the meaning of spirituality in therapy in order to identify the richest possible pool of candidates. See *Appendix B* for the exploratory participatory interview.

Selected candidates were then sent a consent form, (See *Appendix C* for the interview guide and consent form.), after which a semi-structured interview was arranged. The conversations were digitally recorded and afterwards transcribed for data analysis. *See Appendix D* for the transcription of psychologist A as example of data analysis. To ensure confidentiality all names and other identifying details were changed to pseudonyms.

The literature review in Chapter two identified themes and assumptions underlying the existential phenomenological premise.

Although a semi-structured interview guide and questions were set prior to the interviews, further questions were asked in light of the participant's responses. This method

facilitated an engaging dialogue between the researcher and the participant. This was conducted sensitively so as to allow an unfolding, flexible process of narrative experiential accounts (Roberts, 2013). The structure of predetermined questions served as a compass to keep the conversation in line with the objectives, and thus with the aim of the study. This method of data collection allows for the articulation of the detail of the experience and is the required method for IPA.

3.7 Data analysis

There are various ways in which the methodology of IPA can be applied in data analysis. According to Smith (1996), "There is no one correct way to do qualitative analysis" (p. 18). However, this does not mean that there is no forethought and planning on the part of the researcher. Instead, the procedure of analysis is a process of uncovering aspects of the participants' psychological world, and in order to do so, there needs to be a "sustained engagement with the text and process of interpretation" (Smith, 1996, p. 18).

"The goal of analysis is to reach a place of understanding of the experience through the development of integrated statements about the experiences" (Laverty, 2003, p. 20). This process involves examining, sorting, categorising, evaluating, comparing, synthesising and contemplating the coded data, as well as reviewing the raw and recorded data.

IPA transcription is at the semantic level (Smith & Osborn, 2008); therefore, one needs to consider all the words spoken. This semantic level includes the consideration of "false starts; significant pauses, laughs" (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 65). Each participant's accounts were organised and captured in a transcribed format that allowed for the data to be systematically interpreted, evaluated and examined in detail.

The researcher then engaged with the interview transcripts to identify and unfold themes from within the text, so as to ultimately achieve an interpretation of the experiences

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(Quinn & Clare, 2008). Although there are no set ways of analysing data within IPA, the framework does provide guidance in the steps to be followed (Langdridge, 2007; Smith & Osborn, 2008; Storey, 2007; Willig, 2009). In a review of 52 articles relating to the use of IPA, Brocki and Wearden (2006) found that when it comes to data analysis, although the description of the analytic process differs, most papers site the detailed account of guidelines as outlined by Smith (1999). Although these guidelines serve to foster the accessibility of IPA, they should be adapted and developed with each application to generate flow and applicability (Smith, 2004). The steps, and the specific tailored application thereof within this study, are outlined below.

The *first stage* of analysis included reading and re-reading the transcripts of the individual cases, with close, line-by-line analysis (i.e. *coding*) of the experiential claims, concerns and understandings of each participant. According to Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009), this step involves that researchers fully immerse themselves in the data collected from the participants.

Other variations of the first step of data analysis include making notes of: "recurring phrases, the researcher's questions, their own emotions, and descriptions of, or comments on, the language used" (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008 p. 217). Others such as Elliot and Timulak (2005) stated that some researchers combine the researcher's notes of the interview with the transcript of the interview in order to merge the researcher's voice with the participant's account.

In the *second stage* the researcher identifies emergent patterns or themes within the transcriptions. These themes, which emphasise both convergence and divergence, commonality and nuance, are a result of the participants' experiences and the researcher's interpretations (Eatough & Smith, 2008). This step is an examination of the transcripts on a

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textual level. The data is then analysed in detail to identify themes that are meaningful and relevant to the study. The steps are then repeated with all the participants' interview transcripts. Once these steps have been repeated for all the participants' accounts, the researcher identifies commonalities within the cases.

Although this method of spotting or tracking themes is frequently used, Elliot and Timulak (2005) suggested that instead of extracting themes the researcher can also divide data into meaningful themes that can vary in length, depending on the message conveyed.

The *third stage,* which introduces some structure to the analysis and is a development of a "dialogue" between the researcher and the coded data, leads to the development of a more interpretative account (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006; Smith, 2004). This stage entailed reviewing all the categories to ascertain whether some categories could be merged or whether some needed to be subcategorised.

Some of the themes form natural clusters while others are arranged according to hierarchical relationships with one another (Willig, 2009). The researcher moves back and forth between the themes identified in step two, as part of immersion and reflection.

This stage involved examining the initial themes identified in each transcript to distinguish connections across transcripts and to identify ways in which themes could be grouped together in a meaningful way. Fade (2004) applied the same method of analysis and stated that after the initial themes have been extracted from a participant's description some researchers prefer to print copies of the transcript and to literally cut and piece together similar themes.

The *fourth* and final stage entails structuring and illustrating the relationships between themes in a summary table (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith, 2004). The themes are linked together

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or may be discarded due to their irrelevance. The summary table captures only the most essential qualities of the participants' responses to the phenomenon (Willig, 2009). Some of these themes might be explored further and in greater depth in order to add to the understanding or richness of the specific theme. These themes, which are drawn together from the most important aspects of the participant's accounts, capture features that are of importance to the participant and that contribute in a meaningful way to the account.

The purpose of this final stage of analysis serves to order the themes into a logical and coherent research narrative, and in a table format that is easily accessible and supported by texts from the transcripts, to authenticate the themes.

This method of analysis is inevitably subjective and will vary in application from researcher to researcher (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). Interpretations may be validated by other academics or professionals who are either involved in the research or independently contracted (Brocki & Wearden, 2006).

The steps outlined above constitute a suitable method of analysis for the current study as they facilitate and guide the process of a thorough assessment of the data presented by each participant, first individually and then collectively. This method anchors and balances insightful interpretations of the participants' accounts of their phenomenological descriptions.

3.8 The role of the researcher

In the design of this study the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection, as opposed to the use of questionnaires and other tried and tested measuring instruments to collect data. In fitting with this approach of data analysis, the researcher should become an interpretative participant (Wassenaar, 2006). In terms of the specific way in which the study was conducted, the researcher was aware that his presence may have an impact on the interview process and the richness of data obtained. The nature of the study was interpretative, which

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means that the author's understandings and explanations may differ from those of other researchers. Interpretative work calls for an empathic involvement in the material being researched.

This process of awareness, which forms part of reflexivity, allows researchers to reflect on their experience of conducting the research. It also creates room for the researcher to consider and reflect on the manner in which certain insights and understandings have been reached (Willig, 2009). Reflexivity takes place on two levels. First, personal reflexivity speaks to the researcher's reflection upon the ways in which the researcher's experiences, beliefs, and interests influence and shape the process (Willig, 2009). On the second level, epistemological reflexivity occurs when the research is influenced and shaped by theory (Willig, 2009). Epistemological reflexivity thus allows one to reflect on assumptions that have been made in the course of the research, helping us to consider the implications for the research and the findings thereof (Willig, 2009).

3.9 Ensuring validity and quality

The quality of research depends on the principles addressed by Yardley (as cited in Shinebourne, 2011) and Babbie and Mouton (2001). Yardley (as cited in Shinebourne, 2011, p. 26) proposed the following four broad principles to be considered when ensuring quality of work and validity in qualitative studies:

- sensitivity to context

- commitment and rigour

- transparency and coherence

- impact and importance

Sensitivity to context in IPA studies is involved in all four stages of the analytic process, (Shinebourne, 2011).

Yardley's (as cited in Shinebourne, 2011) second criterion for quality, namely commitment and rigour, is demonstrated through the reading and rereading of the transcripts and the continued engagement with the topic and immersion in the data of the research.

The third criterion relates to transparency and coherence, and refers to the clarity of the descriptions during the research process. In IPA this entails providing specific details of all of the following (Shinebourne, 2011):

- the process of selecting participants

- the construction of the interview schedule

- the way in which the interview is conducted

- the stages of analysis

Yardley (as cited in Shinebourne, 2011) points out that "coherence also describes the 'fit' between the research question and the philosophical perspective adopted, and the method of investigation and analysis undertaken" (p. 27). It is therefore expected that an IPA study would be consistent with the underlying principles of IPA: Attending closely to participants' experiential accounts while simultaneously giving attention to the interpretative activity of IPA (Shinebourne, 2011).

The fourth and final criterion is impact and importance; this criterion highlights the fact that the results rendered from this research might potentially contribute to an existing body of knowledge on spirituality within psychotherapy, thus expanding current literature and possibly guiding further research efforts or the building of theory.

Adding to the trustworthiness and quality of research, Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 276) describe the following four main criteria:

- credibility

- transferability

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- dependability

- confirmability

These criteria are discussed below along with examples of how these have been integrated in the research design.

Credibility refers to the authenticity and trustworthiness of the gathered data, the analysis of these data sets, and the conclusions reached (McMillan, 2008). In other words, it relates to whether the findings represent an accurate description of the participants' accounts. Babbie and Mouton (2001) suggest triangulation, referential adequacy and member checks as procedures to ensure the credibility of research. The current study made use of referential adequacy and member checks.

"Referential adequacy refers to having adequate materials to document the research findings" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 277). It supports credibility by providing background meaning to support the analytic process, and includes selected portions of data that will not be analysed but add value to the context. All of these referential adequacy materials help to orientate the researcher in understanding the context of the material. The interviews for the study, which were recorded and transcribed, provided a large body of evidence to document and support the research findings.

"Transferability or generalisability, which refers to the extent to which the research findings can be applied to other contexts or populations, is similar to external validity" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 277). Since qualitative research is context-specific, generalisations are usually not the goal. It is up to the reader to determine whether the study's findings are applicable to the context in which they are interested (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

To facilitate that the reader has adequate means to do so, the current research makes use of purposive sampling and provides criteria for the selection of participants, as well as

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detailed descriptions of each case. A detailed account of the relationship between the evidence collected and the theoretical framework of the study, as well as the concepts and models applied to define the parameters of the study, are also presented.

The aspect of dependability refers to the extent to which the findings are consistent and accurate. Since qualitative research is conducted with a specific population, at a specific time and in a specific context, it is difficult to replicate the study and obtain the same results. This aspect is however addressed by keeping thorough notes on each aspect of the process in a well-organised format. By making these notes available upon request it allows other researchers the opportunity to inspect the procedure if needed, and enables the researcher to justify and elaborate on the findings.

The last criterion, namely that of confirmability, "ensures that a degree of neutrality is maintained and that the findings are shaped by the participants' experiences and not by the researcher's own bias, motivation or interest" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 278). To make sure that confirmability was established, the researcher applied data reconstruction by generating themes, findings, and conclusions from transcripts, and kept process notes. During the interview, the researcher further guarded against bias by not imposing his views on those of the participants and by clarifying concepts to ensure that the essence of personal experience would be captured.

These elements form part of what Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Babbie & Mouton, 2001) refer to as *a confirmability audit trail* which allows another researcher to determine whether the research findings can be traced to their source and are supported by the evidence.

3.10 Ethical considerations

The ethical principles, as stipulated by Wassenaar (2006), were adhered to. These steps serve to protect the rights and welfare of the participants at all times. Certain principals are adhered to in order to ensure that the research is carried out according to ethical guidelines.

These include protecting the autonomy of participants and ensuring nonmalifecence through voluntary participation and elective withdrawal at any time for any reason. Before the interviews, the participants were presented with a letter of information about the study. The nature of the study was explained and they were presented with an opportunity to ask any questions before signing a consent form.

All the information obtained from the participants was treated as confidential and no names appear in any dissertation, thesis or report resulting from this study. However, with their permission, anonymous quotations were used. All data collected during this study will be retained for 15 years in a locked office at the Department of Psychology, University of Pretoria. Only researchers associated with this project will be able to access the data.

3.11 Summary and conclusion

This chapter discusses the reasons for choosing the existential-phenomenological approach and its appropriateness for the present study. It begins with an exploration of the history of phenomenology, and proceeds to highlight the method for data gathering and analysis.

Phenomenology is discussed as the foundation for Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis that served as the methodology for the study. The justification for using this specific method was outlined and linked with the specific research question. The exploration and description of the methodology were performed in accordance with the existential-phenomenological paradigm upon which the present study is built. Possible candidates were

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be identified from various internet databases and selected on the basis of various criteria. The transcripts obtained from the individual interviews were analysed according to the principles as outlined in this chapter. Adherence to these methods ensured that quality of research and ethical standards were maintained.

The steps of analysis that are referred to, are further elaborated on in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This study set out to investigate and explore the subjective experiences of clinical psychologists' understanding of spirituality in psychotherapy. This chapter provides an overview of the analysis of the data and the results as it emerged. The participants are introduced and a summary regarding each participant's context is provided.

The process of analysis is then discussed and illustrated through the transcript of Psychologist A and including the meaning unit summaries of each participant as it transpired from the narratives. The combined summary of all three participants precedes the discussion of the results. Themes that were identified during the analysis process are then concluded and revealed. The themes were constructed, and clustered together, from meaning units (MU) identified in the transcripts of the participants. These themes, as highlighted in this chapter, are central to clinical psychologists' experience and understanding of spirituality within psychotherapy and provide significant answers to the research question.

To attempt a holistic encapsulation and true essence of each individual account is extremely difficult. Snippets of participants' accounts were used to introduce the participant and to describe his/her context. Although the researcher used an external frame of reference to organise themes in an academic manner, the content of each segment is based on the participant's narrative to pronounce their experience.

It is fitting to first discuss the overview of the entire process to make transparent any steps involved and highlight the logical order of analysis followed.

4.2 Overview of research process

Three clinical psychologists participated in this study. All of the interviews were conducted within a two-month span. All of the participants are practising in clinical psychology and met the criteria stipulated in the previous chapter. None of the participants withdrew from the study.

The interviews were held at a predetermined date and time, suiting both participant and researcher, and seemed comfortable and safe for both. The study context was introduced prior to the interview process and participants were allowed the opportunity to clarify any uncertainties regarding the process or to voice any concerns.

All of the methods to ensure research quality as well as all ethical considerations were adhered to. Participants were spontaneous and eager to share their experiences. Communication with the participants during the interviews allowed for clarification and correspondence between the interviewer and the participants.

A great deal of meaning could be conveyed from individuals' experiences arising from the interviews. During the interviews, the researcher attempted to remain client-led in order to avoid imposing his own beliefs and ideas on the interview process. This included encouraging the participants to elucidate concepts that seemed familiar from the researcher's background to ensure that wrongful assumptions were not being made.

The narratives obtained signify the lived experiences of the psychologists' experience with spirituality in psychotherapy, ranging from their views on the topic to specific case examples. The excerpts presented have been taken verbatim from the transcribed interviews

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and have not been altered in any way. Aliases and pseudonyms were used in the transcripts to safeguard the identities of participants and probable identifying details were amended where necessary. The pseudonyms and abbreviations are clarified in a footnote accompanying the transcripts.

The process of analysis followed the steps as outlined in the previous chapter. It started with transcribing the recorded interviews. The transcripts were then read and re-read until a point of saturation was reached regarding the understanding of the message being conveyed. Each segment of the transcript that indicated a valuable contributing point was categorised as a meaning unit. These meaning units were then clustered and organised according to similar subthemes from which the main themes of each transcript matured. The process was then repeated for all three transcripts before a combined integration was constructed.

4.3 Research participants

Participants were contacted after identification in an internet data base, and letters of invitation to participate were sent via email. The motivation and scope of the study were then electronically discussed in further detail. Thirteen psychologists showed interest to participate in the study and were contacted telephonically to conduct the exploratory participatory interview. Seven of these possible candidates did not meet the criteria to participate in the study. Three other candidates partially met the criteria and were used as a preliminary preparatory study to refine the interview process. The remaining three candidates who met the full criteria were then invited to participate.

Without deliberate intent, three Caucasian male psychologists met the full criteria and volunteered to participate. All these participants were bilingual (Afrikaans and English) and shared different spiritual backgrounds and personal views. The table below summarises the

basic characteristics of the participating individuals as stipulated above, and is followed by a

brief introduction and description of each participant.

Table 1: Basic characteristics of participants

Participant	Age (Years)	Male / Female	No. of years as Clinical Psychologist	Religious orientation and background
Psychologist A	38	Male	12	Christian/Buddhist
Psychologist B	58	Male	25	Catholic
Psychologist C	37	Male	12	Christian
Review				
No. of participants				3

4.3.1 Psychologist A

Psychologist A is a 38-year-old, Caucasian male of Christian and Buddhist faith. His

professional interests were originally developed in the areas of corporate finance and

investments. He spent some time consulting in management, human capital, financial and

investment systems. Following this period, he left South Africa and completed his psychology

studies only much later. He has been working in private practice as clinical psychologist for

the past 12 years, with his experience ranging from the South African Correctional Services to

the South African Educational Department. He is currently also a senior lecturer at one of South

Africa's leading Universities.

His orientation in private practice is cognitive behavioural therapy and existential

phenomenology. He has extensive experience in clinical psychology, positive

psychology, executive coaching, and corporate consulting in the areas of

performance, behaviour and risk communication, psychometric scale and survey design, and

quantitative statistical analysis.

During the interview, he spoke with great enthusiasm about his personal understanding

and experience of spirituality in psychotherapy but also had some reservations regarding the

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accessibility of spirituality within sessions. He often made reference to various scholarly literature sources to support and embed his opinions. He shared a particularly interesting case and afterwards reflected as follows:

"How much has (spirituality) informed my actual therapy? I think it's informed it to the extent that I'm very much interested in people's internal representation of the world and how these things explicate and inform behaviour".

4.3.2 Psychologist B

Psychologist B is a 58-year-old, Caucasian male of Catholic religion. He has been a senior lecturer for the past 25 years at one of South Africa's leading Universities and has been practicing psychotherapy during these years.

He has a great passion for his personal religious orientation and has accordingly been involved in various settings where he applied his role as clinical psychologist in religion. He mainly works from a cognitive behavioural model in psychotherapy but says that spirituality is part of almost all psychotherapy work in his experience.

During the interview he openly and passionately shared his thoughts and experiences regarding spirituality and its relation to other constructs, often freely associating and connecting psychotherapeutic themes which at first glance appear detached. His reflective thoughts after the interview were:

"Well I mean I enjoyed it, that's why we continued more than an hour, I enjoyed it ... and it's always nice to share with somebody that's on the same page, somebody that at least appreciates my point of view. Ja ... (Pause) I enjoyed that and um ... (Pause) it's nice to share things, and it's nice to have somebody to listen to me for a change (Laughter)... I could share what came out spontaneously"

4.3.3 Psychologist C

Psychologist C is a 37-year-old, Caucasian male of Christian faith. He forms part of a multidisciplinary team at a psychiatric hospital and has simultaneously worked in private practice for the last 12 years. He is also involved in the academe and lectures at one of South Africa's leading Universities. He is strongly orientated in existentialism and existential psychotherapy, and is one of the founding members for existential analysis in South Africa. He also has a strong interest in forensic psychology and recently completed his PhD. When speaking about therapy in general he stated that:

"I work from a Christian Existential world-view perspective, believing that central to psychological wellbeing is a healthy spiritual as well as interpersonal life ... Meaning and purpose lie at the cornerstone of our existence and without a sense of both we may find ourselves lost."

During the interview he heartily engaged with the conversation and through his significant alliance to existential theorists and theories, a great deal of meaning was conveyed regarding how spirituality is made accessible in therapy through the narratives of experience.

The interview was conducted and transcribed in Afrikaans, which is the first language of both the participant and researcher. The extracts that contributed to the themes were translated to English to fit the target language of publication. The researcher was particularly sensitive to ensure that the meanings expressed in the findings stay as true as possible to the original language data source. The transcript is also presented in the original Afrikaans as *appendix E* for cross-referencing.

4.4 Process of analysis

The process of analysis commenced by firstly transcribing the narratives after the interviews were conducted and recorded. The transcribed interviews were reviewed by an external language editor to further ensure validity of the data. These transcripts were then rigorously reviewed by the researcher until a clear understanding of the themes immersed. The transcript of psychologist A is presented here to illustrate how the themes emerged from the transcribed data. A left handed column provided a reflective space for researcher comments while the right handed column captured each meaning unit as it related to the main and complimentary themes. The transcripts of psychologist B and C is respectively attached as *appendix D and E.*

The next step in the process of data analysis then moved to summarising the meaning units in the form of condensed tables. In these tables each meaning unit were provided a brief statement that captured the essence of the message being conveyed and importantly related to how the subordinate and main themes emerged.

These main themes, however, only surfaced after each transcribed interview was individually reviewed and summarised in table format, indicating that the transcripts were revisited multiple times to ensure that the main themes extracted was an honest and pure reflection of what each participant were communicating. The meaning unit summaries of the participants are presented in *tables 2, 3, and 4* to further illustrate the process. These individual summarising tables were then combined, as a further step of analysis, to give a holistic representation of the themes as they emerged from the narratives to the global understanding. The combined integration of all participants meaning units is presented in *table 5.* The exploration and discussion of derived themes follows these tables with specific reference being made to the individual meaning units as well as indicating specific page and line numbers.

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4.4.1 Interview of Psychologist A as example of data analysis

Meaning Units

R: My topic is a qualitative exploration of clinical psychologists' understanding of spirituality in psychotherapy. That's the formal title, but I'm just looking to investigate what the experience of psychologists are, with spirituality in therapy. That's why I asked if you could just think of some case examples before. Maybe a good point to start is first to ask how you view spirituality?

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He is uncertain about starting with a definition

10 P: Well this is actually what I was going to ask you … How are you defining this? I'll have a crack but I don't want to go down the wrong rabbit hole here.

R: I'd appreciate it if you first give me your views and then I'll just tell you how I've defined it for the study as well.

15 P: Alright … uuummm … to be completely frank with you, I haven't thought about it that much, I've been very busy over the last few weeks, but uuummm… let me say this: (Pause) If you look say at contemporary definitions and the wider world of psychology then Peterson Seligman, I don't know if you've come across their

20 character strengths and virtues? ‖ They actually identify spirituality as one of their character strengths if I'm not mistaken, they actually review it as a character strength, ‖ and look it's been a while since I read it but it essentially underpins and the way they understood it was

MU1, ST1A, MT1

A lot of academic references

not necessarily to say there's a Christian God or Jesus, or Buddhist dharma – well actually for me, I would go more for dharma. ‖ They

25 defined it almost as an appreciation of the transcendental. ‖ ‖ In terms of how I've understood it, I'll say this about spirituality, obviously you need to distinguish between religion and spirituality. The way I'll distinguish it, which is probably similar to you and everyone, is uuuhhh … the formal structures would imply the religious. In terms

MU2, ST1A, MT1

MU3, ST1B, MT1

30 of the spiritual according to my mind is more of a belief in the idea of the transcendental and interest in that realm. ‖ Funny enough I've got a masters student of mine at the moment who's doing a full masters dissertation where he's looking at, people tend to inflate spirituality and religiosity to the extent that they associate with wellbeing. He's

35 actually trying to tease out the difference; it's quite a cool idea, so whether you can be spiritual and not say religious, so we've all sorts of fun designs around it, but an interesting point. ‖ I do agree with it, I do in my mind draw a distinction. One of the ways I've understood it in therapy is perhaps an appreciation that there's more than we can

40 it in therapy is perhaps an appreciation that there's more than we can

MU4, ST1A, MT1

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Reflective Notes		Meaning Units

Reflective Notes (margin)

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Cautious about linking spirituality to clinical psychology

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Again making reference to academic work of others

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Meaning Units (margin): MU5, ST1C, MT1

know. ‖ Now I do think that um … I guess I'm being a bit paradoxical in some sense. I'm cautious of spirituality for spirituality's sake, clearly it's the law of dharma that's happening to you, and dharma being live the law according to the universe and nature. This is Buddhist famously enjoyed when he was last to appoint a leader he said that you must live according to dharma, the laws of nature. Uuummm … ‖ but just applying it as a raw thing is dangerous, you need to be able make a distinction between that and say clinical psychology. ‖ For instance, you will know an idea of reference, delusions of reference in particular, you know the car stopped there and it was red because my dead grandfather was communicating this to me, I think you need to at least have a critical mind around this. So I'm going to contradict myself a lot during this interview but I'll give you something that I think is an idea of reference but as a clinical psychologist I think it's important not be open to the idea that this is an delusion of reference perhaps. That said, you start to look at Jungian synchronicity and there are incredibly powerful and compelling arguments. One of the things I will say is this, how I've reconciled it in my head, ja, existentialism, I like the idea of it, I'll say two things about this. The one I like how Frankl argues it, I don't know if you've read the doctor and the soul (Frankl, 1955)? Ok so were talking about a similar thing, ‖ but I like the idea where he sort of says well, you'll have behaviours and psychologists will look at behaviours and infer mental processes, but kind of stop there. Why not look at mental processes and infer something else? ‖ So I'm quite open to the idea as a principal of rational clinical psychology scientific enquiry to look at mental processes and be prepared to say ‖ well if we observe behaviours and infer mental processes why can't we look at those mental processes and infer say in Frankl's case, the neogenic? ‖ I like the idea of neogenic, I like the idea that that he picked that word and made it up precisely because he didn't want to associate it with a particular kind of religion. And I think it's in that book or one of his others, that if I call it whatever then the Jewish people might not like it or Christians won't then agree so he is saying I'm speaking to everybody.

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5 min

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An explanation to encapsulate spirituality without excluding religious groups

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MU6, ST1C, MT1

MU7, ST1C, MT1

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R: Ja, Ja…

P: And as I understand it that is why he picked a word that didn't have any connotations to it specifically religion for precisely because he didn't want to have the alienation effect. ‖ His message in that sense was that there is something beyond those processes that speaks to a human spirit, and I'm quite interested in that in psychology so I'd understand it in that way. ‖ One of the things I found in practice and

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MU8, ST1C, MT1

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Reflective Notes			Meaning Units

I'm quite embarrassed to be quoting such a bloody lay source, (laughter) but I think it was Scott Peck, I'm sure you've read Scott Peck, fascinating guy …

R: Yes, *the road less travelled*.

5   P: The road less travelled (Peck, 1978), ja, you know you read all the stuff and it gets distilled in all these funny places and you don't know where it comes from after. Scott Peck is an interesting chap as well. I don't know if you read any of his other book as well.

R: Well I read that one and the different drum (Peck, 1987), and people

10   of the lie (Peck, 1988).

P: People of the lie (Peck, 1988*)*, really interesting book, you can't be against evil but only for good. Scott Peck is a controversial character, I actually quite like him, I agree with a lot of his arguments, but I mean of course his first book published in the 70's the road less

15   travelled (Peck, 1978) was an entire new way around discipline and how to discipline yourself. Of course then his later books, I think it was denial of the soul (Peck, 1997), I mean he basically was having extramarital affairs and estranging his kids. He was incredibly popular with a lot of people especially in the religious circles and

20   then incredibly unpopular when this came out. I actually still kind of like a lot of his arguments, I don't agree with all of them but **||** I do like his point that everybody is religious. I think he used the word religious. And that sat with me, and I read that book when I think as an undergraduate, but it stuck with me as I have gone through   MU9, ST1A, MT1

25   practice because I don't buy that people aren't religious or spiritual. I

Committing to a personal definition of spirituality   think it is a facet and it has been my experience that it is a facet of human beings. There is certainly an interest in the neogenic, even if it is the denial of the neogenic or the spiritual it seems to be a facet of people. **|| ||** Do people have religions? Yes, I think it is quite right,

30   even the Atheists have some kind of religion. So our experiences being, there is something there. This is a personal viewpoint, it has   MU10, ST1B, MT1 been my experience. **||** Do I think it is an unconscious desire for an ultimate father figure, no I don't. So I mean it's very much a personal idea and I guess I'm kind of biased in myself but **||** I would

35   understand the spiritual in therapy is I would say it is a facet in that it   MU11, ST2A, MT2 seems that people do seem to be interested in the transcendental and it does seem to be a function of their makeup. **||** How do I understand it theoretically, very simple, I like Frankl's idea of why should we not look beyond the transcendental processes? I'm also very interested in

40   synchronicity, I think that, uuummm… not necessarily a big Jungian, but the guy was smart, and one of the big tests for me, I read a few of

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Reflective Notes		Meaning Units

Meaningful coincidences and Jungian synchronicity

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his books, I loved his *man and symbols*, that was a great book, almost impossible to read for me but very cool. I've always kind of pooh poohed it as too extreme, ‖ I mean I love his idea of introversion / extroversion and a lot of stuff like that but this idea of meaningful coincidences, this synchronicities and the collective unconscious, I don't quite know what to make of it. ‖ It's kind of compelling and sexy but one of the things that made me really think about it was a very quantitative professor who is a sort of mentor of mine. I once asked him what he thought of this touchy / feely, and he's a real mathematician, he's an item response theory specialist and I asked him what do you think of Jung, I was reading Jung at the time, and he said well look: The fact that it has lasted as long as it had in the context where there are a million psychology theories floating around suggests that there is probably something to it. I'd give you a few examples of synchronicity if you like that I believe I've seen in practice. But yes, does that help you, am I on the right page?

MU12, ST5A, MT5

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10 min

R: Yes, yes, I'm gonna just also jump back to the beginning. I hear that you say that distinction should be made between religion and spirituality. For my study I grounded the definition of spirituality similar to what you said in that it is a search for wholeness and connection to something greater. So that's just that which I didn't want to impose before. So that's my grounding definition for spirituality and I also heard you say that you believe that the spirit or spiritual is a part of everybody.

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Again stating his definition of spirituality but also linking it to academic work

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P: ‖ The way I would phrase it is I understand if I were just to pick a purely parsimonious scientific way, spiritualty according to my mind, as far as it concerns psychology, has to do with an emphasis on the transcendental whether it be that which cannot necessarily be seen but plausibly inferred and generated by another force. ‖ You've watched Star Wars hey. There's that emphasis on something that is beyond what's seen. ‖ My experience of people has been that that emphasis does seem to be a part of the psychic makeup. Now whether that is some kind of defense mechanism against anxiety in the world? I suppose it's possible. I think it's also quite possible and as logical to say well you've got these mental processes but isn't there something behind them. So to my mind spiritual is an interest in something that is not necessarily observable. ‖ ‖ So religion you can observe, those behaviours, and that's what makes it a religion. Whether there is meaning behind those behaviours or not, anybody can sing in the choir. So spiritual is beyond what is observable, the transcendental. ‖

MU13, ST2A, MT2

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MU14, ST2A, MT2

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MU15, ST1B, MT1

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R: Ja …

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Meaning Units

P: Look I'm not strong in the theory and the student that I'm talking about now, the only reason I'm supervising him is his interest in wellbeing which is my real field of specialty. So I think and expect that you are far better read on this than me. That's how I would distinguish it.

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R: I appreciate your view of either because I think it's a very good formulated view, without the theory. So in your experience with spirituality and therapy were there cases that you think the spiritual or that aspect the human came to the fore in the therapy process?

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P: Look its uuummm … I'm trying to give you a good answer. (Sigh, pause). Let me kick off by saying this, I really don't know how therapy works … (Laughter) this is confidential right. Alright, I don't quite know how therapy works. I'm very much in the mind of Eric Erikson… listen is it alright for me to just talk like this?

15 min

15 **R:** (laugh) yes please …

P: Jis it's so nice to be the talking for a change. (Laughter). I like Eric Erikson, sorry Milton Erikson's idea that where he says that we need

Therapeutic tailoring as an important part of the process

to make a different therapy for every person. ‖ That has been sort of my general experience where everyone is unique and treating them is

20 unique and the process or reifying or reducing or shrinking everyone down hasn't seem to work ‖ so what I'm saying when I say I don't know how therapy works is … I don't know what your paradigm is, oh ja I suppose existential … but like say for example Psychologist D who is a very good friend of mine, wow she's analytic. Would I

25 happily refer someone to Psychologist D for therapy, YES. Are they going to do different things to what I would do? Completely. ‖ And I think that's how it works, one of the things I've always liked about therapy is that it is kind of a magic thing. ‖ A very cynical or old professor of mine once said: We don't know why therapy works but

30 it kind of does. So I've always been interested in the kind of magic bit. I don't always understand people and I don't know if I should say that or if I shouldn't but anyway it's true. I come from a background from before I was a psychologist, I actually did a Bcom in finance and I worked in bench capital, so I did a lot of things like

35 statistics and that sort of thing, I like doing the math every now and again because therapy is so: What's going on here, what's going on here? So for me that experience has made me increasingly open to the idea that there may be something behind the mental processes. Which perhaps account for what you commented on earlier, I really

40 like CBT because that gives me a nice model and frankly that's a personal disposition. I like behaviours and … but I'm also interested

MU16, ST3A, MT3

MU17, ST3B, MT3

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Reflective Notes			Meaning Units

in the existential and the magic behind it … uuummm …ok. So I say that I guess … in the sense that … let me pick a quote that you can maybe use: Professor X at University X said to me, and I loved it: **||** You study it as a science but you practice it as an art. This has been my experience in therapy, you should study it as a science, you should, and I get very angry with students who say: No diagnosis and labelling and blah, blah, blah, you know what, you know that before you say that. At least give all the definitions and then you can reject it. But I recognize in doing this that you study it as a science but you practice it as an art and I think that art escribes what I call the magic or what we could call the transcendental. **||** The thing beyond what you see. Does the painting of itself make something pretty? No. But if I put everything together: Wow! Look at the dream of Picasso and its more than just the colours, there's something transcendental that moves beyond it. **||** So in that sense you could make the case that much of the therapy relies on spirituality. **||** I read a book a while ago called: If you meet the Buddha on the road kill him. I don't know if you've come across it?

(margin: 5) MU18, ST3B, MT3

(margin: 10)

(margin: 15) MU19, ST3A, MT3

R: No, I haven't heard of it before.

P: Really good book! You should read that book. Do yourself a favour especially if this is what you're interested in and given your profession. They make the point that psychologists are nothing more than modern day soothsayers, and in a satirical way they make the case of this point in the book. And I would go with it to a certain extent. Is psychology a new profession? Ja, well back to Wilhelm Wundt, 1880, its only 100, 120 years old, yet there have been people who have served that function in society since you know, time began. And then of course the priests, and perhaps now in the modern age where we don't follow a ratified form of religion you have the psychologists. Jis I'm rambling a lot… is that Ok?

(margin: 20)

(margin box: 20 min)

(margin: 25)

(margin: 30)

R: Yes, no problem.

P: **||** Psychologists for instance serve in many ways the role of a modern day soothsayer and I think there is something to be said for a more secular society being into the discourse of medicine and science kind of looking for the magic or the transcendental there. **||** My partner who is a clinical psychologist as well says the three most important discourses and the most powerful discourses in society have and remain medicine, science, and religion, and I think those are the discourses that hold sway. **||** In many ways one could argue, and this is a bit cynical, but psychology, one could argue, is the religion that is acceptable in the dominating discourses of science and medicine.

