

**APPENDIX A**

**Tables I & II**



TABLE I

## Participant 2: Dia

*NATURAL MEANING UNITS**CENTRAL THEMES*

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| <p><b>1. Just want to give [you] the background.</b><br/>Um ... um ... She was very ...un- ... un- ... un-<br/>... un-sure of herself. <b>Right! [No] I don't think 'unsure' but I am struggling to find a word for it ... [not unsure] ... but she asked for a lot of confirmation if she ... if she... I think that the best ... what I can remember the most about her voice was that she would say, for example: “Not so? ...” and she had a little (pet) name for me, you know. So it was ... she did seek confirmation - “Not so? ...” Very well. On the other hand, perhaps I am overdoing [the description of] her (i.e. exaggerating). I don't know. You know, that was the difference between the personalities. I was much more daring, she would not take chances. I was ... I know I experienced some impatience, and on the other hand I knew that she was not as fragile as she ... as I thought she was ... if I think very quickly ... I am expressing this very clumsily! I always suspected, and I think almost intuitively knew, that she was stronger than what appeared on the surface. If she did not want to do something, she would not do it. Not stubborn, but she could ... she could ... she could ... yes ... And it took a lot, but she would do it ... you had to push her up</b></p> | <p>(1) Dia recalls the personality differences between herself and her sister as young children: Dia more daring; her sister, not taking chances and seeking constant affirmation. Although Dia became impatient with her sister, she knew almost intuitively that her sister was not as weak as she seemed to be and that she was capable of more than appeared on the surface.</p> |
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| to that.   |  |
| <p>2. So she had the privilege of being afraid, I did not because I am a loud mouth ... I pretended that I was not scared. So if it was dark, I had to walk with her, you see, but it was my choice just as much as it was hers. So there is no resentment if I say this. Not at all. I almost want to laugh about it (laughs) ... I realise we ... we ... had certain roles ... we ... And it was stupid, you know. I thought that I was proving something and she ... well she enjoyed the safety that naturally was very important to her. So if we ... we were small then ... just to give you a picture of the differences between the two of us.</p>   | <p>(2) In retrospect, Dia finds it amusing that she relegated the “privilege” of being afraid to her sister while she pretended that she was not afraid. She realises that by assuming these roles, both their needs were met in a mutually satisfying way and recognises their interdependency.</p> |
| <p>3. In Matric (final year of High School), she started going out with this chap who was in Matric with her. We knew the family. You know, the families knew each other. Also the nieces, you know, the aunt - my mom's sister, all three families knew each other well ... This chap (sister's boyfriend) and I clashed volubly many times because we were very similar (laughs). Um ... and ... and ... he had many ideas, which were totally ridiculous to me ... so that you couldn't ... things like: a girl should not wear something without sleeves. You must remember that that was a time when we were not even allowed to ... we had to wear slack suits, you know. That was the <i>worst</i> that you could do. So you have a picture of the time (laughs). So that was the type of thing that we would differ on but further</p> | <p>(3) Her sister met and married a young man who was well known to the family and although Dia clashed with her brother-in-law on minor issues, overall she got on well with him.</p>   |

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| <p>than that we actually got on very well together. And then they were married. Then she ... she had studied Music and then she did her higher diploma in teaching (HOD) and started teaching ... it could also have been ... No, she did complete her teachers' diploma first and then she started teaching.</p>  |  |
| <p>4. And I think they were married for only one-and-a-half years and then she died. He was still busy with his medical studies. He would have finished that year. He was ... to tell the truth ... it was a motor vehicle accident ...</p>  | <p>(4) Dia's sister was married for only one-and-a-half years when she was killed in a motor vehicle accident.</p>   |
| <p>5. And we were ... she came down with us to the seaside house and we were there for about ten days and then he arrived; he did his practical in B... and then he also came down. So he was also there for a while and then we drove back together, the two of them in their car and I travelled with my parents ...</p>   | <p>(5) Dia recalls that she and her parents were briefly reunited on holiday with her sister before her sister's husband joined them and then they separated again for the journey home.</p>   |
| <p>6. ... and luckily he wanted to drive faster than we did (i.e. that they were ahead of parents and Dia) and we ... we suspect that he fell asleep ...you know, it is ... I suspect, because I can remember times that she travelled with me, that it was not impossible that when he started to go off the road that she grabbed at the steering wheel because she was ... she was inclined to do that, you know, she became so <i>panicky</i>. So I ... I don't know ... but I wouldn't be surprised. Anyway no one else was involved. She was killed instantly ... And the other (i.e. husband)... a doctor</p> | <p>(6) On the way home, her sister was killed instantly in a motor vehicle accident and her husband suffered serious injuries. The family suspected that her sister's husband fell asleep at the wheel but Dia considered the possibility that her sister might have grabbed the steering wheel as the car left the road because she knew that her sister was inclined to panic in a crisis.</p> |

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| <p>arrived at the scene...and he was actually in a terrible state. He had all sorts of injuries: a broken... and ... all sorts of things and they quickly took him to B. This happened just outside C so it's about an hour-and-a-half, I think from B. Um... and a car came from the front and stopped us and [they] said that there had been an accident and the woman is...and they had... that's apparently what <i>he</i> told them to say: "Stop, stop the mother-in-law and them" or something (to that effect), you know. He could still ...</p>           |   |
| <p>7. And then ... so we had to go to K, I think ... Yes, K was the closest mortuary where they took her; they took him on to B. So we first had to go to K...to ... [identify] ...the body, you know... But now, can you ... How terrible! Can you think, for my parents? So from there...that took a long time.</p>  | <p>(7) Dia was immediately and deeply aware of her parents' pain and her main concern as the family travelled to the mortuary was the horror of it for her parents.</p>                                 |
| <p>8. Strange, but I can remember a youngster, he was the son of a minister of religion, he was younger than I was. I think he had just started to study (at university), and <i>he</i> really... you know, he went to a lot of trouble to talk to me for a <i>long</i> time...you know...I don't know if his mother and father said to him : "Shame. Talk to the young girl", you know, that sort of thing (laughs). I remember the discussion so... so well, you know. How dear he was without trying, trying to be too consoling. To me he was such a dear.</p> | <p>(8) Dia remembers clearly, and with warmth and appreciation, her conversation at the mortuary with a polite young man who spoke with her at length without attempting to offer easy consolation.</p> |
| <p>9. And then we went to B. and sat at Casualties for hours to find out what had</p>  | <p>(9) In addition to the loss of her sister, the condition of her sister's husband was</p>   |

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| <p><b>happened to him (i.e. sister's husband). And then...Then we...then my mother's sister who had a very good friend who was a pathologist, she got the doc(tor) to come quickly and his parents. So we stayed, I think, about a week in B. because at that stage it was touch and go with him, you know ... he almost didn't make it ... It was terrible. You know it was ... it was ... Oh! You know it was a Volkswagen ... Ag, at that time there were no safety ... You know, she actually had the safety belt on and she just ... that was all that was wrong ... just here she had a terrible blue bruise. I almost think it was her neck that ... then we ... When he was better then we went [home].</b></p> | <p>critical and the family stayed near the hospital until he was off the danger list before resuming their journey home.</p>  |
| <p><b>10. Then we had the funeral and that...that was terrible. But my experience of that was that I could cut out. There were people who took responsibility for my parents, people, you know, that coped with them and, mercifully, I could then withdraw ...</b></p>   | <p>(10) The funeral was highly emotional but Dia was greatly relieved to find that she could block out the emotions. There were others who assumed responsibility for her parents and she withdrew.</p>   |
| <p><b>11. I cannot verbalize such things immediately. I have to lie on my bed; I need to sort out my thing and then I will ...Only when I feel that I can cope, then I'll talk about it but not before. Before that you must please leave me alone (laughs). And I think that is what saved me. I had time to be alone.</b></p>   | <p>(11) Dia could not immediately respond to her loss. She is aware that she needs time to reflect and digest before she can talk about painful emotions and she realises that having time to be alone helped to preserve a sense of integration and enabled her to cope.</p> |
| <p><b>12. You know, this I remember, that I phoned this friend of mine a few times ... from the hotel ... that's right ...ja ... whew! ... that was long ago, good heavens!</b></p>   | <p>(12) Although she wanted to be alone, Dia recalls with surprise that she contacted her close friend (who had also lost a sister) a few times immediately after the accident.</p>   |

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| <p><b>13. Anyway ... then ... he was still very bad, but then I had to finish my thesis. So I had something that I needed to get to work on immediately which also, in a way, made it easier. Um ...</b></p>  | <p>(13) Although her sister's husband was still in a bad state, the completion of her thesis demanded Dia's immediate attention and having something to keep her busy also made it easier for her.</p>                          |
| <p><b>14. She was buried ... I felt bad that she was buried before her husband could be there. Yes. It was almost as if he had difficulty with ... with closure ... you know, it was bad for him. Um ...</b></p>  | <p>(14) Dia regretted that her bother-in-law was unable to be present at her sister's funeral and she realises that he experienced difficulties in coming to terms with his wife's death.</p>                                   |
| <p><b>15. . ... and then ... my ... my ... I think my parents, for me, were the greatest .....</b></p>  | <p>(15) Of all the people affected by the loss, Dia realises that, for her, her parents were her greatest concern.</p>  |
| <p><b>16. I had a friend at that stage but not that I would trust him ... it takes longish for me to trust a guy (fellow) to talk to him about things that I have not yet sorted out. This sort of talking (i.e. the interview) is not a problem for me, not at all, but if I have not yet sorted it out... emotional ... emotional trust, I find difficult. So with him I didn't really ...</b></p>  | <p>(16) Although Dia had a friend at that stage she could not share her deeper feelings with him as she finds emotional trust difficult and cannot discuss feelings that she has not had time to reflect on and to process.</p> |
| <p><b>17. And my friends were there ... they were very ... And some of my female friends ... and her sister who studied with my sister ... so they also knew her well, which made it more involved ... from their side. [They were there for me] ... Absolutely! But as much as you can support someone else when you also have to hand in your thesis, you know, and you are busy arranging your wedding, and so on, because they were all, you know, in line ... and, you know, it was not as if I experienced it that they were not there, never, but they had other priorities, absolutely.</b></p> | <p>(17) Dia experienced her friends and her sister's friends as involved but she was also aware that they had other priorities and she did not expect a great deal of support from them.</p>                                    |

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| <p><b>18. After that, for me ... for a very long time, it was terrible the way my parents handled it.</b></p>   | <p>(18) For a long time after the funeral, her parents' way of dealing with the loss was a source of great distress to Dia.</p>   |
| <p><b>19. Because she was so small and delicate and lovable ... Really a lovable person ... it almost went to the point of idolatry, you know. So much so that at one point I said, "You are remembering incorrectly." You know, they ... they ... they sort of ... not that I felt that I was not getting enough attention, no, never, never. It was never that. It just factually irritated me ... the twisting of facts because that person was no longer there ... that was for me ... You know ... it's too silly... For me it was ...</b></p> | <p>(19) Although Dia was aware of her sister's many appealing (lovable) qualities, her parents' preoccupation with their deceased child and their tendency to idealise her, annoyed Dia and prompted her to confront them with their apparent distortion of the facts.</p>            |
| <p><b>20. And then those terrible regular visits to the cemetery... I very quickly said : "No thank you! I... I will remember her in my mind. I am not going to a stone." You know that sort of attitude (laughs). Terrible! It was very difficult to cope with...</b></p>  | <p>(20) Dia dreaded, and experienced great difficulty in coping with the family's habitual visits to the cemetery. She resisted this ritual, asserting her view that she would rather remember her sister in her mind.</p>  |
| <p><b>21. And they also handled it very differently, the two of them, which for me was also very... noticeable and which, I think, did some damage to their relationship. Not that there were ever drastic problems, you know, just the usual differences over things, but they definitely um... My father wanted to speak about it continuously. He was a very emotional, sentimental, expressive person and ... and ... and yes, and expressed his emotions much more and my mother wanted to keep it very private and I think it was</b></p>     | <p>(21) In addition, Dia was painfully aware of her parents' divergent ways of coping with their grief and of the subtle conflict that weakened their relationship. Her father wanted to talk incessantly about the loss while her mother preferred to keep her feelings private.</p> |



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| very difficult for them.  |  |
| 22. I realised that I would have to ... that I would rather handle it like my mother did than like my father (did).   | (22) Dia preferred to deal with her loss in the same way as her mother did rather than like her father but she felt caught between her parents and experienced inner conflict.   |
| 23. It is almost as if he wanted to expose it and we were not ready for the exposure but his way of coping was to expose it, you know. So there was a conflict, which was a little difficult. It was actually ... yes, and ... it is... I mean it is both their need(s) and they had an equal right to deal with it in their own way but then there was no support for each other. So it was actually ... that was the most difficult of the whole...   | (23) It was painful for Dia to experience her parents' different ways of coping with the loss (concealing-revealing feelings), but especially difficult was the realisation that their conflicting needs left them unable to support each other.   |
| 24. At one stage I was irritated with my father. Because he threatened me in a way, in the sense that he ... he ... he wanted to drag things out of me that I did not want to speak about ... you know ... he wanted to talk about it and I didn't want to then. I'm not saying that he as a person was threatening, but he created situations that were a threat to me. And I wanted to get away. And the more I wanted to ... you know, we both felt ... oh, shame (laughs) ... It was terrible. Shame! It was terribly bad for them. | (24) Dia was not ready to speak openly about her sister's death and by trying to draw her out and penetrate the silence, her father unwittingly created situations that threatened her emotionally. She became annoyed; wanted to escape but at the same time felt a deep compassion for her father and realised how painful the loss was for both of her parents. |
| 25. After that I went to J ... the next year I went to J to work.   | (25) The following year, Dia went to work in a city at some distance from her parents' home  |
| 26. Oh! ... and that <i>first</i> Christmas, and the <i>first</i> birthday, good heavens what a drama! And <i>to this day</i> , even <i>now</i> , if you forget her birthday, and if you forget the   | (26) Dia recalls the emotional intensity of the <i>first</i> Christmas and the <i>first</i> birthday after her sister's death and she is aware that, even to this day, family relationships  |

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| <p>day that she died, then things are uncomfortable. I have never forgotten but I know I must make an effort. A person will certainly do it. I will do it. I remember it but I think one should not actually <i>celebrate</i> it. I would like a quiet time by myself ...</p>  | <p>become strained if she does not observe anniversary dates with her parents. In the awareness of her parents' hurt, Dia feels compelled to share these occasions with them even though she would prefer to spend a quiet time on her own.</p>   |
| <p>27. Very often, I have often wondered, if it were my <i>child</i>, how I would handle it.</p>   | <p>(27) In an attempt to understand her parents' grief, Dia has often questioned how she would have reacted if she had lost a <i>child</i>.</p>   |
| <p>28. The other factors ... from my side ... the phases that I passed through. I remember ... It was ... It was when I was married ... Oh wait, let me first tell you ...</p>   | <p>(28) Dia remembers a stage of mobility in her grief that occurred when she got married but returns to describe an earlier phase.</p>   |
| <p>29. ...It was ... this was a thing that was very difficult ... to ... almost to, not really to get permission, but <i>emotionally</i> to give <i>myself</i> permission to move away from home. <i>That</i> was very bad. Because I was the only one that was left and I ... um ... half realised that their support for each other was not so good and I was for them ... a sort of catalyst between them ... for me it was ... I remember it was <i>terrible</i> to have to go and tell them that I wanted to move into a flat. For me it was ... ah! ... it was worse than going into an examination ... (laughs)... you know. It was grim ... it was really grim ...</p> | <p>(29) For Dia, an extremely stressful aspect of the loss experience was separating from her parents and her decision to leave home became a formidable and complex emotional task. More than getting her parents' permission was the inner struggle to give <i>herself</i> permission to leave as Dia realised the importance of her supportive role in maintaining the family integrity and in facilitating change in her parents.</p> |
| <p>30. And I wondered how they would react. They did in fact blame each other ... I remember ... even that evening when I told them they actually ... only lightly, it was not a terrible scene, but they made these half comments which said, "but it's ..." you know. They definitely did not</p>  | <p>(30) Dia reflected anxiously on how her parents would react to her wish to move out of home. She recalls that they blamed each other subtly and Dia realised that they could not understand why she wanted to live on her own as this practice also went against the conventions of the time.</p>  |

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| <p><b>understand why I wanted to stay on my own because at that time you must know it was also not an okay thing to do.</b></p>   |   |
| <p><b>31. You see my sister did not do this. She stayed at home until she got married. So it was a foreign concept for them, I think.</b></p>   | <p>(31) Dia recognises that she was breaking new ground as her sister had lived at home until she got married and she realises that her decision to leave home was an alien concept for her parents.</p>  |
| <p><b>32. I cannot remember the comments but I think they felt ... that ... that there was ... You know, now that I think about it, maybe it was what worried each one about the other one's behaviour that they accepted had made me want to leave home. You know ... I ... they did not say [this] in so many words ... really discuss this in so many words. I can just remember that there were comments such as : "Yes, but if ...", you know, ... : "You also make it difficult", or something like that, you know ... and I think that they perhaps ... probably assumed that I experienced the other's behaviour with as much difficulty as they experienced it - you know, my mother and my father. I assume that my father would have thought, that is as I understand it now, that what my mother ... maybe ... the way in which my mother handled the situation and her subsequent behaviour, perhaps made it difficult ... for <i>me</i>, while in fact it was difficult for <i>him</i>. I don't think that he understood what was difficult for me. They definitely did not understand why I wanted to leave home</b></p> | <p>(32) Dia found it extremely traumatic to tell her parents of her decision to leave home. She realised that they could not understand her wish to separate and they blamed each other, assuming that the difficulties which they experienced in coping with each other's way of handling the loss were equally painful for Dia and were driving her away.</p> |

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| <p>and it was <i>terribly, terribly</i> traumatic for me to say this ... to get myself so far as to say: “Now I am going!”</p>   |  |
| <p>33. Um... [it was traumatic] because I found it difficult to explain it to them ... um ...because they literally <i>smothered</i> me, you know, I did not have a chance to breathe because <i>then</i> I was the only focus. One day my brother-in-law said to me, “You will never get a husband if you stay” (laughs). That's not why I left but (laughs) he also ... in other words, what I think now is that he probably also experienced it ... that they are so ... You know, they were not aware of this. Certainly not, because they are the most dear, most supportive people you can get. But they did not have as much <i>insight</i> as one would hope for ... I think they could not get over it. No, no. I think that their needs were obviously considerably greater than their insight in ... into <i>my</i> situation. I am sure of that. That made it ... I must say ... I had to try and shake it off forcibly. Um...</p> | <p>(33) As the only child, Dia became her parents' sole focus, so much so that she felt suffocated, and it pained her deeply that she could not make them understand that she needed her own space. She was aware that her parents could not get over their loss: their neediness blurred their vision of her needs and Dia realised that she would forcefully have to cut herself free.</p> |
| <p>34. Still today there are unwritten rules that we will, more often than not, be together at Christmas. To tell the truth, I have only spent two Christmasses away from my parents... you know... and that is not ... my father is now deceased but (sighs) ... it ... it is the same feeling of ... you, you do not have ... you cannot explain why ... there's no explanation as to why you are not available, why you would like to do your own thing, that would soften it for them. So this is ...</p>  | <p>(34) Although Dia left home, emotionally she still felt bound by family custom to spend special occasions with her parents. She realises that, even though her father is deceased, the feeling remains: there is no choice about where she will be on Christmas Day as nothing can soften the blow of her absence for her mother.</p>   |