MU20, ST2B, MT2

(margin: 35)

(margin: 40) MU21, ST2B, MT2

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Reflective Notes		Meaning Units

It's kind of palatable in that field. Ummm … but in many ways I would go that if psychology deal with people then people do seem to have this aspect. ‖ So broadly that's informed a lot of my practice. To get down to more specific stuff that's perhaps less airy fairy, or perhaps less obstruct and hard to get into some kind of conclusion. ‖ Do I work with people who are interested in working specifically from a religious aspect? I grew up in an Anglican church, I went to a Methodist school, I would identify as Christian, and I would be regarded as quite liberally so though. For instance I have no problem with gay marriage, I think that's fantastic. So it's not surprising I guess for a psychologist to be on the liberal side of that pendulum but I do like it, I like the spiritual aspect and I like the religious aspect. What I like about the religious aspect? I think it was Frankl who said, you know I don't like traditions I always thought traditions was crap and diminishing, more fools I always called it, but Frankl kind of swayed this idea that the value of traditions is that they communicate values. ‖ That said because I'm a psychologist and known in the church I've frankly been part of priest and this kind of thing. But I've got a lot of priest who's come to me as clients from various Christian denominations like Anglican, Christian, Methodist, this sort of thing. One of the reasons I found that it's happened is I think my grandmother started Organisation A, they get me to speak and then the guys sort of said: Similar kind of mind set and he knows where we're coming from so ja. How much have that informed my actual therapy? ‖ I think its informed it to the extent that I'm very much interested in people's internal representation of the world and how these things explicates and informs behaviour. So the beliefs, if you want just a straight CBT model, I'm quite interested in working with the beliefs and I'm quite ashamed of this utilitarian in terms of therapy with that. Let's try another belief, very much in the framework of George Kelly: If this is your way of representing the world and predicting the future and understanding the present and it's not working let's play around with those constructs. ‖ The term construct comes from George Kelly. Ok, so in that sense, ja uuhhh … I'm happy to work with it and my understanding is that it's an integral part of human functioning. ‖ One of the … sorry I'm sort of reflecting on my own process … (Pause) … I've got a reservation … the more I think about it … of saying ja I've seen God in therapy hey … I've got a real reservation about that and I'm trying to think why? (Silence) It almost feels that if I do that … I get the right to change my mind … I'm working through this as we're speaking … but I have an acute reservation of saying definitively I've seen God has moved this person and they've got better. My reservation for saying

Reflective Notes (margin):

20 — Working with the spiritual dimension in therapy

25 — Part of the process is challenging people's beliefs which in turn governs behaviour

Meaning Units (margin):

MU22, ST3C, MT3

MU23, ST3C, MT3

MU24, ST5A, MT5

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Reflective
Notes

that … (Pause) … I'm uncomfortable saying that … (Pause) I guess… ja it sound a bit cookee I guess. Like man I'm a James Bond clinical psychologist man, I can't say stuff like that. I won't be taken seriously! ‖

25 min

5   R: Ja … and I think it's also difficult to measure. You know, how did you see him? Where? How? The quantifiable part of spiritualty has always been difficult.

A reservation and difficulty to admit spirituality in therapy, what it would imply.

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P: How about this … how about I reconcile it like this. You've read Carl Rogers and I've read his book on becoming a person, really good book, but he makes the point that in therapy you should kind of just let yourself go, but afterwards he was very particular about analysing what happened empirically. It's quite an interesting balance, very much on Professor A's kind of thing: study as a science, practice as an art. So in many ways I reflect the outside of the therapy session with you now, I'm coming from a very scientific background and can I explain it as more as a belief system? No, I don't have evidence for that, but of course it's by definition transcendental. I have one or two examples which I'll give you just now where I have no other explanation for it other than there's just something else going on. Ummm … but ‖ I guess when I'm in therapy there's definitely kind of a … I have had experiences sometimes more than others where you feel that kind of going with it as Carl Rogers would say, there's kind of a going with it. Now outside of therapy when I apply the clinical psychologists mind I can generate hypothesis for that. But are God necessarily the spiritual? In the generation of that hypothesis, following the principle of Arkin Rasor the hypothesis with the fewest propositions is generally correct, so … ‖ if my wallet is missing when I leave today is it a plausible hypothesis that aliens landed, snuck in here and took my wallet? Plausible hypothesis? It's not the hypothesis I would go with. Why? Because it has the proposition that aliens exist, and that they want my wallet. So there's too many propositions in there to make it a likely hypothesis. ‖ So in the post reflection of my therapy sessions, even though I may have been going with it, generating hypothesis I'll probably err on the side and say that it was probably an internal construct. And I guess that's kind of the beauty of it in the sense that you just don't quite know. Yet it seems there's something there. ‖ Scott Peck, I think it was Scott Peck, and I feel so embarrassed to be quoting one of the lay ones but he wrote a book called miracles, which I probably read about 15 to 20 years ago and in that, I think it was in that book, he talks about hints at something. He says that it's kind of like: if we are sitting in this room here you

The therapist letting go and experiencing the process in therapy

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20   MU25, ST5A, MT5

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MU26, ST5A, MT5

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This speaks to part of the difficulty of identifying spiritualty in therapy - The implication of admitting to spirituality in psychotherapy.

30 min

would hear bugs flying into the window. I don't know if you've read it. You'll hear that tink, tink. "I've definitely heard tink, tinks. Can I look and see the bugs? No! Did I hear it?" Mmm … ja. Could it just be me? Sure. It's hard to say but I will say this. It's definitely a facet of people, its uniform enough, the transcendental, to say in my mind definitely, the transcendental, the neogenic, the thing behind mental representations is certainly a real representation. To put it a bit nicer, if you want a quotable quote, We had a professor who was a Jungian specialist, and his PhD and much of his research was done from a phenomenological perspective so I went to have lunch with this guy, and I was dying for it, and I said to him: Do you believe in God? So what a perfect oke to ask. And his answer to me I thought was great. He said God is definitely a psychic reality. ‖ I agree with that, I thought how well put is that. God is definitely a psychic reality. So I would say yes, spiritualty, God, whatever you want to call it, is definitely a psychic reality. Ummm … and to that extent yes I engage with it. Maybe my discomfort is this: I cannot understand it and I'm supposed to understand people if I'm a psychologist, or at least have a model for understanding it. So maybe there's a discomfiture there? ‖ I do also think there's a hell of a difference between counselling, or pastoral care or whatever you call it, and clinical psychology, I think there should be. There are people in society who should think from a clinical psychology perspective. So the study of clinical psychology and the practice of psychotherapy are tricky. ‖ I don't think you should let yourself go too far and be open to transcendental stuff you can't substantiate, which is perhaps also why I don't want to say it, it makes me a bad psychologist. Yet it's very hard to deny as a plausible hypothesis … ‖

R: I appreciate that honesty and I'm still wrapping my mind around so many of the things you've said now because I agree that I don't know what therapy is exactly, but I do think that existential thinking, and what I've come to appreciate of the way I maybe see therapy, is that it is unique for every person and that it's in that relation, or in that relationship that the change happens. I think what I'm getting at is that I hear that discomfort for you sits with what you are committing to saying and what that then implies for how you are working and what you are not doing. I get that … and that's especially why I hope that the study will not be trying to proof whether God exist and if he should be in therapy or not, or whether he is not real and should be thrown out of therapy, but more to that connection in therapy between therapist and person from your perspective. What that was like and how that came about, and how you became aware of it. Apart from whether it can be empirically

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Meaning Units

and scientifically proven, whether it could be ascribed to a theorist who said and I experienced it, but more to the personal. Like you said earlier, you know it because you felt it, but it is difficult to admit because it cannot be proven.

5 P: Yes … I've got a nice example for you, I'm thinking of a way to say this, I'm interested in my discomfiture with it, but ok let me put it this way… this is confidential right (laughs). The problem with psychologists is, and 90% give the rest a bad name, frankly most psychologists I know I wouldn't leave alone with my cat. Ummm…
10 you know industrial psychologists said that people seek careers to actively remedy that which they've passively suffered, and I've worked in a lot of hospitals with a lot of psychologists and let me tell you my experience has been that they're bloody nuts! In many circles it's not a particularly proud profession. I don't want to
15 incriminate myself by saying that but … (Laughs)

R: Yes, I hear what you are saying …

35 min

P: (Laughs) … yes, there's Professor A who I had lunch with and he made the comment that there are two types of people who study Masters in clinical psychology. The majority are actually pretty
20 stupid, you get really stupid people and then you get really smart people that tend to be in the minority and you don't get much in the middle and you don't get sort of average. Where I'm going and where my reservation is coming from is perhaps this. I've seen a lot of Christian psychologists and these sort of people who've done
25 **When the therapists impose their values and the damaging effect of labelling** incredible damage. ‖ I've had clients sit in that chair and you know they've been told: you're doing something wrong, that's why you are sick. The only thing to do is pray to God. I have a problem with conceiving God as a person in the first place but for a clinical psychologist to make a comment to a person and to actually believe
30 that enough to impose that on somebody I find that offensive. You've got cancer because God has given you cancer, or you're not following the laws of the Bible good enough and this is why you and your husband is not getting along, you need to obey your husband. Now that in my opinion is wrong and I'll be embarrassed to be
35 associated with them. So a lot of my reservation is coming from the fact that I do believe there a certain spiritual and transcendental aspects in therapy, ‖ but, if I'm sort of saying this to you in what way am I actually different from this crazy Christian psychologists I'm describing? Now yes it is a sort of deduct to an absurd argument
40 but I am struggling to where am I drawing the line to say that I am not like this, or at least I would like to be that way. Ummm … ‖ that I think a lot of my reservation is. I want to say yes there's something

MU29, ST1B, MT1

MU30, ST5B, MT5

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there, but I'm cautious of coming across as an arse. You will see this in practice, you see some horrible things happening and I don't want to be associated with that. I like the idea that this is a proud profession and I say that well knowing it's not in many ways which gives me a bit of a revulsion to associate with this because I'm scared I get grouped into those people and I'll worry what you'll think of me I guess … ‖

R: But I hear what you're saying and it resonates very well with, perhaps from my reading and my understanding of it, and correct me if I'm wrong, but I think what I'm hearing you say is that therapy is also a place where that difficulty of, it's not a place of judgement to say you're good, you're bad, or you know this is punishment for you being bad, and this is theme of good versus bad, but therapy is more an embrace of that difficulty. Which I think is a big difference and what I agree with what you are saying.

P: Yes, absolutely!

R: So therapy is rather an investigation into that difficulty and meaning of what it is to be alive and looking at all behaviours as serving a psychological function, not merely good/bad.

P: I would say for me you have to have … traditional clinical psychology is scientific based, empirical evidence, you know, so on and so forth. For me I would say that the evidence suggests that there are important parts of therapy for which there is no evidence, the transcendental. The bugs hitting the windshield for example. That said, I got to tell you a cool story. You'll like this. Jungian synchronicity. When I was doing my internship and comm serve I had this list of things, I love psychology theory, I read I compulsively, and wanted to like, this sounds terrible, but I wanted to do stuff that all the greats wrote about. So for example like Perlz I wanted to fall asleep with a client. And I've done it! It was great, it was this teenage girl who came and I said: why are you here? Because my mother made me come. Do you want to leave? She said no. I said well what do you want to do? Nothing. So I said alright, and then I fell asleep for about 30 minutes and to her credit she came back and it was such good therapy. So I had all these things which I've read about from the greats and one of the ones I hadn't, it must've been six or seven years ago in practice, here. There's a very famous account of Jung about the idea that there are meaningful coincidences that somehow play into the collective unconscious that guide us through the unconscious blah, blah, blah, to a point of actualization, authenticity perhaps. At one point there's a story of

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Reflective Notes			Meaning Units

Jung and he's listening to a lady telling him about her dreams, and she had these dreams about scarab beetles. While she is telling him her dream about scarab beetles one flies into the room, and he very famously caught it and said here is your scarab. ‖ Ok so a few years ago I had a lady come see me. A young lady, up from Cape Town and she was sort of, I can't remember, she was basically new at university and you know kind of screwed up a bit, blah, blah, blah, nothing particularly serious, if you really want a diagnosis, I don't know adjustment disorder maybe, but she was having a subjectively hard time. So she was up from Cape Town I only saw her maybe four, five sessions, short therapy. She had to fly back. Quite a nice therapy and at the end of the therapy, it was our last session, she was flying back to Cape Town the next day and I often say to people: Is there anything else you'd like to say, or just have heard? You know, as a way to sort of end it. And she said yes and she goes up to this board I've got here, this big white board and I will never forget this. So she draws this picture. (Gets up, walks to the board and draws a picture) She draws this picture which is a boat like this, and she draws these three islands, and very basic like I'm drawing here, and she says: I feel like this boat in between the islands and I drift at sea. So I said: ok, alright, that's the end of the session. I don't interpret it or nothing. Now we're over time, I'm not presidios about the frame, so anyway she's drawn this picture which has taken us over time. Now I've got my other client waiting, my next client. This next client is a… teenage boy, sort of at early adolescence, with autistic disorder. On the autistic spectrum and quite severe. So he used to go through these phases of obsessions and his obsession over that time period was origami. So he is waiting in the waiting room and he's got into the printing paper and he's made a boat looking like this… Creepy hey… And so help me… oh! I feel like emotional about this, because you can't hear, clearly there's a room in between and you know he's in he's own world. And we walked out and this kid is autistic and as we walked out he gave her this boat, and I had the presence of mind to want to say, here is your boat. I tell you, you should've seen that lady's face, it was incredible, there was something there, and then she left, it was the last time I saw her. So why I tell you this story is isn't that an interesting story? ‖

R: Very interesting.

P: ‖ I mean how the hell do you explain that? Is there something else going on, is it possible that this kid could've seen such a picture? I highly doubt it, also knowing this guy's level of functioning, to my mind, and while is an anecdotal account, it convinced me sometimes

Reflective Notes (margin):

Line 5–10: A very good case example speaking to spirituality, the unexplained, and the collective connection and meaning that it might have

Line 39–40: 45 min

Meaning Units (margin):

MU31, MT4A, MT4

MU32, ST4A, MT4

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there's something going on that transcend what we see. How's that, a nice story, put it in? (Laugh) ‖

R: And what did you think of it after?

P: What I thought of that … (Sigh) I'm trying to think what was there? What was I thinking? Give me a sec while I put it down … (Pause) What I was thinking then? The way I understood it … ok, so if you look at Frits Perlz, one of things which I've always enjoyed about him was his way of doing dream interpretation, effectively he doesn't interpret the dream. He believes that every facet of the dream is a facet of the client and you re-experience the dream with the client, and one of the things about Perlz's dream interpretation because you can't actually interpret the dream, so it is accordingly possible, according to Perlz, to re-experience the dream of the client and yet you never the hell understand what happened, what it was about, or what the gestalt was. ‖ So one of the ways I understood it was I could see there was something there. It had salience. I was being a bit of a smart ass, and I don't think I crossed a line, but I was so glad thinking I've got a thing to tick of my list. How do I understand it? I understand it might have been some kind of gestalt going on for his lady and this kid helped in kind of a gestalt completion. This is one of the ways I understood it. There was an emotional salience to that which was powerful. I'm giving a very defendable interpretation of it, yeah. That would explain the process of what happened quite neatly. ‖ In terms of: ‖ How did the confluence of events result in that? I have no idea. I cannot explain how that kid knew to make a boat that looked exactly like hers. I don't know what to make of it. What I would make of it is this. I would make that I don't what to make of it. It could certainly underscore for me the importance of being open to the idea to the transcendental. There might be something you aren't, thoughts, feelings, behaviours, and systemic interactions. (Pause) It has kept me very open minded since then. ‖

MU33, ST4A, MT4

MU34, ST4A, MT4

R: Ja and I mean, I can't help but put my own interpretation or thoughts to it.

P: Go for it!

R: It's amazing that significance of: she feels like a boat in the middle of the islands and as she walks out he hands her the boat. So I wonder also if that wasn't symbolic to say that she wasn't alone in the ocean. You know, getting this boat and the kid made it without a rational explanation but that meaning that could have been attached

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Reflective Notes		Meaning Units
	which could have been so profound because you know… that was part of her difficulty.	
5	P: Ja, I do agree, ‖ there's many interpretations we could give to it. I can say this, it hit her hard, and in a good way. It felt like, and this is subjectively, like wow, something happened here, there was that sense for her, and you can see also for me, I'll never forget that, something happened here, ja … what to make of it, maybe Jung was on to something here, maybe there is some kind of collective unconscious that guides us towards where we need to be, but damn it was cool. It was cool and it felt relevant. Are we just crowbarring postbox explanations? Many of the times I think we can say that. For me that was a really hard one to refute scientifically. ‖ ‖ So ja, I like your interpretation hey! Maybe she is not alone. I mean it's on so many levels, that's so cool! The more I think about it. Maybe you are not alone. But I will say this, I think one of the parts … jis I like your interpretation, you're getting me thinking, you are not alone in that the kid realized the pain maybe but also that there's something bigger than us. I mean what a beautiful not alone message. (Laughter). But I think you've got quite a plausible interpretation of that. I think it gave her experience a validation or a recognition that hit her perhaps on an existential level. That there was something else, a greater meaning going on here. ‖ Now is that a convenient belief to hold? Damn, I'm really going Anthony Robbins of the 1980's, you know what adaptive people believe? Adaptive people believe that everything happens for a reason, whether that is true or not. ‖ You know it happens for a reason and I can control that. But it clearly hit her on that psychic reality perhaps. There was a comfort to that which spoke maybe directly to her psychic God? But damn it was cool. ‖	MU35, ST4A, MT4
Case example - An interpretation of "Not being alone" – Interconnected ness and the collective unconscious		
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		MU36, ST4A, MT4
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25		MU37, ST4A, MT4
50 min		
30	R: Ja I think that's a very nice, or beautiful example of where that spiritual connection was part of her process, and for you as well?	
	P: Ja I mean it was cool, and it was going with the process, and there was this kind of … you know Rogers was trained as a minister.	
	-------------------------------------- (Bathroom break) ----------------------------	
35	P: Jis you're getting me excited man. I don't have good answers for you. ‖ That's how I feel about it, but it is one of those nebulous things. You know, all the magic is between the notes. That's where the music is, in the space between the notes. ‖ This is like one of those things for me. One of my colleagues is referring to the systemic theorists and said: what is the point of therapy? The point	MU38, ST3B, MT3
55 min		
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Meaning Units

of therapy is you just make meaningful noise and there within something happens. Jis, I'm rambling it's so nice! It's so indulgent, I hope you don't mind hey? I'm so enjoying this.

R: No not all, I'm glad, and so am I.

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P: Maybe one of the ways in thinking about this conversation is, I think it is Buddhist, and I can't remember where I came across it, but someone asked one of these sages: Does the spirit of Buddha reside in a dog? Which is you know, a bloody good question because everywhere a dog goes it's dirty, and his answer I thought was

10 wonderful. It was MU. Have you heard about this? ‖ Meaning, fundamentally to a Western mind-set I guess, that the question is too small to contain the answer. So how does spirituality happen in therapy? I guess it's a neat copout but I'd be tempted to say MU. The question is not quite right and too small for the answer, but it

15 certainly recognizes it. ‖ How's that for a great copout.

MU39, ST5B, MT5

R: Ja I think it makes perfect sense and I think it also says something about how difficult it is to… to say this is what it is… and I've seen it and I've measured it and its done and dusted. But also one of the questions that I was particularly interested to ask you about is maybe

20 more on existentialism which linked me to you.

P: Yes, yes, yes, existential phenomenology.

R: Maybe the question that I was interested in asking specifically you was: Do you think there's a link with spirituality, whatever it is for each person, to the existential themes or existential psychotherapy?

25 The way that therapy is viewed from this perspective? Do you think there's a link or space for it there?

P: Ja it's a tricky one … Let me begin by saying this, I don't know that much about phenomenology. I remember I wrote that book review and I know the editor of that journal quite well and what you should

30 do is publish in this manual. You must publish your work there, it's an accessible journal to publish Journal A.

R: I downloaded the review and I saw the journal accreditation from there.

P: So in a sense I sweated quite a lot over that book review because I

35 didn't feel that much of an expert on the field to review it. That said is there a place for I don't know? You would know better than me. The tricky part is I wouldn't want to say that it should be considered as a function of the epistemology, but I like the idea that you get

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existential phenomenology. I've only heard of phenomenology which is like being in the world. But rather than saying it should be part of phenomenology you have this different paradigm which is sort of twist on existential phenomenology. It's kind of like you are further upstream with the epistemological ontology of the paradigm which adds more. So I guess you are imposing phenomenology on it but the fact that it is existential does have that vibe.

R: If existentialism is concerned with studying how we are and what it means to be and you know these questions like what is the meaning of life, and why am I here? Do you think that spirituality is connected to that in some way?

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P: I think that … I'm starting to like my copout answer, because I don't think it's too big a copout rather than a necessary one. ‖ I think that the question, or the way that the question is asked is more than the answer. So I'm stealing Einstein's idea that we should learn to love the questions because the answers always change. ‖ That kind of lines up with what I was saying about MU. I don't know? I can't always defend it in a cognitive way. ‖ More emphasis should be placed on the question than perhaps the answer. I don't think you're going to get a grasp of it. You know that deist poem, or deist prayer where they … (Pause) it's been a long time, but they talk about one and the same breeze passes over the well and they talk about grasping the moon in the stream and basically they say: Ja, the same breeze passes over the well passes over the pines so why do they make different noises? ‖ It was in the forward of Bruce Lee's book on Taekwondo, if you're looking for it. I guess where I'm going with that is yes there's something there and although we don't necessarily know what it is or where it is you can't actually hold the breeze. ‖ So it's a lovely image of this, you can't hold the breeze, there's something in the moment. And it ties to existentialism because life is inherently meaningful because we die. It's real obvious to people who've read about it in the field, well it's real obvious to me I think. I think the minute you try and hold the breeze is that you're not gonna find why it makes different sounds when it passes over different things. There's something about that recursive interaction that the meaning exist only in the motion. ‖

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MU40, ST4B, MT4

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MU41, ST4B, MT4

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MU42, ST4B, MT4

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R: That's a beautiful example if we say spirituality is this thing that we search for a greater wholeness and were trying to make sense of that transcendental like you're saying, there's a connection there but it's still difficult to pinpoint and to hold down or to get an agreed upon opinion. And if we move away from that and start thinking about

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Meaning Units

why is it there and why do we all have it then the only way I could think of linking that with existentialism is that it creates some kind of meaning, there's a purpose to that, or we ascribe in some way a meaning to our existence.

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P: ‖ Ja, you can't hold the breeze … does it make it any less real that you can't hold it? No! Does the breeze make our notes resonate differently, the trees and the wells? Yes! So it's there. I like that idea, that the question is more important than the answer. Interestingly enough you'll find many of that kind of ideas. ‖ Especially in religion where similar things are said like you can't know God, you can't look at God. The knowledge of good and evil, don't eat from the tree, and that theme you'll find in many other religions as well I guess. I'm sorry I suppose it's not a satisfactory answer.

MU43, ST1A, MT1

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R: No not at all. I don't think there could be a more real answer because what I've heard you say was that at the beginning you questioned your own mind and said that you're hesitant to say that you've seen God in therapy but it didn't sound like you're denying that fact or saying that it happened you were more speaking or thinking about that thought, and now … there's no definite: This is where I saw it, this is what it was, one, two, three, done. But it's also not a copout to say that it was never present and I can affirm that it's never been a part of therapy ever. Its more something of that it's difficult to hold.

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P: ‖ It's the breeze, it's the breeze blowing over people, and you know, Jahaveh! The breath, breathing over people, that's a nice one to link it, yes. Jahaveh. There's something in it … you've got me excited you know. ‖

MU44, ST1A, MT1

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R: Ja, and I appreciate your honesty. I think it's very real, and I think that is essentially what I'm after. That honest experience of it whether I could explain it or pinpoint it but for me it's that authentic account of your experience. And to look if my experience similar to others? Is it something completely different?

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P: Jo! Ja it's a cool subject hey. You must publish this hey. ‖ I must say this conversation today, actually I didn't think, and no offense or anything, but I'm really surprised at how much thought it's given me. If I were to take two things away … I mean jis you listen well… creepily good at your job. I mean you listen well in the sense that you've helped me say more than I think. I like the idea of mind that the question is more important, that MU idea. I don't know if I ask the question enough so I'm thinking about that. The other idea that you've helped me say was that I like that breath, I think that's why you cannot hold it, because

MU45, ST5B, MT5

70 min

71

72

the minute you look it's gone. You only hear the residual of the… but there's magic hey … there's no question. ‖ You're going to write this up as a doctorate?

R: Thanks for that bit of encouragement, and thanks for your time today.

5 | 75 min |

P: No you're welcome. I really enjoyed our conversation. I wish we had more time to discuss this.

_____

78 minutes.

10 *Abbreviations: R = Researcher, P = Participant, MU = Meaning Unit, ST = Subtheme, MT = Main Theme, Professor A = a Professor at a leading South African university, Psychologist D = A psychologist associate, Journal A = referring to a psychological journal, University A = a leading South African university, Organisation A = a leading non-profit counselling service*

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Table 2: Meaning Unit summary of Psychologist A

(Collaborate with Appendix D for details)

Condensed Meaning Unit (Units of relevant meaning in text)	Meaning Unit	Description of Subtheme (Ideographic clusters)	Main theme (Expressing the essence of the cluster)
Spirituality is a character strength.	MU1, p55, L20-22	ST1A – Aspects of spirituality	MT1 - Attunement to Spirituality
Spirituality is an appreciation for the transcendental.	MU2, p55, L25-26		*(What is spirituality for each person)*
Spirituality links to an appreciation that there's more to therapy than we know.	MU4, p55-56, L38-1		
Spirituality is inherent and a facet of being human.	MU9, p57, L21-29		
Spirituality is undeniable and should be examined like a movement without specific intent	MU43, p71, L5-9		
Appreciating spirituality in therapy requires sustaining and exchanging, similar to a breath we take.	MU44, p71, L23-26		
Spirituality is a belief in the transcendental, religion is the formal structure.	MU3, p55, L26-32	ST1B – Spirituality is more than religion	
Everybody has some form of religion, but there is something more.	MU10, p57, L29-32		
Religion is observable and spirituality is beyond that.	MU15, p58, L37-40		
Religion offers judgement to people's experiences.	MU29, p64, L25-37		
You have to merge the understanding of spirituality with clinical psychology.	MU5, p56, L7-9	ST1C – Spirituality connects to deeper processes	
The possibility of taking mental processes and inferring something else to them.	MU6, p56, L22-25		
There are numerous possibilities to what mental processes might be, like a universal connectedness with others or a process of sense making of events	MU7, p56, L27-30		
Spirituality is something beyond mental processes that speak to the human spirit.	MU8, p56, L39-42		

Condensed Meaning Unit (Units of relevant meaning in text)	Meaning Unit	Description of Subtheme (Ideographic clusters)	Main theme (Expressing the essence of the cluster)
Spirituality present itself in therapy as a facet of people's interest in the transcendental.	MU11, p57, L34-37	ST2A – The tenuousness of spirituality	MT2 - The understanding or function of spirituality
Spirituality is related to that which cannot be seen but plausibly inferred.	MU13, p58, L25-29		
Spirituality is not easily observed but part of people's psychic makeup.	MU14, p58, L31-37		
People seek explanations for the transcendental in science and medicine.	MU20, p60, L32-35	ST2B – Spirituality addresses the transcendental	
Psychology is the acceptable religion of the modern age.	MU21, p60-61, L39-3		

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Condensed Meaning Unit (Units of relevant meaning in text)	Meaning Unit	Description of Subtheme (Ideographic clusters)	Main theme (Expressing the essence of the cluster)
Therapy is a process of tuning in to the person's uniqueness.	MU16, p59, L18-21	ST3A – Tuning in to sensitivity	MT3 - The structure of the therapeutic unfolding
Much of therapy relies on a sensitivity to spiritual.	MU19, p60, L15-17		*(The unfolding process of how spirituality*
Therapy is a difficult process to explain but mystical or transcendental.	MU17, p59, L26-28	ST3B – Therapy is process of spiritual connection	*emerge or is introduced or brought to therapy)*
Therapy is a process of art studied as a science.	MU18, p60, L4-11		
The magic of therapy lies in the process, like music is between the notes.	MU38, p68, L36-38		
If we examine tradition and religion we learn about values people hold.	MU22, p61, L5-17	ST3C – Examining people's internal representations	
Therapy examines people's internal representation of the world and their beliefs.	MU23, p61, L25-33		

Condensed Meaning Unit (Units of relevant meaning in text)	Meaning Unit	Description of Subtheme (Ideographic clusters)	Main theme (Expressing the essence of the cluster)
The case example of the woman with the boat as illustration of meaningful spiritual connection.	MU31, p66, L4-37	ST4A - Illustration of a meaningful spiritual connection	MT4 - Spirituality is a process of becoming
Struggling to give an interpretation or explanation for the experience.	MU32, p66-67, L39-2		*(Therapeutic shifts)*
The spiritual connection gave emotional salience for the girl.	MU33, p67, L15-24		
Even though the experience is difficult to explain it kept the psychologist open-minded.	MU34, p67, L24-32		
The power and significance of the connection and meaning for both is undeniable.	MU35, p68, L3-12		
A possible message of connectedness and validation of experience.	MU36, p68, L12-22		
The connection was made on a psychic reality and was powerful.	MU37, p68, L26-29		
Within the question lies a quest for understanding that is important.	MU40, p70, L13-16	ST4B – A quest for meaning	
Spirituality should be understood as unique and personal, like a breeze that pass over.	MU41, p70, L18-25		
The recursive interaction that meaning only exist in the motion.	MU42, p70, L28-36		

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Condensed Meaning Unit (Units of relevant meaning in text)	Meaning Unit	Description of Subtheme (Ideographic clusters)	Main theme (Expressing the essence of the cluster)
It is difficult to understand or grasp theories on spirituality.	MU12, p58, L3-6	ST5A - The difficulty to substantiate spirituality	MT5 – Engaging difficulties and challenges with spirituality
It is difficult to admit spirituality in therapy because it can't be measured.	MU24, p61-62, L36-4		
Spirituality is present in therapy but very difficult to measure.	MU25, p62, L20-28		
There's something more to therapy that is difficult to explain.	MU26, p62, L33-38		
Spirituality is present in therapy but difficult to understand.	MU27, p63, L13-20		
A reservation because spirituality cannot be substantiated.	MU28, p63, L25-28		
A reservation to be associated with religious interpretation to experiences.	MU30, p64-65, L41-7	ST5B – The complexity of addressing spirituality	
The process of the spiritual unfolding is not a simple answer.	MU39, p69, L10-15		
A reflection of the process is that spirituality is definitely present but difficult to capture.	MU45, p71-72, L32-2		

Abbreviations: p = page, L = Line, MU = Meaning Unit, MT = Main Theme, ST = Subtheme

Table 3: Meaning Unit summary of Psychologist B

Condensed Meaning Unit (Units of relevant meaning in text)	Meaning Unit	Description of Subtheme (Ideographic clusters)	Main theme (Expressing the essence of the cluster)
Spirituality always forms part of the therapeutic process, it is part of how we relate.	MU1, p156, L6-9	ST1A - Spirituality is a connection to a belief system	MT1 - Attunement to spirituality
Spirituality is ones belief systems.	MU2, p156, L9-11		*(What is spirituality for each person)*
Spirituality is a personal relationship and connection to something.	MU8, p157, L17-18		
Spirituality is the person's core belief system that governs behaviour.	MU11, p158-159, L34-2		
Spirituality is connected to a belief system but does not only mean religion.	MU7, p157, L5-9; 23-24	ST1B – A distinction between spirituality and religion	
Spirituality is a personal way of making sense of life events.	MU12, p159, L10-17	ST1C - Making sense of experiences	
Spirituality as beliefs influence behaviour and relates to hope and value.	MU14, p159, L22-28		
Traumatic experiences and suffering brings people closer to their spirituality.	MU22, p162, L6-12		
People have always been interpreting and making sense of experiences spiritually.	MU24, p162, L20-21		
Spiritualty gives substance to life's difficult experiences.	MU27, p163, L7-8		
Life becomes meaningless if we only live to avoid anxiety and difficulties.	MU28, p163, L8-11		
People become lost in crisis and have to understand these experiences in some way.	MU29, p163, L11-21		

Condensed Meaning Unit (Units of relevant meaning in text)	Meaning Unit	Description of Subtheme (Ideographic clusters)	Main theme (Expressing the essence of the cluster)
Religion connects to people's need to relate to one another.	MU9, p158, L17-18	ST2A - The relational dimension and complexity of religion	MT2 - The conceptualization of spirituality
People experience a disconnect in dogma because of conflicting personal experiences.	MU18, p161, L3-11		*(The understanding or function of spirituality)*
People also use religious content as distraction from their experiential problems.	MU45, p168, L12-18		*(Making sense of difficult experiences)*
Religious contradictions creates internal tension on state of being.	MU46, p168, L35-38		
People experience dogmatic difficulties because of traditions and abuse of power.	MU47, p168, L40-41		
People struggle with the contradiction of religion and the feelings of not being good enough.	MU48, p169, L2-5		
Feelings and experiences are often interpreted in an ambiguous or inaccurate way causing more disconnect.	MU52, p170, L14-17		

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Condensed Meaning Unit (Units of relevant meaning in text)	Meaning Unit	Description of Subtheme (Ideographic clusters)	Main theme (Expressing the essence of the cluster)
Once you respect the person's belief system and spirituality the therapeutic process becomes easier.	MU3, p156, L17-19	ST3A – The therapist's sensitivity to the process	MT3 - The structure of the therapeutic unfolding
The therapist brackets his own beliefs to understand the person better.	MU10, p158, L23-27		*(How spirituality emerge or is introduced in therapy)*
The therapist introduce options which relieves despair.	MU21, p162, L3-5		
The therapeutic attunement plays a crucial role in connecting to the person in therapy.	MU32, p163, L33-40	ST3B - The process of authentic connection	
An authentic therapeutic connection is one of trust and true listening, a spiritual connection in some sense.	MU33, P163-164, L40-1		
The therapist's own disconnect causes them to become technicians instead of healers.	MU35, p164, L34-39		
There are intellectual distraction that removes authenticity. Authenticity is reached by allowing the unfiltered experience to unfold in the present without interpretation.	MU36, p165, L15-22		
The process of integrating thoughts and feelings starts with working in the present.	MU50, p169, L33-40		
Problems usually relates to how belief systems differ from each other.	MU4, p156, L27-32	ST3C – Beliefs and relational constructions	
Beliefs play a crucial role in how relationships are constructed.	MU5, p156, L37-38		
Conflict or misunderstandings arise when people disrespect each other's belief systems.	MU6, p157, L4-5		
People often have a superstitious belief rather than an authentic spiritual connection.	MU15, p160, L7-14		
When relating experiences to others people often feel shameful, guilty and judged.	MU20, p161, L20-40	ST3D - Relation to others	
The false self develops from internalizing others expectations.	MU41, p166, L20-23		
People are afraid of connecting to their feelings because of judgement and social norms.	MU51, p169-170, L40-7		
People surround themselves with materialistic distractions to avoid the complexity of the difficulty of life.	MU26, p163, L3-6	ST3E – Distractions from authentic connection	
People's habits act as distraction from authentic connection to self.	MU31, p163, L28-32		

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Condensed Meaning Unit (Units of relevant meaning in text)	Meaning Unit	Description of Subtheme (Ideographic clusters)	Main theme (Expressing the essence of the cluster)
Connecting with their true beliefs allows the person to connect with their true self.	MU13, p159, L18-22	ST4A - Connecting with true beliefs leads to perceptual shifts	MT4 - Spirituality is a process of becoming *(Therapeutic shifts)*
People need a deeper connection to their personal experiences to reduce problems.	MU16, p160, L16-22		
When people become aware of their personal experience in therapy the process shifts.	MU17, p160, L34-36		
Hopelessness and states of crisis brings people closer to their true spirituality.	MU19, p161, L18-20		
Therapeutic change happens through perceptual shifts and authentic connection to personal beliefs.	MU23, p162, L15-17		
Life is difficult but great suffering and great love will bring us to true growth.	MU25, p162-163, 35-3		
When people connect to their authentic way of being perceptual shifts occur.	MU30, p163, L23-28		
There is a powerful vulnerability when people connect to their personal spirituality.	MU34, P164, L17-22		
Valuing quality of life and relationships brings relief from tension to obtain more and allows the person to just be.	MU38, p166, L3-7		
This connection brings a shift away from nurtured false self and rise of the true self.	MU40, p166, L16-18		
It leads to unconditional acceptance of self and lessens tension and anxiety.	MU42, p166, L26-31		
True growth is a process of self-integration.	MU49, p169, L20-23	ST4B – Growth is a process of self-integration	
We need to integrate thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in order to allow the true self to be.	MU53, p170, L24-25		
Shifts become visible in lifestyle and value changes, from materialism to relational.	MU37, p165, L34-37	ST4C – Change becomes visible in relationships	
Noticeable change in focus from self to others.	MU39, p166, L7-10		

Condensed Meaning Unit (Units of relevant meaning in text)	Meaning Unit	Description of Subtheme (Ideographic clusters)	Main theme (Expressing the essence of the cluster)
When the therapist truly connect to the person's intricate spirituality it also confronts his own beliefs.	MU43, p167, L7-22	ST5A – Engagement leads to confrontation of own beliefs	MT5 - The journey of embracing spiritual obstacles *(The therapist's own confrontation with personal spirituality)*
Some beliefs people hold are difficult for the therapist to engage with.	MU44, p167-168, L42-5		
It is a difficult process for the therapist to explore and allow the emergence of the person's true self.	MU54, p171, L31-34		
The therapist gets confronted with his own beliefs.	MU55, p172, L1-5		

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Table 4: Meaning Unit summary of Psychologist C

Condensed Meaning Unit (Units of relevant meaning in text)	Meaning Unit	Description of Subtheme (Ideographic clusters)	Main theme (Expressing the essence of the cluster)
Understanding of spiritual lived experience.	MU2, p173, L17-22	ST1A - Structure of spirituality in personal experiences	MT1 - Attunement to Spirituality
People have spiritual lived experiences.	MU5, p173, L31-33		*(What is spirituality for each person)*
There is a spiritual dimension behind experience.	MU10, p174, L16-21		
Spirituality is an intuitive experiential dimension.	MU11, p174, L21-24		
The physical reality of spiritual experience.	MU14, p175, L5-9		
Spirituality forms an obvious part of who we are.	MU15, p175, L15-16		
Spirituality is at the core of human experience.	MU19, p176, L3		
Religion and ideology does not encapsulate spirituality.	MU13, p174, L29-36	ST1B - Spirituality is not religion	
People try and make sense of traumatic experience.	MU7, p174, L3-10	ST1C - Meaning from experience	
Spiritual themes and question arise through experience.	MU9, p174, L13-16		
Spirituality gives meaning to life experience.	MU12, p174, L24-26		
The "primitive painting" of spiritual sense making of extraordinary events.	MU16, p175, L16-22		

Condensed Meaning Unit (Units of relevant meaning in text)	Meaning Unit	Description of Subtheme (Ideographic clusters)	Main theme (Expressing the essence of the cluster)
We have a relationship to a spiritual side of ourselves.	MU54, p184, L23-25	ST2A – The existence of a spiritual self	MT2 - The conceptualization of spirituality
This rich experience of spirituality is evident from ancient shamans and tribes.	MU55, p184, L25-38		*(Making sense of difficult experiences)*
Through our intellectual evolution we learnt to conform and disconnect from our rich understanding of being and experiences.	MU56, p184-185, L38-3	ST2B – The consequence of disconnect from this spiritual self	*(The understanding or function of spirituality)*
We have a spiritual origin but cognitive scientific evolution.	MU57, p185, L7-9		
People's cognitive expectations of experience rob them from authenticity.	MU58, p185, L12-25		
Inauthentic relationship with yourself leads to pretentious relationships with others.	MU68, p188, L26-29		
There is limited genuineness and connection with others because of preconceptions.	MU69, p188-189, L37-5		

Condensed Meaning Unit (Units of relevant meaning in text)	Meaning Unit	Description of Subtheme (Ideographic clusters)	Main theme (Expressing the essence of the cluster)
Bracketing / Suspension of own ideas and cognitive preconceived filters.	MU3, p173, L22-25	ST3A - Process of unfolding	MT3 - The structure of the therapeutic unfolding
Allowing the process to develop.	MU4, p173, L25-28		*(The unfolding process of how spirituality*
Part of the process is allowing richness and depth of experience.	MU8, p174, L11-13		*emerge or is introduced or brought to therapy)*
A willingness for self-exploration leads to understanding experiences better.	MU22, p176-177, L37-4		
A therapeutic technique is to stay with the richness of experience and not dilute it.	MU33, p179, L23-29		
Connecting emotions to spiritual experience.	MU18, p175, L31-35	ST3B - The introduction of spirituality in therapy	
Awareness of physical experiences makes connecting to spiritual experiences easier.	MU20, p176, L5-21		
Most people can verbalise their experiential reality.	MU21, p176, L27-29		
Spirituality links to people's relatedness to self and others.	MU26, p178, L4-10	ST3C - Relational tension of Isolation versus Belonging	
The essential meaning of being is lost in the gap between perception and interpretation of experiences.	MU31, p179, L14-17		
Search for meaning versus explanations through society.	MU32, p179, L18-21		
Core isolation and loneliness versus the anxiety of belonging and connecting.	MU35, p180, L3-13		
Finding ourselves in each other but losing ourselves to ourselves.	MU36, p180, L13-16		
People look for common denominators in experiences to make sense of existence.	MU63, p186, L26-34		
Haphazard intellectual interpretations numb anxiety but kills authenticity.	MU64, p186, L34-39		
People are immersed in guilt and anxiety which relate to spiritual content.	MU23, p177, L13-15	ST3D – The manifestation of Anxiety and guilt	
The tension between experienced reality and the anxiety and guilt is symbolically lived out in the spiritual content.	MU24, p177, L20-30		
Conversations about spirituality in therapy are often about experienced guilt about the compartmentalisation of experiences.	MU34, p179, L29-33		
Anxiety is increased by the contradiction of experience versus interpretation.	MU44, p182, L2-8		
Negative experiences interpreted as punishment heightens anxiety.	MU65, p186-187, L39-9		
Manifestation of anxiety relates to fear and inauthentic relationships with others.	MU71, p189, L27-34		
People use religion to avoid or numb inherent anxiety.	MU25, p177, L38-40	ST3E - The compartmentalisation of experiences	
The tension of authenticity versus conformity.	MU27, p178, L10-18		
Societal pressure to conform and religion often smothers the personal experience.	MU28, p178, L18-25		

Religious pressures confronts people with their own authenticity and state of being.	MU29, p178, 33-39		
The end result of this pressure leaves the person at a loss of authenticity, congruency and integrated spiritual experiences.	MU30, p179, 1-5		
The Unfolding process of interpretation to experiences creating difficulty in being.	MU41, p181, L26-30		
Devaluing of experience is a signifier both in a negative and positive sense.	MU42, p181, L30-39		
The effect of dogmatic dosage disconnects people from their true feelings.	MU43, p181-182, L40-2		
Because of dogma the person is disconnected from experience and lives inauthentic.	MU45, p182, L10-17		
Experiences becomes a cognitive learning process.	MU46, p182, L17-19		
The problem of conformity is that individuality and ingenuity gents lost in the process.	MU85, p193, L15-21		

Condensed Meaning Unit (Units of relevant meaning in text)	Meaning Unit	Description of Subtheme (Ideographic clusters)	Main theme (Expressing the essence of the cluster)
Examining the search for self and exploring the uncertainties of life.	MU37, p180, L16-25	ST4A - A courageous effort to change state of being	MT4 - Spirituality is a process of becoming *(How does spirituality unfold)* *(Therapeutic shifts)*
Courage to experience anxiety of the true emotions.	MU38, p180, L25-28		
An acute genuine experience of existence rather than a herd mentality.	MU39, p180, L30-36		
The naïvely authentic surfer as example of how the authentic spiritual experience is reduced to something that it is supposed to be.	MU40, p181, L13-26		
It is a courageous effort to be authentic and not blindly conform.	MU84, p192-193, L38-5		
People live an anxiety avoidance philosophy rather that a life experience philosophy.	MU86, p193-194, L39-10		
Embracing life's unpredictability leads to integration as opposed to splitting.	MU87, p194, 17-28		
Encouraging getting back to experiences as part of awareness shifts.	MU47, p182, L33-35	ST4B - Shifts in awareness and therapeutic refinement	
By bracketing preconceived ideas and allowing the unfiltered experience shifts occur.	MU48, p182-183, L39-15		
By allowing unfiltered and true experiences we integrate them better.	MU49, p183, L19-27		
Need to get back to the authentic experience of the spiritual.	MU50, p.183, L27-28		
The therapeutic process engages with the difficulty of bracketing ideas.	MU51, p.183, L33-40		
In the effort to bracket ideas people become aware of what their own beliefs are which again brings shifts in understanding.	MU52, p.184, L3-9		

Therapeutic shifts and meaning lies in the pursuit of the unobtainable.	MU53, p184, L9-10		
Bracketing of ideas help to reconnect to authentic experiencing and consequential relating.	MU59, p185, L25-35		
In the process of bracketing people find personal meaning in experiences.	MU60, p185, L35-39		
Connecting with authentic experiences frees people from preconceived restraints.	MU61, p186, L5-10		
We experience pockets of meaning with no common denominators.	MU62, p186, L10-17	ST4C – Reconciliation of tension	
Awareness of the feeble attempts to numb anxiety changes perceptions for good.	MU66, p187, L26-35		
People then have to find a different way of being that won't contaminant experiences.	MU67, P187, L35-39		
When people connect to being genuine and authentic the interpersonal manifestation of anxiety lessen.	MU70, p.189, L18-21		
Reaching a state of genuine being and connection to others without judgement and fear.	MU72, p.189, L34-39		
The therapist guides the process to the lived experience to stay with authenticity.	MU73, p190, L13-16		
The process of becoming leads to reciprocal shifts of change and awareness.	MU74, p190, L21-26		
The goal of therapy is a perception shift towards acceptance, not relief to be happy.	MU75, p190, L26-35	ST4D – Self-directedness and experiential authentication	
The goal is a change in perception to appreciate life for what it actually is.	MU76, p190-191, L35-8		
Life is infinitely rich and every attempt to understand it limits the experience thereof.	MU77, p191, L8-11		
Therapeutic phases leads to a different understanding and way of engaging.	MU80, p191-192, L37-7		
The shifts lead to an appreciation for existence and universal belonging.	MU81, p192, L7-14		
Perceptual shifts bring a new appreciation for experiences.	MU82, p192, L17-21		
The end result leads to a genuine being with other human beings.	MU83, p192, L21-24		
Opening the richness of possibilities for what experiences truly are.	MU93, p196, L20-27		

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Condensed Meaning Unit (Units of relevant meaning in text)	Meaning Unit	Description of Subtheme (Ideographic clusters)	Main theme (Expressing the essence of the cluster)
Spirituality is deliberately labelled but there is a need to explore the experiences more.	MU1, p173, L3-7	ST5A - Neglected academic engagement	MT5 - The journey of embracing spiritual obstacles *(The therapist's own confrontation with personal spirituality)*
A need for spirituality because of impact on existence.	MU6, p173, L33-36		
Spirituality has always been present but there is a difficulty to engage with it.	MU17, p175, L22-26		
Something about spirituality is difficult to engage but is part of our core struggle.	MU88, p194, L35-40		
Spirituality comes to the front but gets categorized and labelled before understanding.	MU89, p195, L3-11	ST5B – Positional acknowledgement	
People are avoiding the complexity of the in-between spaces of personal experience.	MU90, p195, L13-22		
It is difficult to completely understand spirituality but the engagement is important.	MU91, p195, L36-39		
Personal interpretation to spirituality becomes a new dogma to follow.	MU92, p196, L1-16		
Therapy is an uncertain and at times an anxious exploration of life.	MU78, p191, L24-27	ST5C - The therapists confrontation	
The process confronts the therapist with his own anxiety and preconceived ideas.	MU79, p191, L27-30		
People need to develop spiritual tolerance for different states of understanding.	MU94, p196-197, L41-12	ST5D - Developing tolerance for difference	
We are entering a spiritual age of more tolerance.	MU95, p197, L19-23		
We are interconnected beings with each other and the earth and need to tolerate this.	MU96, p197, L25-36		
We have a unique connection to each other in African culture.	MU97, p198, L3-7		
We need to get away from the distorted view of self.	MU98, p198, L8-11		

Abbreviations: p = page, L = Line, MU = Meaning Unit, MT = Main Theme, ST = Subtheme

Table 5: Combined integration of all participants meaning units

The evolution of the main themes

Main themes (Capturing the essence of the clusters)	Psychologist A Subthemes (Ideographic clusters)	Psychologist A Meaning Units	Psychologist B Subthemes (Ideographic clusters)	Psychologist B Meaning Units	Psychologist C Subthemes (Ideographic clusters)	Psychologist C Meaning Units
MT1 - Attunement to Spirituality	ST1A – Aspects of spirituality	MU1, p55, L20-22	ST1A - Spirituality is a connection to a belief system	MU1, p156, L6-9	ST1A - Structure of spirituality in personal experiences	MU2, p173, L17-22
		MU2, p55, L25-26		MU2, p156, L9-11		MU5, p173, L31-33
		MU4, p55-56, L38-1		MU8, p157, L17-18		MU10, p174, L16-21
		MU9, p57, L21-29		MU11, p158-159, L34-2		MU11, p174, L21-24
		MU43, p71, L5-9	ST1B – A distinction from religion	MU7, p157, L5-9; 23-24		MU14, p175, L5-9
		MU44, p71, L23-26	ST1C - Making sense of experiences	MU12, p159, L10-17		MU15, p175, L15-16
	ST1B – Spirituality is more than Religion	MU3, p55, L26-32		MU14, p159, L22-28		MU19, p176, L3
		MU10, p57, L29-32		MU22, p162, L6-12	ST1B - Spirituality is not religion	MU13, p174, L29-36
		MU15, p58, L37-40		MU24, p162, L20-21	ST1C - Meaning to experience	MU7, p174, L3-10
		MU29, p64, L25-37		MU27, p163, L7-8		MU9, p174, L13-16
	ST1C – Spirituality connects to deeper Processes	MU5, p56, L7-9		MU28, p163, L8-11		MU12, p174, L24-26
		MU6, p56, L22-25		MU29, p163, L11-21		MU16, p175, L16-22
		MU7, p56, L27-30				
		MU8, p56, L39-42				

Main themes (Capturing the essence of the clusters)	Outline of individual contributions					
	Psychologist A		Psychologist B		Psychologist C	
	Subthemes (Ideographic clusters)	Meaning Units	Subthemes (Ideographic clusters)	Meaning Units	Subthemes (Ideographic clusters)	Meaning Units
MT2 - The conceptualization of spirituality	ST2A – The tenuousness of spirituality	MU11, p57, L34-37	ST2A - The relational dimension and complexity of religion	MU9, p158, L17-19	ST2A - The existence of a spiritual self	MU54, p184, L23-25
		MU13, p58, L25-29		MU18, p161, L3-11		MU55, p184, L25-38
		MU14, p58, L31-37		MU45, p168, L12-18	ST2B - The consequence of disconnect from this spiritual self.	MU56, p184-185, L38-3
	ST2B – Spirituality addresses the transcendental	MU20, p60, L32-35		MU46, p168, L35-38		MU57, p185, L7-9
		MU21, p60-61, L39-3		MU47, p168, L40-41		MU58, p185, L12-25
				MU48, p169, L2-5		MU68, p188, L26-29
				MU52, p170, L14-17		MU69, p188-189, L37-5

Main themes (Capturing the essence of the clusters)	Outline of individual contributions					
	Psychologist A		Psychologist B		Psychologist C	
	Subthemes (Ideographic clusters)	Meaning Units	Subthemes (Ideographic clusters)	Meaning Units	Subthemes (Ideographic clusters)	Meaning Units
MT3 - The structure of the therapeutic unfolding	ST3A – Tuning in to sensitivity	MU16, p59, L18-21	ST3A – The therapist's sensitivity to the process	MU3, p156, L17-19	ST3A - Process of unfolding	MU3, p173, L22-25
		MU19, p60, L15-17		MU10, p158, L23-27		MU4, p173, L25-28
	ST3B – Therapy is a process of spiritual connection	MU17, p59, L26-28		MU21, p162, L3-5		MU8, p174, L11-13
		MU18, p60, L4-11	ST3B - The process of authentic connection	MU32, p163, L33-40		MU22, p176-177, L37-4
		MU38, p68, L36-38		MU33, P163-164, L40-1		MU33, p179, L23-29
	ST3C – Examining people's internal representations	MU22, p61, L5-17		MU35, p164, L34-39	ST3B - The introduction of	MU18, p175, L31-35

		MU23, p61, L25-33		MU36, p165, L15-22	spirituality in therapy	MU20, p176, L5-21
				MU50, p169, L33-40		MU21, p176, L27-29
			ST3C – Beliefs and relational constructions	MU4, p156, L27-32	ST3C - Relational tension of Isolation versus Belonging	MU26, p178, L4-10
				MU5, p156, L37-38		MU31, p179, L14-17
				MU6, p157, L4-5		MU32, p179, L18-21
				MU15, p160, L7-14		MU35, p180, L3-13
			ST3D - Relation to others	MU20, p161, L20-40		MU36, p180, L13-16
				MU41, p166, L23-23		MU63, p186, L26-34
				MU51, p169-170, L40-7		MU64, p186, L34-39
			ST3E – Distractions from authentic connection	MU26, p163, L3-6	ST3D - The manifestation of Anxiety and guilt	MU23, p177, L13-15
				MU31, p163, L28-32		MU24, p177, L20-30
						MU34, p179, L29-33
						MU44, p182, L2-8
						MU65, p186-187, L39-9
						MU71, p189, L27-34
					ST3E - The compartmentalisation of experiences	MU25, p177, L38-40
						MU27, p178, L10-18
						MU28, p178, L18-25
						MU29, p178, L33-39
						MU30, p179, L1-5
						MU41, p181, L26-30
						MU42, p181, L30-39
						MU43, p181-182, L40-2
						MU45, p182, L10-17
						MU46, p182, L17-19
						MU85, p193, L15-21

Main themes (Capturing the essence of the clusters)	Outline of individual contributions					
	Psychologist A		Psychologist B		Psychologist C	
	Subthemes (Ideographic clusters)	Meaning Units	Subthemes (Ideographic clusters)	Meaning Units	Subthemes (Ideographic clusters)	Meaning Units
MT4 - Spirituality is a process of becoming	ST4A - Illustration of a meaningful spiritual connection		ST4A - Connecting with true beliefs leads to perceptual shifts		ST4A - A courageous effort to change state of being	
		MU31, p66, L4-37		MU13, p159, L18-22		MU37, p180, L16-25
		MU32, p66-67, L39-2		MU16, p160, L16-22		MU38, p180, L25-28
		MU33, p67, L15-24		MU17, p160, L34-36		MU39, p180, L30-36
		MU34, p67, L24-32		MU19, p161, L18-20		MU40, p181, L13-26
		MU35, p68, L3-12		MU23, p162, L15-17		MU84, p192-193, L38-5
		MU36, p68, L12-22		MU25, p162-163, L35-3		MU86, p193-194, L39-10
		MU37, p68, L26-29		MU30, p163, L23-28		MU87, p194, L17-28
	ST4B – A quest for meaning	MU40, p70, L13-16		MU34, P164, L17-22	ST4B - Shifts in awareness and therapeutic refinement	MU47, p182, L33-35
		MU41, p70, L18-25		MU38, p166, L3-7		MU48, p182-183, L39-15
		MU42, p70, L28-36		MU40, p166, L16-18		MU49, p183, L19-27
				MU42, p166, L26-31		MU50, p.183, L27-28
			ST4B – Growth is a process of self-integration	MU49, p169, L20-23		MU51, p.183, L33-40
				MU53, p170, L24-25		MU52, p.184, L3-9
			ST4C – Change becomes visible in relationships	MU37, p165, L34-37		MU53, p184, L9-10
				MU39, p166, L7-10		MU59, p185, L25-35
						MU60, p185, L35-39
						MU61, p186, L5-10
					ST4C - Reconciliation of tension	MU62, p186, L10-17
						MU66, p187, L26-35
						MU67, P187, L35-39

			MU70, p.189, L18-21
			MU72, p.189, L34-39
			MU73, p190, L13-16
			MU74, p190, L21-26
		ST4D - Self-directedness and experiential authentication	MU75, p190, L26-35
			MU76, p190-191, L35-8
			MU77, p191, L8-11
			MU80, p191-192, L37-7
			MU81, p192, L7-14
			MU82, p192, L17-21
			MU83, p192, L21-24
			MU93, p196, L20-27

| Main themes (Capturing the essence of the clusters)	Outline of individual contributions					
	Psychologist A		Psychologist B		Psychologist C	
	Subthemes (Ideographic clusters)	Meaning Units	Subthemes (Ideographic clusters)	Meaning Units	Subthemes (Ideographic clusters)	Meaning Units
MT5 - The therapist's journey of embracing spiritual obstacles.	ST5A - The difficulty to substantiate spirituality	MU12, p58, L3-6	ST5A – Engagement leads to confrontation of own beliefs	MU43, p167, L7-22	ST5A - Neglected academic engagement	MU1, p173, L3-7
		MU24, p61-62, L36-4		MU44, p167-168, L42-5		MU6, p173, L33-36
		MU25, p62, L20-28		MU54, p171, L31-34		MU17, p175, L22-26
		MU26, p62, L33-38		MU55, p172, L1-5		MU88, p194, L35-40
		MU27, p63, L13-20			ST5B – Positional acknowledgement	MU89, p195, L3-11
		MU28, p63, L25-28				MU90, p195, L13-22
	ST5B – The complexity of addressing spirituality	MU30, p64-65, L41-7				MU91, p195, L36-39
		MU39, p69, L10-15				MU92, p196, L1-16
		MU45, p71-72, L32-2			ST5C - The therapists confrontation with his own anxiety	MU78, p191, L24-27
						MU79, p191, L27-30
					ST5D - Developing tolerance for difference	MU94, p196-197, L41-12
						MU95, p197, L19-23
						MU96, p197, L25-36
						MU97, p198, L3-7
						MU98, p198, L8-11

Abbreviations: p = page, L = Line, MU = Meaning Unit, MT = Main Theme, ST = Subtheme

4.5 Themes derived and exploration

From the rich narratives obtained from each participant, several shared themes were derived. The shared themes were constructed from the frequency and alliance of subordinate themes or ideographic clusters of meaning units. Although these themes are grouped as apparent similarities, each theme is enclosed by the respective participant's subjective experience thereof. Secondly, there were some subordinate (secondary) themes complementing or contributing to the shared themes. These themes were not reported by all the participants but were considered significant in their own right and were included where fitting to further illustrate, complement and inform the context of the general themes.

The figure below highlights the shared themes identified and illustrates their interconnectedness. These themes include *attunement to spirituality*, *the conceptualisation of spirituality*, *the structure of the therapeutic unfolding*, *spirituality as a process of becoming*, and *the journey of embracing spiritual obstacles*.

Figure 1: Summary of shared themes derived
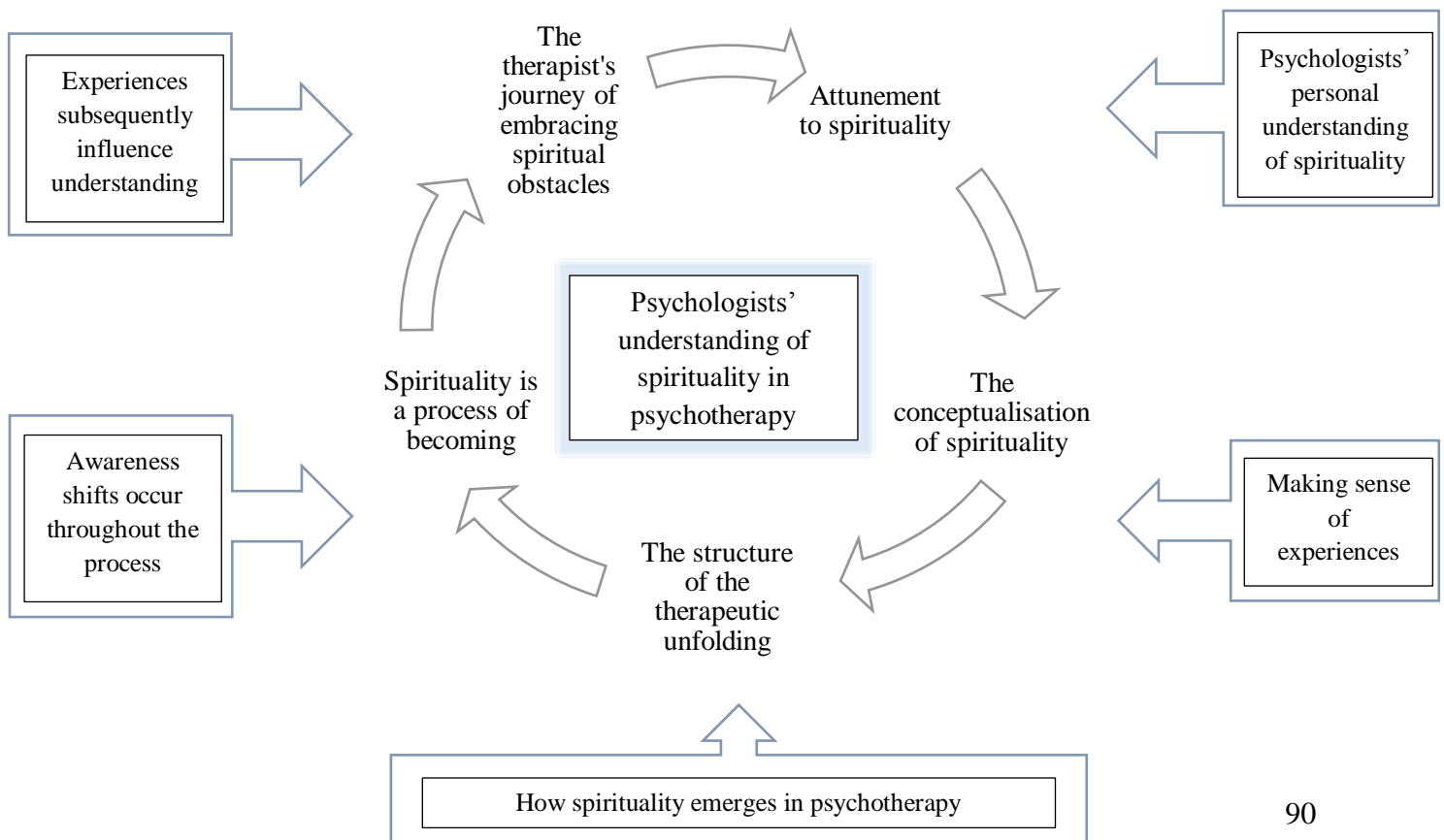
The following section is dedicated to a detailed discussion of each of these themes. This includes a description of the individual contributions of each of the participants to clarify how these themes were constructed.

4.5.1 Attunement to spirituality

The first theme evidently captures the participant's understanding and view of spirituality as a construct. Attunement takes this point further by specifically encapsulating the stance of both the psychologist and the person seeking therapy towards spirituality. This attunement informs how spirituality is later introduced, revealed, and explored within the psychotherapeutic process.

Significantly, the opening part of each interview was dedicated to clarifying and comprehending each participant's unique and rich orientation towards spirituality, before gradually progressing towards psychotherapeutic experiences. Emphasising the participant's attunement set a foundational layer from which the other themes evolved. As a first observation all three participants distinctly said that spirituality should be viewed as different from religion, which subsequently forms a subtheme here.

Spirituality differs from religion

Psychologist A stated that spirituality is related to that which is not observable, while religious behaviours can be observed. He further emphasised that: *"The formal structure would imply the religious. In terms of the spiritual according to my mind is more a belief in the idea of the transcendental and interest in that realm"* (MU3, ST1B). He also said that religion is observable and that spirituality goes beyond that.

Psychologist B said, *"Spirituality is your personal relationship with whatever you want to call it … it's always connected to a belief system but not formalised religion"* (MU8, ST1A),

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and elaborated his point further by saying that spirituality has got to do with the way that we make sense of our lives and is rooted in our primitive belief systems.

Finally, for Psychologist C, spirituality is part of our personal experience, which he clarified by saying, *"Religion or organised religion in terms of how it is structured does not fall under spirituality for me, because it falls under the ideological religious conviction rather than spiritual experience"* (MU13, ST1B).

These extracts each have a unique attribute suggesting that all three participants were of the opinion that spirituality is not only different from religion, but that it is connected to a personal internal experience and speaks to a deeper connection.

Structure of spirituality in personal experience

This aspect of the personal experience is further elaborated by an extract from Psychologist C: *"And then you have to understand that my viewpoint of a spiritual dimension is not a belief or religious dimension, but rather an intuitive experiential dimension of where people are going and how they experience life"* (MU11, ST1A).

A more personal statement from Psychologist B said that *"(spirituality) ... for me it's got to do with um, you know, the way that ... the way that we make sense of our life"* (MU12, ST1C). And finally, Psychologist A worded it as follows: *"So I mean, it's very much a personal idea ... it is a facet in that it seems that people do seem to be interested in the transcendental and it does seem to be a function of their make-up"* (MU11, ST2A), linking the understanding of spirituality to the function thereof.

Although there were identifiable similarities in the different contributions of the participants, they did place emphasis on different aspects regarding this subtheme of the attunement towards spirituality.

Psychologist A spoke about: *"... one of the ways I've understood it in therapy is perhaps an appreciation that there's more than we can know"* (MU4, ST1A), and upon later reflection said that giving a definitive scientific explanation for spirituality was more difficult than he had initially thought, even though he made various academic references to embody his definition.

Psychologist B linked spirituality to a primitive belief system and immediately linked his understanding of spirituality to his experience thereof in psychotherapy, stating: *"It always seems to come up in all types of psychotherapy that I've been working with, especially when it comes to ... problems in marriage and relationships"* (MU1, ST1A).

Psychologist C also linked his understanding of spirituality to his experience thereof in therapy, saying that *"I always focus on their 'lived experience'... you know, their lived or current experience, and that then includes anything uh ... whatever it may be. But in my experience there is often a spiritual experience"* (MU2, ST1A). He made various references to earlier academic work, and brought in the idea of *"life-world existentials"* that exist intrinsically; he highlighted the importance of a spiritual life-world existential, a concept which he emphasised in his own work.

A final subtheme relating to the attunement to spirituality significantly details the attunement towards spirituality of the person in therapy.

Attunement of the person in therapy

Psychologist A introduced this subtheme by saying that we should look at mental processes and possibly infer something else from them. For him, spirituality is something beyond mental processes that speak to the human spirit.

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"There is something beyond those processes that speaks to a human spirit, and I'm quite interested in that in psychology, so I'd understand it in that way" (MU8, ST1C).

Psychologist B said that spiritualty is a personal way that people make sense of life events. People have always been interpreting and making sense of experiences. They become lost in crisis and have to understand these experiences in some way. As a belief system, spirituality influences behaviour and relates to hope and values, and traumatic experience and suffering bring people closer to their spirituality. In this way, spirituality gives substance to the difficult experiences of life. He then stated that life becomes meaningless if we only live to avoid anxiety and difficulties:

"Spirituality has to do with values, and ... and that seems to be if you look at history that seems to be the history that life is ... um ... if you suffer greatly and you love greatly then you find true growth; otherwise ... otherwise life can become meaningless" (MU28, ST1C).

Psychologist C also highlighted this point of meaning in experience by saying that people try and make sense of traumatic experience and that spiritual themes and questions arise through experience. He also highlighted the point that spirituality gives meaning to life experiences and that this spiritual sense-making of extraordinary events has been part of our make-up throughout human history.

"People, after these traumas, usually flock to churches and you know they almost throw themselves in the spiritual as part of spiritually making sense of events that they can't explain or deal with or understand in any other way" (MU16, ST1C).

The similarities in their opinions and descriptions of spirituality as construct guide and inform an understanding of the function of spirituality in people's lives. Some of the extracts

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spoke of these two elements being inseparable, which then later also guides the therapeutic journey. The function that spirituality serves in people's lives thus brought forth the second theme of how the participants understand the function of, or conceptualise, spirituality.

4.5.2 The conceptualisation of spirituality

The first theme highlighted that spirituality is related to an intuitive personal experience. The second theme introduces the thought that spirituality serves the function of making sense of the world but also speaks to our need to connect to others, which crucially links the first and second theme. From the narrative accounts of the participants it emerged that in the participants' experience the function of spirituality addresses some aspects of finding meaning to life and speaks to our relation to others, making sense of belonging, and understanding the world in a particular way.

Psychologist B strongly emphasised the relational dimension and specifically the complexity of religion, where spiritual content and experiences are often associated or interpreted. He felt that people have a personal spirituality which they connect to the broader religions as part of relating to others: "*People have this need to identify and belong to something ... so I think all these churches ... they fulfil some or other need*" (MU9, ST2A).

For Psychologist B this relational dimension becomes complex and relates to the presentation of problems. People's feelings and experiences are often interpreted in an ambiguous or inaccurate way, causing disconnect on a relational level. These disparities then create internal tension in their state of being, making people feel 'not good enough'.

> "*Because our feelings are our feelings and it can be verbalised in an ambiguous or an inaccurate way, it can be interpreted in an inaccurate way, but that's how I experience my inner life and we need to respect that in other peopl*e" (MU52, ST2A).

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Psychologist C understood the function of spirituality as part of a spiritual painting of meaning to life experiences, and stated that through our intellectual evolution we have learnt to conform and disconnect from our rich understanding of being and experiences. According to his view, we have a spiritual origin but a cognitive scientific evolution that robs us from authenticity. This inauthentic relationship with ourselves leads to pretentious relationships with others, where there is often limited genuineness or connection with others because of preconceptions:

> *"It is obvious in our history, as I said, from the cavemen and the shamans, and you can look it up, it is always interesting to find how a tribe or a population group in the Amazon, that has no contact with the world, are predominantly spirituality tuned in. It is a lot more genuine and authentic and open and rich than that same person that was born in New York ... so it is actually beautiful to see how it is actually at our core and that ... and that our own development as humans smother certain things, uh, in time"* (MU55, ST2A).

For Psychologist C, people have a natural longing to understand where their spiritual experience fits in, and whether other people experience something similar, which according to the extracts above links to the presentation of problems.

For Psychologist A, there is a tenuousness to spirituality and it relates to that which we cannot see but are plausibly inferred. He further linked the role of the psychologist to addressing people's spiritual needs in saying that:

> *"Psychologists for instance serve in many ways the role of a modern-day soothsayer, and I think there is something to be said for a more secular society being into the discourse of medicine and science, kind of looking for the magic or the transcendental*

there … This is a bit cynical, but psychology, one could argue, is the religion that is acceptable in the dominating discourses of science and medicine" (MU20, ST2B).

This extract emphasises the important link between people's personal spiritual experience, the function it serves for them, and the platform that therapy provides where they might express these experiences.