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| <p><b>35. But after my marriage, for the first six months I was able to really cry about it for the first time and I could say to my husband it was <i>terrible</i> for me. You know, I...I...at that ... I ...I could ... you know, we... he's not one for speaking much but I could really verbalise ... It was ... you know perhaps ... one, two or three episodes where for five minutes I could say that and that was terrible for me. That was that! And that was enough for me. For me at that stage .... Then it was all right. Afterwards it was all right.</b></p>  | <p>(35) In the relationship with her husband, Dia was finally able to acknowledge her intense sorrow and to openly express her grief. This occurred over a period of time and provided the necessary relief after which she felt more at peace.</p>   |
| <p><b>36. But I retained a <i>tre-men-dous</i> anxiety about travelling by car to the sea... this year for the first time I realized ... you know, it's all right. I ... I ... you know afterwards it got so bad that I thought: "OK now we're at K., we've made it!"; "Now we're at B, we've made it!", you know ... that's how I travelled to the sea. It was ... it was very bad. And I ... these days I laugh at myself because I still think that you are just going to ... [have] a problem ... an accident, when you're on the main road. I immediately put my seat belt on whereas here I would forget. So I ... it clicked ... now there are certain little episodes ...</b></p> | <p>(36) The loss of her sister left Dia with severe anticipatory anxiety when travelling to the sea by car and only this year has she managed to overcome her fear. However, she realises that she still associates travelling on the highway with accidents and takes the necessary safety precautions.</p>      |
| <p><b>37. We kept absolute contact with her husband and with...with... he re-married ... until a [certain] stage and ... then ... ag! The differences that he and I had never had anything to do with my ... my sister's death. I remember that we got into the car after the fellow told us and we</b></p>   | <p>(37) The family maintained contact with her sister's husband even after he remarried and Dia's later conflicts with her brother-in-law were unrelated to her sister's death. From the outset, Dia and her family never blamed him for the death, accepting him as part of the grieving family. In fact her</p> |

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| <p>rode a few kilometres, when my mother said to my father: “you will never blame that fellow”, and that was ... that was her attitude throughout. My ... my ... my father was really the more emotional one that could have [said]... you know: “You did not look after her well enough”, that sort of thing. My mother is the more logical one who ... you know realized, but, you know, to him she is just as important and he would ... at all costs he would ... you know for him it was <i>worse</i> than for anyone else.</p>  | <p>mother recognised that his loss was as severe if not “worse” than that of anybody else.</p>   |
| <p><b>38. No. Never. Never. Definitely never [felt that he was to blame]. If there is anything that I myself know is that she was the one that plucked at the steering wheel. Because I never felt that he drove too fast, or that he drove too slowly, but if he could have done anything better he would have. You know. He was <i>mad</i> about her. Definitely never, never, never that!</b></p>  | <p>(38) Dia herself never apportioned any blame to her brother-in-law as he was a very consistent driver and she believes that he would have done his utmost to protect her sister. However, knowing her sister well, Dia was convinced that she might have plucked at the steering wheel as the car left the road.</p>  |
| <p><b>39. Thereafter I often wondered how much he would have dominated her ... he can be emotionally hard and that’s what I often wondered about and often thought: “perhaps it’s all for the good.” You know, there were certain incidents with the ... the other woman when I thought: whew! If that were my sister, in all likelihood, I would not keep quiet. Um ... so I ... one feels differently in different situations, you know. I mean it’s bad at a stage and then something happens then you think, you know, perhaps ... um ... “It was better”, you know - you view it that way.</b></p> | <p>(39) Dia found that she experienced the loss differently in different situations. She vacillated between feeling that it was bad and then something would happen and she would view it in a different light - that perhaps it was for the “better.” The awareness of her brother-in-law’s unyielding nature influenced her perception; he might have come to dominate her sister and they also had no children.</p> |

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| <p>So the ... they had no children so it was not ... um ...</p>  |  |
| <p>40. And with the ... with my marriage I must say that I began to miss her, but you know how it is at a wedding ... it is so ... more with the arrangements than with the ... but we never ... we were still too far apart at that age, that four - five years, and we were too different, that, she really was a pal to me. I realise that it would have come later.</p>  | <p>(40) With her marriage, Dia missed her sister. Although she is aware that the missing was not based on the intimacy of their relationship as they were not really close at the time of her sister's death, she realises that the closeness would have come later.</p>   |
| <p>41. Um ... frequently I wondered what the situation would have been once I had children, for example. I wondered how we would ... um ... how would the relationship have changed and ... when my parents began to get older I often wondered how ... you know, how she would have seen it. Um ... actually it could have been easier or more difficult, you know, there are always differences in the way you handle situations so there would definitely have been <i>great</i> differences. Also because the... her husband's a very difficult chap. My husband is a very calm person. He will ... he's actually not difficult. Not because <i>I</i> say so but that's the way people experience him. He's a very peaceful chap. He goes along with things and if he doesn't want to do something, he won't do it and he won't make a big fuss about it. So he gets away with things (laughs), in the sense of not doing things that are unacceptable to him.</p> | <p>(41) Looking to future possibilities and relationships, Dia often wondered what her world would have been like had her sister survived (once she had children, as their parents got older), and she recognises the dialectical paradox that it could have been either easier or more difficult, not only because of their marked differences but also because of the nature of their respective husbands.</p> |
| <p>42. Um ... um ... the ... situations that I'm</p>   | <p>(42) At some point, Dia experienced a yearning</p>  |

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| <p>thinking about ... that I thought about the other night (after we had spoken on the phone) ... what was interesting was when I realised it. Yes. At one stage I... realised that my friends with sisters I sort of ... you know, “it’s very nice, [to have] the support” ... and then I thought of <i>my</i> sister and realised that it wouldn’t have been like that because we were too different. Um ... we would, yes, be there for each other, but we had no ... there would be little of doing things together. We simply did not do things in the same way. <i>But</i>, you know, as one grows older ... I don’t know. So I wondered about that and when my father died ... in the hospital, and so on. Then I realised that it probably would have been easier.</p> | <p>for a supportive sisterly relationship but, on reflection, realised that while she and her sister would have been “there” for each other and that this would have made caring for elderly parents easier, they were unlikely to have shared much because they were very different.</p> |
| <p>43. Last Monday I had an idea that I think that my sister would have supported her (i.e. mother) far better because they were much <i>closer</i> to each other in a way, but still I don’t know if <i>she</i> (mother) would have experienced it like that ... my mother ... I don’t know. Must ask her! (laughs). Funny, we don’t speak about such things (laughs). Isn’t it strange how you ... I don’t know when I see how my ... how <i>my</i> daughter ...</p>   | <p>(43) Dia compares herself to her sister and assumes that she might have provided better support for her mother because they had a very close relationship but she has never verified this assumption and realises that she and her mother do not discuss emotional issues.</p>         |
| <p>44. Oh yes. That is something else that I <i>now</i> realise that the anxiety that I had gradually built up of : Whew! You know, at some stage I will be alone. You know a husband is not really <i>family</i>. In the end he has a choice, you know, he has to be there or he doesn’t have to, and your sister <i>must</i></p>   | <p>(44) Dia experienced a gradual but incremental anxiety about being left entirely on her own at some stage of her life and she realises that while a husband can choose to be there or not, a sister and a child <i>must</i> be there whether they want to be there or not.</p>         |



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| <p>be there, you know ... and your child ...<br/>Yes, yes. If she feels like going or not, she will still ... (laughs) ...</p>   |  |
| <p>45. But my daughter, I think, grew into that role ... of... you know, we are very, very close. We have the same sense of humour. We share a lot...we are also very different ... She is a “performer”, I would rather, please, stand behind the curtain (laughs) but she understands very well ... so that ... and sometimes she does things and I really thought hard when she ... when she said that she wanted to study music, whether I tried, you know, [to influence her]... That was not the case at all. I told her that I refuse. She could not take music ... when she was at school. Um ... because we had a session, you know, when she was little and she didn’t want to practise and when she got to Standard six then she wanted to again. Then I said, “No, I’m sorry. You’ve had your chance, now it’s over!” But then after a while...meantime, I hoped that she would want to because she is so musical ... I can see that the child herself ... knows its ... its ... and then really she came back again and said, “No, really.” She really wants to. Then I said: “Okay, if your marks remain the same and I don’t have to say to you go and practise.” And after that I never had to tell her to go and practise. So I managed to sort that out, that I did not try to [push her] into a direction ... um ... I actually discouraged her. Said to her: “You must think very carefully. One should not make</p> | <p>(45) Dia realises that her developing relationship with her daughter filled the void created by the absence of her sister and the awareness of the possibility that her daughter could become a substitute caused some inner conflict particularly when her daughter indicated that she wanted to pursue the same field of interest as her deceased aunt. Dia made a conscious effort to ensure that she had not influenced her daughter.</p> |

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| <p><b>your hobby your career”, because she’s not terribly interested in teaching.</b></p>   |   |
| <p><b>46. But then again ... you know, even the music ... my sister and I ... she used to sight-read. Always did what the book said. I looked at the book and then I ... yes, okay, I think it sounds like that and then I did my thing, you know, and clearly did not get as far ... so her ... way is ... (laughs) ... yes... She was very willing to ...</b></p>   | <p>(46) The differences between Dia and her sister were considerable and revealed themselves even in their approach to mutual interests (music): Dia spontaneous and free, her sister controlled and correct. She realises that her sister’ way of doing things was more effective and successful.</p>  |
| <p><b>47. I think the ... the ... your ... your ... the personality differences, I think, the position in the family, I would say is very important. And then I think the age when it happens ... you know, when both are still in the home, then it’s a day-to-day ... And it was almost ... how we felt because we had a holiday with them. So that in itself, just the return home, was again a bit of a separation because they were married for such a short time ...</b></p>  | <p>(47) Dia believes that apart from the personality differences and the sibling’s position in the family, the age at which the loss occurs is an important variable in how one experiences the loss. For her, spending time on holiday with her newly married sister was reminiscent of earlier times when they shared the same space and had daily contact with each other and the return home was experienced as another separation.</p> |
| <p><b>48. ...And ... um ... there was something else that I thought of... I think there’s ... there are apparently bonds between siblings, you know. If there is more than one in the home then I think it is ... um ... you know, because ... because we always did things together with the cousins, also with the sister’s children, they were the big ones and we were the little ones so it means that ... I had a cousin who was just as old as I was and a younger cousin. Those are the two who are dead. And the older sister and the one who was exactly the same age as my sister, they were</b></p> | <p>(48) Dia acknowledges the existence of sibling bonds but is aware that when there is a significant age gap between brothers and sisters, family peers (cousins) who have regular contact may come to form closer bonds. In her situation, Dia played more with same age cousins than with her sister and the sibling attachment was not a very close one.</p>  |

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| <p>always together. So we were the little ones. So we ... the play always... when they visited I played with the boys and she with her ... so even there, you know, there ... I think we ...</p>   |   |
| <p><b>49. She was the elder sister with a sense of responsibility... it was a responsibility because she was so afraid of making a mistake. Which of course left me more free ... then I made a mistake, you know! So ... I mean, you know ... if we ever had conflict it was about <i>that</i> ... because she tried to stop me because I...provoked her. Because ... well it was fascinating when she became <i>panicky</i> because I wanted to do something that ... look I'm talking on a small scale ... we were extremely civilised little girls, you know. We never ... (laughs) ... so what I am saying is very subtle ... I only want to explain what the situation was (like).</b></p> | <p>(49) Dia perceived her elder sister as being “the responsible one” and while this allowed Dia more freedom, the responsible-irresponsible dialectic became a minor source of conflict between them as her sister would become agitated and try to inhibit Dia's daring and frequently provocative behaviour.</p> |
| <p><b>50. My ... my grandmother would say, for example: “She was not made for this world”, and that was what it was about. She was very different. She ... she ... I think as a little one ... When she was very little she had asthma now and then. So I think she was very protected. Not that I experienced it that way. I was on my own mission, I think ... I was too small and stupid.</b></p>   | <p>(50) Although Dia is aware that as a little girl her sister was regarded as very precious and fragile and that she was treated with special care by family members, Dia believes that she (Dia) was too young to be affected by this preferential treatment of her sister.</p>                                   |
| <p><b>51. Yes, and if you had [asked] me these same [questions] ... [if I were in] the same situation (i.e. the interview) five years after her death I would have probably [mentioned] totally different things ... I</b></p>   | <p>(51) Dia reflects that had she been interviewed shortly after her sister's death (5 years after the loss) she may have given totally different responses but she is not convinced of this.</p>   |

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| <p>don't know ... probably [have responded]<br/>very differently...because... the ... the ...<br/>No ...</p>   |   |
| <p>52. Perhaps because I ... I was always afraid how it would be if we ... it really is a thing that a person really wonders what she would be like now. Because you remember her with her young ... everything, you know, and if I have to think of how my personality has changed ... maybe not totally ... (laughs) but ... very, very...much more patient, much less ... you know. I can imagine that she probably [would have] much more self confidence ... you know ... much more assertive even ... would have been more easily assertive because for me it was ... Interestingly enough, I remember that I could <i>never</i> see her as a school teacher who could cope with a whole class full of children. Because <i>I</i> say school children are, for me, very threatening to have to cope with. You know students are a different matter but school children always remain, for me ... and I can remember that I wondered: "How on earth!" And she carried on. Okay. Good. They were smaller classes because it was music but, on the other hand, it was class music and not everyone enjoyed it. So it is a ... and I ... I can't remember that she ever complained that it was unmanageable for her. That is why I, you know, had the feeling that if she wanted to cope, she would.</p> | <p>(52) Dia realises that her image of her sister remains frozen and she often wonders how her personality would have evolved and what she would have been like in the present. Dia realises that her sister would have changed with time, just as Dia herself has changed, but she is also aware that even when her sister was alive she had surprised Dia by revealing that she was capable of more than Dia assumed.</p> |
| <p>53. She was definitely much stronger and I</p>  | <p>(53) Although Dia is aware that her sister's</p>   |

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| <p><b>know that ... that I never underestimate little people and I think I base that on her and then later on X (friend) ... and my mother. My mother is very small. Small, small, small .... “a little breath” and I know that you must not underestimate little people (laughs): Physically timid doesn’t mean anything! (laughs)... (Still laughing) Now that I think about it, she has grown in my mind (consciousness). Oh, but I think you [also] make assumptions. And quietish people ... you should also not underestimate. It is also... I think basically that was based on my knowledge of her strength ... I think.</b></p>   | <p>remembered image may have grown in her imagination, she believes that, based predominantly on her experience of her sister’s underlying strength, she has learned something very valuable, i.e. never to make assumptions about, or to underestimate, small and quiet people.</p>               |
| <p><b>54. But now, there is really tremendous support in the family and circle of friends for my parents and for me. I think it is also a very ... very important thing.</b></p>   | <p>(54) Dia recognises the value of the support of others (family and circle of friends) that rallied around her and her parents and she believes that this was very significant in her loss experience.</p>   |
| <p><b>55. Yes, this friend of my mother’s ... she’s been dead for a year and I had a tremendously special feeling for her... actually what happened is her parents ... I ... um ... my father’s mother was still alive, that is grandmother X and that was the only grandmother or grandfather that we knew, but <i>this</i> friend’s parents at one stage decided ... the friend and the two sisters, our three families were always together. But she was never married and she had these two parents. And they ... were sort of for all of us, our grandmother and grandfather but of the whole lot they, for some or other reason, apparently decided that I was their</b></p> | <p>(55) Dia experienced the presence of a special family friend and her repeated and active support, more in terms of “doing” rather than “talking” as particularly valuable and has come to realise the significance of unconditional friendship in her experience of the loss of her sister.</p> |

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| <p>grandchild. So it was ... everyone accepted this, there was never any problem that I noticed. So she ... to a certain extent we shared her parents, you know, something the others ... that the other cousins did not do. And she was the type of personality that ... if there was a <i>crisis</i> then she was there. She never really ... I think, yes, you know, I think she was really a <i>mother</i> to me ... an <i>idol</i> in a way ... because she never spoke about things, but she <i>acted</i> ... she was <i>there</i>, you know ... she was always ... that's what she taught me about friendship, that you cannot ... that you will not easily ... or you don't find this in many people ... that <i>unconditional</i> friendship. So she would immediately drop everything and say to her sister: "I'm going. You and your husband travel together." And obviously they came along to B. and they were with us that ... that week [after the accident] ... those few days, I don't think it was a whole week. And it was like ... you know they left immediately which was wonderful. And this happened <i>repeatedly</i> you know. So that support was there and it was very valuable.</p> |   |
| <p>56. So from my side it took the burden from me because I felt, you know, now, in a way, I must carry these people (i.e. parents). They did not have the energy really to ... and because of the nature of my personality they ... I did not ask much ... I actually asked them to leave me alone. You know...because they can carry</p>   | <p>(56) In the awareness that her parents did not have the strength to cope, Dia appreciated the support of others that relieved her of having to sustain her parents. She, herself, made few demands on them, in effect she wanted time alone to deal with her own loss.</p> |

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| <p>on and cope with their problem and I coped with mine ...</p>  |  |
| <p>57. Very little really [i.e. support for herself]. Okay, no...we did make the arrangements together and that sort of thing but they never, <i>never</i> asked how one felt about it. <i>Mercifully</i> not ... It would have been very bad. But on the other hand, my mother was not a great talker and my father was not ... um ... was not at all analytical in the sense of: "Come let's think how we feel about this matter." You just feel, you know. You don't wonder why you feel.</p>   | <p>(57) Although Dia was involved with all the arrangements after her sister's death, others, taking their cue from the grieving family, never asked how they felt for which Dia was extremely grateful as this relieved her of the pain of discussion.</p>                    |
| <p>58. He (father) was a lovable person ... the day when he died I realised ... that the one person who <i>un-con-di-tio-nally</i> always ... you know it is the stupidest thing ... would always take my side and look for excuses for me, is no longer there (laughs). My mother would ... um ... first sort everything out. First ... first find out whose fault it was ... [she would] always think <i>I</i> was at fault, "Because I know my children well!" (laughs). But she is absolutely for ... she was ... you know : "Sort the thing out." She could ... You get the picture of how difficult it was for those two and I felt that I stood in the middle. And I think if there had been other children, perhaps it would have been different ... handled differently ... (thoughtful). I ...</p> | <p>(58) Dia felt trapped between her mother and father whose marked personality differences created difficulties for them in coping with their grief and Dia becomes aware that if there had been other children it may have been possible to handle the loss differently.</p> |
| <p>59. When ... my cousins died (after they were married) and the way in which her sister handled it, my mother's sister handled it, and the way in which she (Dia's mother)</p>   | <p>(59) Based on her experience of subsequent losses within the extended family, Dia becomes aware that different families cope with loss very differently and she realises</p>  |

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| <p>handled it, was totally different. Although, not so much the two sisters as the two <i>families</i>. But then the children were <i>older</i>, you know. I think that makes a <i>big</i> difference. Well, you know, she (i.e. Dia's sister) was ... she was just out of the house when she died and the cousins died ... the older one ... we were about forty two, forty three or thereabout and the younger fellow ... he was about five years younger than us and he was in his late thirties, but they both had families with children and had been out of the house for quite a long time ... although no, I lie. The younger cousin was not out of the house. My mother's sister still stayed with them in the house. They had a flatlet ... her husband was dead at that stage ... so they ... yes, actually they were together daily. But it was striking to me how the personality of the person ... all the people in the family ... their personalities, especially the parents, in the family, their way of handling it largely determines how <i>you</i> will experience it and the...and the ...</p> | <p>that, apart from the age at which a child dies, the personalities of the parents and their way of handling their grief significantly influence the surviving sibling's experience of loss.</p>  |
| <p>60. Okay, how you cope with it is certainly your affair, but...but the demands that are made on you, apart from the fact that your brother or sister is dead...the immediate demands...That is determined by the personalities of the other people in the family ... and this can be even more taxing than the fact that you have suffered a loss, you know. That was something that I realised afterwards ... <i>That</i> was for me the thing that stood out. I</p>  | <p>(60) Although Dia accepts that every sibling will cope with the loss in an individual way, she realises that other family members have their own characteristic ways of coping with the loss and this placed immediate demands on her to cope in the same way as her parents did. In retrospect, this stood out as even more burdensome than her actual loss; the experience became doubly stressful.</p> |