4.5.3 The structure of the therapeutic unfolding

When people present for therapy their presenting problem often relates to spiritual experiences and themes which seem to speak and relate to underlying problems arising from connecting to others, intolerance for each other's belief systems or spirituality, or way of relating to the world. It is the unfolding of this process of how spirituality is brought into the therapeutic process that highlights the third theme of the introduction of spirituality in the therapeutic setting. This theme delineates quite a large portion of the psychologists' understanding of spirituality within psychotherapy, and therefore received greater emphasis.

When focusing specifically on this aspect of the transcripts, the researcher realised that the psychologists' attunement to spirituality and their conceptualisation thereof seemed to influence their approach to therapy. It is then from this particular approach or stance that the psychologists explore the life narrative of the person presenting for therapy, without imposing their own views. Clearly, the therapist's stance towards therapy plays an important role as a subordinate theme in how spirituality is understood to be introduced in therapy.

The therapist's stance towards therapy

Psychologist A strongly emphasised the point of the therapist's stance towards therapy. He indicated the dangers of imposing one's own beliefs in therapy, with some examples of psychologists imposing their beliefs and views in a judgemental way, causing the person to

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experience more problems. Instead he believes that the therapist should be sensitive to the unfolding process and magic of therapy, and in some sense open to tailor the process:

> *"That has been sort of my general experience where everyone is unique and treating them as unique and the process or reifying or reducing or shrinking everyone down hasn't seemed to work ... This has been my experience in therapy, you should study it as a science ... but you practise it as an art, and I think that art ascribes what I call the magic or what we could call the transcendental"* (MU16, ST3A).

For Psychologist A, much of therapy relies on a sensitivity to the spiritual, it is a process of tuning in to the person's uniqueness.

Psychologist B made a similar point and said that the therapist needs to bracket his own beliefs to understand the person better. For Psychologist B, the therapeutic process becomes easier once one respects the person's belief system and spirituality. He further emphasised the stance of the therapist in a parable between taking a role of either technician or healer:

> *"And a lot of psychologists are technicians ... so they could enter into some sort of intellectual conversation, and we can all do that. So it can be some intellectual conversation, and I'm not saying there's anything wrong with that because maybe you shouldn't go deeper than that but ... if a person's spiritual needs need to be addressed and the psychologists is more a scientist or technician that I think that he/she can still accommodate that person to a point"* (MU35, ST3B).

The view Psychologist C holds of the stance towards therapy linked to his view of how shifts become visible that follow later, in that it forms part of allowing the unfiltered experience of being. He also emphasised the point that the therapist needs to bracket or suspend their own ideas and preconceived cognitive filters:

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"So I am focused on keeping my own preconceived ideas to the side and to kind of let it hang in the air, for a while at least, while I get to know the patient, listening to the story and what their main complaint is all about ..." (MU4, ST3A).

*"... so it's almost like the first phase of therapy to open yourself for the experience. To allow yourself to experience it, and then afterwards you try and make sense out of it and you try and capture it, and to try and place it within the bigger picture of what it means to be human. And then hopefully, as a last stage of therapy, to let those insights and changes come through in your world-view and in the way that you live" (*MU80, ST4D).

In this way, part of the process is allowing richness and depth of experience and a willingness for self-exploration that leads to understanding experiences better. For Psychologist B, a therapeutic technique is to stay with the richness of experience and not to dilute it.

As was indicated by all three psychologists, the therapeutic stance informs how they then view personal experiences and how they come to understand people's relation to one another. This relational connections people form are a very prominent illustration of how spirituality is understood to be introduced in therapy.

A process of authentic connection

For Psychologist A, therapy is a process of spiritual connection. The process is difficult to explain but mystical and transcendental. When referring to the relational connection, he said that therapy is a process of art studied as a science, and that the magic of therapy lies in the process, like music in between the notes.

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"You study it as a science but you practise it as an art. This has been my experience in therapy; you should study it as a science … but you practise it as an art, and I think that art describes what I call the magic or what we could call the transcendental" (MU18, ST3B).

For Psychologist B, the relational dimension is a crucial part of the process of authentic therapeutic connection. For him an authentic therapeutic connection is one of trust and true listening, a spiritual connection in some sense: *"… and the relationship of trust and true listening is a spiritual relationship for me because now you are really in touch with the other person's dignity and integrity"* (MU33, ST3B).

Similar to Psychologist A, who compared therapy to a process of art and science, Psychologist B emphasised that the therapists' own disconnect causes them to become technicians instead of healers: *"True empathy is on another level, and a lot of psychologists mimic these things. I think I've seen it … umm … there are psychologists that become technicians"* (MU35, ST3B).

For Psychologist B, the process of integrating thoughts and feelings starts with working in the present, and authenticity is reached by allowing the unfiltered experience to unfold in the present without interpretation.

Examining the internal processes

Psychologist C similarly linked this authentic relational connection as part of the introduction of spirituality in therapy. This connection marks a movement towards another subtheme, namely examining the internal processes as part of the unfolding process.

For Psychologist C, a starting point of the investigation is that most people can verbalise their experiential reality, and this awareness of physical experiences makes the connecting to

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spiritual experiences easier. One of the techniques he uses to facilitate the therapeutic unfolding in accessing the spiritual experiences, is to make the patient aware of the nonverbal experiential reality. Patients eventually become aware of their unique and personal spiritual experience – something they might not have been aware of previously. He illustrated this technique in the following extract:

> *"They introduce it in the therapy, and other times I ask about it, you know like, how do you experience your body when you are anxious? You know, what does that experience do to your experience of space and time? I also ask what that experience does on a spiritual aspect?"* (MU18, ST3B).

The point of the awareness exercise is a therapeutic vehicle that eventually leads the person to a self-reflective space where they can integrate and understand their experiences better. He viewed this awareness of their experiences as an important link to the validation thereof.

Psychologist C stated that the therapeutic aim was to allow the lived experience to be, and to not reduce it into a mould or generalisation, or larger structure such as dogma.

Because the person keeps on experiencing, one aim of therapy is to then reconnect the person with the raw, unfiltered authentic experience in order to release some of the guilt and tension that cause so much difficulty in their lives. By allowing the experience to unfold unfiltered, a richness enters that the person might not previously have been aware of. This in turn leads to shifts in perception and a new way of relating to the self and others. The following extract highlights the therapeutic unfolding as Psychologist C described it:

> *"... to say, 'let me experience spirituality as it comes to me, instead of how I've been taught that it comes to me, and then I allow myself to take that experience and to say*

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that it is a genuine human experience of what I felt at that point in time, in that moment, and that's okay, you know it's okay to have that. So it is in that movement that the shift actually happens …" (MU48, ST4B).

Psychologist A emphasised that if we examine tradition and religion we learn about the values people hold. For him therapy examines people's internal representation of the world and their beliefs.

For both Psychologists B and C, the relational construction causes a certain tension, namely of isolation versus belonging. Psychologist A emphasised the fact that people's internal representation of the world influences and explicates their behaviour. Similar to the others, he also claimed that problems arise, and present themselves in therapy, when people associate their personal experiences with others' interpretation thereof.

In Psychologist B's experience, beliefs play a crucial role in how relationships are constructed, and problems often arise from misunderstandings or intolerance with differing spiritual beliefs. He elaborated this point in the example of marriage by saying that because people have a need to connect to others they interpret their spiritual experiences within a religious dogma. This interpretation of their intricate spiritual experiences creates pressure on their behaviour, which then in turn becomes an intellectual distraction that removes authenticity and creates a relationship based on superstition. Staying with the case example of marriage difficulties, the couple stated their initial presenting problem, to which his response was the following:

"Then I would ask each of the couple, what do you believe, what does marriage mean to you? … Um … and that's when you start realising that people get married for … often people get married for the wrong reasons and often they get divorced for the wrong reasons or for reasons that they weren't aware of, and then it normally goes into

... into their belief systems ... it's tied up with their spiritual beliefs. And once you respect that, once you understand what's happening it becomes easier to work with the person" (MU4, ST3C).

Psychologist B further emphasised that people often have a superstitious belief rather than an authentic spiritual connection. For Psychologist C, there is similarly a disconnect with self through others. He sees people as disconnected from their experiences through constant pressures and interpretations of their experiences. The essential meaning of being is lost in the gap between perception and interpretation of experiences. People struggle to find themselves and to find meaning in their lives. The problem is that people look for common denominators in experiences to make sense of existence, and these haphazard intellectual interpretations numb their anxiety but kills their authenticity. He further spoke about the internal relation to self and how this relational dimension is lived in an outwardly manner towards others. It is then in this relation to others that problems present themselves, because of societal pressures to subtract universality and an emphasis to change. In his experience, internal tension and anxiety arise between personal experience and the sense of belonging or connecting to others:

"I experience that many people struggle with that tension between 'Do I believe what others believe, and do I associate myself with bigger groups, that believe in certain things in which I find safety or at least I lull my anxiety' or 'Can I differ but also believe what I believe in relation to myself?' You know, so ... to put it in other words 'Can I be, authentically be, and live?' ... so I think it is sad how many people live this way, and this then causes problems for them" (MU27, ST3E).

The relation to others and the compartmentalisation of experiences speak to tension of being authentic versus to conform, and this was another important aspect in the experiences of both Psychologists B and C.

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According to Psychologist B, when people relate their experience to others they often feel shameful, guilty and judged. This causes fear to connect to their feelings because of judgement and social norms. A false self thus develops from internalising others' expectations.

For Psychologist C, societal pressure to conform and religion often smother the personal experience. These religious pressures confront people with their own authenticity and their state of being. The following combination of extracts about interpreting or explaining experiences from Psychologist C stress the point of how the unique and authentic experience gets reduced to something universal which removes the personal:

"It robs something of the trauma and the pain and the unpredictability and the anxiety thereof by searching for some or other thing to blame or to connect to give it meaning" (MU64, ST3C).

"… there is no more genuine first person lived experience of just engaging with life. It's almost more of an anxiety avoidance philosophy rather than a life experience philosophy" (MU86, ST4A).

"… so the whole thing gets twisted and that's what people struggle with when they come to me. They are then almost victims of this ideology and they struggle to find themselves and to find meaning in life, because they are so indoctrinated and spoon-fed that they don't know who they are anymore or where they are going or where they're from" (MU43, ST3E).

The end result of this pressure to conform and the tension to fit in eventually leaves the person at a loss of authenticity, congruency and integrated spiritual experiences. In Psychologist C's understanding, part of the way that our problems evolve is that we have a spiritual origin but a cognitive scientific evolution; we have moved away from experiencing to

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immediately interpreting. In the interpretation of experience something is lost. Many people then try to understand their experience before experiencing it. He importantly noted that the devaluing of experience is a signifier both in a negative and a positive sense, and the unfolding process of interpretation to experiences creates difficulty in being; it disconnects the person from their true feelings and experiences and then they live an inauthentic life. There is a gap between perception and interpretation where the essential meaning of being is lost. To encapsulate and illustrate these points he used the allegory of surfing

> *"It's like you buy yourself a surfboard and you rock up at the ocean and you walk into the waves and you say, 'Today I am going to surf', and you don't actually know what you are doing but here and there you catch a wave and you walk out and you say 'I surfed'. And there sits a group of surfers on the beach and they look at you and they laugh at you and they think, 'what did this guy just do in there?' And you say, 'I surfed' and they tell you, 'No, that wasn't surfing, you see there's our buddy back there and he's catching the big waves, that's what surfing is'. And this is just a small tale that illustrates how these things happen in everyday life. So immediately your experience of what it means to surf is moulded through the comments of the group that says, 'No, but it is not'. So too the same happens with spiritual experience ... You know ... so someone will explain it for you, and you will walk away and say, 'Oh, that's what is'. So the poor guy that actually had a lot of fun and thought that he surfed, walks away and thinks, 'Actually I'm not a surfer, and I did not surf. I will have to train more or catch bigger waves or stay longer on my board or whatever, before I can say that I did'. And this also happens with the spiritual, so I walk away saying, 'Actually I'm not as spiritual as I thought, I have to pray more or I have to give more or I have to do more things, I have to do more X, Y, Z"* (MU40, ST4A).

In this illustration, the problem is caused by allowing others (society) to interpret or even validate your experience, as opposed to generating that sense of acceptance or rejection from within. If it comes from within it is congruent with the person's self, and easily accepted. If there is a mismatch between experience and interpretation, there is not only internal tension about the experience (belonging/isolation) but also the guilt of having to change in order to have a pleasant personal experience. The problem of conformity is that individuality and ingenuity get lost in the process and experience becomes a cognitive learning process. The authentic experience of reality ironically becomes conditional.

Distractions from authentic connection

A last important point to highlight is that the manifestation of this anxiety and guilt is either feeling overwhelmed or being able to have a sense of self-containment. In the experience of Psychologist B, people surround themselves with materialistic distractions to avoid the complexity of the difficulty of life. The way he understands the presentation and unfolding is that people's habits act as distraction from the authentic connection to self.

For Psychologist C, people are immersed in guilt and anxiety, which relate to spiritual content. The tension between experienced reality and the anxiety and guilt is symbolically lived out in the spiritual content. In his experience, conversations about spirituality in therapy are often about experienced guilt about the compartmentalisation of experiences. Anxiety is increased by the contradiction of experience versus the interpretation made by others. The person then interprets negative experiences as punishment, which further heightens their anxiety. The manifestation of this anxiety relates to fear and inauthentic relationships with others, which is part of how Psychologist C then understands the presenting problem and the unpacking or unfolding of the process.

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4.5.4 Spirituality is a process of becoming

The fourth theme speaks to spirituality as a process of becoming. As the therapeutic process unfolds and an authentic connection is made between the therapist and the person in therapy, the therapists all reported on how shifts became visible and how they understood the significance thereof.

As was illustrated in the previous theme, the way that spirituality presents itself in therapy is strongly related to experiential difficulties and disconnect in personal experience or misunderstanding of the other. Through the process of therapy these elements may be addressed, and each participant elaborated on how specific therapeutic cases unfolded.

Psychologist A presented a case of a young girl whom he saw for a brief number of sessions. She was experiencing a subjectively difficult time, and during the last session he offered her the opportunity for closing thoughts. She then went up to a drawing board and drew a picture of a boat. The following extract summarises the interaction that followed.

"... (she said,) 'I feel like this boat in between the islands and I drift at sea.' So I said, 'Okay, alright ...' And that's the end of the session ... Now I've got my other client waiting, my next client. This next client is a ... teenage boy, sort of at early adolescence, with autistic disorder. On the autistic spectrum, quite severe. So he used to go through these phases of obsessions, and his obsession over that time period was origami. So he is waiting in the waiting room and he's got into the printing paper and he's made a boat looking like this ... Creepy hey ... And so help me ... oh! I feel like, emotional about this, because you can't hear clearly, there's a room in between, and you know he's in his own world. And we walked out and this kid is autistic, and as we walked out he gave her this boat, and I had the presence of mind to want to say, here is your boat.

I tell you, you should've seen that lady's face, it was incredible, there was something there, and then she left, it was the last time I saw her" (MU31, MT4A).

Although it was difficult for him to attempt an interpretation to the events it is clear that the case had some elements of a message of connectedness, not being alone, and a validation for her experience. He pointed out that the spiritual connection gave emotional salience to the young lady, and that the power and significance of the connection for both was undeniable.

Psychologist A said that even though the experience is difficult to explain it kept him open-minded and the spiritual aspect of this case was so overwhelming that he even felt emotional while sharing it so many years later. He added, *"I think it gave her experience a validation or a recognition that hit her perhaps on an existential level. That there was something else, a greater meaning going on here"* (MU36, ST4A).

He concluded that therapeutic shifts occur as a result of the fact that within questioning lies a quest for understanding, which is important. In his experience, the meaning that people find is a result of the recursive interaction and it only exists in the motion and is unique and personal for each person. Psychologist C similarly said that a willingness for self-exploration leads to understanding experiences better, and therapeutic shifts and meaning lie in the pursuit of the unobtainable.

For Psychologist B, hopelessness and states of crisis bring people closer to their true spirituality. He felt that life is difficult but great suffering and great love will bring us to true growth, and that people need a deeper connection to their personal experiences to reduce their problems. For him there is a powerful vulnerability when people connect to their personal spirituality. He said that when people connect to their authentic way of being, perceptual shifts occur.

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Connecting with one's true beliefs allows a person to connect with their personal unfiltered experience and their true self. This connection brings a shift away from the nurtured false self and the rise of the true self. It leads to unconditional acceptance of the self and lessens tension and anxiety. Valuing the quality of life and relationships brings relief from the pressure to obtain more, and allows the person to just be. The following extract highlights this point:

"… the wellbeing and the quality of the relationships, the quality of life becomes more important. And then they also feel relieved about that as if now they've found that deeper need for what is important. Not chasing after those things that they thought were important, the material things, the circular things" (MU38, ST4A).

"… you know, then you can be yourself and you can relax and you don't have to perform, and the person will accept you – warts and all. So that's the other thing that I would see, is that there's more acceptance of who you really are, you don't have to hold this pose, which causes unnecessary tension and anxiety and funny habits like drinking and smoking and gambling" (MU42, ST4A).

For Psychologist C, it is a courageous effort to change the state of being and it takes courage to experience the anxiety of true emotions and to not blindly conform. He added that people live an anxiety avoidance philosophy rather that a life experience philosophy, and when they embrace life's unpredictability it leads to integration as opposed to splitting. Put differently, he encourages people to have an acutely genuine experience of existence rather than a herd mentality.

Shifts in awareness and reconciliation of tension

A last subtheme regarding the process of becoming was that once the person is able to connect to their authentic self, it leads to perceptual shifts.

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For Psychologist B, therapeutic change happens through perceptual shifts and an authentic connection to personal beliefs. For him, valuing the quality of life and relationships brings relief from the pressure to obtain more, and allows the person to just be.

For Psychologist B, growth is a process of self-integration and people need to integrate their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in order to allow their true self to be. Change then becomes visible in lifestyle and value changes, from materialism to relational, and a noticeable change from focusing on the self to focusing more on others. Psychologist B elaborated on the noticeable change with the following extract:

"So that's how I would see the difference: they're values changing, they're lifestyle changes where they're more person-oriented to the family and the people around them more than what it is the other material things ... the wellbeing and the quality of the relationships, the quality of life becomes more important … so that's how I would see the change and then the symptoms would also change. People become more selfless, thinking of the other things and the other person, and not just me, me, me" (MU37-39, ST4E).

In his experience, there is a noticeable change in focus, away from the self to others. This clarifies the process of becoming instead of a state of arriving.

For Psychologist C, shifts in awareness start with encouraging the person to get back to experiences as part of awareness shifts, by bracketing preconceived ideas and allowing the unfiltered experience shifts to occur. In the process of bracketing, people find personal meaning in experiences.

For him the therapeutic process engages with the difficulty of bracketing ideas and in the effort to bracket ideas, people become aware of what their own beliefs are, which again

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brings shifts in understanding. Connecting with authentic experiences frees people from preconceived restraints. The following extracts highlight the therapeutic unfolding as Psychologist C described it:

> *"... to say, 'let me experience spirituality as it comes to me instead of how I've been taught that it comes to me,' and then I allow myself to take that experience and to say that it is a genuine human experience of what I felt at that point in time, in that moment, and that's okay, you know, it's okay to have that. So it is in that movement that the shifts actually happens ..."* (MU48, ST4B),

> *"It is a challenge that already brings forth therapeutic shifts in the pursuit thereof, and that is actually what psychotherapy is, is in the pursuit of reaching that ultimate place where you are okay with your anxiety, you come to realise that you are never going to reach it, but in the pursuit thereof you learn ways of being more genuine with yourself and through that you become more okay with your own anxiety. So it is almost in the pursuit of that which is unobtainable where our meaning lies"* (MU52, ST4B).

From the narrative of Psychologist C, it became clear that after these shifts occur reconciliation of tension becomes possible, as people realise that we experience pockets of meaning with no common denominators. They have an awareness of the feeble attempts to numb anxiety and that they have to find a different way of being that will not contaminate their experiences. When people connect to being genuine and authentic, the interpersonal manifestation of anxiety lessens.

People then reach a state of genuine being and connection to others without judgement and fear, and the process of becoming leads to reciprocal shifts of change and awareness.

Psychologist C then concluded that the process of changing engagement is part of self-directedness and experiential authentication and that for him the goal is a change in perception to appreciate life for what it actually is. For him life is infinitely rich and every attempt to understand it limits the experience thereof. Therapeutic phases are part of opening up the richness of possibilities for what experiences truly are. It leads to a different understanding and way of engaging. These perceptual shifts lead to an appreciation for existence and universal belonging and brings a new appreciation for experiences of which the end result leads to an authentic being with other human beings.

In this way, the therapeutic process is not about reaching a specific state of being as a goal, but rather a process of authentic connection which leads to a spiritual becoming.

4.5.5 The therapist's journey of embracing spiritual obstacles

As the above extracts indicated, the unfolding process of spirituality within psychotherapy sessions are not always a clear nor an easy venture. Not only does it confront the psychologist with their own convictions and beliefs but it also presents shifts in awareness of understanding. These and other difficulties experienced throughout the therapeutic sessions inform the final theme.

During or after some sessions the therapists reported that they were also left changed in some way as result of the process. There is the afterthought that through the discussion of spirituality in therapy, most realised that it was a vitally important aspect of human existence but that it was under-investigated and misunderstood because of over-categorisation.

Psychologist A had a reservation about admitting spirituality in therapy because of what that acknowledgement would imply about his work ethic. He further said that it is difficult to understand or grasp theories on spirituality and that he has no way to measure it:

"So in the post-reflection of my therapy sessions, even though I may have been going with it, generating hypotheses, I'll probably err on the side and say that it was probably an internal construct. And I guess that's kind of the beauty of it in the sense that you just don't quite know. Yet it seems there's something there ..." (MU26, ST5A).

"Maybe my discomfort is this: I cannot understand it and I'm supposed to understand people if I'm a psychologist, or at least have a model for understanding it. So maybe there's a discomfiture there?" (MU27, ST5A).

He further elaborated on his reservation by saying that spirituality is definitely present in therapy, but he could not substantiate the claim with enough academic support and confidence.

Psychologist B said that when the therapist truly connects to the person's intricate spirituality, it also confronts his own beliefs. Some beliefs people hold are difficult for the therapist to engage with, and it is a difficult process for the therapist to explore and allow the emergence of the person's true self:

"Well, devil worship is a belief, isn't it ... so now were dealing with evil. When it comes to evil and when I see evil in therapy, I've got to deal with it and the spiritual side also plays a role, I've got to ... examine that ..." (MU44, ST5A), *"Yes, I've got to ask myself, but do I really believe in what I believe in, because what I'm hearing now is shocking and it's true ... you know, why do I really believe in what I believe in?"* (MU55, ST5A).

And for Psychologist C, the experienced difficulties related to a number of things. Firstly he felt that spirituality was part of our interdependence on others and earth, and our overall interconnectedness, a value which in reality is not lived by people. For Psychologist C, the difficulty with this aspect lay in the reciprocity that our experiences are interconnected yet

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personal. He suggested that people needed to develop spiritual tolerance for different states of understanding:

> *"... spirituality is for me our own intuitive creative experience of each other and this earth and nature, wherein we experience ourselves, and those experiences are interdependent" (*MU96, ST5D).

Another difficulty that Psychologist C experienced with spirualty was that he felt spirituality had always been present but there was a lack of academic support, engagement, or investigation relating to the topic. He felt that there was still very little being understood and written about spirituality.

For Psychologist C, spirituality comes to the fore but gets categorised and labelled before anything is understood about the experience. In this way, people are avoiding the complexity of the in-between spaces of personal experience.

> *"Somewhere we are busy avoiding the complexity of our spirituality by either saying it does not exist or saying it is not us, or not in our hands, that it is just an ultimate reality or supernatural being and that's it ... In the in-between where life happens and the complexity is and where things do not make sense, we don't dabble there, we avoid it and then it creates problems for us ..." (*MU90, ST5B).

> *"So these things do come to the fore but there is so little being understood and written about it, it is as if it's still a no-go area to a large extent in psychology and philosophy ... It's an aspect of being human that needs exploration, and why do we view the spiritual dimension of humans so shallow or so easily throw it into dogma or give it structure, you know, what is so threatening about it?"* (MU88, ST5A).

"And I think it's necessary, that guys write about this field … and then naturally I also think it's a neglected dimension of humans, although it is so obvious" (MU1, ST5A).

A last difficulty for Psychologist C was that therapy is an uncertain and at times an anxious exploration of life, which as a process confronts the therapist with his own anxiety and preconceived ideas. As closing statement he said that people need to get away from the distorted view of self, and that although it is difficult to completely understand spirituality, engagement with it is important.

4.6 Integration, summary and conclusion

The research study set out to explore and investigate psychologists' understanding of spirituality in psychotherapy. In response to the research question this chapter focused on providing the results of the research process. This effort provided an abundance of rich data from three participants regarding their experiences with spirituality in specific case examples, and further pronounced their understanding of spirituality as a construct. By presenting verbatim extracts from the narrative accounts of the individual participants the chapter unfolded some shared themes pertaining to what the participating psychologists understanding and experience of spirituality in psychotherapy is like.

Although each psychologists input was unique in its own right, a shared understanding of spirituality in psychotherapy emerged. The shared themes represents a holistic picture of experiences and understanding of spirituality relating to psychotherapy. From the themes outlined above it became clear that psychologists' understanding of spirituality is greatly influenced by their experiences with spirituality in psychotherapy and that their particular understanding of spirituality informs their attunement in some way. Since the themes decisively appeared to be interrelated they were presented in a circular manner linking each with the other to illustrate this point further. It became clear that the attunement and conceptualisation, or

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function, of spirituality informs the therapeutic process. The way that spirituality is introduced and explored in therapy formed a vital part of the unfolding process. As the fourth theme indicated the narratives delineated that spirituality is a process of becoming and highlighted how shifts occur within the process eventually leading to reconciliation of the initial presenting tension that the patients presents with. The therapist is however often also confronted with their own beliefs and the last theme accentuated the journey of embracing spiritual divergences.

The therapists further reflected on the field of study and their engagement with the topic which denounced important factors to consider. Psychologist A laid particular claim to the difficulties that surround engagement with spirituality in psychotherapy which prominently supported the last theme. The content of Psychologist B's narrative was valuable and insightful and particularly contributed to the therapeutic unfolding and the relational connection as part of the process. He further shared detailed information about confronting difficulties and how some belief systems others hold influence the process. One of the great difficulties and critiques regarding spirituality in psychotherapy is that, as a construct, it is not easily measured or scientifically captured. Through the contribution of psychologist C it became apparent that one way that spirituality can be opened for investigation is through the experiential dimension of the person bringing a narrative account of spirituality into therapy.

Through the process of conducting, transcribing and interpreting the interviews an enriched understanding of spirituality emerged for the researcher. The participants' unique contributions opened the topic of spirituality through the multidimensionality of their experiences. The researcher became aware of the fact that each person has their own rich spirituality which is made accessible in the therapeutic process through the therapists' facilitation. The process of therapeutic spiritual unfolding is however preceded by an authentic therapeutic connection from which an unfiltered authentic retelling of experiences can emerge.

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From the results the researcher concluded that the client or person in therapy reaches a different state of engagement with others, and world understanding, through connecting with their rich unfiltered experiences. The themes as discussed here also depicted how the therapists becomes aware of shifts in the process through engagement, formulation and reformulation of understanding. Similarly the interviews too had an element of structuring and restructuring of understanding and engaging for the participants with their own spiritualty. The reflections on the research process is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

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CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The research set out to investigate clinical psychologists' understanding of spirituality in psychotherapy. The research was explorative in nature and was further guided by making use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as methodology and data analysis. Three clinical psychologists participated in the study and the transcripts of their interviews provided a rich pool of data for analysis. The interpretative nature of the analysis allowed for a unique presentation and organisation of themes relating to the psychologists' understanding and experience of spirituality within psychotherapy. A detailed overview of these themes were presented in the previous chapter.

This chapter starts by reflecting on the research process by first reflecting on the participants, the process, and then the researcher. It is followed by a discussion of the results within the broader context of the study, and an evaluation of the contributions and limitations is then provided. Recommendations for future research materialised from the reflective process and are presented before concluding the work.

5.1 Reflections on the research process

5.1.1 Reflection on the participants

Although the semi structured interview provided a guideline from which to explore the participants' contributions there were significant individual differences with engagement of the same questions. All three participants started their interviews with conceptualizing the construct of spirituality. This conceptual positional engagement was then followed by a more emotive engagement when giving specific therapeutic examples.

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This aspect perhaps relates to the ambiguity related to the topic, but further also speaks of a reluctance on the part of the participants to commit to a specific position. Yet another reflection is that this reluctance could in a similar way connect to how each participant later described the unfolding process of spirituality in the therapeutic context. When spirituality is introduced in therapy the therapists facilitate a process which allows the person an opportunity for an internal dialogue.

Similar to the examples they gave, and the process they described, the interviews had a quality of anxious conceptualisation, followed by an authentic internal reflection and exploration, which led to a liberation of ideas and rich understanding, on which they then expanded with examples. They reflected that it was a meaningful experience to have the opportunity for such an internal dialogue which, for them, also led to a clearer understanding and positioning or conviction of their own engagement with spiritualty. The interview allowed the participants an internal dialogue (internalisation) where they could confidently clarify their own experiences, which brought a rich new understanding.

The internal repositioning and reflecting became evident through their individual responses to the questions, highlighting each individual's rich contributions and therapeutic application from which the researcher's greater understanding progressed.

Psychologist A showed a reluctance to commit to a definitive statement limiting the researcher's understanding of his experience. As the interview progressed he engaged on an emotive level when sharing an example of interactional meaning through the metaphor of a boat. The therapist saw a woman for a short number of sessions and during the last session she drew a picture of a boat drifting between islands. When she exited the room one of the other patients in the waiting room handed her a boat which he had folded from paper; this boat looked very similar to the one she had drawn during her session. When reflecting on this example it

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became clear that this unrestricted and unfiltered sharing sparked a passionate and truthful sharing of his views and understanding of spiritualty in therapy.

Psychologist B had a different engagement and felt that spirituality is present in all his therapeutic processes. He was less reluctant to give a definitive view of spirituality, linking it to a person's belief system. He further engaged on an emotive level when sharing examples of Satanism, abortion, and child abduction. Upon reflection, these examples were clearly illustrative of the difficulty he often faces when engaging with spirituality in therapy and highlighted a deep personal confrontation with his own beliefs. Sharing these examples allowed him to reconnect to this confrontation and presented a reflection of what spirituality in therapy meant to him.

Psychologist C extensively and passionately linked his understanding of spirituality to existential theory. As the interview progressed, he shared numerous illustrations of his therapeutic techniques but gave no specific case examples. He used an illustration of a naively authentic surfer which provided a clear beacon to connect his ideas and beliefs and further guided his discussion on the topic to a deeper, personal level. The unfolding of his interview allowed a rich unpacking of his ideas, which expanded both his own and the researcher's understanding of his experiences.

An important part of this reflective space in the interview was the participants' formulation and then reformulation of the construct of spirituality. It highlights a deeper personal conviction and enriched understanding to their internal connection and the multidimensionality of experiences.

Upon reflection, all the participants were appreciative of the space they were allowed to freely share their experiences. There was almost a delightful relief to have the opportunity

for an inner dialogue of exploration, which speaks perhaps to a need for similar open discussions about spirituality in future.

A further, more general, reflection on the participants were that 13 psychologists showed interest in the study and were contacted telephonically to conduct the exploratory participatory interviews. Seven of these possible candidates did not meet the criteria to participate and three other candidates contributed to the preliminary preparatory study. This helped to refine the interview process for the remaining three participants, who fully met the criteria.

From the three preliminary interviews several significant observations were, however, noted. Their scope of practice ranged from counselling psychology, to a reverend dually qualified as psychologist and minister. Although these participants did not meet the full criteria as specified for this study, the researcher noticed several valuable contributions to spirituality as construct from their interviews. Their understanding and experience with spirituality in psychotherapy added a different depth and richness of experiences in the way that they engage with spirituality. The reverend, for example, often has to engage with people's spirituality in a supportive and religious setting, which according to him relates to stigma and judgement of people's personal experiences by others. The female counselling psychologist brought a more emotive engagement in the interview and related her understanding of spirituality to her own personal difficult history and journey with religious affiliations which later led to a spiritual liberation.

These, and perhaps other aspects were not emphasised by any of the three contributing participants, indicating that if the study included broader criteria, a different understanding of spirituality would emerge.

5.1.2 Reflection on the researcher's role

As was discussed in Chapter two, the topic of spirituality can be very ambiguous and the researcher had to create a holding space in the interview for the participants to boldly, openly and confidently share their experiences. This was not an easy task and the researcher constantly reflected on each interview afterwards to gain a better understanding of bracketing his own ideas.

Through the process of conducting interviews, the researcher was also confronted with his own bias, sensitivity and understanding of spirituality. It became clear that during the first interview the researcher struggled to maintain the position of researcher and was triggered to respond as practitioner – as illustrated by the following extract:

> "*R:*   *Ja, and I mean, I can't help but put my own interpretation or thoughts to it.*
>
> *P:*   *Go for it!*
>
> *R:*   *It's amazing that significance of: she feels like a boat in the middle of the islands and as she walks out he hands her the boat. So I wonder also if that wasn't symbolic, to say that she wasn't alone in the ocean …"*

Upon reflecting on this aspect the researcher realised the importance, and the sometimes difficult process, of bracketing your own ideas as therapist to allow the unfiltered unfolding process of giving account of rich experiences.

A further reflection was that of the lived experience of the researcher through the process. As the interviews unfolded and the interpretative process commenced, the researcher became acutely aware of an understanding of how spirituality is not only understood in therapy but also how it is made accessible for exploration. This process is facilitated by the therapist through the exploration of the narrative account of the person in therapy. Based on the results

of this study the researcher realised that spirituality manifested through the patient in specific ways where the therapist was supportive of the exploration of difficulties. The therapist and patient's *attunement* to the process allowed the person to shape their understanding in a different way, which brought a different way of engaging with the world. This in turn relieved some of the initial presenting tension and anxiety of the patient. The participants' therapeutic process allowed a validation for the patients' experiences, which reconnected the person to their internal understanding thereof. During the interpretative process, the researcher learnt how spirituality is made accessible in the therapeutic process by the participants.

To add to this reflection, the researcher gained insight in the fact that the therapeutic process of engaging with spirituality allows the reconnection and validation of personal experiences. Spirituality is made accessible through the exploration of the 'life world' of the patient.

The researcher understood that the participants, as therapists, refrained from linking or interpreting these experiences to a greater entity or theoretical understanding and stayed with the process of unfiltered expressions of experiences, and encouraged the patient to do the same. This aspect of therapeutic engagement is a key which later unlocks the door to perceptual shifts and lessening of problematic symptoms and relational engagement.

Through the process, the researcher became aware of the value of bracketing preconceived ideas and experiences by allowing the unfolding of the relational dialogue, which made a valuable contribution to the researcher's insight into the topic.

5.2 Discussion of the results

As the researcher reflected on the interviews with the participants, three important facets emerged. The participants firstly engaged on a conceptual level, clarifying the construct to their understanding. This was followed by the appearance of their lived experiences from

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which central components or essential structures of their related experiences distilled into themes through the interpretative process. These themes have been first described and then discussed in the previous chapter, and are thirdly summarised here relating them to the wider context of the study's literature and theory.

5.2.1 Attunement to spirituality

The first theme that was identified encapsulates the therapist's stance towards spirituality. This unique and rich orientation speaks to more than just a view or orientation and was labelled *attunement*. Although each participant gave a unique attribute to this theme they all identified spirituality as being different from religion.

The view that spirituality encompasses religion was mentioned by authors such as Canda (1997) and Delgado (2005). Hadzic (2011) elaborated on this point, stating that spirituality is a personal experience and not necessarily only an organised social phenomenon. The individual has a unique spiritual path that speaks to the experiential aspects of religion (Hadzic, 2011). Pathak (2011) mentioned that spirituality is more inclusive of the individual differences and various paths; "In other words, a person may be spiritual but not necessarily religious" (Hodge & McGrew, 2005, p. 2).

Attunement to spirituality, as theme from the participants, was then described as a personal experience, encapsulating an intuitive personal experiential dimension as a way of making sense of life. In elaborating on this aspect, a common denominator from all three participants was that spirituality is present in their therapeutic processes but not easily universally defined. They identified that spiritual themes and questions arise through experiences in life, which are often presented in therapy, indicating a *spiritual attunement* in the patients as well.

The difficulty with finding a universal definition for spirituality was corroborated by Hill et al. (2000) who stated that "any single definition is likely to reflect a limited perspective or interest" (p. 52). The patients' *attunement* to spirituality links to the view of Blatner (2004), who defined spirituality as "the activity of developing a deep relationship or sense of connection with wholeness of being" (p. 1), which significantly brings the *personal attunement* into perspective.

5.2.2 The conceptualisation of spirituality

The first and second themes were connected in that the *attunement to spirituality* guides and informs an understanding of the function thereof in people's lives.

The second theme introduced the notion that spirituality serves the function of making sense of the world but also speaks to our need to connect to others, something that crucially links the first and second themes. From the narrative accounts of the participants it emerged that in the participants' experience, the function of spirituality addresses some aspects of finding meaning in life and speaks to our relationships to others, making sense of belonging, and understanding the world in a particular way.

This relational dimension to others is evident in the fact that we learn to conform to norms and learn to interpret our experiences within a bigger context, which takes away the authenticity thereof and leaves the person anxious and overwhelmed with guilt.

This facet was discussed in literature such as Hill and Pargament (2003), who said that because spirituality is individualistic, subjective, and emotional, it motivates us to search for meaning and purpose in life. The need to connect to others was mentioned by both Mohandas (2008) and Pathak (2011), who both mentioned that religions are community-based worship and originated as a way of addressing humanity's innate need for spirituality.

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The theme further links to existential themes such as death, anxiety, isolation, despair, meaning, and meaninglessness. Although we connect with others, we are essentially alone (Zafirides et al., 2013). Fromm writes, "All passions and strivings of man are attempts to find an answer to his existence" (Fromm, 1956, p. 27).

The meaning we create in life gives us a sense that there is a purpose to our existence (Waterman, 2014), and it is the quest for appreciation of the interconnections and interpretations of experience that brings a sense of rationality to life.

Waterman (2014) further stated that meaning has been conceptualised in multiple ways, all of which emphasise purpose (Klinger, 1977; Ryff, 1989), significance, or a higher calling (Baumeister, 1991; Yalom, 1980), perceptions of order and coherence in one's existence (Reker & Wong, 1988), and ultimate concerns (Emmons, 1999).

According to a paper presented by Henry (2003), meaning "includes the things that shape experience and create attributes of hope, authenticity, trust, courage, perseverance and other ways of being in the world" (p. 2). The literature thus strongly supports this *conceptualisation of spirituality* as a sense-making process in response to experiences, and to find meaning in life.

5.2.3 The structure of the therapeutic unfolding

The third theme delved into the therapeutic process and examined how presenting problems related to spiritual experiences. The therapist's stance firstly formed an important facet of this theme. The theme further related to underlying problems arising from connecting to others, intolerance towards others' belief systems or spirituality, or from one's way of relating to the world. It is the unfolding of this process of how spirituality is brought into the therapeutic process that further colours the third theme in the introduction of spirituality in the therapeutic setting.

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Linking to this was the importance of making an authentic therapeutic connection from which the internal representations could be explored. From the participants' accounts it became evident that people experience anxiety and guilt which manifest as either feeling overwhelmed, or being unable to have a sense of self-containment. People experience distractions from an authentic connection to their experiences – distractions such as a focus on materialism and addiction.

Although literature specifically examining how spirituality is introduced and explored in therapy, from the therapist's perspective, was very limited, studies such as Coyle (2008), Murray et al. (2004), Suarez (2005), and Walton (1999) did highlight some of these aspects. These authors all used various methods to explore spiritual meaning for individuals in different settings. Others again provided various attempts to configure existential phenomenological theory into psychotherapeutic practice (Cohn, 1997; Condrau, 1998; Du Plock, 1997; Spinelli, 2006; Strasser & Strasser, 1997; Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997).

In a similar study, Coyle (2008) found that some of the participants had difficulty disclosing their spiritual experiences early in the interview and only started to share such experiences in more detail later in the session, indicating that a good therapeutic relationship, and sensitivity towards the person's world-view guided the session towards authentic disclosure. This was an observation also noted in the therapeutic processes of the participants of this study.

In Suarez's (2005) research on views and experiences of integrating spirituality into psychotherapy, "some therapists reported being illuminated or guided by 'spirit' in therapy. They described these occasions as moments of 'connection', 'spiritual intimacy', 'understanding', 'insight', 'clarity' and 'healing'" (Coyle, 2008, p. 62). In these moments, the patient's spiritual experiences was said to have revealed to the therapists what the patient's

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emotional state was like, the nature of the patient's core pain and/or what the patient needed (Suarez, 2005). Although the participants in this study did not use similar language to describe the unfolding of spirituality in their therapeutic processes, they too emphasised the importance of connection.

5.2.4 Spirituality is a process of becoming

The fourth theme indicates how shifts became visible and how the therapists understood the significance of such shifts. The participants experienced that shifts occur as a result of the fact that within the process of questioning lies a quest for understanding, which leads to a new awareness. Once the person is able to connect to their authentic self it leads to perceptual shifts. Growth is a process of self-integration, and people need to integrate thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in order to allow their true self to be. The relief from experiential and relational tension is a process guided by understanding, allowing, and connecting to the person's authentic experiences. This facilitation then progresses to valuing quality of life and relationships, which allows the person the freedom to authentically engage with their experiences.

Koole (2008) emphasised the role of the therapist in this process of facilitation by saying that the therapeutic aim is to allow people to examine their embodied attitudes, values, beliefs, choices or assumptions regarding what it means for them to exist and engage with themselves, others and the world in general.

The process of therapy from an existential viewpoint can thus expose, examine, challenge, confront, clarify and reconsider their experienced problems in relation to their world-view or understanding of life, and free them to appreciate the true significance of life (Koole, 2008; Spinelli, 2006).

May (1958) further wrote that existentialism "seeks, rather, to analyse the structure of human existence − an enterprise which, if successful, should yield an understanding of the

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reality underlying all situations of human beings in crisis" (p. 7). This awareness is intended to enable the person to achieve freedom and a responsibility to act.

Kierkegaard (as cited in Steiner & Reisinger, 2006) summarised all of this as follows: "being in touch with one's inner self, knowing one's self, having a sense of one's own identity and then living in accord with one's sense of one's self is being authentic" (p. 300). Other authors highlighted that the individual creates an authentic self when leaping towards their freedom and responsibility which is uniquely distinctive, personal work (Golomb, 1995; McDonald, 2005).

The participants of this study also laid claim to the importance of the therapist's facilitation as a vehicle steering towards change. The internal shifts, and the connection to personal spirituality, are a result of authentic connection to the person's experience which was a prominent observation in this study.

5.2.5 The therapist's journey of embracing spiritual obstacles

The final theme draws attention to therapy being an uncertain and at times anxious exploration of life which, as a process, confronts the therapist with his own anxiety and preconceived ideas. It confronts psychologists with their own convictions and beliefs but also presents shifts in awareness of understanding – an observation that was also mentioned in their reflections on the interview process.

A second difficulty was that the participants experienced spirituality as difficult to measure and understand or grasp due to the lack of theoretical support. They mentioned that spirituality is definitely present in therapy but that it is difficult to substantiate claims with enough academic support and confidence. A further difficulty is that spirituality comes to the fore in therapy but gets categorised and labelled before anything is understood about the multidimensionality of experience.

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Several authors such as George et al. (2000), Hill et al. (2000), Sheldrake (1992), and Wulff (1997) support this difficulty in engaging with spirituality and relate this to the lack of scientific inquiry into spirituality as being separate from religion. Scientific studies on spirituality is, however, possible and supported by scientific research on spiritual processes (Hood et al., 1996; Koenig et al., 2001; Larson, Swyers, & McCullough, 1998).

A study by Crossley and Salter (2005) specifically examining clinical psychologists' experience of addressing spiritual beliefs in therapy, found that spirituality was experienced as an elusive and nebulous concept that evoked feelings of confusion, and there was a lack of professional engagement with the construct. Their study claimed that because of the ambiguity surrounding spiritualty and the lack of understanding of the topic, it may go by unnoticed in sessions. This unfortunately in turn creates a gap in the understanding of spirituality and what might be needed in terms of clinical psychologists' training programmes to not only better understand, but more importantly to engage with the individual's spiritual aspects in the therapeutic session (Crossley & Salter, 2005).

Authors such as McMinn and Dominquez; Miller and Thoresen; Sperry and Shafranske (as cited in Plante, 2007) wrote on the subject and were of the opinion that: "psychology and spiritual integration in psychotherapy is likely to continue to evolve and develop in ways that will hopefully benefit psychotherapy clients" (p. 900).

More recently, Cohen and Koenig (as cited in Hadzic, 2011) claimed that "training programs in both psychiatry and psychology are beginning to highlight the importance of addressing spiritual issues as a part of mental health care" (pp. 227-228).

Linking previous literature to the results of this study suggests that, although spirituality is at times a nebulous concept with limited scientific support, numerous attempts have been made to research and integrate persons' personal understanding thereof, which would help the

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broader understanding thereof in psychology. Yet another observation from the participants, one that is supported by the literature, is that spirituality is an important concept in need of more scientific investigation and discussions.

5.2.6 Synoptic description of spirituality as phenomenon

The themes that emerged further addressed spirituality as broader phenomenon. A symbolic realisation of creating meaning also emerged through the accounts of the participants. Psychologist A related his understanding of spirituality by means of the metaphor of a breeze, stating that although the same wind passes over different objects it makes different sounds passing over each. For psychologist B, spirituality related to a personal sense of creating meaning through the relation to others, which also relates to his beliefs. The personal construction of spirituality for psychologist C was related to finding meaning in authentically embracing experiences, without trying to make sense of it in a bigger understanding.

In this sense, the phenomenon of spirituality as broader construct was seen to relate to a personal construction of finding meaning in the accounts of the participants, emphasising the importance of the subtle nuances and differences in each person's understanding of the concept of spirituality. The contributions and limitations of the study are presented here within the framework of the applied phenomenological approach. This discussion provides a framework for interpretation and application of the research findings.

5.3 Evaluation of the study

5.3.1 Contributions of the study

The following contributions speak to the validity, applicability and value of the current research:

- One of the contributions of the study was that the researcher's positioning through the interview process created a holding environment and reflective space where the

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participants could explore their own experiences, and this led to a rich and insightful contribution.

- The phenomenological approach of the study allowed for a rich and extensive pool of data, documentation, description and analysis of the personal and qualitative accounts of psychologists' understanding of spirituality in psychotherapy, of which there is limited research available.

- The phenomenological approach further strengthened the process of interpreting the results, thus not limiting or constraining the themes which emerged from the transcripts.

- The results presented were contextualised within the broader theoretical overview and previous studies, enabling an integration of the current findings into the existing literature.

- The semi-structured nature of the interviews used in this study allowed the participants the opportunity to create their own structure, which directed the description process to relevant aspects of their experiences which they found significant and relevant.

- The researcher was able to tailor the investigation process in accordance with the content and contribution of each participant. It was thus the participants' privilege to drive the research process while the researcher facilitated the flow.

5.3.2 Limitations of the study

A number of limitations were noted and are indicated here:

- Although the sample provides unique individual accounts of experience, it lacks views from different genders, races, cultures, and spiritual orientation.

- All participants had a Christian spiritual orientation bringing a specific view to the discussion. Alternative components and a different richness might be added if different additional positions could be included.

- The small sample size provides a subset of multiple experiences rather than a general experience of psychologists. Although this is in accordance with the phenomenological approach and aims of the study, the applicability of the themes, reflections, and discussions have to be interpreted within this context.

- The researcher's perceptions and beliefs prior to the process probably influenced and shaped the manner in which descriptions were interpreted and analysed. To minimise participant and researcher bias transcriptions of the interviews (embedding all statements and summarising information using the raw data) will be made available to the scientific community on request, for evaluation.

- The conclusions and discussion are a product of the researcher's interpretation rather than an exhaustive representative view of the phenomenon of psychologists' understanding of spirituality in psychotherapy.

5.4 Recommendations for future research

Considering the limited discussion to date regarding the experience of psychologists' understanding of spirituality within psychotherapy, the researcher would like to offer some recommendations which could assist future research projects and discussions:

- One of the important recommendations reflects on the dual role as researcher and practitioner and the pitfalls this presented. The researcher would like to remind others to be sensitive to the process, to constantly reflect back on the interviews as they occur and to bracket their own preconceived notions regarding the topic.

- Another recommendation would be the provision of an open platform among therapists for discussion about spirituality. In such a setting, therapists can contribute their own richness to the construct, which will help a broader understanding.

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- All three participants presented a very analytical way of thinking and if such a study were to be repeated, a recommendation would be to include other voices that would add depth to a more intuitive (female) or supportive role (different professional qualifications). A change in inclusion criteria would present a different kind of richness, thereby further aiding the broader scientific understanding of spirituality in psychotherapy.

- Yet another recommendation would be that researchers should remain sensitive to their own bias and preconceptions throughout the process. The respondents were initially markedly hesitant to engage with the topic of spirituality because of the existing theoretical ambiguity. The researcher suggests that interviewers have to facilitate an honest and authentic exploration without prompting or leading the participant away from their experience.

- The study further focused only on the psychologists' experience with spirituality in therapy. If such a study were to be repeated, another rich dimension for exploration would be from the perspective of the clients or patients in therapy.

5.5 Conclusion

Spirituality is a difficult, somewhat ambiguous construct with a long history of inquiry within the field of psychology. Through a thorough literature review it became apparent that although much has been written on the construct, scientific inquiry into the concept as being separate from religion, is somewhat limited. A more prominent reflection was that there are only a few studies available, even less specifically within the South African context, focusing on the intricacies in the concept itself and the multitude of constructions surrounding spirituality and the individual seeking therapy. This presented a unique opportunity for the current study to investigate spirituality within the discipline of psychotherapy, placing

emphasis on the psychologists' accounts of their experiences with spirituality in psychotherapy.

The research process commenced and was grounded within the existential theoretical framework, while applying a qualitative Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as methodological lens to facilitate the process of data capturing and analysis further. Various psychologists were contacted and identified through an internet database, and an exploratory participatory interview further served to filter interested psychologists to obtain a rich pool of participants. A semi-structured interview followed, which was recorded and transcribed for data analysis.

Through the interpretative process of this data, a rich appreciation and insight into psychologists' understanding and experiences with spirituality in psychotherapy emerged. The results of the study revealed that through this process the person seeking therapy becomes aware of their internal constructions, which lessens the anxiety to always explain and quantify experiences within a bigger context. This awareness shapes a different world-view and engagement with experiences that mutually changes the patient's experience of problematic symptoms and relations to others. The therapist is also not left unchanged through this interaction and reconstructs his personal awareness to his own spirituality as a result of the confrontation and obstacles often involved in the process.

The research process was one filled with numerous challenges, constraints and limitations, but turned out to have been a rich and rewarding spiritual journey for the researcher, who too experienced a metamorphosis as researcher, fellow practitioner and person.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Letter of invitation:

<div align="right">

Juan-Pierre Carstens

jpcarstens@gmail.com

Tel no. 072 544 8303

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12/10/2014

Information Letter and Consent Form for Invitation to be interviewed

Dear Psychologist

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my Master's degree in Clinical Psychology, at the Department of Psychology at the University of Pretoria, under the supervision of Dr A Gildenhuys. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

Title of Study

A qualitative exploration of clinical psychologists' understanding of spirituality in psychotherapy.

Purpose of the Study

Spirituality within the field of psychology is a growing subject of interest. Although there are many views on the construct itself, the validity thereof, and various other avenues relating to the topic, the purpose of this study is to focus on, and explore, therapists' experience of spirituality in therapy.

Procedures

This will be done by specifically focusing on case examples relevant to the topic. These case examples will be identified by you as participating psychologist and discussed in a focus-specific discussion/interview. This study will focus on questions relating to how you as psychotherapist value and conceptualise the use and occurrence of spirituality in the context of therapy, its relation to meaning construction, general themes identified, and traits associated with spirituality. The idea is to collect a rich, explorative, quality of experience, from which a data analysis will follow.

I trust that you are a well-suited candidate if you are actively involved in the field of clinical psychology, irrespective of specialisation, and feel that you have a case or more cases relevant to the context as stipulated above.

With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish.

What are your rights as participant?

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately 60-90 minutes, to take place in a mutually agreed upon location. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences, by advising the researcher.

Ethical approval

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and has received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Committee (ResCom) of the Faculty of Humanities, and complies with the ethical standards of the University of Pretoria. However, the final decision about participation is yours.

Compensation

Your participation is voluntary. No compensation will be given for your participation.

Confidentiality

All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study; however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained for 15 years in a locked office at the Department of Psychology, University of Pretoria. Only researchers associated with this project will have access. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor.

I hope that the results of my study will be of benefit to the profession of psychology, the broader research community, but also to you as participant.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like to participate, please contact me at 072 544 8303 or by e-mail at jpcarstens@gmail.com. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr A Gildenhuys at 012 420 2541 or e-mail at assie.gildenhuys@up.co.za.

I look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Sincerely

_____   _____

Juan-Pierre Carstens   Dr Assie Gildenhuys

Intern Clinical Psychologist/Researcher   Supervisor and Clinical Coordinator

University of Pretoria   University of Pretoria

Appendix B – Exploratory participatory interview

1. Are you actively seeing patients for psychotherapy?

2. Do you prefer working from an existential perspective in psychotherapy?

3. Do you value spirituality in psychotherapy sessions?

4. Are you willing to anonymously present a case or cases, with specific examples of where spirituality was used in psychotherapy?

Appendix C – Interview guide and consent form

1. How do you understand spirituality in the therapeutic setting?

2. How do you experience spirituality within psychotherapy?

3. Can you describe a specific case, or various cases, in which spirituality became a significant part of the therapeutic process?

4. How did spirituality become part of the process?
   Prompt: How did you become aware of the theme of spirituality as significant to the process?

5. Which existential themes emerged and how was it taken up in the therapy?

6. As a therapist how was your experience involving spirituality?

7. What did you became aware of about your own understanding of spirituality through this case or similar cases?
   Prompt: Did your view of the meaning change in any way?

8. Do you think this experience changed the patient's view of spirituality/meaning in any way?
   Prompt: If so, can you please elaborate?

CONSENT FORM

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Juan-Pierre Carstens under the supervision of Dr A Gildenhuys of the Department of Psychology at the University of Pretoria. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be tape-recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the dissertation and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

This project had been reviewed by, and has received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Committee (ResCom) of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria. I was informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact the researchers at 072 544 8303 / 012 420 2541 or jpcarstens@gmail.com / assie.gildenhuys@up.co.za.

With full knowledge of all the above, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

____   YES   ___   NO

I agree to have my interview tape-recorded.

____   YES   ___   NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes from this research.

____   YES   ___   NO

Participant's Name *(please print)* _____

Participant's Signature _____   Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____   Date _____

Faculty Advisor Signature _____   Date _____

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Abbreviations: R = Researcher, P = Participant, MU = Meaning Unit, ST = Subtheme, MT = Main Theme

Reflective Notes			Meaning Units
	R:	As you know I'm trying to investigate the experience of therapists with spirituality in um… in therapy, and a think a good maybe point to depart is to ask how do you view spirituality?	
	P:	Well broadly speaking it's very important, um, ‖ it always seems to come up in all types of psychotherapy that I've been working with, especially, especially when it comes to… to problems in marriage and relationships, ‖ um, because ‖ for me, spirituality, well I mean basically it boils down to one's belief system, you know what one believes in. ‖ Which we also find in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, what's his name Aaron… what's his name…	MU1, ST1A, MT1 MU2, ST1A, MT1
	R:	Beck	
	P:	Yes Aaron and his daughter Judith Beck, so ja, it comes up in all sorts of problems I found. Even at Hospital A, because I worked at Hospital A for many years um and at Hospital B, and even with the, well with the African people their belief systems, ‖ it's tied up with their spiritual beliefs. And once you respect that, once you understand what's happening it becomes easier to work with the person. ‖	MU3, ST3A, MT3
	R:	And you mention that it comes up a lot in therapy and especially in marriage and those kinds of situations, um, I wonder why?	
	P:	Well often people you know when I ask people now you want to get divorced or now you're unhappy with each other but what attracted you to this person in the first place, and why did you get married. You know: Why DID you get married why didn't you just have a formalised relationship. I mean I would ask these sort of questions eventually. ‖ Then you know, then I would ask each of the couple what do you believe, what does marriage mean to you… um… and that's when you start realizing that people get married for, often people get married for the wrong reasons and often they get divorced for the wrong reasons or for reasons that they weren't aware of, and then it normally goes into… into their belief systems… ‖ um, if marriage is um… a legal relationship ok, then it is a legal relationship. But if a marriage comes from a church… well it's not a contract then it's a covenant. Then it's a man and a woman and they bring their creator into the relationship whether they are Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, or Christian, you know then it's a threesome. ‖ And often people have never seen it like that or they never really thought a lot about it. ‖ The woman would say: "Ja maar sy is baie godsdienstig en die Here is altyd	MU4, ST3C, MT3 MU5, ST3C, MT3

Reflective notes in the left margin:

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This says something of the importance of spirituality in psychotherapy for him.

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Patient brings it to therapy and got a desire to understand their feelings. (Links to the big concept of the cognitive versus feeling).

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As a way to explore the spiritual he asks them about their beliefs in general which then later relates to spirituality.

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Meaning Units

5

10

5 min

in hulle verhouding" but the man never thought of it, or the other way around. The man married a sexy woman and the woman married a wealthy guy and as soon as the woman's figure change and the man's bank balance change **||** then there is conflict and there wasn't that deeper level of communication and respect. **||** So ja, so, **||** you know the spiritual part often comes in because, ja, so, what does marriage mean? If it is a relationship where you bring your creator into it then you know what does that mean. Spirituality does not necessarily have to mean religion, **||** um… and it doesn't necessarily have to, ja it doesn't have to be that, it's um, it's um like we've learned in existential therapy and the existential theories that um… ja you know… the meaning of life.

MU6, ST3C, MT3

MU7, ST1B, MT1

R: How do you think um, spirituality is the same or different from religion?

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P: Well it can be part of religion, um, but often religion is a formalized… (Laughs) a formalized habit and a money making business, and you know we've seen that. But now **||** spirituality is your personal relationship with whatever you want to call it, **||** the Cosmos, um… the Universe, people like to talk about the universe… yes and then you would find spirituality in all types of religion – Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, well that is uh, uh, yes and then Christianity, and then even the Atheists, because the Atheists would uh, they would worship themselves mostly. Ja so is there a connection well uh… **||** ja it's a, it's always connected to a belief system but not a formalized religion. **||** Do you know how many Christian religions there are in South Africa?

MU8, ST1A, MT1

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MU7, ST1B, MT1

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R: Well I can just imagine cause for every, I come from a small town and just in that small town for every now and again there's a different church, all Christian.

P: At the moment the registered Christian religions in our country is far over 8000 and you know these are the registered ones. In the world there's more than 40000 registered Christian religions, and they've got to be registered because of income tax and things like that. And I'm not talking about the cults.

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R: Ja, ja. I wonder if I hear what you are saying about the religions and how specifically there are so many registered Christian churches or religions.

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P: Denominations.

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Reflective Notes		Meaning Units

R: Denominations yes, I wonder if taking that back to spirituality and um, if that's not saying something about the attempt to encapsulate or capture or accommodate all of the different spiritual paths?

P: Well um… Can you say that again…? I don't want to go of the path.

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R: Ja. No I'm listening to you're saying that religion and spirituality is not necessarily the same.

P: Ja

R: And that religion can be almost a more formalized thing than spirituality and almost more individual.

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P: Yes.

Learnt behaviour and individual beliefs does not coincide.

R: And so I wonder if all of these registered denominations is not trying to, if that doesn't almost speak to the different personal spiritual paths and if it's not trying to accommodate but uh.

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P: Ja well it would meet people's needs on some level. You know that's why, that's why things like scientology, you know, that's why they have such a big following. And of course they just go after the successful people. Uh… because ‖ people have this need to identify and to belong to something. So I think all these churches they, they, uh, they uh… you know they fulfil some or other need. ‖ Like I've often said to people: If you're an affluent speaker and you know the Bible you can make a lot of money. Because that's what they do I mean you know you spoke about in that town that you come from that they spring up all over the place. ‖ So in psychotherapy when I become aware of people's beliefs I um, I never ever impose my spiritual beliefs or my religion but I can expose it when its relevant and I'll tell them well according to the way I see things you know this is how I would approach the problem. ‖

MU9, ST2A, MT2

He is saying that in order for authentic therapy he has to connect to the person's core belief system because it influences, and governs, behaviour.

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MU10, ST3A, MT3

10 min

R: You also mentioned earlier, right at the beginning that um, a very important aspect of therapy and you find quite often so um, I was wondering how does spirituality, how is it introduced into the process of therapy? How does it um, surface?

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P: Ja, well how does it manifest itself, how do I… how do I um, you know bring in spirituality? Well you know we're talking about spirituality but also like I said in the beginning ‖ it has to do with our belief systems, what we believe in, um, and that's also got a lot to with Beck you know Beck's theory. We all have beliefs core beliefs, we also have the intermediate beliefs and uh, and that filters through, right through to our behaviour and when we get into trouble, so, eventually,

Spiritualty is a personal way to interpret life events, to make sense of experiences.

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MU11, ST1A, MT1

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Reflective
Notes

Meaning Units

if I'm doing Cognitive Behaviour Therapy then I have to go to what is the person's core belief. ‖ For instance, if they are battling with you know their studies, you know, where does this come from? The way that you were brought up, you know your undisciplined lifestyle for example, but you know where does that come from? Or if it's in marriage, like I said earlier, you know, what do you believe marriage should actually fulfil, you know. What do you expect from your partner? What did you see in your partner earlier that you know, that isn't happening anymore or that isn't there or that's changed? Um… ‖

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MU12, ST1C, MT1

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I haven't defined spirituality but for me it's got to do with um, you know, the way that, the way that we, the way that we make sense of our life. Now religion can shape that because we all get indoctrinated by our teachers… by our, by our pastors, by our parents, by our lecturers, by our peers. We all get indoctrinated but at the end of the day the true spirituality is sure I've heard what my parents and my teachers and my pastors and the TV and my friends have said but now I've got to make a personal… commitment, as to what do I live for? ‖

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How does people that find meaning differ from people that cannot connect spirituality to themselves?

‖ And if I could answer those two questions I often ask people that. If you're prepared to, if you're able to, to identify what you will live for… No. If your prepare to identify what you'll kill for… and what you'll die for, you know then you're in touch with what you actually will live for. ‖ ‖ You know some people die and kill for a packet of cigarettes which we've seen at Hospital A, which we see in the newspaper, some people will die for a cell phone. Other people… will lose a billion but they won't give up on life because they have a different mind-set, they have a different, they have a different spirituality, they have a different belief system. They have a different uh… well relationship with their creator. ‖

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MU13, ST4A, MT4

MU14, ST1C, MT1

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R: Ja and linking those um, linking spirituality perhaps to these themes of purpose and um, meaning, and you know that personal um, fulfilment that it brings for the person is something that I hear you say is very important to them.

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P: Yes… yes…

R: And you also mention that sometimes you ask them about it. About that core belief for example, but are there other times when it is introduced almost in a more subtle way from their side or you know that it manifest in a different way?

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People's superstitious beliefs disconnect themselves from themselves which causes tension and conflict.

P: Well people say that they've tried everything. Sex problems, you know they've tried everything. Well then I say well have you tried, have you tried, bringing your creator into bed. Nee ma you know well people say you know I can't do that. How come? How come? (Laughs) You

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159

5

| 15 min |

10

People are
taught things
with the idea
that it is
15 spirituality but
later they
realize that it is
a human made
superstition –
linking
20 behaviour to
beliefs.

know sex and the sexual act was invented by God, how come? And we invite God when we eat, when we drink, when we do things, now how come you can't invite Him into your bedroom. You know so that also gets to how they view… sexuality. Um, and what sort of superior being do they have a relationship with? Because people can often use that word, you know I'm spiritual, I'm religious, I'm godsdienstig… but then you find out often, **||** OFTEN you find out that it's more a superstition, than what it is a true spiritual connection. That they don't really have a healthy relationship. Ja, and um, I can say that because in my journey in life I've also come that way where you get fed a lot of things and you do a lot of things out of habit and then you start to say wait a minute, what's this all about? And then you dig deeper and you look wider and you get into more trouble and then you actually see that you know… this is actually the way that it could be. **||** I mean look at the world at the moment. The world, and we see that, that, there's a sense of normlessness, you know the values are lost in the world. You read about it. You know people do what they want to. In our country there's no guidelines and you know laws are made and they try and make laws and regulations to make people uh, orderly, but it doesn't work… **||** because if you don't have your own personal um, connection with the beauty in nature and creation then no laws are going to change that. **||** Maybe I've veered off a bit?

R: No I think I'm following what you're saying and I also hear that in your experience with therapy is that that spiritual connection or understanding of let's say a God or a connection to a Greater is often… um, troubled by um, this, like you say what we're being told and what we're being um, what others almost impose and that creates certain views which then in some way sounds like it creates a disconnect from that spiritual connection that they're looking for like you mention now with the marriage and sex and um… That view that, I could imagine that the view that that person held of um, spirituality does not allow to also be brought into the bedroom, to sex, like you said now.

P: Ja, ja it should be brought **||** I mean it should filter into all aspects of your life, and um… and I think once people get that connection then therapy becomes simpler, well it becomes easier **||** even Carl Jung said that. He said if people have a religious attitude, he used the word religious. If people have a religious attitude the therapy goes a lot better. I can't give you the page number now but I can find it. Freud for instance said, well he said many things, but he for instance said, and Freud was an atheist, and one of the things Freud said was how come a Godless Jew was allowed to invent psychoanalysis. Now there

MU15, ST3C, MT3

MU16, ST4A, MT4

MU17, ST4A, MT4

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Reflective Notes		Meaning Units
	already he's coming out with his belief system, you know a Godless Jew. So there he is talking about his, his relationship with his… well with his ancestors with his heritage Jewish, he says that. ‖ So anyway what I'm saying is that it always comes through, and if people start making those statements like I've tried everything and you know: "Only God can help" You know then I say well ok let's take that seriously. You know how can God help you now? You know I'm not a dominee but have you spoken to a dominee? No they can't because the dominee won't understand. In the past when people used to come to me because they were pregnant, well they don't have to now because abortion is legal and then they wanted an abortion ‖ and I would say but you know there's always five alternatives. You know why do you want to abort? There's normally five alternatives there… You know for instance you can marry the person or you can give the child up for adoption or you don't have to marry but you can keep the child or you can wait for a spontaneous termination of pregnancy, but don't do what other people do and that, you now, that is the sixth alternative and that is to commit suicide, because people do that. ‖ But to contemplate suicide also brings us closer to spirituality, to what you know what life means to us. ‖ ‖ I used to ask these people bring in your mother, bring in your father, bring in your dominee, because, because you really want to have this abortion and you're telling me now you're going to Swaziland. You know this was about 25 years. And you're going to some back street abortionist. You know I'm only a psychologist, I can point out alternatives but what do you really believe in, this is a life we're talking about here. Yes but we're serious we're going to do this. You know and then as a therapist I have to make a decision about their going to do it or not and then I would say but… are you prepared to go to a country where they allow abortion? And then they would say ja, and I would say that I know of a place in London for example, and if you really determined I can give you the address and you can contact these people. But that's also working with their belief system you know but how do they value life? Because I'm pregnant and um… normal feelings of shame and I'm ashamed I'm still in school, we can understand that surely but now you're making a decision that has implications and would normally point out those implications. People normally feel depressed and guilty two years later or whatever. So… I don't know if I'm straying from the point but there's always a reason to investigate people's beliefs and spirituality.‖	MU18, ST2A, MT2 MU19, ST4A, MT4 MU20, ST3D, MT3

Reflective notes (left column):

The therapeutic process shifts as a result of authentic connection to experience.

Making reference to academic work to ground and emphasize the point.

20 min

This is a very good case example of how spirituality unfolds in therapy. People reach a state of hopelessness because of judgement by others. It relates to this tension of not being good enough and personal experience.

The pressures on behaviour because of beliefs.

R: And you also, I was struck by when you said earlier that once they become aware of or that aspect becomes part of therapy then it becomes easier. But I'm wondering why? Why, why would that be if

Reflective Notes		Meaning Units

the spiritual becomes part of the therapy process would it then becomes easier?

Therapy becomes easier because people start to ask themselves fundamental questions not only about their beliefs but ultimately about their view of life, the meaning and purpose to it.

P: Well, well I think Viktor Frankl also told us that. He said that ‖ if everything is going wrong then there's only one thing you can change and that's your attitude towards what's happening. ‖ And um… then ‖ a lot of these guys that went through the concentration camps that became therapists is once you go through great suffering then automatically, if you are prepared to go through it, then you automatically um, well eventually you start to ask these questions. Why does God allow this? Why does the creator allow this sort of thing to happen? And then they've got to ask these questions. So why does that happen but maybe, not maybe but it's been told ‖ that now we're going into theology and mysticism, which is another part that that's the way God created us. God created us that we can only be fulfilled by Him or Her… ‖ And that life events, the things that happen in our life, will always give us an opportunity to deepen our relationship with our creator… ‖ Ja… so I think the short answer is that, that's the way God made us. You know everybody has a conscious. Everybody has some idea of the power and the force out there. ‖ Even if you look in anthropology, there's always people worshipping you know, whatever out there. ‖

MU21, ST3A, MT3

MU22, ST1C, MT1

Summarizing the point of purpose of spiritualty.

MU23, ST4A, MT4

MU24, ST1C, MT1

R: And you also mentioned earlier you know that with the abortion example you said the other option is suicide and if you then think of suicide that also brings you to some confrontation and now you're mentioning again that crisis state that Frankl spoke about and the suffering and the meaning we create and I'm thinking, I wonder how often people acknowledge or see, or go on that spiritual or search for that spiritual connection or find themselves lost in that crisis. With specifically spirituality in mind I wonder if, once they acknowledge that connection you mentioned the therapy becomes easier… so I wonder if those in crisis if they miss that completely or if it's part of the struggle or if it's part of like what Freud told us the subconscious or unconscious level…

25 min

P: Well um… M. Scott Peck wrote a book called "The road less travelled" and ‖ in the first sentence he said "Life is difficult", and life is difficult, you know life is not supposed to be easy. Uhh… it's in the illusions that we bring up our kids or kids are brought up to think that life is easy. But great suffering and great love will bring us… to true growth. Great suffering and great love. But if you love greatly you're gonna suffer greatly. So you know there's a lot of paradoxes when it comes to life and uh… and when people think that life is easy, or

MU25, ST4A, MT4

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Reflective Notes

Growth, love and courage. People that do not understand a deeper connection cannot deal with the fact that life is difficult.