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| <p>think ... I think that nobody can say that my parents were, you know, outrageously this or that. It was just that I had to cope with ... I must cope in the way that they cope ... and that was a <i>double</i> thing for me. You know like ... imagine that your son has a ... loses a girlfriend. You cope with it the way that <i>he's</i> coping with it ... even if she was a lovely person that you knew. It was ... yes, you know, this happened over and over and over again...</p>   |   |
| <p>61. Oh, absolutely (she felt the pain of her parents). Yes, yes. And it places <i>demands</i> on you ... and I assume that if there are more children then the children could half <i>understand</i> each other, you know, and almost jointly bear the (burden) ....that thing of : “Let us help mom and dad cope.” And my mother and father, I think, are not ... they are not extremely ... we are a very civilized family (laughs) ... so, you know, if I speak of them ... it is .... it is very subtle (laughs) ... but it did .... It did place demands on <i>me</i>.</p> | <p>(61) Dia experienced her parents’ pain as a subtle demand from which she could not turn away and she assumes that it would have lightened the load if there had been other siblings who could have shared the responsibility of helping parents to cope.</p>   |
| <p>62. And I finished (ie. studies)... It (the death) was in July in my fourth year ... and I finished in December. I got work in J but I commuted. So I still lived at home.</p>  | <p>(62) Although Dia started working in a city quite far from home, she continued living at home and commuted daily.</p>  |
| <p>63. And that October ... <i>that</i> was the first thing. The very same friend of whom I spoke earlier on and I decided to go overseas. Then the rand was very strong. It was seventy cents to the dollar. No the <i>dollar</i> was seventy cents to the rand. So it was ... it was something that we very much wanted to do and she was already</p>  | <p>(63) Dia felt her parents’ ever-increasing “holding on” and she wanted to escape from their intense embrace but while she welcomed the opportunity for some space between herself and her parents, she also realised that a separation would be extremely painful for them. Despite her ambivalence, Dia succeeded in breaking</p> |

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| <p><b>there. Just to get away for those three months was ... there were no fixed addresses and it was certainly very bad for them (i.e. parents) but for me it was ... I just wanted to get away a little from the clinging because the holding on became more intense. And then I came back ... in December, I think ... and moved into a flat. I often wondered if I was not the only child, I am sure that the situation would have been easier.</b></p>   | <p>away but she is convinced that this would have been easier had she not been the only child.</p>  |
| <p><b>64. I often wondered how ... how it would have been if she had been there and, as I say (there would have been) many positives and many negatives. I realise that there may have been a lot of conflict because there would be two families which may(be) ... you know, our family... my husband and I and the children would have had to cope with her (sister) and her husband ... the brother-in-law ...</b></p>   | <p>(64) Dia often reflected on the future and wondered how it would have been had her sister not died. She realises that there would have been positive and negative aspects; viewed negatively, there may have been considerable conflict between Dia and her new family, and her sister and her husband</p> |
| <p><b>65. It is interesting when things started going terribly wrong between him and his second wife - she had a small problem with drugs and things, you know. No, not “drugs” ... “depression drugs?” ... What do you call them? “Medication”, yes, that’s it! And then they were divorced and he’s remarried now. And now ... here towards the end of last year, the one cousin who is just as old as my sister was... her husband ... they were all together in matric ... I am talking about my brother-in-law and my sister and the cousin and her husband ... it was a group that I knew very well ... that everyone ...</b></p> | <p>(65) Dia became increasingly aware of her brother-in-law’s later attachment difficulties and was struck by how similar his third wife was to her deceased sister. She realised that he had not resolved his grief over the loss.</p>   |

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| <p>you know, it was a well known group ... to each other ... then her husband died and it was ... how can I say ... almost like a reunion. You know, then all the friends were back. And then it struck me <i>again</i> how much this third wife ... looked like my sister - small and dark and fine and...you know... it was strange.</p>   |   |
| <p>66. ...It was interesting to me just after the ... after the accident, I often went ... I had to ... I went to him between classes and helped him with exercises and so on, but I knew that for him (the visits) revolved around <i>speaking</i>, you know. It was awful for him. He was bedridden for a long time. He had a fracture that gave many problems. Um ... so it was also a ... it was also someone ... because he and I were actually friends, I had to almost support him as well. You know, this was also ... also another ... another situation.</p>   | <p>(66) After the accident, Dia was aware of her brother-in-law's psychic pain and his need to speak about the loss and she experienced a sense of responsibility to sustain him emotionally as well. This was an additional stress for her.</p>  |
| <p>67. That's the way <i>I</i> experienced it, you know and, I think, because of the nature of my personality. I cannot cope ... I cannot make as if I...or, I cannot <i>give in</i>... "<i>admit</i>" that's the word. I cannot, not ... I cannot, not cope because as soon as I do this, then I collapse completely ... you know. For a while I must ... my ... my ... my <i>mind</i> must take over rather than my emotions. I mean ... I must <i>think</i> myself through this ... yes, I think, come through this cognitively. Um ... and I think this was part of the process too ... it was bad, I could not cope with it immediately. I would, in any event, not have been able to</p> | <p>(67) Internally Dia experienced the pain of her loss but she could not submit to her grief or acknowledge that she was hurting for fear of breaking down. She needed time to reflect and to work through the loss on a cognitive rather than emotional level before she could talk about it with anybody. She realises that one's individual personality influences the grief process.</p> |

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| <p>talk about it with anybody at that stage.<br/>And I think <i>there</i> it would also differ a lot ... because the need which ... you know, the ... the personality will determine what your needs are.</p>  |   |
| <p><b>68. What was bad about the first experiences of someone (around you) close to you who has died, I think the ... the grandfather ... the friend's father whom I called grandfather ... his (death) was at that stage the only one in my family that I had ever experienced and then the friend's sister. She also died in a motor accident ... and I think the suddenness of it ... that's the other thing that I have thought about ... um ... the manner in which they die ... is ... um ... will also certainly make a difference. You know, if a person is sick for a long time, then it is something completely different ... to this unexpected ... especially when it is accompanied by violence, it can be even more awful, you know.</b></p> | <p>(68) Although Dia's first encounter with death (grandfather) was painful, she realises that the experience of loss to a sudden and violent death is qualitatively different and can be even more awful than the loss of someone who has been ill for a long time.</p>  |
| <p><b>69. You know that I always said that I ... I ... I ... and I definitely felt it ... I honestly felt : "Why not ... why her and not me?". I mean I was not in a relationship. I was not married. I was almost disposable at that stage because it wouldn't have been so bad for everybody ... um ... naturally I'm not so stupid ... (laughs) ... it would have been bad (laughs) ... obviously ... so what I mean is that they would have felt bad for a time, you know ... nobody would have ... they became much more realistic later on. Remember that I once</b></p>   | <p>(69) Dia constantly sought answers to the question: "Why her and not me?" and felt guilty that she had survived while her sister had died. By comparing her life at that time with that of her sister, she concludes that her death would have been less devastating as fewer people would have been affected and she assumes that her loss would not have been as deeply mourned.</p> |

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| <p>said to them: “No wait a bit. Now you are going overboard.” But I really felt ... if I ever felt in the least bit guilty, I felt guilty because it was not me, because she had just got married, just qualified. I wasn’t sure what I wanted to study ... nobody ... or what work I wanted to do ... if I wanted to do that sort of work. I was not in a relationship that was going anywhere, so, you know ... it would simply have been logical. I think she ... she was perhaps ... so that was the only thing that I thought of, you know. I wouldn’t say that I really felt guilty ... how shall I describe it ... but I know that I had such thoughts ... which ... you know if I had to make the plans, I would have made them like this, you know (laughter).</p>                     |   |
| <p>70. And that was another thing ... religion ... Fortunately at one point I got as far as to realise that I <i>was</i> allowed to be angry. I <i>could</i> but then I should not gossip about God, I had to tell Him that. That was a great relief. That experience that, okay you may be angry but then you do not turn away and speak behind [God’s back] ... the ... the ...the ... who ... who ... who has the power, has done the wrong thing and therefore I hate Him, and things like that. You know. Fortunately I realised that you could ... and those are things that I had to [work out] for myself ... you know ... I realise I would not have accepted anything like that from anyone else. It would not have been a solution for me to hear this from someone else. Like at</p> | <p>(70) As a Christian, Dia experienced intense anger towards God and through her spiritual struggle she realised that she was allowed to be angry provided she could say this directly to God and ask Him to help her to cope. This was a personal solution which evolved over time and Dia realises that she would not have accepted this had it come from somebody else.</p> |

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| <p>the funeral, you know, it would not ... but because I came to this <i>myself</i>, it was ... yes ... yes ... it also did not happen immediately. For a long time I felt, yes, I'm annoyed and it's a very stupid thing to let happen. It was unnecessary. Look at how many lives have been messed up and people who ... but for me it was a very, very big relief to realise that I may be angry as long as I could say this <i>directly</i>, that: "I am angry, help me sort it out." I think it was okay for me ... now I can cope. It was for me ...</p> |  |
| <p>71. And those who talk a great deal of religion ... for me it is a fact ... um ... it is a given, you know, and all these terribly emotional things about religion are terrible for me. I don't want to know anything about it. For me it was very bad ... and you don't belabour someone else with religion ... you ... if you cannot influence the person with how you handle your life ... then you are not a good ambassador sort of (laughs). So ...</p>   | <p>(71) Dia rejected the abstract and emotional ideas of others who attempted to console her with religious talk. For her the loss was a lived reality, a "given", which was very painful and she felt that religious persuasion was not helpful.</p>  |
| <p>72. I'm not saying these things because I am a religious-speaking person. Not at all. Anything but! But ... I remember that I ... um, [it is] Job hey? [Yes], Job. There's a stage when ... when ... old ... old ... Job complains, complains, complains and he and his pals sit and moan, then ...then ... God puts things together and He says to him, "Man you keep quiet and let me tell you about all the things that I've done: Can you do <i>this</i>, can you do <i>this</i>? Have you done <i>this</i>, have you ever done <i>this</i> ...?"</p>   | <p>(72) Dia's perception of God as the Ultimate Planner, based on her reading of a biblical story, strikes a chord in her because of her passion for planning and she develops a sudden insight and awareness that there are plans better than she can visualise or conceptualise. She comes to accept that there is a Higher Hand in these things and to entrust God with the planning of her life.</p> |

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| <p><b>Actually you're stupid. You don't know anything. You don't make any plans. I make better plans!" (laughs). And for me, you know, that was what made me understand ... so I accept that there is someone who can plan and I am...I... I'm absolutely amazed by ... um ... planning. I am fanatical about planning (laughs). So if someone can make provision for things so that this whole thing resulted in a whole subtle chain of how things are connected ... if someone can conceptualise this, then I must trust Him with the planning of my life. This is something that clicked with me. So the accusation that I had in that respect has become for me ... good ... "I know better. I don't have to explain to you why I did this but I know better", and I must accept it like that. So for me it was a ...</b></p> |   |
| <p><b>73. And I think it was ... at that stage, twenty-one, um ... is also a time that you have not sorted yourself out properly in that respect. You are emotional, perhaps very ... you know, this school religion can actually go terribly overboard ... it's ... it's ... almost a mass ... hysteria. And I don't want to shoot it down, not at all. For many children it is of great value but one must see how long it lasts, you know, that's how I feel about the matter. And um ... That's it. It was a test. It was very easy at a Christian Student Society camp to say : "Yes, I ... I ... wonderful. The Lord is everything!", but when you find yourself <i>in</i> such a situation then it is a</b></p>   | <p><b>(73)</b> In her quest to find answers to the loss, Dia arrives at an understanding of the difference between the unquestioning acceptance of the easy and ready-made prescriptions of organised religion and the harsh and concrete reality of being-with-loss. This prompts her to test previously held religious assumptions and to clarify her own personal beliefs.</p> |

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| <p>double-take... of <i>really</i> being in such a situation to ... with me it went very well (i.e. with the Christian Students' Society). We never had problems...you know it was not really wonderful but it was always very well organised and everything went well and so on ... so that was the first ... as I say with the friend's sister and my [sister's death], because their deaths were only six months apart it was almost one thing ... in this ... in this ... in this respect ... in that respect of: "Why?", you know ... and to deal with it. You are half involved in working through it when the second one occurs and you have to deal with that as well. And from primary school days we were very, very close and also the families knew each other. You must realise that the parents ... the sister that died was a friend of my eldest cousin ... my mother's sister's eldest daughter. So it was all ... like intermarriage (interrelated) but it was (laughs) ... I mean ... and we stayed close to each other, all of us. It was actually a community that were involved with each other.</p> |  |
| <p>74. It really helped that I had my own time ... that I could withdraw and that was the greatest help ... and ... um, this friend who had the same experience. I think those two ... I think it was really my salvation that I could ... um ... that I was not forced to ... to ... experience this <i>together</i> with the family ... you know ... or to work through it together ... did not</p>  | <p>(74) Dia wanted to deal with her grief in her own way and in her own time and felt grateful that she had time alone, that she could withdraw and was not compelled to work through the loss with her family. She believes that having the opportunity to do this and the support of a friend who had had a similar experience, helped her to survive this difficult period.</p> |



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| <p>have to work through it together, that I could do it by myself ... and ...</p>  |   |
| <p>75. ... and maybe that I ... that I immediately had to deal with a major task (thesis) and there where I felt the most comfortable, you know ...could continue. I ... I ... I ... analyse and reflect much more easily than I am able to work through ... than what I can emotionally acknowledge and work through. So I think I ... you know, those were the circumstances that resulted in ... yes, I could keep myself busy. I had an objective and you must leave me alone because I am ... busy ... so everyone left me alone. The door of my room was closed and they left me alone because I was busy ... and I think in the process of finishing the thesis I ... (long pause) ... But I still found time for myself and the storm outside ... uh ... uh ... and I didn't have to see it all ... and I was satisfied that they had enough support because they had ... people close to ... to each other ... and to them, they had there ... (suddenly very thoughtful)</p> | <p>(75) Dia could not deal with her emotions immediately and having an academic task to complete gave her time alone to work on her project while still being able to reflect on her loss. Comfortable in the knowledge that her parents had adequate external support, Dia kept herself occupied, legitimately closing her door against the “storm outside.”</p> |
| <p>76. I ... I ... just wondered, if it were a younger brother or sister how one would then have handled it ... or if you were the eldest and the middle one should die ... and perhaps you had to help with the younger one. I think all those things ... you know, then the younger one would be your responsibility. That would have been gall to me ... because my parents had their friends, you know, they had people close to them ... It is really clear that the</p>  | <p>(76) Dia realises that while her parents had no energy to cope with any additional demands, they at least had external support. Speculating on a different family constellation, she feels relieved that she did not have younger siblings for whom she would have had to assume responsibility.</p>   |

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| <p>parents have no energy left over ...</p>   |  |
| <p>77. I ... look, I don't say that they were not interested in what I was doing ... that's how <i>I</i> experienced it. Perhaps <i>I pushed them away</i>. You know, perhaps they got the message loud and clear: "don't bother me", I don't know. We never really spoke about it. But there was definitely the ... the ... for me the <i>greatest</i> help was that I had time, that I was not, you know, sucked in. That would have been really terrible.</p>  | <p>(77) Although Dia experienced her grieving parents as not actively involved in her activities, she suspects that she may have distanced herself from them for fear of being overwhelmed by the family grief. She still feels that having time alone, not being sucked into the family grief, was for her the greatest help.</p>   |
| <p>78. And you know for me ... the fact that my sister was who she was, that for me was very easy because it really ... very often I could console myself that she would, in any case, have struggled to cope with all the difficult things [of life]. And actually that she had lived the best part of her life ... and she was married, she had that experience. So, you know, from then on, I think, only the more difficult things come. It was nice to think ... You know how you feel when you are twenty-one. Marriage is the ultimate - never again will anything ... so wonderful ever happen again. And ... I thought: "Wow, you know. She was ... she was not cheated!" (laughs). A person almost feels these very young people, you know, they really have not yet had the experience of ... it can be a wonderful union ... Oh yes, one seeks such things. Thereafter I often...very often...very often realised that she was sort of spared</p> | <p>(78) Dia's awareness of her sister's gentle nature facilitated acceptance of the loss as she realised that her sister would not have coped well with the hardships of life. Although she is aware that one seeks comfort, Dia also often consoled herself with the thought that her sister had not been deprived of the joy of marriage and that she had, in effect, enjoyed the best part of life.</p> |
| <p>79. [She was spared of having to go through what Dia experienced]. Yes. It would</p>   | <p>(79) Dia acknowledges that it would have been painful for her sister to have experienced</p>  |

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| <p>surely also have been bad ... not that I thought that it would (laughs) have been the biggest problem. Um... yes, definitely.</p>   | <p>the loss of a sibling but had not considered her own death as the most significant hardship that could have confronted her sister had she survived.</p>  |
| <p>80. Mm ... [she was dependent]. I think it was a sort of immediate dependency in the situation but I don't think ... she trusted me enough ... I think I was a bit unpredictable. Um, in the sense of ... (laughs) ... you know we were so different ... not that it was really that, but I think ... I was prepared to tackle things that she was not... So I don't think she would have ... you know, she ... she ... she would have entrusted her life to me. I was in all likelihood <i>too irresponsible</i> for her at that stage and I did things that were probably unacceptable to her. You know took chances - in <i>her book</i>, took chances. Which did not ... I was not a ... but she was really ... um ... not adventurous (laughs). She was not very daring. Not at all. She would <i>never</i> go overseas for three months after she had studied without knowing exactly where she was going, you know, to places, you know, to people. She would have gone to visit, sure, but she wouldn't have gone and taken a chance because at that time people did not do it so often and nowadays there's nothing strange about it. But at that time it was really altogether ... you know, you did what the American books said you had to do, there was no one really to find out. It was...</p> | <p>(80) Dia repeats that she and her sister were very different and while her sister depended on her in certain situations, Dia believes that she did not fully trust her because of her perception that Dia was unpredictable and even <i>irresponsible</i> at that stage.</p> |
| <p>81. Yes (that was the way she remembered</p>  | <p>(81) Although Dia does not want to be</p>  |

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| <p><b>her sister) and that is why I wonder if there had been more brothers and sisters how one would have ... you know ... if it would have been more supportive or more of a burden ... (thoughtful/concerned) ... I don't want it to sound as if I considered it to be a tremendous responsibility but it is just a thing that happens around you and you see people around you struggling, you know, and this does not make your task actually so much easier.</b></p> | <p>perceived as a victim weighed down by heavy responsibility, she realises that experiencing the struggle of others around her made her task that much more difficult and she often wondered whether having other siblings would have been a source of support or an additional responsibility (burden).</p> |
| <p><b>82. Yes. Yes (could share her loss experience with her husband). Then I could let go ... And ... and ... I had the emotional trust. Um ... and he is the type of guy who wouldn't be upset with it, you know... so he ...it made me think that I ... it's not ... rather I think, I knew I could say as much as I wanted to (say). He would not insist ... [that I tell more].</b></p>  | <p>(82) In the trust relationship with her husband, Dia was finally able to let go and express her emotions. She felt confident that he would not be upset by her grief and that she could reveal as much or as little as she wanted to without fear that he would insist that she disclose more.</p>         |

**Table II**

Participant 2: Dia

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*Constituents of the Individual Situated Structure of Sibling Loss*

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**1. The Sibling Attachment (1,2,46,48,49,80)**

Dia recalls the personality differences between herself and her sister as they were growing up: Dia more daring, apparently fearless, independent, spontaneous, and free; her sister, not taking chances, fearful and seeking constant affirmation, controlled, correct and responsible. Although Dia experienced some impatience, she knew almost intuitively that her sister was stronger than she appeared to be and, in retrospect, she realises that by assuming these roles both their needs were met in a mutually satisfying way. When they were children, Dia perceived her elder sister as being “the responsible one” and while this allowed Dia more freedom, the responsible-irresponsible dialectic became a minor source of conflict between them as her sister would become agitated and try to inhibit Dia’s daring and frequently provocative behaviour.