Something about the difficulty of dealing with the inherent absurdities of life.

35 min

Meaning Units

when we're made to believe that life is easy then we can get into trouble if we don't have if we don't have guidelines, it's going to be tough but then what do you lean on. ‖ ‖ I've got friends that are very wealthy and their children grow up and they didn't have to battle so hard and then their children leave religion, and the parents get upset you know they say: one day you're going to really find it difficult uh, ‖ ‖ you know what are you going to lean on if you haven't developed this spiritual base? Spirituality has to do with values, ‖ and, ‖ and that seems to be if you look at history that seems to be the history that life is… um… if you suffer greatly and you love greatly then you find true growth otherwise… otherwise life can become meaningless. ‖ ‖ Why does one person who loses his wife and his family and his business carry on and just, well not just, but he carries on, but he lives? While the other person commits suicide because they fail matric, for example? You know where, you know where… now we got to make sense out of it. (Pause) How come one person loses everything, you know where does he get his strength and his courage from? And another person… JA… just loses whatever, a marriage or a car and then gives up? And we've got to answer these questions, I've got to answer these question when I'm dealing with people and giving examples. ‖

MU26, ST3E, MT3

MU27, ST1C, MT1
MU28, ST1C, MT1

MU29, ST1C, MT1

R: How've you come to make sense of that question in your experience?

P: Well it's like I said, ‖ once you have a personal relationship with your Creator, with God, and then um… then it becomes a personal thing. It becomes this is the way I see it and what I stand for… I use the word Mysticism earlier on because if you contemplate, or meditate, um, and then you get to that place, that space, where you don't think anymore but you just are. ‖ ‖ Where you don't do the praying… the mumbling the words, where you allow the Holy Spirit or God to pray for you, because you know what's better than that? What's better than the designer to get into this vehicle and sort it out himself, because we're always getting in the way with all out habits that we get into and ‖ ‖ it's the same with psychotherapy that the therapist, or many therapists and students that I've seen forget that the basic thing in therapy in this relationship is trust, and if you want true therapy to happen you've got to listen. We've got two ears and one mouth and often people use it the other way around, and once that happens… then therapy works. But too many therapists get seduced by the gimmicks, and they always want to do some intervention, and they're not listening and they don't have a relationship of trust and therapy doesn't work, um… ‖ ‖ and the relationship of trust and true listening is a spiritual relationship for me because now you are really in touch with the other person's dignity

MU30, ST4A, MT4

MU31, ST3E, MT3

MU32, ST3B, MT3

MU33, ST3B, MT3

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and integrity, ‖ um, and you're getting in touch with God's opinion of that person, not my opinion, because you're allowing the person to expose herself or himself. I don't know if I'm answering you but I'm just responding… (Laughing)

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R: No, I'm finding it difficult to not impose with my own ideas as well because it resonates so well with what I've come to understand and think but perhaps the best way to follow on what you've just said is that I also hear that you are saying that the therapeutic relationship and the sensitivity and that listening is also a spiritual aspect for you?

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P: Sure… oh yes… true listening and true respect… ja.

R: And I'm also, and this is the part where I might impose ideas is that once… we we're talking about one person dying and the other one living, I also heard that you said that the one that's more, that once a person becomes aware of this spiritual connection or the connection with self and a spiritual path then it's almost like it creates a resilience or better understanding or groundedness to place everything.

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P: ‖ Yes it's all those things, resilience, groundedness yes all those things. Yes you have a more solid platform, a more secure base to operate from because true love is also making yourself vulnerable you see if you really love you make yourself vulnerable. But if you understand that and people take you for a ride you handle it differently. ‖

MU34, ST4A, MT4

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R: And you mentioned earlier also about therapists being almost sold on the gimmicks and wanting to impose and not really following the process and I wondered why that is? Perhaps the question is: Do you think it's easy or difficult for therapists to embrace the spiritual in therapy or to be open for it?

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P: Well for some it is and for others not. You know hearing you talk now I remember way back in 1953 when Rollo May was talking to Carl Rogers. At that time when American psychotherapy belonged mainly to the medical fraternity but then the psychologists got hold of it and the government said well it's got to be licenced and one of the things that Rollo May said to Rogers was: "It's difficult now because now we must become aware: are we training technicians or healers?" ‖ And a lot of psychologists are technicians and I often told my students that, you know that empathy doesn't mean reflection. Reflection is a technique, the FBI can do that. True empathy is on another level, and a lot of psychologists mimic these things I think I've seen it… umm… there are psychologists that become technicians ‖ and we can understand that because when you go into private practice you need

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MU35, ST3B, MT3

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164

Meaning Units

the cash flow and people become impatient that the money must come and normally when people see us they are down and out, often they are down and out and they don't have money, and um… ja… you can get into trouble often. I don't know if that's what you're asking but ja listening doesn't just mean that you're reflecting and all those things that you've learnt.

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R: And I'm hearing that you are saying that some are sensitive for it and they might be more open to bring spiritualty or to explore spirituality in therapy and others may not because of this technician healer beautiful parable, so ja… I wonder how the… how those then that do not bring it in experience when they are confronted with it like you mentioned earlier, if that space is then the therapist or the patient or where would that lead if spirituality were to be some part of the need?

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P: Well I think… you know luckily most psychologists have an IQ of at least a 100 ‖ so they could enter into some sort of intellectual conversation and we can all do that so it can be some intellectual conversation and I'm not saying there's anything wrong with that because maybe you shouldn't go deeper than that but at least we've all been exposed to existential therapy and ja… so I think that that can happen, that if a type of spiritual or if a person's spiritual needs need to be addressed and the psychologists is more a scientist or technician that I think that he/she can still accommodate that person to a point. ‖

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MU36, ST3B, MT3

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R: But earlier when we spoke about that it forms a big part of your therapy, how do you become aware of the change to spirituality? How do you become aware of the change towards the spiritual in the process?

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P: Well the whole content of the conversation changes it goes into a different direction um… for instance in a marriage then it's not so much about the money its more about the welfare or wellbeing of the kids its more about the wholesome lifestyle that they want to live and not so much about… they're becoming depressed because they can't have 2 overseas holidays a year you know so then they're values change and its ok not to ride the Porsche anymore because now it's not so important so I don't mind driving other wheels. ‖ So that's how I would see the difference, they're values change, they're lifestyle changes where they're more person oriented to the family and the people around them more than what it is the other material things. ‖

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MU37, ST4C, MT4

R: Again um maybe imposing but thinking how that links to the themes of existential theory and authenticity it sounds like it's that shift away

165

Meaning Units

from the materialistic and the distractions more to the personal and the individual relationships and those kind of things.

5 | Relational versus material focus as part of witnessing change. A deflation of ego and emerging of true self.

P: Yes ‖ the wellbeing and the quality of the relationships, the quality of life becomes more important. And then they also feel relieved about that as if now they've found that deeper need for what is important. Not chasing after those things that they thought were important, the material things, the circular things. ‖ ‖ So that's how I would see the change and then the symptoms would also change. People become more selfless, thinking of the other things and the other person and not just me, me, me. So that's how I would notice that. ‖

MU38, ST4A, MT4

MU39, ST4C, MT4

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R: So when you mentioned earlier about religion and spirituality and linking that to what you are saying now it's as if the ego is deflating and the more the spiritual grows or that connection becomes more prominent then that, that uh, selfishness and ego becomes down.

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P: Yes it deflates. Yes and then also themselves where up and till that point ‖ they've been aware that… that they've been nurturing a false self and then the truer self, starts coming out. We all have a false self, right from the beginning, where we have to impress, ‖ where we're kids, and all that um… all right maybe I'm generalizing but that's what seems to happen that ‖ when we internalize all these other values and expectations like I said earlier from our teachers and our parents then we internalize it and then the false self develops because that's not really who we are. ‖ And I often bring in that analogy when people in a marriage, then I would say but you know, there's only one place where you can really be yourself and that's in a marriage because if you love a person and the other person loves you, ‖ you know then you can be yourself and you can relax and you don't have to perform and the person will accept you warts and all. So that's the other thing that I would see is that there's more acceptance of who you really are, you don't have to hold this pose which causes unnecessary tension and anxiety and funny habits like drinking and smoking and gambling. ‖

MU40, ST4A, MT4

20 | Anxiety and tension are caused by false self. This leads to habits that is an attempt to numb the experienced anxiety and pressure to be something other than the true self

MU41, ST3D, MT3

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MU42, ST4A, MT4

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R: I wonder if this false sense or the upholding of this false sense isn't also part of why people often struggle with the spiritual. Because if the spiritual represents the authentic and connection to others and that connection to the real self then this false self is almost then opposed to that.

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P: Getting in the way, YES! It gets in the way. It's opposed to that yes.

R: And in the process of therapy in your experience as that comes down and they becomes more aware of the other then the change starts to

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Meaning Units

happen and the symptoms start to present differently or then there's change in that as well.

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The therapist is confronted in this case example with his own beliefs, personal life and ethical obligations.

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Interesting new concept on spirituality is that there is a negative spirituality like evil people (devil worship). They connect to their evilness in spirituality which is a big challenge for the therapist.

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P: Yes…(Pause) I once had a case where a woman came to me and she was depressed and I normally work quickly, people stay with me or they leave me quickly, and I think I did some relaxation exercises and some cognitive restructuring and within 3 sessions her depression was gone. ‖ She came back to me and she said thanks for that but now I want to tell you the real reason… why I was depressed. But she was relieved now. She said that: "some time ago I got involved in Satanism and devil worship and, and… I became beautiful and successful and important and all that but I was asked to sacrifice a child and I did. I sacrificed a 4-year-old girl and the expectation from the other devil people were that the child should have blonde hair and blue eyes." And my daughter was about 6 years old also blonde hair and blue eyes and I thought hell you know now I feel transference and counter transference and she said: "and that's why I did it because I would become more popular and powerful but I knew it was wrong and I had to change, and nobody could understand." Nobody could understand why she was depressed, not even her husband knew what was happening. Then she had to come and share it and I said well you know I said to myself now you're putting me in a difficult position because as a therapist I have an ethical obligation and responsibility ‖ but I will see you again, and she didn't come back but I know that she is doing well and still happily married but it bothered me so at that stage I was doing a bit of forensic work and I knew Judge A at the court and I went to him and at that stage there was also a lot of, I don't know if you remember – was it Kidnapper A? – in Town A there was a guy who had kidnapped about 10 girls – Kidnapper A, Kidnapper A – and at that stage it was headline news. This girl gave me an address… which I thought was there. So I went to Judge A and said listen I might be able to help you with all these kidnappings, Kidnapper A was his name! It was in Street A, the house is still there, they haven't built on the house, they've dug up everything looking for all the remains of these girls but I think they were sent out as sex slaves. So anyway I went to Judge A and I said I think I can help you with this so he called in the head detective, and I said I'm a psychologist and I heard about this but I can't give you names, but they never came back to me. And in my conscience, in my "gewete", I said well I tried to help the community and I tried to make the magistrate aware of a possible murder, because look this girl could be bluffing me, she could be testing me? She could be trying to impress me, shock me or whatever, but I had to do something about it. ‖ Well devil worship is a belief isn't it… so now we're dealing with evil. When it comes to evil and

MU43, ST5A, MT5

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MU44, ST5A, MT5

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when I see evil in therapy I've got to deal with it and the spiritual side also plays a role, I've got to… examine that… why are you dabbling with these dangerous things? Where have you learnt this from? How come you're making this important in your life? And you're getting in trouble… ‖ Sorry we deviated but…

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R: No, no, no, I think it's very relevant and I hear that it's also sometimes change for the positive and it's almost a healthier process and I hear that's its sometimes also an extremely difficult process to explore a person's belief as you say or they're spiritual part if it becomes more to the evil side or the dark side… The difficulties of that becomes very difficult as well.

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50 min

P: Well ‖ it becomes a challenge and now you've also got to ask yourself you know how far can I go with this and who else? I was also involved with some forensic cases and somebody referred me case and said this person is demon possessed, assess him, help him. And you know the way this chap behaved really looked weird and these things and I sent him back to the person who referred him and I said this person is not demon possessed. ‖ If you want to we can send him to an exorcist but his not demon possessed his just preoccupied with all these devilish things and he does these things to shock you and to distract you and all these things because um… because there was a criminal charge against him, and once there's a criminal charge people come with all sorts of gimmicks and they say this person is crazy or possessed or all those things… so you've also got to distinguish.

MU45, ST2A, MT2

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R: But also something important which you are highlighting now is that I've also thought about is with this spirituality and we spoke about this false self and true self and in this case for example I've often wondered what it says about this good/evil and this internal struggle with how we relate with this belief system and this good versus evil? Like um… I'm thinking now about the work of Freud as well with the split that he spoke of and I'm wondering if that's also not linked to the spiritual and this view of self in some way?

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P: Ja well I mean Freud said that we're basically dominated or strongly influenced by our impulses, whereas Jung said basically we are good people and we all striving to become self-actualized. Um… (Pause) ‖ I don't think God makes mistakes and I don't think God makes duplicates but now why do people get baptised, so that now becomes a contradiction, ‖ because we have to get rid of the original sin, but I don't have original sin, you know God made me now why must I have to. ‖ The church and the past, haven't they made this thing a big money making thing and a big tradition thing ‖ so but sorry what I'm saying is

MU46, ST2A, MT2

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MU47, ST2A, MT2

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Meaning Units

that we're made to believe that we're basically good but we that we're still born with flaws… ‖ and I think some people don't make sense out of it and if it's true that there is a dark side in us it always has to be cleaned and refined. If that is true then I can understand that some people can just allow that to happen. ‖

MU48, ST2A, MT2

R: But also what I'm hearing what you are saying that is important, and correct me if I'm interpreting wrongly, but in the practice of religion this good and bad is almost… it's like they are saying we'll cleanse you of the bad and keep the good, but with the personal journey of the spiritual to come to that authentic self and that place of connection it's an integrated and more holistic understanding that there's different aspects but they're all part of the same and you don't need to be rid of certain things.

P: Ja, where you've got to integrate, I mean Jung spoke about our shadow and we all got a shadow if you want to use that metaphor, and then we've got to integrate that shadow. I also teach at University A, I've been teaching there this year, and one of the students were reading a book on Jung and shadows and he said to you think that Jesus had a shadow? And I said well ja… (Laugh) I can't explain but I think he must have because he was human. ‖ So we all have this shadow and this part of ourselves that we don't like that we want to get rid of or that we don't want to face or that we hide but eventually we have to integrate because that's who we are. I think… ‖

MU49, ST4B, MT4

55 min

R: And maybe again imposing my own idea but that integration is then the spiritual and the cognitive and all the different aspects into the true self.

P: Yes… yes… You see for a long time especially after Rene Descartes, was it after the 1500's you know the reformation period, there was a strong rational thing on the planet where we could work things out and that lasted and we've seen that in education where you must be disciplined and you must use your will but very little is given to the feeling part, until now lately, and especially with carl Rogers, staying with the person now. ‖ This is how you are feeling NOW! Alright your past is important but it's actually coming through now so this is what we've got to deal with and that's one thing that Rogers said is that your personal experience, your subjective experiences is your reality and no one can take that away from you. So you know don't throw me with the Bible or some other interpretation, it's my own personal experience. So ja… the reason that I'm saying that is we need to integrate our thoughts but our feelings as well. ‖ ‖ En mense is bang vir hulle gevoelens. We don't like to say I feel murderous. People have

The therapeutic importance of the present.

MU50, ST3B, MT3

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		Meaning Units

5 often asked me how do you feel and I would say I feel suicidal and they would walk away. (Laughter) but that's to get the conversation going. How do you feel today? Well I feel murderous. Nee maar jy mag nie so voel nie. How do you mean I'm not allowed to feel it, I can feel it! How do you feel today? Well I'm hell of a horny, you know I'm allowed to be horny and depressed and suicidal and all these things. ‖

MU51, ST3D, MT3

10 R: And I also wonder if that isn't part of the difficulty to just find the empirical evidence or the scientific method that pinpoint spirtualty and say this is A B C and what it is. And I wonder if that isn't connected to what you are saying with that feeling part as well because it's something that's difficult to measure and I wonder if it doesn't influence how it is introduced or practiced or verbalized.

Allowing the feelings in therapy.

15 P: Yes, ja… ja… ‖ because our feelings are our feelings and it can be verbalized in an ambiguous or an inaccurate way, it can be interpreted in an inaccurate way, but that's how I experience my inner life and we need to respect that in other people. ‖ Ja but that's only a feeling, well if that's only a feeling it's still important to know. When I used to work with the psychiatrists they would say ja but that's only a psychological thing. I would say well if that's only a psychological thing then it is massive because you can't X ray it. At least in your game you can take blood tests and do X rays but if it's only psychological, you know now we are dealing with a lot of unknowns. So ja… that's why ‖ we need to integrate all these things, our thoughts, our feelings, our beliefs, our attitudes, alles. ‖

MU52, ST2A, MT2

Self-integration is the only goal of therapy which allows perceptual shifts and changes in behaviour.

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MU53, ST4B, MT4

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30 R: In your experience with spirituality in therapy and the cases and those cases where it has been prominent and that we've briefly touched on, how has it influenced your view of spirituality? Did it change in any way or did I stay the same or affirmed some things that you already believed or thought of? One example was that case with the girl definitely challenged it in many ways because of the spiritual aspect being present and her beliefs but I'm thinking of how other cases might have influenced your view of spirituality?

60 min

35 P: Ja no… I mean… (pause) when people get into trouble then they either go to the doctor, or the psychologist, or a friend, or they go to the church. Now when the church is corrupt then these people lose a lot of faith in what is good and wholesome. We've seen a lot of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. And now you've got the people in power, the bishops and some cardinals, and then they don't expose it they block it. So they know what's going on but they don't expose it, they don't expose that priest and then we've seen it in the last 20 years. We've

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seen it in Boston, we've seen it in Chicago, and last year it came out in Ireland and Germany where these priests were sexually molesting kids… and adults… Now when a person comes to me and says I've lost faith and I've lost respect for this God given institution, the so called church. You know now you've got to work or a different level. For me I've got to work on a different level because it's true, objectively we see it in the newspapers, we see it on TV, that the so called guardians of Christ's church is now corrupt and they are in for the money and the power and they actually hurting and destroying people because if you've been sexually abused then it leaves marks on you forever. And now to deal with that person, and I have, or these people… now it's their relationship with God, and not with the people on the planet anymore, because the people on the planet is useless. And you know not all of them. But they generalize and they come with their steotypes: All Catholics are bad… all Muslims are suicide bombers, things like that. Now you've got to get the person in touch with you know what is your relationship with this God that allows this evil… because it is evil to happen… and then it becomes a deeper form of therapy. You also need to practical and you need to get a lawyer involved, a good lawyer. Good lawyers are normally bad but you've got to get a lawyer that is moral involved. So that you can say now we've got this bad person but we're dealing with a big organisation, and we also need some practical help because we don't want the person to get exposed but ja… I don't know if I'm answering you but that also becomes challenging because now you're dealing with an organisation that's become corrupt. We saw how people are misusing people, we saw that pastor that's getting his congregation to swallow snakes and people do that. And it happens in all religions where people gets abused sexually, financially or whatever.

R: and when you are…

P: ‖ So that's when spirituality takes on a different dimension because now you really have to zero in and what do you really stand for because these people want to give up because they've been religious and now they want to commit suicide, so what do you do? ‖

MU54, ST5A, MT5

R: And when it is challenging in that way and spirituality becomes part of the therapy in that way do you find that then it also challenges your view of spirituality?

P: Definitely, oh yes!

R: Then it also almost asks, then you almost ask those questions of yourself outside of therapy.

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MU55, ST5A, MT5

P: ‖ Yes, I've got to ask myself but do I really believe in what I believe in because what I'm hearing now is shocking and its true… you know why do I really believe in what I believe in? I don't want to call it introspection because that can be vain but I've got to deeper contemplation. ‖

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65 min

R: Ja, but it forces you to confront your own spiritual connection.

P: For sure, always. Definitely… yes.

-------------------------- Break for coffee and bathroom --------------------------

R: Perhaps for the sake of my interview a last idea or thought is that this conversation that we had this morning, how was that for you in terms of spirituality and thinking about it and the space it has in therapy and your views?

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85 min

P: Well I mean I enjoyed it, that's why we continued more than an hour, I enjoyed it… and it's always nice to share with somebody that's on the same page somebody that at least appreciates my point of view. Ja… (Pause) I enjoyed that and um… (Pause) it's nice to share things, and it's nice to have somebody to listen to me for a change (Laughter). You know won't thinking that I'm talking junk, maybe say some of it is weird but that's not what's important. The thing is I have an opportunity to share what I think you are asking me. Because you've asked me a few question and maybe I've sidestepped but the point is I could share what came out spontaneously. Yes, thank you I benefitted and it's been enjoyable, it's been therapeutic.

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R: For me as well I think perhaps this is a thought for a reflective journal rather than the interview but I'm so amazed that how many of the thoughts that you shared resonate so well from the definition or view of spirituality to how it presents in therapy and how it's part of it, is I don't want to say confirm but resonating with ideas I had and saw and read about and I wonder if we opened more such discussions or have platforms where spirituality is just, a free space to talk about it and talk about it more, what that would change for how we view it in therapy and how we embrace it, or who even would be open for it because it's now from therapists who find it more intuitively and the others well like you said technicians. I think many are spiritual but sceptical to embrace it in therapy because therapy is clinical and a thing you should do in a certain way but it's not a place where they bring their spiritual selves and sceptical or scared. So I guess at the end I'm saying I wonder if there's more conversations like these what would that bring.

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Appendix E – Data analysis of interview of psychologist C

Abbreviations: R = Researcher, P = Participant, MU = Meaning Unit, ST = Sub Theme, MT = Main Theme

Reflective Notes			Meaning Units
	P:	Ja so… um, dankie dat ek kan deelneem aan die, en ek dink dit is baie nodig, dat ouens bietjie in die veld skryf want soos jy se ‖ as n ou so oplees oor die filosowe kom mens agter daar is eintlik heelwat gese daaroor maar dis asof die mense dit amper doelbewus misgelees het of dit half doelbewus gekatigoriseer het, die spiritualiteit deel. ‖	MU1, ST5A, MT5
	R:	Ja, ja.	
	P:	So ek dink dis goed dat ons bietjie daaroor chat.	
	R:	So umm… n goeie vertrek punt dink ek is um… ek doen nou ondersoek oor spiritualiteit in terapie maar van die sielkundige se ervaring daarvan. So uummm… en natuurlik is dit nou in existentialisme geground maar, hoe sien jy spiritualiteit in terapie maar miskien apart of net oor die algemeen?	
Grounding his way of working.	P:	Ek werk hoofsaaklik van uit n existentiele denkraamwerk in psigoterapie en (sug) gegewe dat as iemand in my kantoor inloop of in my konsultasie kamer inloop, ‖ fokus ek altyd op hulle "lived experience" soos die engels se, ek sal maar baie engels en Afrikaans deurmekaar gebruik, maar jy weet hulle geleefde of beleefde ervaring en dit dan behels enigeiets uh… wat ookal dit is. Maar in my ervaring is daar baie keer n geestelike ervaring wat n mens het, so dan werk ek daarmee ook. ‖ ‖ So dit is nie dat ek half spiritualiteit induce nie. Ook as deel van existentiele psigoterapie is die belangrike aspek van bracketing wat jy ook seker al gelees het of die suspension of your own ideas, so ‖ ‖ ek is gefokus daarop om my eie vooropgestelde idees eenkant toe te hou dat dit half in die lug hang, vir n wyle ten minste, terwyl ek die pasient leer ken, die storie hoor en waaroor hulle main complaint gaan. ‖	MU2, ST1A, MT1 MU3, ST3A, MT4 MU4, ST3A, MT4
Description of approach to therapy but not a definition of spirituality yet.			
	R:	Mmm, mmm…	
	P:	En natuurlik van daar af vertak dit in verskeie rigtings, uuummm… hoe ook al die terapie ontwikkel. ‖ Maar ja spiritualiteit is maar vir my deel van die mens se ervaring en die mense wat na my toe kom, snaaks genoeg, is ook baie oop oor spiritualiteit. ‖ ‖ So hier en daar het ek mense gehad wat se hulle gaan gladnie daar nie of dit het geen beduidende impak op hulle lewe nie, maar die oorgrote meerderheid het dit een of ander impak op hulle bestaan. ‖	MU5, ST1A, MT1 MU6, ST5A, MT5

Reflective Notes line numbers: 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35

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		Meaning Units

R: En n belangrike ding is, jy't nou gese dan dit maak deel uit van daai lived experience so hoe kom spiritualiteit na vore in die terapie?

P: Ja, wel iemand sal bv. se (pause) uh… **‖** jy weet ek is laas maandag voordat ek werk toe gaan gehjiack en… jy weet dit het my totale wereldsbeskouing uitgedaag en gechallange en ek kon nie gaan werk nie en ek was angstig en ek was depresief en ek kan nie glo dat God sulke goed toelaat nie, hoe kan sulke goed met my gebeur? Wat vir my ommiddelik n spiruele existentiele vraag is: hoekom ek? So asof inherent in die vraag is daar die stelling dat daar is iets wat die goed laat gebeur. So uh, dit is bv. hoe dit geintroduce sal word. **‖** Um, maar soos ek se **‖** dan hang ek half terug om eers daai… lived experience n bietjie meer diepte en rykheid aan te gee deur te luister en te explore voordat n ou nou net half hop op die idee van spiritualiteit. **‖ ‖** So in daai sin word dit geintroduce maar ook as deel van n totale ervaring. So n ou se dan nie die hijacking was n spiruele ervaring nie, maar n aspek daarvan het n spiruele vraag opgebring. **‖ ‖** Soos baie traumas, egskeidings, die meeste van die goed waarmee ek maar werk is verhoudings issues, egskeidings, traumas, jy weet stress… hierdie existentiele vakume wat mense beleef. Waarheen gaan ek? Wat doen ek? En daai goed. Daar is maar altyd n spiruele dimensie daar agter, **‖** en dan moet jy ook verstaan **‖** my siening van n spiruele dimensie is nie n geloofs religiese dimensie nie, maar eerder n intuitiewe (used hands to illustrate point) ervarings dimensie van waa mense gaan en waar hulle deur die lewe belewe, met ander woorde **‖ ‖** hulle ervaar die lewe ook as n geestelike ervaring en gee dan ook sin aan hulle lewe vanuit n geestelike ervaring. **‖**

R: So dis belangrik wat ek hoor jy se daar is vir jou n verskil met n spiruele ervaring en daai dimensie en geloofsaspek noodwendig.

P: Wel **‖** geloof is vir my deel van n spiruele aspek maar religie of georganiseerde religion in terme van hoe dit gestruktureer is val nie vir my onder die spiruele nie omdat dit onder die ideologiese geloofsoortuigings eerder as n spiruele ervaring. Natuurlik kan daar dele wees van daai belewenis van geloof en religiese affiliasie wat n spiruele dimensie kan aanhe maar dit is nie spiritueel per sy nie. Dit is nie asof ek dit alles net in een mandjie gooi nie. Jy weet dis eintlik iets heel anders as wat religie is. **‖** Hierdie is baie meer um… ek dink, ek weet nie of jy van Max von Mannen se goed al gelees het nie, hy het so bietjie deur Heidegger se goed gegaan en Merleau-Ponty en baie van die existentiele filosowe, en hy het n paar goed geidentifiseer of aspekte wat hy noem life world existentials. Nou um… ek het dit ook in my PhD studie, uh, oor dit kommentaar gelewer. Maar hy het bv.

Meaning Units:

MU7, ST3C, MT1

MU8, ST3A, MT4

MU9, ST1C, MT1

MU10, ST1A, MT1

MU11, ST1A, MU1

MU12, ST1C, MT1

MU13, ST1B, MT1

Reflective Notes:

5 — One way of introduction is overtly – direct relation to their belief system.

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30 — 5 min — He is illustrating his point by referencing academic work – Also illustrating his own interest and oreitnation in existentialism

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174

Meaning Units

corporality, jou ligaamsbelewenis or lived body, hy het relationality or lived relationship, dan het hy spaceality of lived space, en temporality lived time. Maar ek het geargumenteer in my studie ook dat daar is ook lived spirit or spiritualality as nog n manier van hoe mense die lewe beleef en ervaar en dan sin mak daaruit. **||** Met ander woorde ek is n liggaam so as ek n naald vat en hom op my hand druk dan voel ek daai pyn, maar wanneer ek sit tussen bome en ek kry n gevoel van vrede en serenity dan is dit wel ook deel van n spacial of n ruimtelike ervaring maar tog ook deel van n geestelike of spiritual ervaring, **||** so die goed overlap maar ek het geargumenteer dat van hierdie filosowe ook either hint daarnatoe of wel dit baie ernstige waarde gee. Ouens soos Gabriel Marcel en Paul Tillich en die ouens wat gepraat het oor spiritualiteit en geestelike belewenis. Um… ja so dit is maar waar dit vir my inpas as deel van n tipe life world existential van hoe ons die lewe ervaar. **||** En natuurlik wat ek ook dink n neglected dimensie is van die mens alhoewel dit so obvious is. **|| ||** Kyk bv. as jy gaan kyk het na die groot tsunamis wat gebeur het oor die afgelope 10 of 15 jaar, aardbewings en krisisse en die 9/11's. Mense na daai trauma vlok gewoonlik na kerke toe en jy weet hulle werp hulself amper in die geestelike ook as deel van om geestelike sin te maak uit gebeure wat hulle nie op ander maniere kan verklaar of verwerk of verstaan nie so daar is hierdie groot ding in die mens soos jy weet **|| ||** van die oertye af, van die eerste paintings in die boesman grotte tot vandag se politisie en professionele mense probeer geestelike sin maak uit die lewe. So ek kon eintlik nie mooi verstaan hoekom dit nooit die aandag gegee is wat dit dink ek werd is nie. **||**

MU14, ST1A, MT1

MU15, ST1A, MT1

MU16, ST1C, MT1

MU17, ST5A, MT5

R: En, jy't nou nou aan die begin ook genoem dat baie van die mense wat jy sien, amper die meerderheid, bring daai spirituele element of behoefte of tema na vore met hulle lived world soos hulle dit vertel en soos jy hulle leer ken.

P: Ja, ja, **||** hulle introduce dit in die terapie, en ander kere vra ek daaroor, jy weet soos hoe beleef jy jou liggaam wanneer jy angs voel. Jy weet wat doen daai ervaring aan jou belewenis van ruimte en tyd? Vra ek ook wat doen daai ervaring en belewenis op n geestelike en spirituele aspek? **||**

MU18, ST3B, MT3

R: Ja, en jy het nou genoem met daai verbintenis met trauma maar ook as n ou in die veld sit met n boom en as jy n ervaring kry en n gevoel kry dat dit vir jou n verbintenis met die spirituele het. So wanneer die mense jou hulle stories so vertel en daai spirituele element kom na vore, hoe was jou ervaring van wat dit met, jy weet as mens dink aan

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Reflective Notes		Meaning Units

daai existential temas en hoe mens sin maak daarvan, hoe pas dit in by daai menslike ervaring?

15 min

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This is an illustration of a specific therapeutic technique he applies – Making people aware of the non verbal experiential reality.

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Awareness is an important precursor to access experience.

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People are not aware of their experiential reality but most can give a positive or negative association to it.

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P: Wel ‖ ek dink dit is aan die kern van die mens se ervaring ‖ maar natuurlik soos baie ander aspekte van hierdie life world existentials en hierdie hele existential psigoterpaie gaan ‖ dit baie oor die awareness of. So dit gaan oor om n bewustheid te skep van jou belewenis. So met ander woorde ek doen dit baie keer in terme van terapie met die liggaam: Kan jy in jou liggaam ingaan en werklik voel hoe dit voel om daai liggaam te possess of dit te behou in terme van jou belewenis. So met ander woorde hoe voel dit om daar te sit op daardie stoel? Kan jy voel waar is die spanning? Jy weet, en dan sal die pasient of die klient se ek voel daar is spanning in my rug of my gewrigte voel styf of my nek is nie ontspanne nie, of whatever die liggaamsbelewenis is. So baie keer gaan dit oor om die awareness te rig tot n sekere belewenis, net soos wat dit gaan oor tyd. Jy weet dink bv oor tyd, as jy n goeie tyd het dan vlieg die tyd net so verby en ander kere terwyl dit moeilik is rek tyd uit, so jou experience of belewenis van tyd is nie altyd dieselfde nie. So ook met die geestelike of spirituele moet jy partykeer mense daaraan bloot stel en daarvan bewus maak om hulle belewenis daarvan te kry, jy weet so dit is half van n… n… bewuswordingsoefening. ‖ En natuurlik net soos met ligaamlike belewenis is nie almal dieselfde nie, jy kan n ou kry wat daar sit en se well hy voel niks nie, hy weet nie wat ek bedoel nie, hy voel nie sy liggaam nie. Net so gaan jy ook iemand kry wat hulle verstaan nie die geestelike nie, hulle is nou maar hier, jy weet. So dit is nie altyd dat iemand hierdie ryke ervaring het nie, en dit is ook ok, maar um… ‖ die oorgrote meerderheid mense met wie ek werk kan daar gaan en daai belewenisse jy weet beskryf. Hetsy positief of negatief maar hulle kan dit ten minste verwoord op n manier. ‖

MU19, ST1A, MT1

MU20, ST3B, MT3

MU21, ST3B, MT3

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The awareness exercise is a therapeutic vehicle that leads the person to a self-reflective space where they can integrate and understand experiences better. Understanding self = understanding experiences

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R: Ja… en jy het ook gese dat mense n persoonlike ervaring vir daai dimensie wat jy in terapie sien, so wat ek ook hoor jy se is dat daai verwoording daarvan is ook vir party mense makliker en meer toeganklik as vir ander.

P: Ja, ja en ek dink dit is um, wat van die filosowe ook oor praat met n ou se eie bereidwilligheid om dieper in jouself in te gaan. Ek dink van Kierkegaard af deur, um, verwys baie van hulle na daai dieper gaan. Jy weet Heidegger ook, ‖ om in jouself in te kan kyk en daai self te kan wees. En ek dink dit is maar deel van die oefening, net soos wat jy jouself meer kan wees en meer kan verstaan en amper beter, meer akuraat kan beleef as jy bewus is van jou tyd en jou ruimtike dimensie en jou verhoudings dimensies en jou geestelike dimensies,

MU22, ST3A, MT4

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Reflective Notes		Meaning Units

jy weet so is dit n vehicle vir psigoterapie om iemand te kry op n punt waar hulle meer self-reflective is, meer uh, jy weet self verstaan en dan n beter idee ook het van wat hulle ongelukkig maak of wat hulle laat suffer. ‖

5 R: En as dit dan n betrokke element van die terapie proses word hoe bring jy dit in of word dit deel van daai terapie proses nadat hulle die vertelling of ervaring, jy weet jy het nou klaar genoem dat die een manier is bv. om net meer bewus te wees van die ervaring van om in die stoel te sit. So miskien dink ek juis nou net aan ander ways wat
10 dit kan deel van die terapie word, so hoe vorm die verskillende maniere vir jou deel van die terapie?

He relates experiential problems to inherent anxiety of having a meaningless existence, which leads to guilt about how we are experiencing life.