While Dia is aware of the existence of sibling bonds, the 4 year age gap and the marked personality differences between herself and her sister kept them separate. Even as children, they both formed closer bonds with other family peers (cousins) with whom they had regular contact. Dia and her sister played more with same-age cousins than with each other and the *sibling attachment* was not a very close one. Dia felt that they never became friends in the sense of sharing confidences and doing things together. Yet her sister was very much an integral part of Dia’s world and, after her death, her sister’s remembered image increases in dimension. She realises that the closeness would have come later.

**2. Separation: (3,4,5,47)**

The first major separation from her sibling occurred when her sister married. Although Dia clashed with her brother-in-law on minor issues, generally she got on well with him and this in no way affected the sibling relationship. Dia and her parents were briefly reunited on holiday with her sister before her sister’s husband joined them for a few days and then they separated again for the journey home. For Dia, spending time on holiday with her newly married sister was reminiscent of earlier times when they shared the same space and had daily contact with each other and the return home was experienced as another separation. Her death, on the journey home, was a tremendous shock and the final separation. Dia’s sister was married for only one-and-a-half years when she was killed in a motor vehicle accident.

### 3. Blame: (6,37,38)

Her sister's death was instant and unexpected. Although the family suspected that her sister's husband might have fallen asleep at the steering wheel, Dia and her family never *blamed* him for the death, accepting him as part of the grieving family whose loss was as severe if not "worse" than for anybody else. Dia's later conflicts with her brother-in-law were unrelated to her sister's death and she herself never apportioned any blame to him as she believed that he was a very consistent driver and she realised that he would have done his utmost to protect her sister. If anything, Dia felt convinced that her sister, who she knew was inclined to panic in a crisis, might have pulled at the steering wheel as the car left the road.

### 4. Parents' Grief: (7, 15,18, 19,20,21,22,23,24,26,27,34,50,58,59,60,61)

- *Awareness of parents' pain: (7, 15,18)*

On receiving news of the accident, Dia was immediately aware of her *parents' pain* and her main concern as the family travelled to the mortuary to identify her sister's body was the horror of it for her parents. Later she realises that, of all the people affected by the loss, her parents remained her greatest concern and for a long time after the funeral, their way of dealing with the loss became a source of tremendous emotional stress for Dia.

- *Idealisation: (19,50)*

Dia was aware of her sister's many appealing and lovable qualities, and was also aware that the family regarded her as very special, precious and "not of this world", but she believed that she (Dia) was too young to be affected by this preferential treatment of her sister. However, after her sister's death, her parents' preoccupation with their deceased child and their tendency to *idealise* her annoyed Dia. She felt irritated, not by the lack of her parents' attention but by their apparent distortion of the facts which prompted her to confront them, saying, "You're remembering incorrectly!" Later her parents did become more realistic.

- *Rituals and Anniversaries: (20,26,27,34)*

Dia dreaded and experienced great difficulty with the family's regular visits to the cemetery and withdrew from this *ritual*, preferring to remember her sister in her mind. She also recalls with horror the emotional intensity of the first Christmas and the first birthday after the death and to this day she senses the expectation within the family that *anniversary dates* are openly acknowledged and jointly observed. Although Dia has never forgotten her sister's birthday or the day on which she died and would prefer a quiet time on her own, she is aware that relationships become strained if she fails to "celebrate" these occasions with her parents. In the awareness of her parents' intense pain, Dia still feels bound to spend special occasions with them. Her compassion for her parents and her quest to

understand what it means to lose a child, continues to influence Dia and she has spent only two Christmasses apart from her family of origin. She is aware that even though her father is now deceased the feeling remains: nothing can soften the blow of her absence for her mother.

- *Divergent ways of coping with the loss: (21,22,23,24,58)*

Dia was painfully aware of her *parents' divergent ways of coping with their loss* and the emerging subtle conflict that created difficulties for them and weakened their relationship. Her father constantly wanted to speak about the loss while her mother preferred to keep her feelings private. While Dia preferred to cope with her grief in the same way as her mother, i.e. privately, she felt trapped between her parents whose marked personality differences created difficulties in coping with their grief. Aware of her parents' conflicting needs (concealing-revealing) feelings, Dia realised that they were unable to support each other. This was the most stressful aspect of the loss experience for her. Dia herself was not ready to deal openly with her sister's death and by trying to draw her out to speak about her feelings, her father unwittingly created situations that threatened her emotionally. She felt annoyed and wanted to escape but at the same time felt a deep compassion for her father and realised how painful the loss was for both of her parents. In retrospect, Dia realises that if there had been other children, the loss experience might have been handled differently and consequently been less stressful for everyone.

- *Demand to grieve in the same way as parents: (59,60,61)*

Based on her experience of subsequent losses within the extended family, Dia becomes aware that different families cope very differently with loss. She realises that the personality differences between her parents and their way of handling their grief significantly influenced her experience of the loss of her sibling. Although Dia accepts that grieving is an individual matter, she realises that family members have their own characteristic ways of coping with their grief. She experienced the expectation that she cope in the *same way as her parents* as an immediate *demand*. In retrospect, this stood out as even more burdensome than her actual loss. The experience became doubly stressful. Her parents' grief became a subtle demand from which she could not turn away and the sense of responsibility weighed heavily on her. She assumes that it would have lightened the load if there had been other siblings who could have shared the responsibility of helping parents cope with their loss.

## **5. The Burden of Responsibility: (9,14,65,66,67,76,81)**

In addition to her own loss and the awareness of her parents' intense sorrow, Dia was concerned about significant others who were also hurting. Her sister's spouse was in a critical condition and bedridden for a long time. Dia regretted that he was unable to attend the funeral and she realised that he experienced difficulties in coming to terms with his young wife's death. As his friend, Dia was aware not only of her brother-in-law's physical pain but also of his psychic pain and experienced a sense of

*responsibility* to sustain him emotionally as well. Soon after the funeral, she often helped him with his physiotherapy but became increasingly aware that for him the value of the visits revolved around speaking about the loss. His need to talk was particularly difficult for Dia as she sought to contain her grief for fear of breaking down. Because of her personality, she needed time to reflect and to work through her loss on a cognitive level before she could share her inner feelings with anybody. She could not submit to her grief for fear of collapsing altogether and experienced the supportive interaction with her sibling's spouse as an additional stress.

Although Dia was aware of the devastating effect of the loss on her parents, she felt grateful that they at least had external support. Speculating on a different family constellation, she feels relieved that she did not have younger siblings for whom she would have had to assume responsibility as she realises that her parents did not have the energy to cope with any additional demands. Although Dia does not want to be perceived as a victim weighed down by heavy responsibility, experiencing the struggle of others around her made her task that much more stressful and she experienced conflicting thoughts and feelings. While she needed a space in which to grieve, she was also afraid of losing the meaningful relationships that she had and she often wondered whether having other siblings would have been a source of support or an additional *burden*.

#### **6. Withdrawal and Time to be Alone (10,11,12,13,17,74,75,77)**

At the funeral Dia was greatly relieved to find that she could *withdraw* because there were others who took care of her parents. Although her friends were also there and were involved and caring, she realised that they had other priorities and she did not expect a great deal of support from them. Implicitly Dia felt relieved as she could not immediately respond to her loss. She needed a space to reflect and digest and she realised that having *time to be alone* helped to preserve a sense of integration and enabled her to cope. The only person that she felt comfortable with was a close friend who had also lost a sister (6 months earlier) and Dia recalls that she contacted this friend a few times immediately after the accident.

The completion of a major academic task also demanded Dia's immediate attention and provided her with the necessary relief from the pain of others, enabling her to deal with her grief in her own way and in her own time. Comfortable in the knowledge that her parents had adequate outside support, Dia kept herself occupied, legitimately closing her door against the "storm outside" while still having time to work through her inner chaos. She actually asked others to leave her alone and felt grateful that she had time alone, that she could withdraw and was not compelled to work through the grief with her family. She believes that having the opportunity to do this and having the support of a friend who had had a similar experience, helped her to survive this difficult period.



### **7. The Value of Social Support: (8,54,55,56)**

From the outset, Dia and her family were embraced by helpful community. She appreciated the presence of a young man (a stranger) who, shortly after the death, spoke with her at great length without attempting to offer easy consolation. More specifically, Dia *valued* the ongoing *support of others* (family and circle of friends) who rallied around her and her parents and she believes that this was very significant in her loss experience. Aware that her parents did not have the strength to cope, Dia appreciated the support of others that relieved her of the responsibility of having to sustain her parents. She, herself, made few demands on them; in effect she wanted time alone to deal with her own loss while they dealt with theirs. The presence of a special family friend and her repeated and active support, more in terms of “doing” rather than “talking” was particularly valuable and Dia has come to realise the value of unconditional friendship in a situation of sibling loss.

### **8. Hidden Grief (16,57,67)**

Dia held on to her grief, unable to trust others or herself with her raw inner emotions. She needed time to reflect and to recover a degree of control over her emotions before giving verbal expression to them and she could not share her feelings with anybody, not even her boyfriend. Although she was involved with all the arrangements following her sister’s death, she was grateful that others, taking their cue from the grieving family, never asked her how she felt. This relieved her of the pain of discussion and implicitly of the fear of total collapse. Dia simply could not weaken, could not yield to her grief or acknowledge that she could not cope for fear of breaking down and her *grief* remained *hidden* for many years. Externally she seemed to be coping well while internally her pain was intense. Later, she comes to realise that one’s individual personality significantly influences one’s grief process.

### **9. The Trauma of Leaving Home (25,29,30,31,32,33,62,63)**

The death of her sister made *leaving home* extremely difficult for Dia and she experienced severe inner conflict and stress. While she had always been a fiercely independent person and needed her own space, she was also acutely aware of her familial responsibility and the supportive role that she played in holding the family together and in facilitating change in her parents. Her decision to leave home became a formidable and *traumatic* emotional task: more than getting her parents’ permission was the inner struggle to give herself permission to leave. Dia loved her parents dearly and her consideration and awareness of their intense pain as well as their difficulty in coping with yet another “loss” delayed her departure. Although she went to work in a city at some distance from her parents, initially she continued to live at home and commuted. Reflecting anxiously on how they would interpret her wish to move out of home, Dia became immobilised, unable to bring herself to the point of saying, “Now I am going!” Contributing to her conflict and stress was the realisation that she was breaking new ground, her sister having lived at home until she got married, and Dia realises that her

decision to leave home was a foreign concept for her parents. Once she had told her parents of her wish to move out of home, her fears were confirmed. They could not understand her need to separate and subtly blamed each other, assuming that their reactions to the loss were driving Dia away.

Dia realised that her parents' need to hold on to her was greater than their understanding of her situation. As the only remaining child, she had become her parents' sole focus, so much so that she felt suffocated and wanted to escape from their intense embrace. However, while emotionally she welcomed the opportunity to break away, she also understood that a separation would be extremely painful for her parents. Dia realised that her parents could not get over their loss and that their neediness blurred their vision of her needs. She felt helpless in making them understand that she needed space, and it pained her deeply that she would have to cut herself free from them by force. Although Dia finally left home (18 months after her sister's death), she remains acutely aware of how traumatic leaving home was and she feels convinced that the separation from her parents would have been easier if she had had other siblings.

#### **10. Death Anxiety (36)**

The death of her sister left Dia with a severe anticipatory *anxiety* when travelling to the sea by car and she has only very recently (this year) partially overcome her anxiety. However, she still retains traces of her fear of *death*. Although rationally she realises that an accident can occur in any place and at any time, emotionally she still associates travelling on the highway with having an accident and takes the necessary safety precautions. Paradoxically she is more relaxed when travelling in the city.

#### **11. Abandonment and Aloneness: (44)**

With the passing of time and in the context of the loss of significant others (sister and father), Dia becomes aware of a gradual but incremental anxiety about being left entirely alone at some stage in her life. Reflecting on her future and on other significant relationships, *abandonment and aloneness* become frightening possibilities as Dia realises that a spouse can choose to remain in the relationship or not while a sister, or a child, *must* be there whether they want to be there or not. With the loss of her only sibling, Dia fears abandonment and aloneness and comes to appreciate even more what has been lost in losing her sister.

#### **12. Vacillation and Temporality: (39,51)**

Dia found that she experienced the loss of her sister differently in different situations. She *vacillated* between feeling totally devastated by the loss and then something would happen and she would view it in a different light. With the passage of *time* she became aware of how emotionally unyielding her brother-in-law could be with his intimate other. Dia felt strongly that had he treated her sister in that way, she (Dia) would not have accepted it and would have protected her sibling. This would have

caused some conflict. As new meanings emerge, she feels that perhaps it was for the best: for example, her sister's husband might have come to dominate her. It was at such times that Dia felt that perhaps her sister had been spared many hardships. She believes that if she had been asked about her loss experience shortly after her sister's death (up to 5 years later) she might have felt and responded very differently.

### **13. The Paradoxical Experience of the Gap: (40,41,42,43,45,64)**

Although Dia felt the gap left by her sister's death, paradoxically she also realised that they were very different and too far apart in age at the time of her sister's death to be really "pals." At some point, she experienced a yearning for a supportive sisterly relationship but, on reflection, realised that although she and her sister would have been there for each other, they were unlikely to have shared much. Dia also missed her sister as she prepared for her own marriage and while she recognised that the missing was not based on the strength of their relationship, she was aware of the potential for greater closeness in the future. Looking to future relationships and possibilities had her sister not died (once she had children; when her parents began to get older), Dia recognises the dialectical *paradox* that there would have been many positives and many negatives; it could have been either easier or more difficult. On the negative side, there might have been conflict between Dia and her family and her sister and her husband; on the positive side, it might have been easier to care for elderly parents and Dia also assumes that her sister may have provided better support for her mother following her father's death, because of the close bond between her sister and her mother.

Later Dia realises that her developing relationship with her own daughter filled the *gap* created by the loss of her sister and the awareness of the possibility that her daughter could become a replacement for her sister evoked deep inner conflict particularly when her daughter indicated that she wanted to pursue the same field of interest as her deceased aunt. Dia made a conscious effort to ensure that she did not influence her daughter.

### **14. Beyond Totality (52,53)**

Dia realises that her image of her sister remained frozen at the time that she died and she often wondered how her sister's personality would have evolved and what she would have been like in the present. She realises that her sister would have changed with time, just as Dia herself had changed. Although she recognises that her sister's remembered image may have grown in dimension, she is aware that even when her sister was alive she had surprised Dia by revealing that she was capable of more than Dia assumed. Based predominantly on her experience of her sister's underlying strength and infinite possibilities, Dia realises that her sister has left her with something valuable, i.e. never to *totalise*; make assumptions about, or underestimate small or quiet people.

### **15. Survival Guilt (43,50,69,80)**

Dia constantly sought answers to the question: “Why her and not me?” and felt *guilty* that she had *survived* while her sister had died. By comparing her life with that of her sister, Dia concludes that her own death would have been less devastating as fewer people would have been affected. Although she realises that her death would have been painful for others (sister and parents), she assumes that her loss would not have been as deeply mourned. In her attempt to make sense of the loss, Dia reflects on her sister’s positive qualities (responsible; cautious, controlled, predictable and successful) and on the nature of her significant relationships (close to mother; very special to grandmother; greatly loved by her husband), and concludes that by comparison her own death would not have affected others in the same way or for the same length of time. Faced with the reality of the loss and the fractured lives of so many significant others, Dia felt that in a logical (and just) world the one who had taken all the chances (i.e. herself); was seemingly irresponsible; had no permanent intimate relationship; and was unsure of her future career direction; *she* was the one who should have died in the place of her sister. She felt strongly that if she had had the choice, she would have planned it differently: *she*, and not her sister, would have died.

#### **16. Anger and Pain in the Spiritual Struggle (70,71,72)**

As a Christian, Dia felt close to God but with the loss of her friend’s sibling (6 months before her own sister's death) she started questioning how and why an omnipotent God could allow such a dreadful thing to happen. With the loss of her sister, feelings of anger arise together with a need to find answers. Dia directs her intense *anger and pain* towards God and a *spiritual struggle* unfolds as she seeks to understand her loss. She is relieved to find that she is allowed to be angry with God provided that she is able to communicate this directly and ask Him to help her to cope. Dia realises that this was a personal solution that evolved over time and that she could not have accepted this had it come from anybody else.

In her quest to find answers to the loss, Dia arrives at an understanding of the difference between the unquestioning acceptance of the easy and ready-made prescriptions of organised religion and the harsh and concrete reality of being-with-loss. This prompts her to test previously-held religious assumptions and to clarify her own personal beliefs. She rejects the abstract and emotional ideas of others and their attempts to console her with religious talk. For her, the loss was a lived reality, a painful “given”, and she felt that religious persuasion was not helpful. Through her personal struggle, her perception of God as the Ultimate Planner, based on her reading of a biblical story (Job), strikes a chord in Dia because of her passion for planning and she develops an insight and awareness that there are plans better than she can visualise or conceptualise. She comes to accept that there is a Higher Hand in these things and to entrust God with the planning of her life.

**17. Seeking Comfort (39,68,78,79)**

Although Dia's first encounter with death (i.e. her grandfather) was painful, she experienced the sudden and violent death of her sister as qualitatively different and realises that such a loss is even more awful than the loss of someone who has been ill for a long time. In her search to make sense of her sister's premature death, Dia sought and found *comfort* in her belief that because of her sister's gentle nature she would not have coped well with the more painful things of life. Reviewing her sister's life, recalling the fact that she had experienced the "ultimate" joy of love and the spiritual and physical union of marriage, Dia would often console herself with the thought that her sister had not been "cheated"; that she had, in effect, enjoyed the best part of her life. Also comforting was the thought that her sister had not left behind young dependants. Although Dia is aware that with a loss one seeks comforting thoughts, she comes to realise that her sister had in a sense been spared the hardship and pain that inevitably come in later life. Viewing the loss from this perspective, Dia's experience takes on a new meaning. The awareness of what her sister had lost (i.e. possible future hardship and pain) enabled Dia to see what her sister had achieved and experienced in her short life and made it easier for Dia to cope with her loss.

**18. Trust and Mourning: (28,35,82)**

It was only when she got married (3 years after the loss) that Dia was able, for the first time, to openly acknowledge her grief and cry about the loss of her sister. Dia remembers this period as a significant phase in her grief process. In the *trust* relationship with her spouse, she could finally let go of her pain and *mourn to* another, expressing how dreadful the loss was for her. Giving expression to her grief over a period of time provided the necessary relief and she felt more at peace. Her knowledge that her significant other could be trusted, that he would not be unduly upset by her grief and that she could reveal as much or as little as she wanted to without fear that he would insist that she disclose more, helped her to let go of the pain and enabled her to mourn the loss of her sister.