P: Ek dink baie keer haak dit ook aan by die mense, en wil ek amper se oerkwessies, daai angs en skuld. ‖ En ek vind dat baie mense in terme van die spirituele baie gedompel is in n skuld. Natuurlik ook oorsprong uit hulle angs uit, ‖ um… as jy kyk waaroor dit gaan dan is dit interresant dat n groot, en seker die oorgrote meerderheid van geloofs oortuigings argumenteer vir n lewe na die dood so n continuation in watse tipe form van existence, of dit nou reincarnation is or life eternal is of nirvana is of whatever dit is dink ek ‖ dit reflekteer ook daai, soos ek se, oerangs, van die mens of non being, om nie te wees nie, of om op te hou bestaan en daai angstigheid veroorsaak ook daai skuld gevoel wat die ouens van praat jy weet: hoe leef ek my potensiaal uit of my possibilities uit? Maar hoe leef ek met die keuse van om te kies vir een ding kies ek teen ander goed? So ek dink amper daai spanning word amper simbolies uitgeleef in geloofsinhoud. So mense kom baie keer in die praktyk aan, of die issues kom baie keer uit wanneer daar oor skuld gevoel gepraat word. Wie is ek? Of wat ek gedoen het of nie gedoen het nie, hoe ek my lewe leef of waarin ek sin uitkry of wat maak ek hier of waar ek voel ek mors tyd. ‖ En dit is eintlik so beautiful om te hoor hoe mense dit verwoord. Maar ja al daai goeters fuel maar net daai spirituele belewenis ook.

| MU23, ST3D, MT3 |
| MU24, ST3D, MT3 |

It is beautiful how people find the words to then illustrate the tension and guilt of what they think are expected of them and what they actually experience.

R: En jy het nou nou ook genoem dat in tye van krisis gaan mense um, of na n kerk toe of na, dis asof hulle meer oop is vir daai spiritualiteit
35 en ek wonder ook net of dit aansluit by hierdie angs en soeke na betekenis en sin making van n ervaring of jy weet daai death anxiety?

15 min

P: Ja jy weet ek dink dis ironies om te sien dat van Kierkegaard se tyd al dat hy gepraat het hoe die mense, ‖ die massas na die kerke toe vlok uit n ignorance van hulle eie angs en amper giveness of throwness in
40 die wereld ‖ en veral die kritiek wat hy gehad het veral die deense meer ortodokse kerke die herd mentality wat hy dit genoem het, en ek

| MU25, ST3E, MT3 |

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Reflective Notes

Illustrating the point of the relational dimension of being – Firstly with yourself and then with others and that part of the biggest tension is relating to the question of being: Can I have authentic experiences but also relate and associate with others.

The pressures to fit in and associate with others also relates to something of a split or double bind as he calls it here. People are accepted for who they are in religion but also expected to change to be more fitting with the ultimate way of being.

In the interpretation of experience something is lost. Many people then try to understand their experience before experiencing it. There is a gap between perception and interpretation where the essential meaning of being is lost

dink baie van daai is vandag nog steeds so teenwoordig. Um, maar hy het ook baie geskryf oor die individu en die individu en daai famous confusing line van: "The self is not the relation to the self but a relation to itself through itself" so die idee is eintlik dat **||** jy bestaan eintlik ook maar net tot verhouding tot jouself maar en dat die self is nie net hierdie ding binne jou soos n entiteit soos die brein of die amygdala of n deel van jou brein nie, jy weet dit is eintlik jy in verhouding tot jouself. En dat jy die verhoudingsdimensie ook uitgeleef word teenoor ander mense maar sonder om jouself te verloor in die herds of die masses **|| ||** en ek beleef dat baie mense sukkel met daai spanning tussen glo ek wat almal glo en assosieer ek myself met groter groepe, wat sekere goed glo en daarin vind ek my veiligheid of ten minste sus ek my angs of kan ek verskil maar ook glo wat ek glo in verhouding tot myself? Jy weet so met ander woorde kan ek wees? Authentic wees, en leef? En dan ook authentically geestelikheid ervaar, want dis natuurlik die ongeluk wat met baie van hierdie goed gebeur het soos as jy dink aan corporality of lived body, daar is veral in die hede, wel ek dink dit was eintlik nog altyd so, **|| ||** maar veral in hedendaagse lewe n groot idee van hoe moet jy lyk, wat jy moet weeg, en hoe jy gebou moet wees en al daai goed. So society as die groter entiteit sal altyd druk sit op die individu se ervaring van sy liggaam bv. Net so is dit dieselfde vir die ruimtelikheid en die tyds belewenis maar ook dan vir die geestelike dimensie so dis die ongeluk dat georganiseerde geloofspraktyke baie keer smoor hiedie geestelike belewenis. **||** Net soos wat jou liggaamsbelwenis smoor as jy dink jy moet so gegym of jy moet so lyk, en die posters is daar en jy is n konstante strewe om daar uit te kom om te voel maar nou fit jy in en nou is jy deel van wat aanvaarbaar is, net so met geestelikheid baie keer um beleef mense dat hulle moet in die dogma glo en aan dit voldoen en die stappe doen. En ek dink veral in baie gelowe is daar konstante klem op veranderinge. So en natuurlik as iemand vir jou se jy moet verander se hulle vir jou jou huidige staat is nie goed genoeg nie. So **||** dis so n double bind wat mense in is, ek is ok vir wie ek is se die een deel van die geloof maar ek moet verander en iets beter word of iets heiliger of iets meer vervuld of hang nou af watse geloof jy oor praat. So ek dink dat georganiseerde geloof veral in dogma n persoon baie keer kan konfronteer met hulle eie authenticity, hulle eie self-relatedness, hulle eie uuummm… oortuiginge oor hoe hulle geestelikheid beleef. **||** En dit is maar die hartseer ding en dit is dieselfe in Kierkegaard se tyd en dit is dieselfde in ons tyd dat op die einde het wel Nietzsche het dit self gese "God is dead" en almal stop ongelukkig daar en dink hy is die groot atheis maar niemand lees die tweede sin wat se "and you killed him". **||** En sy hele argument was

Meaning Units

MU26, ST3C, MT3

MU27, ST3E, MT3

MU28, ST3E, MT3

MU29, ST3E, MT3

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20 min

5   Part of the
dilemma is
that people are
rushing to
interpretation
before fully
experiencing.
An intellectual
hazard and
inconvenience
10   that robs the
experience of
fully
developing

He is stating
that the
15   therapeutic
aim is to allow
the lived
experience to
be, to not
reduce it into a
mould or
20   generalisation,
or bigger
structure like
dogma. The
function of
that
25   reductionism is
the
containment of
anxiety.

eintlik maar dat n mens die spiritiuele, die Godheid daar uit gehaal het en dit verander het in iets so dood en dogmaties en dan natuurlik ook oop is vir die misbruik deur politiese organisasies en groepe en so. So op die einde los dit mens at a loss vir hierdie genuine authentic spirituele ervaring. ||

MU30, ST3E, MT3

R: Mmm…

P: Jy weet en dan bv. in verskillende geloofsoortuiginge kan n ou sit onder die bome en jy kan n ervaring hê wat jy weet is nie, is iets meer as net, jy weet ek sien n boom en ek waardeer dit, of ek ruik die vars lug maar daar is, alles kom bymenkaar en dit voel soos n geestelike belewenis of jy beleef dit geestelik, maar dan wanneer jy dit kommunikeer aan ander sal daar altyd n poging wees, om van hulle kant af, dit een of ander groepering of klasifikasie te sit, hetsy watookal die geloofsoortuiging. || So iets van die belewenis word dan ook verlore, en dis waaroor die hele existentiele phenomenology gaan om net die, om terug te kom by die essence soos Husserl gese het "the essence of things themselves" maar || dan gaan dit verlore want dan sit || ons en se: "ja maar jy was daar onder die bome en jy weet dit was kalm en die wind het gewaai" of "ja maar was dit nou God wat daar verby was of n profeet of was dit nou die aura van die of net die mense" jy weet en dan word dit onmiddelik geinterpriteer. ||

MU31, ST3C, MT3

MU32, ST3C, MT3

R: Mmm…

P: En || daai interpretasie partykeer smoor dan die rykheid en uniekheid van die belewenis. En dit is dan eintlik waaroor die hele beweging gaan van existentiele phenomenologie, om te probeer keer dat die mense se lived experience en geleefde, en beleefde ervaring, gereduseer word tot n formule of n veralgemening of n dogma, of n groter struktuur wat eintlik maar net daar gestel is om ons eie angs te contain, jy weet eerder as om iets sinvols by te dra. || So dis nou erg gederail van die punt af maar ja || dis dan waar die gesprekke in terapie oor geestelikheid baie keer gaan. Daai skuld gevoel of gevoel van geestelike ervaring gekompartementaliseer en gelabel word en partykeer net gereduseer word as iets onsinnigs of iets onnuttigs of so.||

MU33, ST3A, MT4

MU 34, ST3D, MT3

R: Ja, en ek uh… daars baie aspekte van wat ek hoor wat jy se maar wat ek wonder is of dit nie dalk deel is wat vir party mense moeilik is om juis oor daai ervaring te praat omdat dit dan n klasifikasie of interpritasie moet he van waar dit pas uh, jy weet bv. is dit nou geinterpriteer volgens hierdie geloofsoortuiging of hierdie een of waar word dit geplaas? Maar die ervaring, is soos jy se, gaan afgebreek word, of n deel sal verlore gaan met hierdie interpritasie. En ek wonder

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<u>Reflective Notes</u>

of dit n deel is hoekom dit vir mense moeilik is om daarmee um, in touch is, maar ook te verbaliseer?

Because people have a need to belong or connect with others, as opposed to feeling Isolated, they will reduce their experiences in an attempt to numb the anxiety

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P: ‖ Ja ek dink aan die kern daarvan is maar weereens een van daai oerangste waaroor ek my PhD onlangs gedoen het van eensaamheid jy weet wat ook maar direk staan teenoor connectedness of belonging of watookal jy dit wil noem. Maar ek dink die mens is n angstige wese so die oomblik as ek iets ervaar moet ek rondhardloop en vra: "Het iemand dit ook gesien?" jy weet: "het iemand dit ook ervaar?" jy weet: "Het jy dit al ook beleef?" en die oomblik as ek daai affirmation kry dat daar is n ander wat dit ook ervaar het dan is dit asof ek kan gaan: "Phew, eks ok…" en die hartseer daarvan is dat daai self, en daai genuine unieke belewenis word dan gereduseer onmiddelik tot iets wat: "Ag dit is iets wat ander ook ervaar" ‖ ‖ Jy weet so probeer ons ons self vind in mekaar maar verloor ons ons self meeste van die tyd met mekaar, jy weet so… so dit is n dinamika wat baie keer veroorsaak word deur daai rondhardloop en vra: "Is ek ok?" ‖ ‖ So ook as jy n geestelike ervaring het sal jy vra "Waar pas dit in?" jy weet "Wie is dit, of waar?" en dis n natuurlike soeke van die mens om dit te weet, en ek se nie die soeke om self is sleg nie, so kyk net waarheen die soeke ons lei is nie regtig altyd die antwoord nie, maar eerder net n containment van die angs eerder as n ultimate answer. En soos jy weet die existentialiste maak maar baie van die uncertainties in die lewe, jy weet die feit dat ek nie weet nie. So as ek onder die bome sit en ek het n geestelike ervaring dan weet ek nie hoekom en wat en waar en waaroor dit gaan nie. Ek weet dit nie. ‖ ‖ Ek kan gaan soek vir verklarings en n verklaring vind wat my, wat vir my berusting bring of my angs ten minste verminder maar dit beteken nie dit is waaroor dit gegaan het nie, jy weet. ‖

MU35, ST3C, MT3

MU36, ST3C, MT3

MU37, ST4A, MT4

This is the transgression to connect with others without conforming – Connecting authentically

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25 min

MU38, ST4A, MT4

R: Mmm, mmm.

He is revealing some of his own personal difficulty in relating to others because of his awareness of the function thereof.

The "me to I" and the "me to you"

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P: So um, ‖ so ek is baie bewus daarvan, wat dit natuurlik ook moeiliker maak dink ek om te lewe. (Laugh). Dis makliker om te lewe jouself as jy maklik jouself in ander vind en in groot organisasies jy weet en jys ok met labels en groter konsepte wat jou definieer. Maar dis moeilik as jy deur dit sien en jy weet dit is eintlik maar nie dit nie. Jy lewe amper heeltyd exposed maar dis n baie meer, wil ek se, akute genuine belewenis van die lewe as om die "herd mentality" te he ‖ soos Kierkegaard dit noem of jy weet so, um, maar net, uh, Nietzsche met "the opium for the masses"

MU39, ST4A, MT4

R: Mmm, mmm

180

Reflective
Notes

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He provides
this example
of the surfer to
illustrate the
problem
caused by
allowing
others
(society) to
interpret or
even validate
your
experience as
opposed to
generating that
sense of
acceptance or
rejection from
within.

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If it comes
from within it
is congruent
with the
person and
easily
accepted. If
there is a
mismatch in
experience and
interpretation
there is not
only internal
tension of the
experience
(belonging/isol
ation) but also
guilt of having
to change in
order to have a
pleasant.

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P: Jy weet daai tipe goed te he. Was dit nou Barks gewees wat dit gese het? Maar anyway dit is daai idee van hom om genuine te leef en die lewe genuine te ervaar.

R: En dit sluit aan dink ek by wat jy nou nou oor gepraat het van die existentiele tema van authenticity en dat hierdie belewenis van spiritualiteit as persoonlik, en hierdie ervaring wat jy het, maar dan om dit nou te interpreteer en te klasifiseer in n geloofsoortuiging of in n dogma of in n spesifieke assosiasie met of tot ander dink ek daar le daai konflik anper inherent wat ek hoor jy se. Dis gemaklik om te behoort of te assosieer, maar as my ervaring verskil van, in elemente, of in n rykheid anders is dan is daar hierdie, uh, konflik van belonging?

P: ‖ Ja, en dis dan wanneer die dogma inkom wat vir my vertel hoe moet ek eintlik ervaar. Jy sien dit is waar die hele ding twisted raak. Umm, dis so goed jy, jy koop vir jou n surfboard en jy daag by die see op en jy stap in die golwe in en jy se: "vandag gaan ek surf", en jy weet nie eintlik wat jy doen nie maar hier en daar vang jy n brander en jy stap uit en jy se: "ek het gesurf". En daar sit n groep surfers op die strand en hulle kyk vir jou en hulle lag vir jou en hulle dink: "wat het jy gedoen daar binne?" en jy se: "ek het gesurf" en hulle se vir jou: "Nee, dit was nie surf nie, jy sien daar's ons buddy daar agter en hy vang die groot golwe, dit is wat surfing is". En dis nou maar net n klein verhaaltjie wat illustreer hoe die goed gebeur in die allerdaagse lewe. So onmiddelik word jou ervaring van wat dit beteken om te surf, word gemould deur die kommentaar deur die groepie wat se: "nee maar dit is nie". ‖ ‖ So dieselfde met n geestelike ervaring, jy weet jy beleef iets en jy kom by die kerk aan en se: "Jis gisteraand het ek die gedroom of daai gesien" of "jis toe ek vir die maan kyk toe kry ek die gevoel" en dan sal hulle vir jou se: "Ja maar God praat met jou" of "die planete is in lyn en daar is spiruele energie" ‖ ‖ jy weet so iemand sal dit vir jou verklaar en jy sal dan wegloop en se: "Oh, dit is wat dit is". So die arme ou wat eintlik baie fun gehad het en gedog het hy surf stap weg en dink maar eintlik is ek nie n surfer nie, en het ek eintlik nie gesurf nie, en sal ek nou moet meer oefen of groter golwe vang of langer op die bord bly of watookal voordat ek kan se ek het. En dit gebeur dan met geestelikheid ook so ek stap weg en se maar eintlik is ek nie so geestelik soos wat ek gedink het nie, ek moet meer bid of ek moet meer gee of ek moet meer goed doen, ek moet meer X, Y, en Z. ‖ So die hele ding word omgedraai, en dis dan wat mense mee struggle wanneer hulle by my uitkom. ‖ Hulle is dan al amper victims van hierdie ideologie en hulle sukkel dan om hulle self en hulle eie sin in die lewe te vind want hulle is nou al so geindoktrineer en gespoon

		Meaning Units

Reflective
Notes

feed dat hulle nie meer weet wie hulle is en waarheen hulle gaan en waar hulle vandaan kom nie. ‖ ‖ So dis amper dieselfde as sekere psigiatriese medikasies, dieselfde ding wat jou angs numb om te kan leef en nie oorweldig te word deur jou angs nie, is ook die culprit wat jou numb om die lewe te ervaar tot op n punt waar jy nie meer jou eie pad kan vind nie. Jy verstaan so dis amper dieselfde dosis in terme van wat dogma en georganiseerde geloof doen om jou angs te sus is ook die dosis wat jou doodmaak op die einde. ‖

MU44, ST3D, MT3

The introduction of spirituality in therapy happens as people are disconnected from their experiences through constant pressures and interpretations of their experiences. They struggle to find themselves and to find meaning in their lives. The problem is that the interpretation of the masses numb their anxiety but it also kills their authenticity.

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R: Mmm, mmm.

P: ‖ Dit verlam jou en numb jou vir ander ervaringe.Wat dan inevitably gebeur, dis nie asof jy dit nie het nie, jy het dit maar jy kan dit net nie beleef en ervaar en beskryf soos jy dit beleef nie want jy is onder n sekere… dogma of sekere leringe of ideologie wat dit moet interpriteer. Met ander woorde die ou wat die surfboard die tweede dag in die waves in vat het nie dieselfde ervaring as die vorige dag nie want nou is daar expectations en nou is daar n model om na te streef, en dan word dit inauthentic, en ‖ ‖ dan word dit rigied en aangeplak en meer van n kognatiewe leer oefening meer as n intuitiewe geestelike ervaring. ‖

MU45, ST3E, MT3

MU46, ST3E, MT3

35 min

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Because the person keeps on experiencing one aim of therapy is to then reconnect the person with the raw, unfiltered authentic experience in order to release some of the guilt and tension that causes so much difficulty in their lives.

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R: Ja, en dit is nou spiritualiteit en daai belewenis van self in die verbandskap amper tot die samelewing. Maar jy't genoem dis wanneer die ouens dan met hierdie worsteling en moeilike punt in terapie inkom en dan half voorkom in terapie. So wanneer dit dan in terapie na vore kom en hierdie elemente word nou geverbaliseer en dit word nou op n meer uh… persoonlike manier aangespreek. Hoe sien jy dan daai, of miskien nie sien nie, maar hoe beleef jy dan daai verandering um, of um… miskien is verandering die woord vir as die persoon dan oor spiritualiteit kan praat in terapie en die ervaring daarvan op n unieke manier of n relational of watookal en dit word meer ontgun in terapie. Hoe sien jy dan die verandering in terapie na hetsy n positiewe of negatiewe of n meer angstig minder angstig, meer authentic, jy weet daai, nie manifistasie nie maar daai ontvouing in die terapie proses?

P: Wel vanuit dat die existentiele benadering ‖ encourage ek mense dan om om in die terapie en ook op, en in, hulle eie tyd die principles toe te pas van half jouself te kan laat experience. ‖ Soos ek genoem het van die existentiele kosep van bracketing of die suspension van jou eie geloofsoortuigings oor watookal vir n wyle, en ek doen dit nie net oor spiritualiteit nie, maar dit is vir my n baie effektiewe manier om terug te kom by die ervaring. ‖ Amper om te gaan en n tennisbal op te tel en dan vir jouself te se jy weet kom ek vergeet, of ek sit dit eenkant in my kop, van hoe n tennisbal voel. Deur eers vir myself te se wat weet ek

MU47, ST4B, MT4

MU48, ST4B, MT4

182

<u>Reflective Notes</u>

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By allowing the experience to unfold unfiltered a richness enters that the person might not previously have been aware of. This in turn leads to

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shifts in perception and way of relating to the self and others.

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Preconceived ideas of reality and experience eventually pushes anxiety overboard which becomes evident in the presenting

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problem

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van die tennisbal van wat is hy en hoe voel hy en wat is my belewenisse, maar dan gaan ek en ek gee my liggaam die kans en my senses om regtig te voel hoe dit voel, en dan te beskryf in ryker terme as wat ek vroeer dit beleef het vir net n tennisbal voel nou maar sag en wollerig for instance, maar hy voel ook hard en jy kan hom squeeze en partykeer het hy harder en sagter dele en dieselfde met spiritualiteit, om jouself toe te laat om te kan gaan en te se wat glo ek en wat weet ek, dit eenkant toe te sit, en natuurlik kan jy dit nooit 100% doen nie maar net die strewe alleen bring n verandering, om dit te doen. En dan te se kom ek beleef geestelikheid dan soos dit na my toe kom in stede van soos ek geleer is dit na my toe moet kom, en dan laat ek myself toe om daai belewenis te vat en te se dis n genuine human belewenis van wat ek op daai punt in tyd, op daai oomblik gehad het en, en dit is ok, jy weet dit is ok om dit te he. So in daai beweging gebeur die shifts eintlik… ‖ Mense beweeg bietjie weg van wat hulle gedink het hulle weet of wat hulle glo. Hulle kan dit bietjie bracket en eenkant toe sit, hulle kan hulself toelaat weer om te beleef, en dan weer dit te integreer met hulle vorige ervaringe en… en dit is vir my deel van die existentiele verstaan van die mens, dat ‖ as ons kan oper wees en onself meer toelaat om die lewe te beleef vir wat dit is, dan sal ons minder vooropgestelde idees he wat op die einde van die dag ons angs ultimately laat oorboord gaan en dan in terme van simptome manifisteer. Jy weet so ook dan met geloof en n geestelike ervaring, as ons onself kan toelaat om dit te beleef vir wat dit is dan sal ons nie met al hierdie ultimate vrae sit wat nie antwoorde het nie. Van "wanneer kom God?" of "hoekom laat Hy sekere goed toe?" of "wat beteken dit in n geestelike sin?" want ‖ ‖ dan sal ons terug kom by die ervaring van daarvan. ‖

MU49, ST4B, MT4

MU50, ST4B, MT4

R: Ja, en jy se belangrik met daai proses van dat die persoon dan als opsy kan skuif en die belewenis by uitkom van wat dit vir daai persoon persoonlik is begin die shifts te gebeur en dan kan jy die verskil in terapie sien.

P: ‖ Mmm, mmm… ja en daai bracketing of suspension van jou assumptions is n baie powerful ding. Dis eintlik vir my so n… jy weet, amper n kern kenmerk wat dit in terapie bruikbaar maak, is dat dit nie moontlik is om dit te doen nie. Jy weet soos dit nie moontlik is om jou lewe op aarde te extend vir altyd nie, net so is dit nie moontlik om van n gebou af te spring en dit te oorleef nie, net so is dit nie moontlik nie. Maar in die strewe daartoe werk jy ook met jouself en jy se vir jouself: "maar hoekom is dit so moeilik?" ‖ jy weet "hoekom is dit so moeilik vir my om te vergeet hoe n tennisbal voel?" of te vergeet van wat ek glo oor sekere goed en deur daai oefening kom mense baie keer by

MU51, ST4B, MT4

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Reflective
Notes

wat ou Spinelli noem sedementations in jou um, wereld siening of wereld beskouing uit wat se: "maar jis ek sukkel om hierdie eenkant toe te skuif, vir my bly dit maar altyd so." Uh, ‖ so dit is n, dit is n uitdaging wat klaar terapeutiese shifts te weeg bring net in die persuit van dit, en dit is eintlik maar wat psigoterapie is, is in die persuit van om die ultimate plek te bereik waar jy ok is met al jou angs kom jy agter maar jy gaan dit nooit bereik nie maar in die persuit leer jy maniere van hoe om meer genuine met jouself te wees en in dit raak jy meer ok met jou eie angs. ‖ ‖ So dis amper in daai persuit van dit wat unobtainable is waar ons meaning le. ‖

MU 52, ST4B, MT4

MU53, ST4B, MT4

R: Ja, ja. Sjoe dis mooi gestel, en as ek dink aan wat jy vroeer gese het is ook n belangrike punt is dat hoewel die mense wat jy vir terapie sien meer oop of ontvanklik of meer um, n bewustheid het om te verbaliseer wat daai ervaring is um, en ander dit nie het nie, is dit ook n belangrike element wat as dit na vore kan kom dan, wat jy dan as terapeut, daai proses fasiliteer van bracketing soos jy dit noem, dan bring dit daai shifts en bewuswording.

P: Mmm, ja, want in dieselfde asem wat mense sukkel om hulle eie liggaams belewenis te ervaar so sukkel hulle om hulle eie geestelike belewenis te ervaar. Alhoewel dit beteken nie hulle het dit nie.

R: Ja

If we look at the history of humankind we always see spirituality as part of human beings way of finding meaning in life and making sense of existence. It lies at our core

P: Hulle het die geestelike ervaring, net soos iemand met n liggaam, dit beteken nie hulle het dit nie. ‖ En in dit neem ek nie aan dat jy n gees as entiteit het soos jy n liggaam as entiteit het nie, maar jy is in verhouding tot n geestelike sy van jouself ‖ ‖ en dit is nou maar baie voor-die-hand-liggend in ons geskiedenis soos ek se van die grotbewoners en die shamans en ag jy kan gaan kyk, dis vir my altyd interresant hoe vind n tribe of n bevolkingsgroep in die Amasone wat niks kontak met die wereld het nie, en jis hulle is predominantly geestelik ingestel. As daar n siekte is dan word dit geinterpreteer as n geestelike of mense van wat geleef het en in die hiernamaals terugkom om goed te doen aan ons. So dis eintlik baie meer genuine en authentic en oop en ryk as wat daai selfde ou wat in New York gebore is en groot geword het en n 6de generasie New Yorker is wat nie rondloop in awe van dat die son skyn en dat dit reen en die meaning daarvan af en die blessedness en die sacrifice, so dis eintlik vir my mooi om te sien hoe dit eintlik by ons core is en dat, en dat ons eie ontwikkeling as mens smoor sekere goed, uh, met tyd. ‖ ‖ Soos ons almal lyk al hoe meer dieselfde, ons almal dink al hoe meer dieselfde, en glo al hoe meer dieselfde, en terwyl daai unieke bevolkingsgroepie glo dalk baie meer uniek en selfs binne hulself baie

MU54, ST2A, MT2

MU55, ST2A, MT2

It is easier to relate to self if there is not such a strong influence of society. Disconnecting with self and unqiuness through cognitive filters

MU56, ST2B, MT2

184

Meaning Units

divers is. Dit is nie so tot daai mate geconform tot sekere goed nie, daar kan nog baie goed wees en hulle is nog baie meer oop vir ervaringe, jy weet wat dit beteken. ‖

R: Ja

5   P: En kan geestelike attributes gee aan diere, en insekte en plante en die weer en watookal. So dit herinner my daaraan dat dit is nie iets wat ons, ‖ ons het nie spiritual geword in ons evolusie nie. Ons was spiritual uit ons origin maar dit word verwronge hoe meer klem ons op die kognatiewe en die wetenskaplike en daai tipe goed sit. ‖

MU57, ST2B, MT2

10   R: mmm

Again making reference to the fact that problems develop because of what people expect of experiences on a cognitive level.

P: Umm, ek het nou die dag vir mense gese, en my gedagtes dwaal maar soms, maar ‖ dis amper dieselfde van hoe ons kinders leer oor seks. Jy leer kognatief alles. Wat dit is, en dan eendag ervaar jy dit belewenis gewys, maar dan word daai beleweniservaring van jou binne in n kognatiewe raamwerk geinterpreteer. Dus sit baie mense dan met skuld gevoelens of issues rondom seks en seksualiteit. Maar dit word geleer vanuit n kognatiewe kant. Dis amper asof ek jou gaan vertel as jy nou jou surfboard optel en instap gaan jy voel die water is koud en dis gevaarlik en die golwe kan jou omslaan, en jy moet dit doen en dat, en jy moet pasop… so teen die tyd wat jy in is, is jy so bang om by die agterste golwe uit te kom wat eintlik die is wat jy kan surf uit te kom dat jy vassit hier voor en… klein brandertjies probeer surf wat nie genoeg momentum het om jou gewig op te tel nie. En jou hele ervaring is eintlik screwed up in n sin as gevolg van hierdie vooropgestelde idees. ‖ ‖ So, en dit weereens is waar die bracketing kan inkom om vir myself te se: "Kom ek probeer my eie verwagtinge eenkant toe te sit en vooropgestelde idees, en dit te belewe vir wat dit is" soos wat daai tribe in die amasone hulle geestelikheid belewe. Natuurlik ook vanuit n manier van die wereld interpriteer maar ek dink tog dis minder rigied en global en universieel as wat dit is in massa media en society waar jy google n ding en as google se: "jou kind se koors is hoog vat hom dokter toe" dan glo jy dit, want dit is n autoritere figuur in jou kop. En almal google dieselfde google. Dis nie jy sit hier as n tribe in die amasone en jy moet self sin maak uit wat, jy weet nou hier gebeur nie. ‖ ‖ Jy weet n boom het nou hier op jou kind geval en jou kind is dood en wat beteken dit? Het jy nou iets verkeerd gedoen? Is dit n message? Is jou kind nou na die hiernamaals? Daai belewenis is n baie: "Jy moet dit self uitfigure" as google dit en se wel: "Bome val kinders dood en dis hoe dit is" ‖

MU58, ST2B, MT2

MU59, ST4B, MT4

MU60, ST4B, MT4

185

40 min

Meaning Units

When people authentically experience their being without trying to connect it to other experience they have less anxiety. They are free to fully experience these pockets of meaning in moments of time

R: Ja… en dan as daai veranderinge gebeur in die terapie proses hoe is jou belewenis daarvan?

P: Wel ja, (sug) ek dink natuurlik is dit vir my goed en positief en ryk om te sien hoe mense meer ervaar en sin maak uit hulle ervaringe uit, en op n genuine manier. **||** En dan ook vry kom van die vooropgestelde idees en verwagtinge en agter kom maar hulle hoef nie dit te leef nie. Jy hoef nie altyd jou ervaringe binne n groter konteks te interpreteer om ok te wees nie. Jy weet partykeer kan jy dit net ervaar en dit laat staan en aangaan. Jy weet sonder om altyd te probeer om dit te connect **|| ||** en dit is partykeer maar waar my eie persoonlike oortuiging van "pockets of meaning" vandaan kom jy weet ons leef maar in pockets of meaning en daai pockets kom en gaan. Dis soos bubbles. Die kinders wat hierdie bubbles blaas, dit hang rond en dan verdwyn dit en dan pop die bubble en dan kom ander bubbles jy weet dis hoe die lewe is en as ons alles probeer interconnect en sin maak in groter strukture dan begin ons, dan begin ons common denominators soek. **||** Soos: "ek was nie sondag in die kerk nie en maandag is ek gehijack, Uh! Daar is een of ander verband hier, dus het ek nie op n geestelike vlak gedoen wat ek moes nie en eks gestraf op n fisiese vlak".

MU61, ST4B, MT4

MU62, ST4C, MT4

R: Mmm

Part of what creates problems for people in terms of spirituality is that our intellectual (ingesteldheid) and development in terms of being causes us to hastily make assumptions and interpretations to experiences which in turn influence our behaviour, way of understanding, and sense making for trying to predict future experiences in a closed and narrow way

P: Dis n eenvoudinge voorbeeld, maar dis die gevaar van om al ons meanings te probeer inwerk in n coherent ervaring van die lewe wat eintlik in elk geval nie sin maak nie. Daar is gn verband tussen of jy by die kerk was en die hijacking nie behalwe as jy gehijack is by die kerk, jy weet maar, um, **||** verder probeer ons uit angs uit, probeer ons hierdie goed by mekaar trek om te se daar moet hierdie ultimate ding wees. Jy weet dis altyd vir my interresant as ek met mense praat bv. n scenario waar n vrou se seun is in n motorongeluk dood. Dan vra mense: "Maar het hy gedrink?" en dis asof as sy gaan se: "Ja" asof mense gaan se maar ja dis dan hoekom. Jy weet, so daar is something to blame, daar is iets om te se Ah! Jy weet is die vrou verkrag: "Het sy alleen in die donker rondgeloop?" "Ja, ok, ja jy sien dis hoekom dit gebeur het." **|| ||** Maar dit beroof van die trauma en die seer en die unpredictability en die angs daarvan deur een of ander ding te soek om te blameer of te koppel of sin te gee. En ek dink dit is die grootste gevaar van ons mens se eie intellektuele en, en, en ontwikkeling van wese en verstaan van self, dat ons hierdie verbande so amper lukraak en onverantwoordelik maak **|| ||** en dan wil ons se maar: "jy weet… my kar is gesteel, hierdie land is oppad af, daar is gn sin en betekenis hier nie, ons is oppad af ondertoe, dus kan ek net immigreer, en dis

MU 63, ST3C, MT3

MU64, ST3C, MT3

MU65, ST3D, MT3

186

Meaning Units

People interpret the negative experiences as punishment for not being good enough or not experiencingor being in the right way. The therapeutic process then allows them to get back to authentic experience without judgement or interpretation

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my enigste opsie." Jy weet so dis n klomp events en n klomp belewenisse wat jy saam groepeer en n konklusie maak om jou angs te beheer en dan wil jy daarop reageer. Wat ironies genoeg nie eers jou angs beter maak nie maar net een of ander bietjie anestetic of verdowing op jou belewenis sit vir n sekere tyd en al weet jy diep binne jouself daar is nie n verklaring of daar is nie n verduideliking daarvoor nie. So ek dink dit is die hartseer van hoe baie mense leef, en dit veroorsaak dan hulle probleme want dit is nie good enough om te se: ‖ "Ek was gehijack omdat ek was nie in die kerk nie en nou wroeg ek myself oor my eie geestelike pad wat nie voldoende is nie. Maar ek mis die punt en as ek net kan verstaan dat hierdie goed gebeur en deel van die lewe en daar is nie guarentees nie." Eerder om te sit met die angs belewenis as om te vinnig probeer sin maak op iets wat nie vir my lasting vrede gaan bring nie.

R: Ja en ek dink wat moeilik is, en wat ek hoor jy se met hierdie interpretasie van ervaring en hierdie angs en hierdie mmm… amper die ontneming van my eie ervaring en jy weet daai verskuiwing of die anesteatic soos jy dit noem, ek dink wat die moeilike of miskien n moeilike vraag wat ek aan dink is dat deurdat spiritualiteit deel van die terapie word en die persoon bewus word van hierdie validasie van persoonlike ervaring en spiritualiteit en um, uniekheid van self, dink jy dit maak dit moeiliker of makliker om te relate tot ander?

P: Wel, ek dink daarso is twee kante van daai saak. Aan die een kant maak dit dit makliker om te relate met mense wat dit ook so verstaan en daarso kan gaan. Aan die ander kant maak dit dit dalk oneindig moeilker om te relate met mense wat nie dit kan sien nie. ‖ Ek vergelyk dit baie keer met "the Matrix" wat jare terug op was, meeste mense het seker dit nou al vergeet waaroor dit gaan. Dit gaan eintlik oor dimensies en n social kommentaar eintlik dink ek oor sisteme en om binne in gedoktrineer te wees en n buitestaander te kan wees. In die fliek speel die storie uit dat mense agterkom dat wat hulle eintlik leef is is meer n geprogrameerde realiteit wat eintlik nie n realiteit is nie. En wanneer hulle eers daar uitstap en dit kon sien kan hulle nie weer teruggaan sonder om anders te wees nie. So hulle kan nie in ignorance meer leef daarvan nie. ‖ ‖ En ek dink dit is die curse van enige existentialis ook is as jy, of jy self dit noem of nie, maar as jy eers deur dit kon sien en deur die mens se feeble attempts om sy angs te demp, dan kan jy nie weer terug gaan en jouself convince dat dit moontlik is nie. ‖

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MU66, ST4C, MT4

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MU67, ST4C, MT4

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R: Mmm, mmm

187

P: Dis amper asof jy besef het dis vals en dit kan nie. So nou moet jy op n ander manier vind om daarmee om te gaan wat jou amper defenceless kan los at first. En natuurlik wat die meeste existentialiste dan doen is om hulself te dompel in existentiele filosofie wat dan vir hulle eintlik daai angs behouer en bied. Want dit, dit gee jou ten minste… n wete en n belewenis van jouself en die lewe wat meer akuraat is vir wat dit actually is. In stede van iets wat nou al so gekontamineer is dat jy weet nie meer wat is real en wat is nie.

R: En ek hoor ook deur als wat jy, of baie van die goed wat jy nou al gese het, dat daai bewustheid van spiritualiteit en die persoonlike en die ervaring bring n authenticity na vore en wakker dit aan in hierdie bring vir die persoon n bewustheid van hoe hulle, jy weet, vorige gebeurtenisse geinterpriteer het of hulle relatedness tot ander of hulle kan hulle self sien tot ander. Wat n goeie ding is vir die ontwikkeling en vir um, daai angs en vir daai ontdekke van self. Maar aan die ander kant is die moeilike ding dan hoe om nog steeds te kan relate want die ordening van sosiale normes en um, jy weet die geloofsaspek van jy moet glo in n gesamentlike entiteit of n God of n watookal, bring mense weer by mekaar. Waar hierdie amper n, hierdie bewustheid en uniekheid amper weer n ander manier moet vind hoe jy dan kan relate to other?

P: Ja… en ek dink dit sluit aan by Martin Buber se filosofie aan van "I thou" and "I it". Ek weet nie of jy in jou thesis daarvan skryf of daarvan gelees het nie maar ek dink dit, dit verander baie keer hoe jy relate met ander mense. ‖ So ek dink as jy baie geindoktrineer is en baie kognatief en baie onder ideologiee leef jy nie baie bevraagteken nie is jy maar in n "I it" verhouding. Al lyk dit na n "I thou" verhouding ‖ soos bv mense in die kerk smile almal as hulle by die kerk is en hulle gee mekaar drukkies en hulle vra: "hoe gaan dit?" maar maandag by die werk is hulle weer nors en ongeskik. So met ander woorde dit lyk soos n "I thou" verhouding, n verhouding waar jy die ander as n genuine entiteit en mens met sy eie belewenisse en ervarings ook waardeer op n geestelike sin. Waar dit so kan lyk is dit eintlik n "I it" jy weet ek teenoor iets want ek weet ek moet so relate teenoor iets en ek kan nie hier inloop en nors wees nie want ek is nou by die kerk of ek is nou in n geloweige opset. ‖ Jy weet so ek is hier amper gelimit in hoe genuine ek kan wees. Ek se nie dis in alle kontekste so nie maar om net te se dat, daai genuine geestelike belewenis en ook ervaring van ander sit in n "I thou" verhouding want jy weet ongeag verskillende religiese organisasies en oortuigings is ons mede mense, is ons co-inhabitants van hierdie

50 min

Part of the problem with not living authentically is that the relation to others also becomes false and pretentious. It is yet another way of trying to fit into what is expected and not genuine emotional expression.

MU68, ST2B, MT2

MU69, ST2B, MT2

188

Meaning Units

wereld op n selfde vlak en ek kan in respek en erebied relate met jou. Eerder as wat ek baie religiees kan wees en eintlik in n super "I it" verhouding is waar ek dink maar jy is nie gered nie of jy glo nie of jy is iemand om te convert of om te oortuig, of om van weg te bly, of om nie mee te meng nie, of om… **||** So wat kan lyk na n baie geestelike plek is niks anders as net n "I it" verhouding nie. Waar my vooropgestelde idees en oortuigings my in n posisie sit om jou net te kan sien as ook n mens met daai selfde belewenisse en entiteit en geestelikheid. En ek dink dit is waar die verandering in relatedness vandaan kom.

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Therapeutic shifts towards authenticity and genuineness also lessens interpersonal manifestation of anxiety because there is no more judgement of others experiences, beleifs, or way of being. There is an acceptance that each person's experience can be unique and personal.

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R: Ja, en ek dink dis n belangrike punt want ek hoor jy se daai verhouding tot ander word dan nie net meer outentiek nie maar amper eg en gesond waar die ander manier van daai veroordeel of um, pretentiousness of jy weet daai manier um, baie meer n guarded element ook het van om te se dat daar is sekere dele van my wat nie van pas is of nie hoort hier of nie in hierdie manier van relate kan pas nie. As gevolg van daai interpretasie van watookal.

P: Mmm, ja en **||** ek dink dit is da waar daai genuiness en authenticity tot op sy kern kom is daar nie meer n angs wat, wat n… hoe kan se, interpersoonlik manifesteer uit n vrees dat iemand my gaan oortuig van iets anders nie. **||** Maar daar is net n wees. Met ander woorde ek kan, se maar n baie getroue en n baie, uh, ryk belewenis Buddhist wees met baie ervaringe en jy kan dalk van n moslem oortuiging wees maar ons kan sit en ons geestelikheid met mekaar deel en wegstap sonder om te voel ons moet iets anders glo of ons moet iets verander van hoe ons beleef, en dit is ok, dit was n genuine "I thou" interaksie tussen twee mense. **||** Of ek kan nie met jou wil praat nie uit vrees uit dat dit konflik gaan opbring oor my oortuigings uitgedaag gaan word of ek gaan jou moet uitdaag oor jou oortuigings in n tipe van n tou trek, soos n "tug of war" om te kyk wie het nou eintlik die genuine ding hier beet. Jy weet en dit word dan daai "I it" jy weet ek is eintlik met iets heeltemal doods hier in verhouding wat ek net oor die lyn moet trek om my eie angs te demp, en dan begin die angs manifesteer. **|| ||** Waar as jy genuine is op jouself en jy weet daar is nie ultimate answers vir al die goed nie kan jy met enige iemand praat en wegstap en dink maar: "Dit was interresant" en life goes on, sonder om in n wroeging gegooi te word oor jou genuineness vs daai persoon en wie het nou eintlik die regte antwoord op hierdie goed. **||**

MU70, ST4C, MT4

25 This awareness brings an openness and frees the person to not be bound by a naroow minded interpretation and expectation of wht experiences are supposed to be. They can share and listen and connect with others in a less fearful and anxious manner.

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MU71, ST3D, MT3

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MU72, ST4C, MT4

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R: Ja, en miskien plaas ek nou my eie interpretasie op dit maar ek dink aan as jy dan jouself um, jou ervaring interpreteer op n spesifieke

manier of soos hierdie surfer voorbeeld nou bv. in stede van daai ervaring van die eerste keer toe hy uitgegaan het het en dit net beleef het teenoor nou moet hy dit op n spesifieke manier toepas. En wanneer daar dan nou n nuwe surfer kom en dan jy weet as ons die eerste voorbeeld vat en daai persoon sien hiers nog n ou wat leer surf en hy kom uit en surf juis in daai, um, authentic wees van dis hoe dit is om te surf en daai relatedness is dan egter. Waar omdat dit nou geinterpriteer moet word in die model van die ouens op die kant skep dit dink ek ook deel van daai angs om te se hoor hier hierdie persoon moet dan ook inpas by hierdie model. Van die top down amper, in stede van om net te se vind jou eie pad. En ek dink dit is n groot onderskeid tussen die verskil van wees.

P: ‖ Ja en dit trek ek al die pad terug tot by die lived experience en laat daai lived experience emerge van waar dit is eerder as wat dit van hier bo geinterpriteer word en dan word dit gemis in die groter prentjie. ‖

MU73, ST4C, MT4

55 min

R: Ja, en wanneer daai verandering in terapie gebeur in hierdie persone en in jou ervaring nou met die terapie met wat jy doen, verander dit ook dan iets vir jou oor jou siening van spiritualiteit of terapie of mensewees?

Every therapeutic process is a learning for him about what it means to be human. Sometimes it resonates well with his own views and other times it challenges his beliefs. He believes that both the patient and therapist emerge as change beings as result of the process. The interaction does not necessarily cause him to radically change his own beliefs but it leaves an impact on perceptual shifts, which is also his goal for therapy.

P: Ja, ‖ ek dink as n psigoterapeut leer ek uit elke sessie uit van mensewees so partykeer daag dit ook dinge uit wat ek glo en dink en voel oor die mens en ander kere strook dit en val dit in daarby. So ek dink, ek kan nou nie onthou, ek dink dit was Yalom wat gese het dat enige goeie terapeutiese interaksie los altyd beide die pasient en die terapeut veranderd of changed in a way. ‖ ‖ So ek dink natuurlik, soos jy weet, het n ou baie uit die existentiele filosofie uit gepraktiseer so dit is daai beginsel dat ons sal altwee changed beings wees na die tyd en ek dink dit is wat Buber ook praat van n "I thou" interaksie en probably waar Yalom se idee ook vandaan kom waar hy se maar daai los beide veranderd. En dit beteken nie my ideologiee en my geloofsoortuigings verander nie maar ek is geimpakteer deur jou, en dit sal altyd by my bly, eerder as wat dit my empty los of conflicted los of my net, my net… dood los in terme van interaksie. So ja ‖ ‖ ek dink so leer n ou en natuurlik soos enige goeie existentiele psigoterapie is die idee nie om happy en vervuld en en sonder probleme uit te stap nie maar eerder om n perspektief verandering te ondergaan en n waardering vir die lewe in wat hy is en dan rond te loop en te se: "Maar luister ek was eintlik nooit geguarentee dat ek nie gehijack gaan word nie en eintlik is ek gladnie geguarentee dat my existence eers sal aangaan na die volgende

MU74, ST4C, MT4

MU75, ST4D, MT4

MU76, ST4D, MT4

190

Reflective Notes		Meaning Units
     5 10 15	One of the changes in therapy comes to the front when people realize that life is absurd and every attempt to understand it is limiting the experience thereof. Once this perception changes the person's experience becomes different.	

minuut nie, maar die feit dat my lewe bedreig is is enitlik iets wat my bewus gemaak het dat my lewe in konstante bedreiging is." Ummm… daar is alles van virusse in die lug tot misdaad to hartaanvalle tot genetiese predisposisies en ongelukke en bisariteite in die lewe so die absurdity van die lewe het einltik net simbolies gemanifisteer as n hijacking insident en ek moet deal met daai sudden bewuswording van: "Oh my wereld! Wat ek gedink het is altyd daar is nie altyd daar nie." ‖ ‖ En dis ons oer probeem so… um, ons het uit ons oerangste uit probeer onsself oortuig dat alles ok is maar dit is eintlik nie, en sal nooit wees nie. En dit is n moeilike ding om mee te leef, maar dit is n beter manier om te leef as om te dink alles is ok en dan is dit nie. ‖

MU77, ST4D, MT4

R: Ja, en wat ook belangrik is wat ek hoor jy se is dat deur daai terapie proses eerstens is die doel nie om daai happy en probleem vrye lewe te skep nie, wat nou weer moontlik n ander illusie kan wees nie, en die ervaring vir jou daarvan ook vir jou partykeer challenging is en ander kere sekere dinge bevestig maar dit is ook n veranderings proses so dit is n reciprocal ervaring.

<table>
<tr><td>20

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30</td><td>The process of therapy is an uncertain exploration of existence which brings him to an understanding of what it means to be human. The therapeutic process also confronts the therapist with his own anxiety and beliefs.</td></tr>
</table>

P: Ja en ek dink net soos hierdie inhirente kwaliteite van die lewe um, jy weet uncertainty en anxiety so het psigoterapie ook natuurlik daai dimensies in so psigoterapie is eintlik n onsekere proses. Ek se altyd vir die studente jy weet nooit wie volgende by jou kantoor gaan inloop en waaroor hulle praat nie, en jy weet nooit wat hulle volgende sin gaan wees nie, en wat die volgende krisis of oorwinning of belewenis gaan wees nie so dis maar n, n, n… ‖ uncertain exploration van existence en so ontdek n mens maar die diepte daarvan en die rykwyte van wat dit beteken om mens te wees. So mens is ook maar heeltyd bewus daarvan ‖ ‖ so die terapeut word ook gekonfronteer met hulle eie angs en die angs inherent in die sessie en daai belewenis en hulle eie vooropgestelde idees en ten minste te kan poog om nie hulle te laat verblind vir die pasient nie. ‖

MU78, ST5C, MT5

MU79, ST5C, MT5

R: Ja, en miskien sit ek nou weer my eie interpritasie op dit maar as ek jou reg gehoor het deur ons gesprek vanoggend is die doel van terapie dan nie om voorbereid te wees vir elke scenario en n antwoord te he vir elke probleem of elke ervaring te kan plaas in iets nie, maar meer net oop te wees vir jou persoonlike belewenis daarvan in stede van om voorbereid te wees.

P: Ja, so ‖ dis amper soos die eerste fase van terapie is om jouself oop te maak vir jou belewenis. Jouself toe te laat om dit te beleef, en dan daarna maak n ou sin daaruit en probeer daai belewenis behoue, en verstaan in die groter prentjie van wat dit beteken om mens te wees. En dan hopelik as n finale fase van terapie daai insige en verandering

MU80, ST4D, MT4

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`60 min`

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<u>Reflective
Notes</u>

His view of the process of therapy is that as a first stage of therapy the therapist should allow himself to be open to the experience of the session and the persons unique telling of being, and then as a final phase of therapy to allow the insights and awarenesses that distilled through the process to come to the fore in how you live – in the same way that the same is expected of the patient.

The awareness of life's absurdities, uncertainties and inevitable end as death does not bring doom and gloom and hopelessness and despair but rather facilitates a creative interaction and appreciation with life and experiences and a sense of interconnected ness and universal -

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in wereldbeskouing te kan laat deursyfer in hoe jy jou lewe leef. Jy weet om daai surfboard te kan optel en te kan se: "Maar luister dalk is dit wat surfing is vir jou, maar heirdie was surfing vir my en dis ok." En aangaan om dit te doen soos wat dit vir jou voel ok is en daai belewenis nog steeds genuine te maak en nie weg te stap en te dink: "Ag ek sal dit nooit kan doen nie want ek het nie voldoen aan daai vooropgestelde idees nie." ‖ ‖ So dit is dan waar daai wereldbeskouing deur, en hopelik, deursyfer tot hoe mens die lewe beleef. En dit is amper soos die eerste wave van existentiele filosowe, die lateres in die later 90's Marcel en daai ouens het hulle geskryf oor die uitvloeisel daarvan, van daai houding teenoor die lewe wat hoop bring en wat kreatiwiteit bring en wat samesein bring en wat ons verantwoordelikheid teenoor ons naaste laat besef, um, en die mense om ons ‖ en daai waardering gee vir existence. So dis nie alles soos baie mense dink doom en gloom nie en jy moet nou maar net vrede maak met "die lewe is absurd en uncertain" en "we all die in the end" nie. ‖ Dit is juis daai wete en besef bring voort n nuwe kreatiewe omgang met die lewe en n waardering van wat dit is en om te kan… jy weet… die see bv. ervaar en in dit te kan swem en daar te kan, in die natuur wees en, en, en universally belonging te voel dat jy daar hoort en interconnected is. ‖ ‖ So die uiteinde is appreciation en hope en genuine love en connectedness en concern en amper… ek wil dit nie humanitarian of n humanistiese gevoelens noem nie maar dis meer n genuine being human with other humans. ‖ Um, te weeg bring, en nie n oppervakkige charity of n jammer kry of n… ons eie angs van probeer ontslae raak deur eerder goed te doen of jy weet oppervalkig te wees nie. Dit is eintlik die spin off van dit.

R: Ja, en ek hoor ook dat terapie dan daai plek is van validasie vir ervaring nie in relasie tot ander om te se: As jy dit… dan sal dit… met ander woorde daai strewe na iets of dit nou n geloofs of n spesifieke way van wees is, dit is meer net n validasie van: "die ervaring wat jy het is genoeg en kom meer by dit uit. Daai validation of self amper in stede van: verander en as jy hierdie verander of hierdie meer doen dan…" jy weet daai If… then… As jy nou kerk toe gegaan het dan sou jy nie gehijack geword het nie, as jy die surf metode toepas dan sal dit nie gebeur nie. Maar eerder om meer te wees van: Beleef die ervaring van wat jy het en dan wat daarna sal kom… wees net oop daarvoor.

P: Ja, ja, ‖ dis baie meer daai om jouself toe te laat om daai angste te ervaar want dit is ook nie die maklike pad nie. Paul Tillich het geskryf "The courage to be" jy weet dit is n courageous effort to be en met jouself te wees want dit gaan teen die maklike pad van om te conform en en jouself te kan begewe in die massas en saam te gaan. So dit is

<u>Meaning Units</u>

MU81 – ST4D, MT4

MU82, ST4D, MT4

MU83, ST4D, MT4

MU84, ST4A, MT4

192

Reflective
Notes

- belonging with life itself. The end result is appreciation for life, hope, genuine love and connectedness to other people.

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65 min

Another example of how people want to validate their experiences by how many other people agree with their experiences or interpretation of being.

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defnitief n uitdagende proses en baie keer moet n mens ook in terapie ook daai courage na vore laat kom want mense sukkel om dit te verstaan om teen die massas en die massa media en die sin van hoe dinge moet wees ontstaan. Te se maar hoor hier waar is ek want ek dink ek voel… ||

R: En n belangrike ding wat ek ook hoor is dat dit nie dan n makliker ervaring van lewe of wees voortbring nie maar net n meer egte een.

P: Ja… ja dis amper soos die facebook ding. Wat ek baie aan dink is jy kan iets opsit en jy kan "likes" kry. Dis amper so validasie vir dat jy iets gese het wat meaningful is of is daar ander wat dink dis ok en so die mense raak in n way addicted aan daai "likes" om te kan "gelike" te word en daar is genuine soos kompetisies daarvoor om te kyk hoeveel "likes" kan n mens kry en die eintlike ding, jy weet wat Kierkegaard sou se daaroor is daai is juis die "sickness unto death" wat || op die einde van die dag daai individualiteit daai ingenuity laat verloor want jou likes word natuurlik geshape deur wat likeable is deur die massas daar buite so dadelik is dit nie meer jy nie maar eintlik wat aanvaarbaar is. So dit is aspekte van jouself wat die psigodinamiese ouens sal se dit is dele van jouself wat jy uitprojekteer aan ander maar eintlik hier binne is jy ongelukkig en gedisintegreerd jy weet jy vind nie jouself nie. ||

MU85, ST3E, MT3

R: Mmm, en dit het jy genoem aan die begin dat as die pasiente of kliente instap vir terapie is dat dan juis daai "strewe na" wat die angs verhoog omdat dit dan vir hulle n moeilike um, sin maak proses word van "maar hierdie belewenis van trauma" of "hierdie kruispad of probleem of ervaring wat ek nou het is vir my oorweldigend omdat ek nie kan sien waarna ek moet streef nie" of "die metode wat ek toegepas het om daarna te streef het nie die resultate gebring wat ek nou gehoop het nie", jy weet daai met die kerk bv. ek het nou nie kerk toe gegaan nie nou is ek gehijack, nou bring dit hierdie guilt en oordeel van ek moet meer wees en ek moet meer doen, ek moet meer… sodat ek die positiewe kan ervaar.

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Futile attempts to control anxiety

People try to control their life through following what others say they should do. A futile "If… then" way of living

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P: Ja en nie net die positiewe nie maar ook in daai voorbeeld en in so baie ander sodat ek my, my, somehow n verskil kan maak aan my, aan my… oorgelewerdheid aan die wereld en al die forces hier. Met ander woorde dat wanneer ek dan gereeld kerk toe gaan is die likelihood dat ek gehijack word minder, dus somehow het ek n influence om myself te keer van slegte ervaringe en daai angs te beheer. Dis eintlik waar die issue daarmee le, is dat || mense soek maniere en probeer sin maak sodat hulle huslef kan oortuig dat hulle meer in beheer is van wat aangaan. Jy weet so as jy nie in donker stegies rondloop nie, laat in die

MU86, ST4A, MT4

193

Reflective Notes		Meaning Units
Disintegration and sickness unto death		

nag nie, dan sal jy nie verkrag word nie, so dis n manier as ek daai onthou dan kan ek myself ten minste weerhou van daai trauma. Jy weet so begin ek 110 verskillende goed in my kop bymekaar sit end an leef ek hierdie resepies van jy weet: "Betaal jou belasting, gaan studier na skool, doen n werk, wees verantwoordelik, bly getroud of skei." Jy weet watookal daai vooropgestelde goed is, dis septies van om jou bymekaar te hou en daar is nie meer n genuine first person lived experience van engage net met die lewe nie. Dit is amper n angs vermydings filosofie eerder as n life experience filosofie. Mmm… en dit natuurlik laat verskeie simptome op popvan verskeie aard. ‖

R: Ja, ja, en spesifiek in die mental health met die belewenis van um, jy weet dilusie of hallucinasie of daai split in self sien ons naturlik baie dit.

P: Ja, ja

R: Ja, die not good enough gevoel, en ek dink dit bring daai split na vore, en ek dink dit bring ander probleme natuurlik ook.

P: Ja, ‖ n mens moet later amper jou gedagtes in twee split om sin te maak uit jou ervaring uit en jouself sane te hou op n sekere vlak terwyl integrasie is amper die moeiliker maar meer gesonde pad. Dis amper om eerder die lewe te sien vir wat dit is en daai genuiness te beleef as om die fake amper sugar coated version te leef. Jy weet amper soos om n boks smarties te he, party smarties het gif in en ander het olie in en ander het grond in, en ander is kliphard, en nie elke smartie se inhoud is chocolate nie. Dis n ding wat n ou moet besef in die lewe en dan leef jy nie met n voorverwagting dat jy gaan chocolate in die smartie kry nie maar dat watookal die smartie jou bied is wat die lewe jou bied en jy moet daarmee deal soos jy gaan. Daar is nie n manier om te predict wat volgende gaan kom nie. ‖

(MU87, ST4A, MT4)

R: Ja, en dan n laaste vraag vir die onderhoud se doeleinde is dat in ons gesprek vanoggend en al die elemente wat ons aangespreek het, is daar enige iets wat vir jou uitstaan of wat by jou linger vanuit ons gesprek op die oomblik?

70 min

P: Ag ek dink jy weet soos wat ek altyd maar praat en dink oor die goed besef nie altyd dat daar so… ek dink nie leemte is die regte woord nie, maar ‖ ek dink n aspek van die mens wat geexploreer moet word en hoekom ons die geestelike dimensie van die mense so vlak kyk of hom so maklik in n dogma ingooi of struktuur wil gee, jy weet wat so bedreiging daaraan is? Ek dink tog dit kan as deel van ons kern stryd verstaan word en as n ou dalk n beter besef daarvan het sal jy ook dalk n beter verstaan of besef van die mens het. ‖ Jy weet so dit is die

(MU88, ST5A, MT5)

194

Meaning Units

positiewe of wat existentiele psigoterapie so bruikbaar of sinvol maak vir my is dat watookal daar beleef word kom uit en kom na vore in terapie eerder as om n sekere pad te he wat n ou stap. So ‖ die goed kom uit maar daar word so min daaroor geskryf en verstaan, dit is asof dit n "no go" is nog steeds tot n groot mate in sielkunde en in filosofie. Dit is soos om either een van twee roetes te vat en dit gaan of in die Godheid en heiligheid en supernatural daarvan, of dit daal in die Atheistic dit bestaan nie en dit is maar net deel van nog n sielkundige of kognatiewe of psigodinamiese proses, jy weet so obviously kan nie, en soos wat die existentialiste vir ons se is dat nothing is that easily dismissal nie. ‖ Jy weet jy is nie verkrag omdat jy laat die aand in die stegie rondgeloop het nie, hoekom nie. Jy weet so ‖ iewers is ons besig om die kompleksiteit van ons geestelikheid te vermy deur either te se dit bestaan nie of te se dit is nie ons nie, of in ons hande nie, dit is nou maar n ultimate reality of n supernatural being en dis al. So met ander woorde ons vlieg amper heeltemal in die hemel in of ons duiwel af tot in die hel maar in die inbetween waar life happens en die kompleksiteit is en dit nie sin maak nie, daar dabble ons nie, ons vermy dit en dan veroorsaak dit vir ons probleme, want dit is nie net daar bo in die wolke nie en definitely nie daar onder in die hel nie. En iewers moet ons ook sin maak van hoe ons leef en geestelik ervaar. ‖

R: Ja, en ek stem saam en ek hoor dat jy se, ek hoor dat dit n veld is wat nog baie ryk is en nog baie potensiaal het om nog meer te explore. En miskien sal jy saamstem met dat in my ervaring was dit as ons luister na hoe existentialisme wel n metode of manier is om dit oop te maak dink ek die dilemma le daarby dat die ervaring van spiritualiteit of interpritasie daarvan het geen maklike manier om dit te interpriteer sonder om n gedeelte van die rykheid daarvan te verloor nie. So aan die een kant is die teorie geskets of geskep in n way om te se maak oop vir meer en word bewus dat daar meer is maar ander die manier om dit akademies raak te vat of sin te maak daaruit of na te vors moet dit dan ook iets interpriteer en dan gaan iets inherent verlore gaan deur die navorser of die persoon of die vertelling daarvan of watookal. En ek dink dit is…

P: Ja en ‖ ek dink dit maak dit uitdagend maar net soos wat bracketing maar n impossibility is, net so is daai ultimate verstaan van ons gestelikheid ook en for that matter die ultimate verstaan van enige iets. ‖ Maar dit is net interresant dat ons meer weet van silicon en n silicon chip wat gebruik kan word in rekenaars en eers die afgelope 50 jaar rond was en weet ons so min van spiritualiteit wat al vir die afgelope 1000de jare daar was. ‖ Dis asof ons amper doelbewus

MU89, ST5B, MT5

MU90, ST5B, MT5

MU91, ST5B, MT5

Reflective Notes

5 Part of the afterthought for him is that the spiritual dimension is still very unexamined and is something that lacks exploration.
10 Even though many philosophers have written about these ideas it
15 remains a neglected aspect in our field.

20 Part of the dilemma is that the little bit that people write about spirituality becomes yet another
25 guideline of what our spiritual experience should be. It becomes a new ideological
30 highpoint to strive towards. They immediately try and address the ultimate instead of
35 staying with research on the lived experience and the richness and wideness of our
40 experiences. We need to open more.

195

partykeer die oogklappe aansit of we turn a blind eye en natuurlik is daar baie geskryf al daroor maar gegewe hoe kern dit is vir die mens is dit nie naastenby voldoende vir daai belewenis nie. En wanneer dan daar geskryf is daaroor dan word daai geskrifte ironies genoeg weer die poel van wat ons probeer bereik. Iemand skryf 2000 jaar terug oor hulle geestelike belewenis en dan 2000 jaar later word n reelboek of n dogma of n manier wat vir jou aandui hoe jy moet leef. Of iemand skryf meer onlangs oor hulle siening van die wereld en van geloof en van fate en faith en dan word dit aangehaal as n ideologie en dit word verander in n beweging en voor ons weet sit ons weer met dieselfde dilemma. So dit is amper asof wanneer mense dit se se hulle nie dit is wat ek glo en ek dink… dit is asof hulle dadelik die ultimate wil aanspreek en onmiddelik is daar n vlock en soos ons nou gese het in die mens sal daar skape wees wat soek vir n herder, so die oomblik as iemand sy hand opsteek en se ek het n staf in my hand dan is hulle agter hom aan, en dit is uitdagend. **||** Maar ek dink dit is waarom die filosofie so waardevol kan wees om meer lived experience navorsing te doen en te se maar dit is hoe dit is, en nie te se hoe ek dink dit moes wees of hoe ons weet dit al was of hoe dit sin maak met daai die, maar net dit is hoe dit is. En **||** as ons meer die lewe kan sien vir hoe dit is dan verstaan ons dalk meer van hoe ryk en hoe oop en hoe wyd ons ervaring is eerder as om onmiddelik dit te gaan sit in een of ander akademiese of geestelike dogma. En natuurlik is filosofie ook n akademiese benadering tot dit maar ek dink tog dit is een wat meer oopmaak as wat dit toe maak en meer rykheid bied eerder as wat dit n entrapment of die vasvang van belewisse bied en te se maar kom ons kom terug by dit self. **||**

75 min

R: Ja, en vir my eie refleksie uit ons gesprek vir my vanoggend het ek net bewus geword van die go to vir navorsing oor spiritualiteit of spiritualiteit selfs net as n construct is die eenvoudige antwoord altyd dit is nie n meetbare quantitatiewe en waarneembare entiteit nie maar tog wat ek van bewus word deur vanoggend se gesprek is dat die belewenis van ervaring is toeganklik en deur die vertelling daarvan en deur dit is daar n spirituele element wat na vore kan kom in terapie en in jou belewenis baie mense bring dit na terapie toe. En met dit wat toeganklik kan word is dit dan nie meer geground nie maar defnitief makliker toeganklik om by die konsep te bly.

P: Ja en ek dink as jy gaan kyk en wat so hartseer is daaroor en ek dink as ek daaroor praat raak ek altyd meer oortuig daarvan dat dit is ons as human race se grootste struikelblok wat ons gaan moet oorkom as ons wil oorleef as n spesie in die volgende 100 jaar of 200 jaar, **||** is spiritual tolerance vir mekaar en understanding vir mekaar en

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<u>Reflective
Notes</u>

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For him we
need to move
into a spiritual
age of more
tolerance for
each others
15 personal and
different
experiences
instead of
judging and
fighting to
convince
20 others of our
own limited
interpretation
of what it
might mean.
We are
25 becoming
extinct because
of spiritual
intolerance and
conflict. It is a
calling for an
evolution
30 towards the
spiritual
understanding.

80 min

35

40

understanding van daai spiritual experience. As jy gaan kyk na die mense se geskiedenis na die afgelope 200 jaar na hoeveel mense se lewens is verloor net gebaseer op spiritual intolerance waar groeperinge wat sekere oortuiging het en geestelike belewenis het ander groeperinge wil aanval en uit te haal en vice versa. Jy weet en selfs in die onlangse geskiedenis en daar is dele soos jy weet in die wereld waar dit n konstante stryd is en daai intolerance en daai "I it" verhouding veroorsaak miljoene sterftes oor die jare so ons as mens gaan net so lank nog n blind eye kan draai op ons eie geestelikheid en ontwikkeling en verstaan totdat di tons gaan uitroei en ons onself gaan uithaal in n poging om ons ideologie en oppervlakigge geestelikheid af te dwing op ander. ‖ So ja ek dink dit is eintlik maar as jy die nuus aan sit pretty much in your face maar my vraag is what are we doing about it? Kospakkies word gegooi en treaties word geteken but still the conflict remains en die stryd gaan maar net aan 1000de jare later, maar ek dink dit het die potensiaal om ons as mens uit te roei. Ek het n boek nou die dag gelees wat dit baie mooi stel en se ons was in die biological age vir die afgelope 100 jaar plus met die ontwikkeling van tegnologie en medies en ‖ ons gaan nou ingaan in n spiritual age en so ons die body tot n mate effektief kan behandel en verstaan is ons redelik op n goeie plek met die mens se liggaam, en as ons nie daai selfde move na die geestelike toe kan vat nie gaan dit ons ondergang wees, ‖ jy weet amper soos die black plague destyds, n eenvoudige virus maar 100de 1000de miljoene dood, so gaan daai spiritual intolerance gaan n klomp mense, en doen reeds, uitroei. ‖ Wat vir my aan die kern is is dat geestelikheid ons interafhanklikheid van heirdie aarde is, ons mede wesens, daai konsep van ons is almal eintlik gekoppel aan mekaar, daai amper kern waarde van geestelikheid het dan sy offspin op die einde amper as die teenoorgestelde: "Ons het julle nie nodig nie, julle het ons nie nodig nie, julle vat ons goed, ons vat julle sin, julle bly op ons land, ons glo wat ons glo, julle is verkeerd, ons wil niks met mekaar uit te waai he nie, jy weet dis ons olie, ek was eerste hier" en al hierdie goed is die spinoff van die eintlike wat geestelikheid vir my is is ons eie intuitiewe kreatiewe belewenis van mekaar en hierdie aarde en natuur waarin ons onself beleef en daai belewenis van ons is amper interafhanklik. ‖ Die bome wat jy afsaag het n impak op die ou aan die ander kant van die wereld ek bedoel. Dis n druppel in n emmer maar dit bly n emmer vol druppels, jy weet so dit is daai beginsels gaan tot nuut en almal gaan te kere en baklei en voer oorlog of trek tou oor wie die ultimate waarheid beet het of reg of vereerd is of dan groepeer hulle en boelie groepie en die klein outjies val uit om te moet glo wat die groot groep glo. En bygese in ons land is seker een van die beste plekke om te kyk hoe

MU95, ST5D, MT5

MU96, ST5D, MT5

Reflective
Notes

Afrika filosofiee anders is as westerse filosofiee en te kyk hoe ons dinge anders doen en hoe daai filosofiee verwronge word en amper gedruk word om te conform **||** en as jy dink aan die Afrika konsep, en ek is nie n expert nie, maar hulle glo baie meer in die

5   interconnectedness wat mense het, ek is my gemeenskap en my gemeenskap is ek en ons staan saam en help mekaar en ondersteun mekaar anders as wat baie westerse individualistiese kultuur. **||** Ek dink Kierkegaard se **||** idee van die self moet uniek in homself wees het verwronge geraak in n westerse ideologie van die self is alles en

10   die belangrikste, solank die self gelukkig is en dit gaan oor die self is als ok. **||** So ek dink veral in ons land en ek hoop ek het die krag en energie en tyd om te skryf oor Afrika filosofie en daai ubuntu beginsels en daai gemeeskapsvisie wat hulle het en hoe dit eintlik nader is aan n existentiele siening is van die wereld hoewel hulle ver

15   verwyderd was van Europa in terme van kontak en kennis oordrag van wat die filosowe toe gese het.

R: Ja dankie, ek dink ons kan daar stop…

_____

84 minutes

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Abbreviations: R = Researcher, P = Participant, MU = Meaning Unit, ST = Subtheme, MT = Main Theme, Professor A = a Professor at a leading South African university, Psychologist D = A psychologist associate, Journal A = referring to a psychological journal, University A = a leading South African university, Organisation A = a leading non-profit

25   *counselling service*

MU97, ST5D, MT5

MU98, ST5D, MT5

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Appendix F – Declaration of language editing

TRANSLATING • WRITING • EDITING • PROOFREADING

Anna-Mart Bonthuys (D Litt et Phil – SA)

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Always in excellence mode

DECLARATION: EDITING

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, the undersigned <u>Dr Anna-Mart Bonthuys,</u> hereby declare that I am a fully qualified and experienced language practitioner, and that I have thoroughly edited and proofread the masters dissertation of Juan-Pierre Carstens, titled *"A qualitative exploration of clinical psychologists' understanding of spirituality in psychotherapy"* (UP), to the best of my abilities.

10 May 2016

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Dr Anna-Mart Bonthuys   Dat**um** *e*

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