TABLE I

## Participant 3: Elena

| <u>NATURAL MEANING UNITS</u>   | <u>CENTRAL THEMES</u>   |
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| 1. Um ... in October it will be about ... it will be three years...It's about two and a half years now.  | 1. Elena's brother died approximately two-and-a-half years ago (i.e. before the interview with Elena).  |
| 2. Um ... I think him being ... well, very [involved] ... of course not just [that] ... well obviously a brother, he was very involved in the businesses. I think on that side of things it's taken a big knock ... because of that emotional side. Because the last shop we opened was his and ... um ... the shop in B was basically for him. So like <i>me</i> working in <i>that</i> , I did in a way for <i>him</i> ... it's a strange thing almost, ja (yes), but ja, I did it for him ... | 2. Emotionally and functionally Elena and her family were dealt a heavy blow by the loss. Because of his involvement in the family businesses, her brother's death left a gap not only in their lives but also in the family businesses, a gap that Elena decided to fill. She realises that taking her brother's place in the business was in a sense doing something for <i>him</i> . |
| 3. And obviously ... What I felt when it happened was ... well look, because it was obviously a great shock to us all ... and um ... I felt I needed to help the family through it ... like support the family. Um ... my mother ... I think it [he] was her soft spot (half-hearted laugh), he was a soft spot so I think she ... she took it very hard. I think as any mother would .. um...   | 3. Contributing to her readiness to assume her brother's place in the family business was Elena's awareness of the tremendous shock for the whole family, particularly for her mother, and she felt a need to support her parents and to help them through the loss.  |
| 4. He was twenty-five, ja, so it was very young and ... a lot of energy. He was ... um ... he was ... if he wasn't here at home, he was always talked of, you know. We'd like sit down if he wasn't here and we'd discuss Tom, you know, It was always about him and what he did .... And ... He was ... um ... like I said, a lot of energy, so when he was gone, it ... it ... it changed our lives  | 4. Elena feels that the loss changed their lives radically. Her brother was an energetic and vital young man (25 years old) who was always the centre of family discussion so that even today she is acutely aware of his absence and feels the painful emptiness created by his death.   |

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| <p>totally. I think up to today, it's ... ja, it's not nice ... at all ... obviously ...</p>   |  |
| <p>5. Obviously Christmas and things like that are like ... terrible ... they're dreaded. ... Um ... ja, I think, the last one we tried to go away from ... you know, like from the home because we always used to be here and stuff, but ... um ...also it doesn't work.</p>  | <p>5. Elena feels the loss more acutely during certain times of the year (e.g. Christmas) and these occasions, usually celebrated at home when her brother was alive, are anticipated with dread. She is aware that going away from home does not help and realises that from this pain, there is no escape.</p>   |
| <p>6. Ja, it's ... a <i>hole</i> - in our hearts, in our lives, in our ...</p>   | <p>6. Elena experiences the loss as a void, an emptiness in their lives.</p>   |
| <p>7. Although I'm not ... I'm not angry about it ... I don't know... I ... my brother was a success story for me. Ja, I don't know, like the way he changed and the way he was, like towards the end ... the way he felt about himself, the way he showed it to other people ... I don't know ... as if he knew he was going, I don't know ... if that's the way it goes...(rather desperate), I don't know ... (little laugh) ... Ja (he lived life fully), but towards the end he changed almost to a better person and a lot of people saw that and that's ... that's why I say his was a beautiful story because even though he'd ... um ... maybe spoken aggressively before or ... um ... towards the ... the end, I think it was the last three months, he was not ... he was <i>soft</i>, I don't know, he wouldn't shout, he ... you know, he told my mom: "I love you", he wouldn't ... used to treat her so badly sometimes .... I don't know, he was content with himself, I think that's the biggest ... and that's how I see it as a success story.</p> | <p>7. Elena has no anger about her brother's death and experiences his life as a "success story" as he had changed a lot towards the end of his life (last 3 months), ultimately becoming a better person (less aggressive, more loving and content with himself). She seeks answers for this transformation and wonders whether he perhaps had a premonition that he did not have long to live.</p> |
| <p>8. My mother was very ... very ... you know</p>   | <p>8. Elena believes that her mother, who lived in</p>   |



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| <p>... angry about it ... not angry ... you know, disappointed. She'd always say, you know, like: "My biggest fear is to lose a child", and I guess it happened, ja.</p>   | <p>constant fear of the possibility of losing a child, might have felt angry about the loss but, on reflection, she realises that it was not so much anger as an overriding feeling of disappointment when her mother's fears were realised.</p>  |
| <p>9. Um ... I know even up to today, I don't think, ja ... it's ... the pain is still there. You miss him a lot, you know. I always wonder what he'd be like, you know, how ... you know, what he'd say to me in a certain situation or whatever and ... um ... you know, how our kids would be one day ...</p>   | <p>9. To this day, Elena still feels the pain of the loss and she thinks constantly of her brother. She is aware not only of her loss in the present but also recognises the loss of future relationships and possibilities (what he would be like now; what he would say to her; what their children would be like one day) and the missing persists.</p>  |
| <p>10. ... and I think the saddest part is that I can associate <i>now</i> more because I can remember him now, you know, because I'm also young .... In twenty years time I won't ... I won't be able to <i>see</i> him older and I think that ... you almost feel like you're losing touch and that's very sad ... ja.</p>   | <p>10. For Elena, the most distressing aspect of her loss is that, in the more distant future, she will lose the strong connection with her brother that she presently feels. She is aware that as she grows older, her memories of him will recede and she will not be able to visualise, or relate to him as an older person. It hurts her and she feels sad about this future eventuality.</p> |
| <p>11. It was beautiful .... Um ... he was loved ... a lot. I don't know if you heard about his funeral. That church was full. It was ... Ja ... he was a people's person. He loved going out and speaking with people ... and, ja, he obviously did his rounds very well ... (laughs) because he was very ... that church was very full. I've never seen it that full for any funeral before. Not that I've been to many but I think those words came out of everybody's mouth. Um ... a good ... like a good ... a good boy, he was, you</p> | <p>11. Elena was delighted and impressed by the large number of people that attended the funeral and she realised that, despite her brother's "naughty and cheeky" behaviour, he was greatly loved and that his loss had touched many people. Implicit in his popularity is an affirmation by others of her brother's intrinsic goodness.</p>   |



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| <p>know. He was naughty and he was like cheeky ... but, you know what I mean!</p>  |   |
| <p>12. It was a motorbike accident. He'd gone away with two friends to S ... ja, they all had bikes, they all went like on a run ... ja, and one corner too fast ... (visibly upset - no tears).</p>   | <p>12. Elena's brother had gone away with friends on a motorcycle run and was killed instantly when he took a corner too fast.</p>  |
| <p>13. Ja. Although one picture I have in my mind ... when we saw him ... when we <i>first</i> saw him there at S after he died ... um ... I remember his face because he wasn't injured. His face was still perfect. His body was still perfect. He ... he just ... obviously his neck had ... um... you know, broken neck ... but his face was still perfect and I'd never ... I'd never seen him that beautiful in my life. He was a good-looking boy, you know, but he ... I don't know ... he looked ... he looked <i>beautiful</i>, I don't know what it was ... peaceful .... I don't know ... he never, ever looked that good to me. Just ... <i>cold</i> ... and that ... that was very ...</p> | <p>13. Although Elena's initial feeling at the sight of her brother's face after the accident was that she had never seen him looking as handsome, as beautiful or as peaceful as on that day, she is also confronted by the dreadful fact of his death - his body was cold and lifeless.</p> |
| <p>14. Ja, ja we all went together [to identify the body] ... It was, Ugh! ... It was a terrible day. It's also ... we drove ... it was terrible, and the weather was terrible, it was cloudy and it was drizzling and the whole ... ugh! ... the whole thing was really u[gh]! ...</p>  | <p>14. Elena recalls with pain and horror the drive with her family to identify her brother's body. Vividly imprinted in her mind is the cloudy and drizzly weather of that dreadful day.</p>   |
| <p>15. ..and I'm a very ... I think, like straight person, so I had to break it to my parents that he died, you know, cause they kind of knew but no one would like come forward and say it.</p>   | <p>15. Elena assumed the responsibility of breaking the news of her brother's death to her parents for although they suspected that her brother had died, others (the extended family) could not bring themselves to actually voice this.</p>   |
| <p>16. So ... I remember sitting at home ... here ...</p>  | <p>16. Elena recalls that she was at home preparing</p>   |

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| <p>it was ... because I was writing my Honours exams at university when it happened and I was sitting here with a friend and my cousin phoned me, she says to me they're on their way from J. I mustn't go anywhere ... Is this detail too much? She said I mustn't go anywhere, they're on their way. She said something happened to T. So I said: "OK well ... like what ... what?" No, she can't tell me. So then from there I knew, look something's happening. I phoned her back: "Tell me if he's hurt. I'm old enough" ... you know, "just tell me". "No, we're on our way." Then I thought, no ... obviously something was up</p> | <p>for her Honours exams when she received news from the extended family that "something" had happened to her brother. Although the family assumed a protective stance, reluctant to communicate the full reality to her, Elena became increasingly uneasy and realised that something serious had happened - her brother was more than hurt.</p> |
| <p>17. So I tried to phone friends ... I phoned his friends who were there ... obviously ... but (they) must have switched off the phone, or something – it's not the easiest thing to say. Um ... I phoned his girl friend ... um ... she didn't know anything. Eventually I got ... a ... a ... anyway by the ... you know, I got hold of numbers ... eventually she phoned me back and she told me: "No, he died."</p>   | <p>17. Elena was anxious to know what had happened to her brother and tried unsuccessfully to contact his friends who, she realised later, had been avoiding communicating the dreadful news. Finally Elena arrived at the truth: her brother was dead.</p>   |
| <p>18. So basically I just went to the shop and ... look it's going to get said... it's...you know, so I just ... I told them ... "Tom is dead!" Very straight and not very tactful I guess but, ag! (ah!) it's not the easiest thing to say and it's ....</p>  | <p>18. Elena believed that the truth had to be revealed and simply went to her parents and told them: "Tom is dead!" Although she is aware that she was abrupt in conveying the news, Elena realises that there is no gentle way to impart the fact of death.</p>   |
| <p>19. Ja, and from there ... my mother's <i>never</i> been the same person; my father's never ... ; our <i>lives</i> have never been the same... we're just not the same people, you know. It ... it changes you a lot... um ... (long</p>   | <p>19. From that moment, Elena's experience of self and world is radically changed and she becomes aware of the extent to which her brother's death has changed her, her family and their lives.</p>  |

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| <p>pause) ... Um ... <i>harder</i>, I guess. I've become a lot harder ... generally in life.</p>   |   |
| <p>20. I don't know... Um ... religion-wise it's changed me. I used to be a lot more religious (a self conscious little laugh). Not a lot more but ... um ...I won't say I'm angry with God. I won't say I'm upset with Him but I've just <i>distanced</i> myself from Him ... although lately it is better, you know, I am getting closer ... but before I didn't ... not that I wouldn't go to church on ... "it's Easter, I'm not going", type of thing, you know, but I wouldn't <i>feel</i> it, as I felt it before ... you know. I really don't know why, maybe you can explain that to me, I don't know ... um ....</p> | <p>20. Elena had been close to God but with her loss she found that she distanced herself from Him, not wilfully or in anger but more from an inability to feel His presence as she did previously. Although, with time, she has started to draw closer to Him, she remains confused and conflicted as she struggles to make sense of the changes in her relationship to God.</p> |
| <p>21. ..and I tried to feel stronger ... especially for my parents ... because ... I see ... I don't know, I guess I love my family a lot you know. We are very close as Mediterranean families are. And I think ... um ... I've tried to be there for them as much as I can, you know.</p>   | <p>21. Elena is aware of her strong attachment to her family and in her attempts to maintain the closeness of the family unit, she tried to be strong for her parents (stronger than she felt) and to be there for them as much as possible.</p>  |
| <p>22. In a funny way though, like my mother will never like sit down and like: "Are you okay", and ... it's like she knows I'm there, you know, the things I do, but I won't necessarily like phone her up: "Are you okay?", you know. But, ja, she knows I'm there. The love's there ... the fundamental love is there ... and things like that ...</p>  | <p>22. While Elena continued to support her family, she found it strange that her mother never asked how she was feeling. In turn, Elena also avoided enquiring about her mother's feelings, reasoning that the bond of love within the family is there, it is a bond of "fundamental love" and so words are not necessary. .</p>   |
| <p>23. [Talk] about him? ... um ... if ... um ... if I really feel like I need to [talk], I will just say something but not really much. I won't elaborate on my feelings as much, you know. I think it's ... even though I am very</p>  | <p>23. Although Elena may feel a need to talk about her brother, she seldom discusses her feelings about the loss even with her close friends. She is aware that they become uncomfortable with such talk and she tries to</p>  |

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| <p>close with my friends it's almost ... I don't want to put them in that position because they feel awkward and ... I might just say, you know: "I wonder what my brother would think", or ...</p>  | <p>spare them any embarrassment by restricting herself to un-emotional comments about her brother.</p>  |
| <p>24. I think, especially in the beginning, I would just like hear happy stories about him and ... "ah, he would do this!" ... and I'd love to hear things he did and ... I think initially I wanted to find out everything about him from all his friends that I didn't know because I obviously knew the brother-side of him, you know, and I didn't know the friend-side and I wanted to know the friend-side, the boyfriend-side, the every-side of him.</p>  | <p>24. At first, Elena wanted to know everything about her brother and she loved listening to his friends' "stories" about him . Hearing about their experiences with her brother was a way of discovering aspects of his life that she had not shared and opened a window to a side of him that she, as a sister, had not experienced.</p> |
| <p>25. And ... I don't know, it's a strange thing ... it's almost as if when he left, he left me with that little magic, I always say (spontaneous laugh)... with that little magic, ja. Like people will tell me, ja, like: "How did you know...?", or ... I don't know ... especially when it comes to his friends, you know, and it was ... I don't know ... I just feel he left ... I can't explain. He had such an air [about] to him and such a ... um ... I don't know ... (long pause) an <i>energy</i> ... an energy to him that I loved and in a way, I don't know, he's left me with it, I feel he's left me with it, but ... which is beautiful and I think I'll carry it through with me ... (pause) ... Ja, a <i>feel</i> of his ... Ja,</p> | <p>25. In an inexplicable way, with the loss, Elena feels that her brother has left her a rich legacy (his <i>energy</i>; his "magic") - qualities that she loved so much in him and which others now see in her. She is aware of the beauty of what her brother has left her and believes that she will hold on to this forever.</p>       |
| <p>26. ..but ... um ... I think I've ... ja ... it's been a fight, a struggle, you know, it's an emotional fight, you know. You always try and ... block it ... not ... not ... I ... I won't</p>  | <p>26. Elena is aware that the loss of her brother has been a constant emotional fight and she struggles against her emotions. Although, with time, the pain has diminished, to this</p>  |

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| <p>say block ... ja, in a way it might be blocking it, I don't know, if I blocked it or dealt with it. I actually ... I still don't know to this day. I don't really know ... you know. Obviously I don't feel as much pain, you know because time has gone by</p>  | <p>day, she is still not sure whether she has avoided (blocked) the grief or dealt with it.</p>   |
| <p>27. Ja ... I would say [the loss has struck at her faith] ... which is not nice but I think it's just something I have to like work through. I can't ... I think the worst part is I can't really pin-point it because it's not anger - because I'm not angry with God for taking him away because ... um ... He obviously has reasons or whatever to have done what He did ... um ... I don't hate Him for it ... um ... I don't know, I'm not angry with Him ... I'm just, I guess ... disappointed .... Ja ... I guess a bit disappointed ... but, um, I must work my way through that, you know. I'm already much bet(ter) ... well better ... ja ... just a bit more time ... it will come. Ja.</p> | <p>27. Elena feels distressed that the loss has shaken her faith and altered her relationship with God. Although she does not feel anger or hatred towards Him and accepts that He had His reasons for allowing this to happen, she struggles to understand her emotions as she feels the familiar order slipping away and is aware of a certain disappointment with God. While she feels confident that she will re-establish the bond with Him, she recognises that she needs more time to work through this.</p> |
| <p>28. OK, my brother was always here but he was never here, type of thing, you know. He was here but if we were having a family dinner he was in and then he was like out because he was going to see a friend or something. He was a busy body, he wanted to do everything, you know. I think he wanted to live life to the full ... it was almost ... he wanted to do anything and everything that he could, you know, and it almost makes sense, you know, after he'd gone, I don't know ... maybe that's <i>why</i> he was like life-hungry...</p>   | <p>28. Elena regrets that her brother threw himself into life with an intensity that did not allow for much contact with the family. After his premature death, her brother's need to live life to the full assumes new meaning; his hunger-for-life is almost justified - at least he had lived his allotted span to the full.</p>   |
| <p>29. Um ... I don't know, any little story, you</p>   | <p>29. In the desire to keep her brother's memory</p>   |

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| <p>know, it's like almost like I can latch onto it for some <i>more</i>, or like remember him even <i>more ...</i></p>   | <p>alive, Elena eagerly held on to any small incident or story about him as this expanded her memories of him and enabled her to remember him more fully.</p>   |
| <p><b>30. So you know, having heard everybody's like little stories, or ... especially closely afterwards, his friends would come up to me and ... like a friend I'd never met and he says to me: "You don't know what your brother has done for me", you know, he was ... he did things that really touched people in ... you know he'd obviously helped them with a specific problem but ... I don't know ... they'd come and tell me: "You don't know what he's done. He's the greatest person, you know. He's helped us so ..."... "he's helped me" - it was a specific guy. He said: "He's helped me so, so much. I'm so grateful" ... and like hearing things like that, I think that makes me ... you know, proud of him and ... ja ... ja, and ... and you hear .... That's like <i>real</i> stories you know ... not just like what he wore ... where he went, and .... and ... it's like actual ... ja ...</b></p> | <p>30. Shortly after her brother's death, Elena welcomed the stories that his friends and others shared with her. She became aware of his tremendous caring, generosity and kindness and realised the extent to which her brother had touched the lives of others. This enabled her to remember him with pride.</p> |
| <p><b>31. Ja! ... and I think it was also very sad for his girl friend. She was ... she also had a child, I guess, and he was almost like a father ... you know ... like a father-figure, I guess, for the child because the child was about seven when my brother ... [died] .... [they had been going out] Ja ... almost for like <i>five</i> years ... they went out for long.</b></p>  | <p>31. Elena was aware that her brother's girlfriend and her child were also deeply affected by the death of her brother.</p>   |
| <p><b>32. And that's another nice thing, you know, he took a girl and, yes, she is a beautiful girl and all, but she had a child and I think a lot</b></p>   | <p>32. Elena recognises other positive qualities in her brother that set him apart from others: he had committed to a relationship with a</p>   |

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| <p>of men won't take a woman, as beautiful as she might be, with a child. I know I discussed that with some of my friends and they were like: "I don't want the extra baggage", type of thing, you know, and he took her and ... shame the little boy's ... ja, he ... he was a father-figure to him ... and it was ... it was beautiful.</p>  | <p>woman who had a child and had assumed the role of "father." Listening to the opinions of other young male friends, Elena realises that many men are not willing to accept the additional burden of a dependant and this affirms her perception that her brother was special.</p>  |
| <p>33. Just, he was ... ja ... he was a speed freak. Look he <i>is</i> my brother but he's ... ja, he would always drive fast ... and, ag, the fastest car and ... the bike was just too powerful, I think, for him and he took a wrong corner ... and ja ... it was sad ...</p>   | <p>33. Despite her loyalty to her brother, Elena was also aware of his weakness for fast driving that ultimately led to his death and she retains a deep sadness over the loss.</p>  |
| <p>34. [Relationship] With <i>him</i>? ... um ... I had a weak spot for him (laughs). I did, ja ... He was two years ... ja, three years in ... ja, two years older than me. Um ... I think if I had a problem and I'd really ... you know ... I'd go and sit down with him, although I would rather pick a friend, you know, because the girls usually understand better or whatever ... you know, but if it was a problem that ... you know ... I think I'd like approach him on that , you know, we were close in that way.</p> | <p>34. Elena had a sentimental affection for her brother who was two years older than she was. Although she often preferred to discuss personal problems with an understanding female friend, there was a closeness between her and her brother that enabled her to approach him with certain concerns.</p>                      |
| <p>35. I think he ... um ... he loved me a lot for what ... Ok, obviously for what I was, but (also for) what I did for him because every time he'd ask me for something I'd tell him: "this is the last time I'm doing it , do you understand?", and the next time he asked me, I'd do it again, you know, that's the kind of soft spot I had for him, and I would always tell him, "No, I'm not going to do it!" and ... ag! (ah!), we used to fight</p>   | <p>35. Elena believes that her brother loved her a great deal not only for what she did for him but also for the person that she was. Although they also fought a lot and conflict arose in their relationship as her brother made many demands on her, loyalty and affection prevailed and the sibling bond never weakened.</p> |



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| <p>a lot as well, you know, not speak to each other for like ... (laughs) ... like a week or something (laughs) and then, ag, it was fine, and ... ja ... it was fine.</p>   |  |
| <p>36. But I think ... ja ... I think he ... he respected me a lot and that ... that means like the world to me, you know. He'd obviously told my friends, you know, "she's ... she's the <i>best</i> in our family"...you know, "She ... she doesn't... she doesn't obviously understand her value as much as she should", you know, and, "She can just ask for anything and she'll get it." That's how much, you know, he thought that I was like worth ... it was nice, you know, because he <i>never</i> really ... he <i>never</i> really communicated his feelings to me. We never had the type of relationship like: "I love you", or ... or ... you know... it was ... I don't ... I think it wouldn't mean very much ... it's like you <i>feel</i> it's there, so you don't have to say it that much.</p> | <p>36. Elena believed that her brother loved and respected her but he had never directly communicated this to her. It was through the comments of her friends that she came to realise the extent to which he valued her. Although she accepted that when love exists words are not necessary, after the loss, his affirmation of her worth meant a great deal to her.</p> |
| <p>37. You know, they're always <i>there</i> ... you take for granted that they're always <i>there</i> until ... And I think ... ja ... I would have <i>loved</i> to have spent more time with him but I guess that's impossible... my mother says the same and ... but I ... I would have really loved to have spent more time with him. He was always just ... So difficult, you know, life gets so busy ... the one person gets this, the other gets that, and you don't really spend as much time with each other as you should, and I think especially us with businesses there is not really much family time, you know ... it's a lot ... um ...</p>  | <p>37. With the loss Elena becomes aware that one takes family for granted, assuming that because significant others are there, they always will be. She realises that with the pressure of everyday life, one neglects to spend family time together and (like her mother) she regrets that she did not spend more time with her brother.</p>                             |



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| <p>“got to work, got to work!”</p>   |   |
| <p>38. Ja, my father is also taking it a bit ... he’s obviously not as, you know, as forward as my mom. My mother like ... she’ll express it more and she’ll cry and she’ll talk to him more or whatever she, you know, she feels helps her. My father is more quiet about it. [But] It’s also hit him hard. I think ... um ... he, my brother, was very like similar in character to my father, you know, so that’s why like the things that my brother did my father would understand and you know, he ... Ja ... I think he understood him <i>very</i> well ... because he was also ... himself ... Ja, and it ... it ...</p> | <p>38. Elena is aware that her father’s silent sorrow runs deep as her brother was very similar to her father and he understood him well. She realises that although her father does not express his grief as openly as her mother does, his son’s death has struck at his very being and he too is deeply wounded.</p>                   |
| <p>39. Ja, I think the worst part for me is to see my ... my parents like this, you know ... um ... it, it like hurts me and it upsets me, you know, because it’s ... ugh! ... it’s just not the same people, you know, and it’s just really sad ... it’s really, really sad ... Ja, ja. It feels like I’ve lost my ... not <i>lost</i> my family but, it’s ja, definitely changed us in many ways ... Ja, ag!</p>   | <p>39. For Elena, the most distressing aspect of her loss is witnessing the radical changes in her parents. Although she does not feel that she has <i>lost</i> her family, she is aware that they are not the people that they were and this saddens and hurts her deeply. She realises that they have all been changed by the loss.</p> |
| <p>40. ... and all his things we’ve left, you know, and ... I guess it's like a way of not ... trying not to let go. I don’t know ... you don’t want to let go, you just keep his ... as long as you can ... (half hearted laugh) Ja, it’s just how you <i>feel</i>. (long pause) Ja ... Mm ...I can’t think of anything else ... (nervous little laugh)</p>   | <p>40. The family have kept all of her brother’s belongings exactly as they were and Elena supposes that this is their way of holding on to her brother. She realises that in effect one does not want to let go of a loved one and tries to maintain the link for as long as possible.</p>   |
| <p>41. Ja, [I have] an older brother, ja. I think for him it was a bit easier because he’s living, you know, in another home with his wife and ... I think it was easier for him, you</p>  | <p>41. Living at home, Elena’s entire being is immersed in the loss while her elder brother, who is married, is able to find some respite when he returns to his own home. Although</p>   |

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| <p>know, like you're <i>here</i> but then you go away to your <i>home</i> and it's not so, you know, difficult whereas for me I'd live it, eat it, breathe it all the time, you know. I won't say it's any easier on <i>him</i>, you know, I won't say that either. It's just ... ja ... it was just <i>different</i> in that way... um...</p>  | <p>Elena is aware that he also feels the loss, she believes that it may be a little easier, or at least different, for him as he is not constantly surrounded by the pain.</p>  |
| <p>42. I don't know, I felt ... I felt really strong ... I don't know how I did it especially close to when it happened, because ... I ... it was: "I'll take it all and I'll deal with it", and I think ... ja ... from leaving ... my Honours exams, I was writing at that point in time, I didn't write my first one because it was a week after his death, I wrote all the others and I passed them and then I went straight into the shop and then I just took it in my hands: "Come, I'll do it", you know, because ... obviously because of the emotional loss my parents couldn't deal with things ....</p> | <p>42. Soon after the death, Elena surprised herself by her strength and after completing her exams immediately took over the running of her brother's business. The awareness of her parents' emotional collapse influenced her decision to continue with life's tasks and to assume family responsibilities.</p>  |
| <p>43. ... and , I mean, you ... you can't stop life, unfortunately ... it feels like you want to stop life ... you don't want to know anything but I mean you ... it would be worse to sit in the house and cry all day. Ja ... Yet I felt very weak. You know, like the way I looked. I'd lost a lot of weight, you know ... um ... ja, terrible. .... (long pause)</p>   | <p>43. While Elena also felt as if she wanted to withdraw from the world and was disinterested in anything unrelated to her brother, she realised that unfortunately life continues and she reasoned that it would be worse to sit and cry all day. However, although she was strong, deep down she felt extremely weak and this revealed itself on a bodily level.</p> |
| <p>44. And I hate going to his grave ... ja ... (little laugh). I don't see the point of it ... I don't ... it was ... it's his last like ... physical state type thing, you know, but I don't want to associate a graveyard or anything with him. I think he was too happy a soul to</p>   | <p>44. Elena feels a strong aversion to visiting her brother's grave, preferring to remember him as the happy and vital person that he was in life. She realises that the finality of the tombstone brings the loss home more forcefully but she does not want to associate</p>   |

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| <p>... you know ... to associate that [with him] and ... I really don't like it. I don't go ... I'm hardly involved. Ja, I'll go ... like (clicks tongue) five times a year maybe, or six, but I don't like it. I'd rather look at a photo and that way ... Ja. I hate to see his name on that cross. I think that's ugh ... it's just ... I don't know, I guess it hits you in the face, but I don't like it.</p>  | <p>her brother with death and resists going to the cemetery.</p>   |
| <p>45. You see my mom is totally different she loves to go. Every weekend she'll ... flowers and the whole thing, ja ... (little laugh). I don't know ... just different, ja, just different ...</p>  | <p>45. Elena is aware that her mother likes to go to the graveyard (visits regularly; takes flowers), and she accepts that she and her mother differ in this respect.</p>  |
| <p>46. Ja. And I love to see his friends, you know, especially people he was close [to] although it's very difficult to communicate with them because when they see me or whatever, they ... they obviously [think] "Tom", you know, get a picture of him, so for <i>them</i> it's difficult as well as for me because I can sense that, even though I would love to sit down and ask them, you know: "tell me a story", or ... "what did he say when you did this?" you know, but ... ja ... it's not like that, unfortunately ...</p> | <p>46. What Elena finds most meaningful is to be with her brother's close friends and to share stories about his life but she senses that it is painful for them to be with her as they immediately associate her with their lost friend. She regrets that she cannot initiate discussions with them on this level and remains silent.</p> |
| <p>47. Ja, death's a very strange thing (little laugh) to deal with ... I fear it ... (little laugh). I fear death. Ja. Like I've seen ... you know, before it has never really happened to anyone ... it has never touched home. It's not really an issue, you know, because ... look people die, but yes, I guess, they're old and things like that ...</p>   | <p>47. Having come face-to-face with death, Elena finds it bewildering and fears it. Death had touched her personally and she realises that it is not something that is distant or simply part of the natural order of life (old people die) as she had previously believed. This frightens her.</p>                                       |
| <p>48. But from experiencing my brother's death I fear ... I fear losing my parents ... or</p>  | <p>48. Through her brother's death, Elena has become fearful of losing her parents and</p>   |

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| <p>anybody close to me, you know... it's just like ... (long pause) ... Well I don't fear it every day and stuff, but ... um ... it doesn't really... I won't say it really affects me ... I just ... I'd appreciate maybe people mo(re) ... like my parents, more ... because I know they won't be here anymore ... you know, like forever type of thing, because you've been born and they've always been here type of thing and you ... and, you know, they will always be here type of thing but through the death I've basically realised it doesn't happen ... you know, they're not always going to be there, so I appreciate them more in ways, you know ... ja ...</p> | <p>other significant others and while her fear is not pervasive, she has come to appreciate others (parents) more. The loss of her brother changes her vision as she realises that life is transitory and that she cannot assume that those who have always been there are going to be there forever.</p>            |
| <p>49. No, not my own [death]. No. I don't think I'll die soon (hearty laugh). You get some people who say: "No, I'll never live [to be] old." I don't know if they <i>know</i> [that they won't live for long], but I ... I think <i>I'll</i> live [to be] old (laughs again).</p>   | <p>49. Although Elena is aware that there are those who almost sense that they might die young, Elena's death anxiety does not extend to a fear that she will die at a young age.</p>  |
| <p>50. A grandmother [died], but she was overseas so it's not really, you know, you're not ... although I was very close to her when I was little. She brought me up apparently. My mom was [busy] ... and ... she used to stay here for a while [came from overseas] and ... ja ... a beautiful woman, you know ... like ... in her heart, you know... and ... I lost her but that was almost, you know, she was <i>old</i> and I wasn't <i>that</i> close, you know, with her as I was with my brother, you know. Ja, so it was ... um ... (long pause) I don't know it's harder ...</p>  | <p>50. Although Elena lost her grandmother to death, she accepted it as part of the natural order of life and her death was not as difficult for Elena to deal with as the loss of her brother. She realises that while she was close to her grandmother, her attachment to her brother was infinitely stronger.</p> |
| <p>51. [Doing things with brother when little]</p>  | <p>51. Elena has vivid memories of her brother and</p>   |

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| <p>(laughs heartily) Ja, fighting! (laughs) Ja, I remember ... I remember him ... like we were playing hopscotch down this little thing here (points to the spot outside the kitchen window) and he'd trip me and I'd fall and then I'd cry. I remember things like that very clearly. And I remember like running frantically to the phone to phone my mother and tell her: "uh ..uh...uh!" ... and as I'd get to the phone, he'd like pull the cord out, you know ... he loved to tease his little sister, you know (laughs). Especially when you're little, you know ... when you're younger ... [2-3 years] it's like more of an age gap. I think lately it wasn't that much of an age gap. We'd go out more, you know, together, whereas before it's like: "Don't speak to my friends", and that you know ... but ... um ... (long pause) ....</p> | <p>she recalls that as children they played and fought with each other. Her experience of being victimised by him was heightened by the advantage of age (2-3 years older than she was) and she often felt helpless and cried. She realises that when one is young even a small age gap can be quite large but more recently the gap seemed to narrow, their relationship changed and she would occasionally go out with him and his friends.</p> |
| <p>52. Ja, I was always covering up for him, I think (laughs), very often ... I was always, ja, picking up [the] his pieces and like covering up for him which he <i>never</i> knew really because I would never tell him: "Guess what I did?", you know but ... um ... ja, I don't know I just did it ... I think he would have appreciated it (laughs). I'd be at the shop and I'd tell my dad ... look small things ... I'd always let him go and get away with murder sometimes, you know... um ... as I said, soft spot ... he was a soft spot, you know ... Ja, ja.</p>   | <p>52. Elena had a deep affection for her brother and behind the scenes consistently covered up for him and rescued him from trouble. She did this without his knowledge and without expecting him to reciprocate but she is aware that he would have been grateful had he known.</p>   |
| <p>53. Yes, although when we were younger, with my oldest brother I was ... we were much closer ... ja, it was like almost we'd always</p>  | <p>53. As a child, Elena felt closer to her elder brother and they would sometimes go off together and not think to include Tom.</p>  |

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| <p>go like the two of us and then: “Oh, come let’s just call Tom”, you know, the stage. It was like that. So I was <i>very</i> close to my oldest brother but ... um ... I think we’d ... that changed ... there wasn’t ... I don’t think anyone was closer than anyone else for quite a few years before his death. Ja. Not in a big way or [that] we did it for years ... maybe like for a few months ... At a stage. I just ... maybe it’s just left a mark in my head because my mother ... I remember the one time she said, you know: “Tell Tom to come with you guys”, and I: “Okay”, you know. It was never a problem but we just didn’t <i>think</i> of it. It wasn’t like a <i>thing</i> and it didn’t become like a thing between us ever, you know. It was never like you don’t ask ... or ... it was never like that ... ja</p> | <p>However, this was never really an issue amongst them and they were all equally close for quite a few years before Tom’s death.</p>  |
| <p>54. Ja. I think what I hate most about this is that the older like I get the more distant the memories will become, you know. I won’t remember his smile or the way he said something, you know, or ... and I think that saddens me most because it’s obviously distancing him from me, you know...</p>   | <p>54. Elena is aware that the older she gets the dimmer her memories of her brother will become. The thought that she may not be able to remember his smile or the way he would say something is what she dislikes the most about the loss and leads to deep sorrow as she realises that this will distance him from her.</p> |
| <p>55. ...and like ... sometimes (clicks tongue) the way I say something it’s exactly like <i>he</i> said it, you know, or like the <i>way</i> he said it, and I <i>love</i> it. I just ... I <i>love</i> it although not everyone will realise it obviously because they don’t know him or ... but ... ag ... I <i>love</i> it, it just like ... it brings a smile to my face, you know ... Yes, that reminds me of him. I won’t say it like on purpose ... you</p>   | <p>55. Elena is filled with indescribable joy whenever she utters one of her brother’s phrases or expresses herself exactly as he would have done. This reminds her of him and brings a smile to her face but she realises regretfully that time might expunge these memories and this fills her with fear and sadness.</p>    |

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| <p>know, like I'll say it because he said it, but obviously from being together and stuff you pick up things he says you know and as I say it, it will come out ... and <i>Wow!</i> .... (delighted; big smile) ... ja. ... but , as I said I'm just scared it .... becomes ... like you forget ... ja, that's very sad .... (long pause) ...</p>   |  |
| <p>56. Ja, and the fact that like he can't be here for like my big days, for instance, you know. I would love to ... you know, one day when I get married, I would have loved him to be there, you know... and ... ja ... that's really sad, you know, because ... Ja, just being <i>there</i> ... you know ... being <i>him</i> (laughs)... Ja ... (long pause) ... Ja, I was godmother not so long ago ... you know, I would have loved to see how he would ... you know, what he'd say, or ... you know...</p>   | <p>56. Looking to the future, Elena also feels deep sorrow that her brother can never again be present to share in the celebration of important events (getting married) in her life. She realises that the missing and longing for her brother will linger on.</p>  |
| <p>57. [the impact of the loss] I ... I guess just like dealing ... dealing with it or fighting it, or whatever, you know ... it's been very hard ... and um ... ja, I don't know. I know like ... my entire like being ... it's not been, you know, good ... <i>as</i> good, you know ... I obviously ... you know, I'm not looking as healthy, not been as healthy, what shall we call it ... you know, I think it's normal that people ... if you're not like psychologically fine it like shows on you, type of thing. And a lot of stress. I lost a lot of hair, I think, initially and stuff, you know ... um ... Ja ... it's just ... it's like a fight, you know ... it's a fight</p> | <p>57. For Elena, the loss has been a constant fight, an emotional struggle, that has affected her whole being. She is aware that she does not feel or look as healthy as she did before the loss and realises that either facing the pain of loss or struggling against it, both are equally difficult and stressful.</p> |
| <p>58. ... and especially seeing your parents like that, it's almost ... you don't want to accept</p>   | <p>58. Particularly painful for Elena is observing how radically her parents have changed</p>  |



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| <p>it like that ... I don't want to accept them as they are, you know, these are my parents ... um ... compared to what they were, you know, as people ... and like a smile ... every time I see my mother laugh it's like, I get so <i>happy</i> because she doesn't do this, you know, often. Like to <i>giggle</i>, or like ... especially lately she's been like <i>talking</i> more and it's like: "Wow!", you know, I'm glad she can like almost touch upon it again because it's ... it's, you know, it <i>hurts</i> to see them like that ... a lot.</p> | <p>since the death and she resists these changes. She does not want to accept her parents as they have become but recently has found some inspiration and hope as she observes aspects of her mother's "old self" emerging.</p>  |
| <p>59. I don't blame them for it, you know, I don't blame anyone for anything ... it's like, no one <i>did</i> it, you know. It's just that's the way it's become, you know...</p>   | <p>59. Elena does not blame her parents or anyone else for what has happened. She realises that no one wilfully did this or wanted it to happen and she accepts that it is just the way things have become.</p>  |
| <p>60. Oh yes, [went on holiday last year] ... well, ja ... ag, you know. You go [away], you stay for a while and you come back to exactly the same thing ... so ... it's ... it's not ... even though you might talk about it and deal with it, it's almost like you have to come back to the exact same thing ... so ...</p>   | <p>60. Elena found that there was no escape from the reality of the situation. Even though she went away on holiday and spoke about the loss and dealt with it, on returning home she found that nothing had changed and that she had to face the exact same situation.</p>  |
| <p>61. It was nice on holiday ... ja, (laughs) ... ja, even though... although I spoke <i>about</i> him a <i>lot</i>, you know, because obviously there [overseas] everybody wanted to know about him but ... and obviously seeing all my family and they all had questions to ask because I was the first one to go after his death, you know, so they'd all: "and how are your friends"; "and how is this"; and "Tell me"; ... and like one of my cousins, extremely close to me, but she like couldn't believe it ... she would like: "Tell me ...</p>        | <p>61. Elena enjoyed the break away from home despite the fact that the extended family approached her with many questions. Although she did not block out the loss and discussed her brother's death at length with others, she realises that not having to cope with her parents' grief was like a heavy burden lifted from her shoulders.</p> |



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| <p>Tell me stories”, and we would discuss it ... and, you know, it wasn’t as if I never ... as if I went there and I just blocked him off, never spoke to anyone about him. He was very much a part of that ... but it was ... I think maybe not dealing with my parents, you know, it was like ... like a weight off my shoulders.</p>  |   |
| <p>62. Although I don’t mind doing it and I do it with the greatest of ... but it is a ... a ... responsibility ... Ja, absolutely [feel the responsibility]. It’s not just something ... you know ... they really do not ask for anything. Ja ... ja [feel the responsibility] towards them, you know. Like I’m me. I just want to ... if I can ... (laughs) ...</p>  | <p>62. Although her parents do not make any demands on Elena and she herself has no objection to supporting her parents and does this willingly, by virtue of who she is, she experiences it as a heavy responsibility and wants to help them as much as she is able to.</p>  |
| <p>63. ... ja, it’s just that you don’t think that you’re that strong, you know. I’ve obviously become a lot stronger...Ja, it’s ... ja: “Okay, so take it when it happens”, you know ... Ja. I don’t know how I was that strong. I really don’t ... Godsend? ... (laughs) ... ja...</p>   | <p>63. Elena realises that she is much stronger than she had previously thought. She is surprised by her strength and considers that it possibly came from a power beyond herself; from God</p>   |
| <p>64. Initially it was difficult because you don’t ... I am not the type of person who likes to show my feelings to a lot of people and even though like my friends would come maybe the next day I wouldn’t like burst out crying or like go ... “uh! uh!” ... you know. I’m not that type of person and I like to maybe share it with one or two people I feel very close to me, you know. So in that way it was ... I think I actually put people in an awkward position because they’d come and I’d smile at them and: “How are you?”, type thing, you know, and they’d like but:</p> | <p>64. At first, it was very hard for Elena to cope with her grief as by nature she is inclined to conceal her emotions and restricts sharing deeper feelings with a few select friends. With the loss, she found that she could not reveal her pain even to close friends and she put on a façade that concealed her raw inner sadness as she held on to a pretence of “normality.” She realises that this placed her friends in an awkward position but, while they wavered and were confused, they still assured her that they were there if she needed to talk.</p> |

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| <p>“Hang on ...”, you know, and it’s as if I don’t ... I mean I would smile at them although inside me you could see that I was hurting and like sad, you know, obviously not the same as I would <i>now</i> ... it would be ... you can’t compare ... but my friends would still tell me: “If you want to talk about it, just say”, “come and tell me”, you know, and ... I don’t know. I just don’t open up to people easily at all.</p> |  |
| <p>65. I think I’m more now ... I’m more closed now than I was before. I don’t let people into my space easily ... like ... like personal space. You know, I’ll get along with people and I’ll speak but ... um ... not just to anyone and everyone. I won’t just go ... if I’m upset I’ll try not to show it to a lot of people, or, you know ... (Long pause). Ja. ... I don’t know what else .....</p>                                  | <p>65. Elena believes that she has become more reticent since the loss and while she has not withdrawn from others and communicates on a social level, she does not easily allow others into her personal space and continues to conceal her pain from others.</p>   |
| <p>66. I don’t know if you meet again as souls or if it happens like that but if you do I’d love ... I’d love ... to somehow be with him again if it is, because, I don’t know, if there are answers but ... these are theories; everyone’s got a different theory, you know. I don’t know, I’ve never been there and come back, you know (laughs) ... But geez, I’d be the happiest chappie! (laughs) Ja. ...</p>                         | <p>66. Elena yearns for her brother and looks to spiritual answers and the possibility of existence beyond the physical. While she realises that there is no definite proof of the existence of an afterlife, the thought of meeting him in a spiritual form gives her hope and sustains her; to be with her brother again would be the ultimate state of happiness for her.</p> |
| <p>67. And I think I am really glad that I can still look on him in a positive light, you know, with a smile on my face or ... you know, like share a story about him with ... and whatever ... ja, I think that’s very nice ...</p>   | <p>67. Elena feels pleased that she is still able to view her brother positively; can share a story about him and can remember him with joy (a smile on her face).</p>   |
| <p>68. ... and I’d hate to obviously like feel the intensity of my mother’s pain, you know</p>   | <p>68. Elena is reluctant to experience the depth of her mother’s pain but she is aware that she</p>   |

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| <p>what I'm saying ... um ... Obviously when I have a child of my own then I'll understand what it would be like but ...</p>  | <p>cannot possibly understand the lived experience of a mother's loss until she herself has a child of her own.</p>  |
| <p>69. I don't want to look at <i>him</i> in that light ... I don't want to look at him as ... like a <i>pain</i>, you know ... it's obviously very confused feelings because it is <i>that</i>, and it is ... but I'd like to like remember him as a happy person ... not as a happy person ... in a happy light ... um ... you know ... you know ... and it's like ... ja, I don't know... I'm not very good with words ... Ja, ja. I want to remember him as happy as he always was, you know, the energy he had and that ... you know. I just don't want to ever let go of that and just see it as: "Tom : tragedy"; "Tom : dead", you know; "Tom : bike accident". I don't want to see that, I want to see like: "Tom : happy" ... Like he used to hoot a thousand times before he came into the house, you know, that ... that energy that he had ... he was always like, like ... ["Here I am!"] (Laughs) Ja, ja, ja! You know, and that's what I want to remember and like associate with his name, you know, and that beautiful person people saw in him, you know, and the things he did for people and like the way he touched my heart and ... um ...</p> | <p>69. Elena experiences conflicting emotions. While she feels the pain of loss, in contrast to her mother, she resists associating her brother with pain, preferring to remember him with joy. She holds on to the energy and beauty that was her brother, determined that the existing negative associations (accident-tragedy-death) will never over-shadow her positive memories of his caring and of how he had touched her life and the lives of others.</p> |
| <p>70. Ja, initially, ja. It was very difficult. I remember I wouldn't cry ... at all. My mother like: "Please cry." I'd say like: "I can't", "I cannot cry." I don't know why, what, how ... and if I did, I did for a little bit all by myself or maybe ... on the <i>odd</i> occasion with a friend and for so short ... I</p>   | <p>70. Initially Elena could not express her grief (cry) despite her mother's encouragement that she give vent to her emotions. She feels confused by her lack of emotion as previously the slightest disappointment with a boyfriend would reduce her to tears. Although Elena considers the possibility that</p>   |

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| <p>don't know. I <i>couldn't</i> and I don't know what it was and it wasn't always like that because I remember boyfriend stories before that ... uh! If a boyfriend upset me a little bit I would be like in tears, you know, I'd get upset and cry bitterly and then it was over, you know, but with my <i>brother</i> it was <i>not</i> like that, I don't know <i>why</i>. Was it? ... I don't know if it was being strong enough but it doesn't mean that you're not strong if you cry, you know ... if you cry it doesn't mean that you're not strong, but I just, you know, I couldn't cry. I don't know why ...</p>  | <p>she may have been trying to be strong, she is aware that crying does not mean that one is weak and although the confusion continues, implicitly she is aware that the quick but maudlin tears of a disappointment in love cannot compare with the dimensions of real and deep grief.</p>  |
| <p>71. [Getting back into own career] Ja. I think I was doing something just for <i>me</i>, you know, which I know is ... I'm not really a selfish person, you know, I'll do a lot for others if I know them .... Um ... I don't know I guess I did this for <i>me</i>. I think I was just accepting something for <i>me</i> and not living ... ja, just for me basically ... It was a path I was taking, you know, and ... ja, I won't say specifically my goals are in that direction but it was ... it was something that I ... if I didn't do ... if I didn't do (it), I think I'd regret one day ... if I never did that for me I would turn around one day and say I should have and I didn't want to do that, for me. So I might as well give it a try.</p> | <p>71. Elena's decision to move on with her own life (career) is not without some conflict and the need to do something exclusively for herself is experienced almost as a selfish act but she realises that if she denies herself this opportunity that she may regret it in the future. She accepts that she does not have to live someone else's life; that she can follow her own path without feeling that she is somehow betraying those that she cares about (brother and parents) by doing so.</p> |
| <p>72. A research company. No, it's not a ... but it's marketing research, you know, it's business orientated. I did a B.Com. .... Ja. .... Interesting ... Mm. It's nice. Totally different to ... like the business. It's</p>  | <p>72. Having put aside her own interests and assumed her brother's role as manager of a business, Elena finds herself confronted by another personal choice (dilemma): should she continue in the role of employer</p>  |

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| <p><b>different to work for someone else and [to work] for you[yourself], as well. That is my latest dilemma here (laughs) ... you know, should I work for someone else or should I work for me? I enjoy the environment, I enjoy the ... the ... it's obviously so much more like intellectual and you deal with ... the people you deal with are so much better than what you deal with in the businesses and ... um ... ja, it's a communication thing. It's just ... ja. And you feel like you're always furthering yourself in this ... obviously my career, because obviously I'm learning and it's a whole new learning experience, whereas the business it's ... you know ... Okay, I'm ... you know, I'm basically the boss ... you <i>do</i> learn I guess but not as stimulating ...</b></p> | <p>(business) or become an employee (own career). She feels divided but realises that she can identify more with others in her own field, and that she finds her work more challenging and intellectually stimulating.</p> |
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**TABLE II**  
**Participant 3: Elena**

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*Constituents of the Individual Situated Structure of the Loss of a Sibling*

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**1. Experience of a Void (1,2,4,5,6,12,52)**

The sudden death of her brother, two-and-a-half years ago in a motorcycle accident, turned Elena's whole world upside down. Emotionally the loss was a heavy blow for her and her family. Her brother was young, energetic, a central life force in the family so that even today Elena still feels the *void* created by his death. Home, indeed life itself, seems hollow and empty without him. While she feels the gap ("hole") more acutely during special times of the year (e.g. Christmas) and these occasions are anticipated with dread, she is aware that going away from home does not relieve the pain. Her brother's absence is felt on a physical-emotional level and the pain remains constant irrespective of where she is. Elena realises that from this pain, there is no escape. She experiences the loss as a permanent emptiness in her life and in the lives of her parents.

The void is also experienced as an empty space in the family. Elena is aware of a break in the sense of wholeness and continuity. The central role that her brother played in the family businesses meant that functionally there was a gap that needed to be filled. In her quest for stability and continuity, Elena puts aside her own career and takes her brother's place in the business. On reflection, she realises that in a strange way she was doing this for *him*: filling in for her brother, covering for him, and maintaining harmony and wholeness (picking up the "pieces") in his absence as she had done when he was alive.

**2. Parents' Bereavement (3,8,15,18,19,21,38,39,41,42,43,58,59,61,62,63,68)**

- *Desire to Support Parents (3,8,21,38)*

Elena's consideration and awareness of her parents' intense pain also contributed to her decision to assume her deceased brother's place and to continue with his work. Immediately after the death, Elena was aware of the tremendous emotional shock of the loss for the whole family, particularly for her mother. In her *desire to support her parents*, Elena puts aside herself and attempts to help them through the loss. She had always been aware that her mother was closely attached to her deceased brother and that she lived in the shadow of potential child loss. With the death, her mother's worst fears are realised and Elena witnesses her intense pain and distress. While her father grieves differently, Elena is also acutely aware of his silent sorrow. She realises that although he does not openly express his grief as her mother does, he too has been deeply wounded by his son's death.

Her deep love for her parents contributes to attempts to sustain them; to be there for them as much as possible.

- *The Weight of Responsibility (15,18,41,61,62)*

From the outset, Elena felt a strong sense of *responsibility* towards her parents. Because others (the extended family) were hesitant to tell them that their son had died, Elena assumed the responsibility of breaking the dreadful news to them. She realised that her parents would have to be told sooner or later and she took it upon herself to inform them of his death. In retrospect, she recognises that she may not have been very gentle in the way she broke the news but she realises that there is no easy way to impart the fact of death. While Elena is aware that her elder married brother also feels the pain and that it is not easier for him, she realises that it is "different". He can move away from the grief by returning to his own home. Whereas living at home, Elena's entire being is immersed in the unrelenting family grief and she experiences this as a heavy responsibility. Having a break away from home, for a brief holiday overseas, brings the realisation that not having to face her parents' grief was as if a heavy *weight* had been lifted from her shoulders. Although her parents do not make overt demands on her and Elena feels no resentment towards them and supports them willingly, she feels their pain and wants to help them in any way that she can. Living in the shadow of parental grief, Elena continues to feel their pain as a heavy responsibility.

- *Changes in Parents (19,39,58,59,68)*

From the moment of voicing the fact of her brother's death, Elena's experience of self, world and others is radically changed. Existentially, neither she nor her parents are the way they were prior to the death and she realises the extent to which the loss has changed her, her family and their lives. For Elena, it is particularly painful to witness her parents in their bereavement. They are simply not the people that they were before the loss and this hurts and saddens her deeply. While she does not feel that she has lost her family, Elena is aware that the loss has *changed* them radically. Whereas formerly her mother would laugh and talk a lot, now there is only deep sorrow. While Elena accepts that a mother's pain at the loss of a child is intense, she cannot accept her parents as they have become. She resists the changes that they have undergone and attempts to recover the familiar psychological order and the parents that she loves. Seeing her mother laugh or giggle as she used to fills her with joy and gives her hope as she realises that her mother can survive the loss; can almost touch on her "old" self again. Elena is aware that the changes in her parents magnify her own struggles but she does not condemn them nor does she blame anybody else for the loss. She realises that no one deliberately did this. She accepts that that is the way things have become; that death is with them and that sorrow must be endured.

- *Being Strong for Parents (21,42,43,63)*

In the face of the emotional shock to the whole family and in an attempt to retain the closeness of the family unit, Elena's immediate response was to *be strong* for her *parents* and to sustain them through the loss. Immediately after the death, Elena was surprised to find how strong she felt. She continued with everyday tasks; completed her examinations and then immediately took control of family responsibilities, formerly handled by her brother. Her awareness that her parents were immobilised by their loss and her strong attachment to her family gave her strength and provided the impetus for her to continue with life. Although, like her parents, she also lost interest in anything unrelated to her brother and realised that withdrawal was an option, she was aware that her primary attachments were threatened and she resisted withdrawing. Elena reasoned that it would be detrimental for her to sit and "cry all day" and she decided to be strong; to continue with life rather than succumb to her grief. Although she had not perceived herself as a very strong person, after the loss she adopted the philosophy of "take things as they come" and dealt with the challenges, handling situations as they arose. Elena surprised herself by her incredible strength.

Yet, while she appeared to be strong, she was aware that her inner feelings were not congruent with this perception. Deep down she felt very weak and this reality was reflected in her physical appearance. Later, she realises that she has indeed become a lot stronger but she remains confused as to how she could have been so strong, particularly soon after the loss, and believes that her strength came from a power beyond herself; that it must have been sent by God.

### 3. The Spiritual Struggle (20,27)

On a religious level, Elena felt changed by the loss. Prior to the death, she had been a regular churchgoer and had been close to God but with the loss she found that she had withdrawn from Him. She *struggles* with her emotions as she feels the familiar order slipping away. Although she does not feel anger or hatred towards God, she has withdrawn from Him. She experiences a distancing from Him, perhaps some disappointment in Him, and cannot feel His presence as she did previously. While more recently Elena has begun to draw closer to God and feels confident that she will re-establish the bond with Him, she remains confused and conflicted as she struggles to make sense of her changed relationship with God. She realises that she needs more time to work through this closeness-distance dimension and is aware of a *spiritually* challenging path ahead.

### 4. Hidden Grief (22,23,64,65,70)

Initially, Elena found it extremely difficult to *grieve* openly for her brother. Despite her mother's encouragement for her to give vent to her emotions, she was unable to cry and if she did she would do so only very occasionally and for brief moments either privately or with a friend. She feels confused by her apparent lack of emotion, particularly as previously the slightest disappointment in a love



relationship would reduce her to tears. But this was not the case with the loss of her brother. Although she considered the possibility that she was trying to be strong, she was aware that crying is not a sign of weakness. Yet she would not, could not cry. Later she was puzzled by the fact that her mother never enquired about her feelings. Taking her cue from her mother, Elena also avoided speaking to her mother about the loss and maintained a protective silence. She reasoned that by consistently being there for her mother, she would be aware that the love was there and so words were not necessary.

Though others were significant, Elena also avoided sharing her deeper emotions even with her close friends. In addition to the need to be strong for her parents, Elena is aware that, by nature, she does not share her deeper emotions except with a few select friends. However, with the loss of her brother, she found that initially she could not reveal her grief even to her close friends. She tried to *hide* her feelings and maintained a façade, greeting her friends with a smile. It was very difficult to maintain a façade, concealing her painful emotions while deep down experiencing deep sorrow. By not being authentic with her friends, she realised that she in fact placed them in an awkward position. But apart from her own reticence, Elena sensed that others felt uncomfortable with death and if ever she felt the need to speak about her brother, she would restrict herself to unemotional comments about him in an attempt to spare her friends any embarrassment. She realises that she has become more secretive (“closed”) since the loss and while she has not withdrawn from others and interacts on a social level, she does not readily allow others into her personal space. She continues to conceal her feelings but is aware that she is not being authentically herself. She has been changed by the loss.

##### **5. *Sharing Stories (24,28,29,30,46)***

While Elena found it difficult to speak about her feelings, she welcomed the “happy *stories*” about her brother that his friends and others *shared* with her immediately after the loss. She regretted that, during the years before his death, her brother had distanced himself from the family and in her quest to know everything about him, Elena listened avidly to the stories of his friends' experiences with her brother. These narratives gave her great pleasure and were positive and meaningful, revealing significant aspects of her brother's being (what he had meant to others and how he had touched their lives) and enabled her to remember him with pride. Hearing about his experiences outside the brother-sister relationship almost extended her relationship with her brother and provided a window to aspects of her brother that she had not known. Elena eagerly held on to any small incident related to her brother as these unshared experiences broadened her knowledge of him, extending her memories and enabling her to remember him more fully. Implicitly, the stories also filled the void created by his death and the lost opportunity to get to know him better. Unfortunately, much as she enjoys being with his friends and still longs to hear more about their experiences with her brother, Elena has

become aware that it is painful for them to be with her as they immediately associate her with their lost friend. She realises that they too are hurting and in an attempt to protect them she remains silent.

#### **6. *Maintaining the Link* (25,40,55)**

After the loss Elena discovers, and his friends also notice, that she carries within her something of her brother - an “energy”, a charm, a “feel” of his that she delights in and which she experiences as a gift from her brother. In her quest to *maintain the link* with her brother, she holds on to these internalised traits that she loved so much in him, not wanting ever to let go. She realises that her brother had been so much part of her world that she assimilated many of his sayings and mannerisms. She is delighted whenever she utters a phrase or expresses herself exactly as he would have done as this reminds her of him. Having the same voice inflection and spontaneously using expressions that he would have used fills her with joy as her brother lives on in her. Her strong identification with her brother enables Elena to maintain the tie with him. She incorporates and holds on to these unique qualities of her brother just as the family holds on to him by keeping his personal possessions undisturbed. She realises that by keeping these physical reminders, the family, in effect, is also resisting letting go of her deceased brother. However, she retains a tremendous fear that time might expunge her vivid memories of her brother, that she will forget his unique way of being and this fills her with sadness.

#### **7. *The Pain of Future Loss* (9,10,54,56)**

For Elena, the *pain* and the missing are still present and she thinks constantly of her brother, aware not only of the loss in the present but also recognising the *loss of future* relationships and possibilities (when she gets married; has children, etc.) The most distressing aspect of the loss is that in the more distant future, she will lose the strong connection with her brother that she presently enjoys. As she grows older, memories that enable her now to retain the past will fade. She will not be able to remember his smile or the way he said something, and it saddens her as it will distance her from him. She fears that she will lose touch with her brother. In addition, she will not be able to visualise or relate to him as an older person and fears that she will lose him altogether. She feels deep sorrow that her brother will not be present to participate in the celebration of significant future events in her life and she realises that the missing and the longing for her brother will linger on. In an attempt to retain the closeness to her brother that she enjoyed, Elena holds on to living memories of her brother (stories, photos) not wanting ever to forget him.

#### **8. *The Emotional Struggle* (26,57,60)**

Elena experiences the loss and the accompanying grief as a fight, a constant *emotional struggle* that has impacted on her entire being. She is confused and does not know whether or not she has blocked the experience, closed off thoughts and feelings about the loss, or dealt with it. Although she is aware that with the passing of time she does not feel the pain as acutely as she did initially, it remains an

ongoing emotional fight. Just facing the loss or struggling against it has been extremely difficult. She is aware that since the loss, she has not looked or felt healthy and realises that severe emotional stress can manifest on a physical level. Particularly stressful is facing her parents' unrelenting grief. Elena is acutely aware that her own struggles are amplified by her parents' pain. Even though she went away on holiday and spoke about her brother and felt that she had dealt with her grief, on returning home she found that her parents' mourning had not abated. Facing the same situation at home, Elena feels trapped in the emotional struggle.

### **9. *Making Sense of the Loss* (7,28,33)**

In an effort to *make sense of the loss*, Elena focuses on events in her brother's life shortly before his death. Ambivalently she admits that her brother was inclined to drive dangerously fast and she feels sad that this weakness ultimately led to his death. However, she has no anger about his death. She perceives her brother's life as a "success story"; his death almost a "good" death. She is aware that he had changed a lot towards the end of his life (last 3 months), ultimately becoming a more caring and contented person (something that many others also noticed and acknowledged) and she wonders if he had a premonition that he did not have long to live. While she regrets that her brother threw himself into life with such intensity that he had little meaningful contact with the family for quite a few years prior to his death, when his life was cut short by the accident, her brother's need to live life fully takes on a different meaning. His hunger-for-life which, in life, seemed excessive, now, in death, almost makes sense and paradoxically is a comfort to Elena - at least he had lived his allotted span to the full. She finds some solace in knowing that her brother's life had ended on a positive note.

### **10. *Remembering Sibling with Joy* (11,32,67,68,69)**

Reflecting on her brother's life, Elena discovers positive qualities in him that set him apart from others. Listening to the opinions of other young adult males whom she trusts, affirms Elena's perception of her brother as a special person. The large number of people at the funeral also affirms what she had always known: that her brother was greatly loved and that he was intrinsically a "good" person. This is comforting to her and enables Elena to remember him with pride. She remains fondly attached to her brother and is really happy that she is still able to view him positively, can enjoy sharing a story about him and can remember him with a smile on her face. Unlike her mother, Elena resists associating her brother with pain, preferring rather to *remember him with joy*. However, conflicting feelings arise as she too feels the pain of loss but she is determined that the negative associations with her brother: accident-tragedy-death will never overshadow the positive memories of his vitality and the meaning that his life had for her and for others. She resists the negativity of her mother's pain and holds on to the happy moments, remembering how her brother had touched her life and the lives of others.

### **11. *The Sibling Attachment* (34,35,36,51,52,53)**

Elena's *attachment* to her deceased brother was a close but ambivalent one that changed over time. When they were young children her brother often victimised her and made her cry. They played together but they also fought a lot and their relationship was fraught with conflict. Because of his advantage of age (approximately 3 years older than Elena), she frequently felt powerless in his company and, as a little girl, she sought the security of closeness with her elder brother. However, this was never a major problem and for several years before her brother's death, she felt equally close to both of her brothers.

As they matured, the age gap between them seemed to narrow and they drew closer: she could discuss certain problems with him; they occasionally went out together. Elena admits that she had a deep affection for her brother. She became his supporter-caretaker and while she often refused to do things for him, she would inevitably soften and yield to his requests - frequently against her will. However, despite the conflict between them, loyalty and affection prevailed and the bond never weakened. She would allow him to go out while behind the scenes she "covered up" for him, protected him, and rescued him when things went wrong. She did this without his knowledge and without expecting him to reciprocate, but she realises that, had he known, he would have appreciated what she did for him.

Although Elena was aware that her brother loved her deeply, they had never openly expressed their affection for each other. It was only after the loss that Elena learned, through the comments of others in whom her brother had confided, how much he respected and valued her; not only for what she did for him but also for who she was. His affirmation of her worth: the fact that he considered her to be the "best" in the family and that he was prepared to do anything for her, defined who she was and was very important to her.

### **12. *Fear of Death* (37,47,48,49,50)**

Having come face-to-face with *death*, Elena finds it bewildering and *fears* it. Although prior to the death, the loss of a young person existed as a dreaded possibility, Elena had never seriously considered this. She knew that people died but they were old (like losing her grandmother). With her brother's loss, death becomes figural. Death had touched her personally and was no longer distant or simply part of the natural order of life. Elena's awareness of unpredictable and mortal existence is heightened. She now knows that death can come at any time and this frightens her. She questions her taken-for-granted attitude towards family relationships and realises that one neglects to spend time with significant others, assuming that because they are there, they always will be. She deeply regrets that she did not spend more time with her brother; time that has now run out. Elena comes to fear the loss of significant others. However, this is not a pervasive anxiety. Although she is aware that some people may not live to a ripe old age, her awareness of early and premature death does not extend to a

fear of her own death. However, she has become more appreciative of time spent with parents and others close to her, as she realises that they are not going to be there forever.

### ***13. Evading Death Reminders (13,16,17,44,45)***

Although cognitively Elena was able to grasp the finality of her brother's death and indeed desperately needed to know the truth about what had happened to her brother, emotionally she struggled to integrate this reality into her life. Her initial feeling at the sight of her brother after the accident was that she had never seen him looking as handsome; as beautiful or as peaceful as on that day. The dreadful fact of death (his cold and lifeless body) could not be grasped immediately and she continues to hold on to living images of her brother. Unlike her mother who visits the cemetery regularly and finds this meaningful, Elena has a strong aversion to visiting her brother's grave and cannot bear to see his name on the cross. Although she does visit the cemetery occasionally, Elena prefers to remember him as he was in life and cannot bear the finality of the tombstone. She realises that visiting his grave brings the reality of the loss home more forcefully and she resists this reminder. She knows that he is dead but emotionally she does not want to face this all the time. Her brother was too “happy” and energetic a soul to be associated with lifelessness; with death. She holds on to living images of her brother, *evading death reminders*.

### ***14. The Desire for Reunion with Sibling (66)***

Elena longs to be *reunited* with her brother and considers the possibility of existence beyond the grave. While she realises that there are no definite answers to the question of life after death, the thought of meeting him again in a spiritual form gives her hope and sustains her. To be with her brother would be the ultimate happiness for her.

### ***15. Freedom to be Separate (71,72 )***

Elena's more recent decision to move on with her own life (career) is not without some conflict but she realises that if she denies herself this opportunity she will regret it later. Adding to her conflict is that having put aside her own interests and assumed her brother's role as director of a business for so long, she is now also faced with another personal choice - to continue in the comfortable role of being a manager/employer (business) or to follow her own career as an employee. She feels divided but realises that she can identify more with her own career and that she finds it more challenging and intellectually stimulating. Elena accepts that she can be *separate*; that she can follow her own path, without feeling that she is being self-centred or, implicitly, that she is somehow betraying her loved ones (deceased brother and parents) by doing so. She realises that she owes it to herself to develop further and decides to at least give herself this opportunity. However, she remains involved in the family businesses and continues to support her parents.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Interviews**

## Research Participant 1: Cathy

Background Information that emerged from the interview:

Cathy was 23 years old at the time of the loss of her 19 year old brother. Her parents had lost a 3 year old daughter during her mother's pregnancy with Cathy and a 2 week old infant daughter when Cathy was two years old. Cathy was totally unaware of the other losses that her parents had suffered. This information only emerged after the loss of her brother. The multiple losses in a single family had far-reaching implications in terms of the parents' ability to handle yet another loss and seem to have had a ripple effect on the participant. The "shadows" that previous losses had cast on this family were brought into sharp focus by the loss of her brother. In the interview, the emphasis on "silent grief" comes out very strongly in Cathy's situation and the need to break the silence (to speak out) is indicated by her eagerness to share her experience in an interview while experiencing great difficulty in providing a written description of her loss.

### Original Interview

Cathy: "It feels like it just happened yesterday" (not recorded on tape).

"Right. I was in J. when it happened, when my brother had the accident, and I was watching a movie and they blackened the...the...[screen] and they put a notice to come to the manager's office and there was this absolute fear...you know, that...um...I didn't know my mom and dad were in D. and we'd gone over to J. to see the movie by train...and, 'how would I get...?' you know... 'what was going on?' And here I am in J. and away from home and there was this absolute disbelief, you know, you can't think. Anyway, eventually I got to the office and the manager told me that my brother had a bad accident and that friends were coming to pick me up, and...the...the...the knowing that it's very serious and...the hoping that it...nothing was going to be as bad as, you know, I thought it. And then they dropped me at the hospital and I...I can't remember if I went in to my brother...as I said, I run away. They brought a cushion that I sat on and I don't think that I...still wanted to accept...The doctor came and told me there was nothing they could do. He (brother) had damaged his liver but I *still*...you know..."

Interviewer: "Hoped..."

Cathy: "Yes, and I sort of half slept on this couch and eventually my mom and dad travelled up from D. and they arrived at the hospital. And...I don't even know what time you know and... from that moment everything became sort of hazy. Ja, ja, it is as though the reality of what happened makes you...made me...feel totally...um...out of touch, you know, as though you ...as I say, I run...as though you don't want to accept what has happened. My mother, strangely enough, she came out and told me...she came out and told me we must go home (i.e. where she and brother had been staying in J.) and then...(wept bitterly/very upset)...we went home... Anyway, at some stage...I think it must have been about nine o'clock she came and said we've got to go to the hospital. So we quickly got dressed...They went in. I sat outside..." (very upset)

Interviewer: "You sat outside..."

Cathy: "Mm...(struggling with tears) and he died while my mom and dad were in the room (weeping bitterly)...and my mother became hysterical...then they came back and we went home...What happened after that...the going home, I was like so cold. I can remember that. And there was much phoning and people coming and...I can't remember...anyone really coming up to me and saying: 'We're so sad', you know (wept). And I don't know if it was because I withdrew or because you know they...the...the...it was my mom and dad that lost their child, you know. Ja and even at the funeral, I can remember...after the funeral...it was a strange thing...you know. It was as though it



was something that happened that was not part and parcel of me, you know. It was something that I was observing. Do you understand? It was *terrific* pain that my mum and dad had and I was observing all of this”.

Interviewer: “As though you didn’t own the pain? It was mom’s and dad’s...”

Cathy: “No, no. And also no one really owned that I was part of the family. With the result that you think you are a bit of an outsider...it is...that it is those people that are pained and are so ...in sorrow, not you, and I think it becomes uh...uh...something that you...you...well up inside ... because you don’t really give yourself...you don’t really think you have the right to ...to be...you know...to be emotional about it because it is *their* son and it’s *only* your brother. Do you understand what I am saying? With the result...it was a very strange...it still feels to me as though it’s totally hazed up, you know...those few weeks of it. I can remember someone... We were sitting in the...the...the...I had a bedroom/ sitting-room and I was sitting there with some of my cousins and a person came in and said to me...I can’t remember the person, but I can remember the person saying to me, ‘I’m so sorry for you...for losing your brother.’. And I think that’s the only person...”(weeping bitterly)

Interviewer: “The only person that acknowledged your pain.”

Cathy: “Ja, that’s right, ja!...and you know when your question[naire] (i.e. research question) came and I looked at it and I couldn’t answer it, I couldn’t put it on paper because it becomes such a reality...on paper. And...but this has also given me time to think a bit exactly what actually happened, you know. How did I feel about all this and as I say, I felt like an outsider.”

Interviewer: “Um...”

Cathy: “Ja, sitting outside the whole thing but being very torn as well. And very upset.”

Interviewer: “You had the pain but did not feel justified in...”

Cathy: “Ja. I think when there is a tragedy like this each one copes with his own pain. You can’t cope with your mother’s pain, you can’t cope with your father’s. As much as you would like to, you know. I can remember going to bed and waking up in the morning and thinking it definitely didn’t happen you know, he is here, you know. Ja, and then when the funeral was over and we tried to get back into normal life. Um...I became...I tried to protect them from songs that he was very fond of, you know, and it became a weird existence because he was so much part and parcel of our lives yet none of us acknowledged him, we never spoke about him, you know. He...everyday, I mean we’d sit down to eat and we would all cry and no one would acknowledge why we were crying. I just remember once my mother said to us at the table, to my dad and I, um...that we must just think what it would have been [like] if he had killed someone...because a drunk man rode into him, ja, and it sort of...it’s a burden that at least ... he did not have to bear. And I think that was the only time that there was ever an acknowledgement about the...about what had happened. My mother on occasion became hysterical and my dad got the doctor in a few times...”

Interviewer: “Can I just check. Were you staying at home at the time?”

Cathy: “Yes, I...what was I doing? I can’t remember...It really was a terribly hazy...a time that I seldom go back and look into. I know I was at home and I stayed at home. I made a pact that I would stay with them for three years...And I stayed for three years and tried to protect them. Then they started to go to the cemetery every Sunday. And it became an absolute ritual. They’d both go off. Sometimes I’d go with...eventually I couldn’t stand the emotional strain and they’d go and they’d come back. My father was losing weight, my mother was looking terrible and one day they came back and I said to my mother, ‘This has got to stop. You’re killing dad you’re um...you’ve got other things that you must look...’ and she said, ‘I just want to tell you, my *favourite* child died!’ (very



emotional/wept)...You know when...when you're in a situation you don't realize that's just her way of hitting back, you know...at her pain ...” (overcome with emotion; unable to speak)

Interviewer: “Very painful talking about this.”

Cathy: “I think that it was devastating...it wasn't...it was hurtful...it was...When I think about it...for many years I thought I had no worth. You see, you yourself are in...I myself was feeling terribly...I was scared for what was happening to them seeing them, you know, seeing them deteriorating. I couldn't understand what was going on, because it just continued and continued. And the strange thing is that after that they came right, you know. I mean they still didn't mention him. They never mentioned him, neither did my father um...and just before my father died my mother and I sat in the lounge and I spoke about him and she cried and from then we spoke about him...that was fifteen years after he died. Um...we have never mentioned the circumstances...um...in D. they bought him a little car and the car arrived as the funeral car arrived to take him. Ja, you know it was a very, very um...um...emotional thing and to this day I cannot look at blue M...s. They bought him a little blue M... there and as we were getting into the funeral car the driver with the blue M...came from D. and...”

Interviewer: “So he was not in a vehicle when the accident occurred?”

Cathy: “Yes, he was driving my mother's car. There was a lot of guilt I had in that as well because the evening that we went out he was going to go to his girl friend by bus and I said ‘No!’ and I got quite angry. ‘We've got to go to the station and you've got to take us!’ and because he took the car he had the accident and *that* caused me guilt for *years*... That I worked through...and, I mean, I never told my parents so I haven't worked through that to that extent, you know, I think to a certain extent there is still a lot of guilt wrapped up in him having been in the car...um...But I think you've got to let go as well, you know, can't live... As I had to eventually let go of, you know...I knew my brother was my mother's favourite child, you know. She was very protective of him. He was very much like her family and he'd had a car accident before that and was in hospital for...um...”

Interviewer: “She worried more about...”

Cathy: “...about him than she did about me. Yes. She used me in many ways I think she was a very hard woman. I think...I didn't realize at that stage that she had had so many...ja!”

Interviewer: “Losses...”

Cathy: “Ja, and she was very, very hard on me. My dad also always said that ‘just keep quiet you keep the peace’, but when I was a child I didn't understand this. And the fact that she was pregnant with me when it happened to my sister then it's resentment towards me...on her part...that's how I worked it out, you know, and I think it made it easier for me to cope with what happened when I was young...”

Interviewer: “So you're saying that because your 3 year-old sister died...”

Cathy: “You know, as I (said)...you know...It actually was a very strange relationship, my mom and I. Now that she...she's 90 now, she's mellowed tremendously yet she was always very, very hard on me, she...never on my brother...it was a strange thing...but I don't think you can... you know...you must worry why. No...I just...lately I just thought, well that was the way it was and you just got to accept and just get on with it. As I say her...*her* bereavement, which I was not part and parcel of, had a tremendous effect on *my* confidence... *and* going back to how I feel about...I still think...I still grieve about him...as he was when he died...a young man, you know, and he was very good looking young man. I don't know how I feel now... um...”

Interviewer: “Before we go on to that let me...can I just check. What you said initially was that there was the fear and the shock and the unreality of the loss...”

Cathy: “Oh, Yes! Every morning, you know, you wake up and think it couldn’t have, you know, he must be here. That not wanting to accept it. Ja, I actually don’t know when acceptance came. I think for a long time after he died I’d wake up and think he’s still...and I’d hear him whistle. He loved um...um...um...motorbikes...not motorbikes, bicycles...um... He’d go on these bicycles...racing bicycles in groups with the other chaps and um...it, um... you know, there are still certain sounds that one still remembers.”

Interviewer: “So there are a lot of memories...”

Cathy: “Ja...I don’t think you can...like my father died and you don’t lose...Sometimes it dims and then other times the things that you can’t remember you remember very well again, you know. I think it depends on the normal mental state or your emotional state perhaps. You want to remember and what you don’t you don’t. And...um ...and...”

Interviewer: “Those were the feelings at that stage.”

Cathy: “Ja, ja... they...they...I can still remember that feeling of waking up and thinking it didn’t...it didn’t happen. That it was a dream...you know, and not wanting to accept...”

Interviewer: “And when the reality hit you?”

Cathy: “You know, I don’t know. I think it took time...even the...I think they left the coffin open in the church. I think it was done purposefully so that the reality could hit us. You know when someone is ill and...when my father died he was ill for some time...and...and...”

Interviewer: “That prepared you...”

Cathy: “Ja, that prepares you, but when...and I think...there it hit...home that... ‘here he was.’ And I think that is why it was done. I don’t know who decided that it should be. Perhaps the family did, you know my mother’s sisters and...[they] saw that the acceptance wasn’t, you know, there. I don’t know, but normally all funerals we went to the coffins are closed and I think perhaps the reality hit there...that ‘it’s over.’ But still...I can still remember long after the funeral waking up and thinking it definitely didn’t happen, you know, that he’s here... and then listening for the noises he used to make in the morning...it’s a...bereavement is a strange thing...its...you can’t picture the moment...I think each one...and I often wonder in small children what happens there?”

Interviewer: “Younger than you were where the understanding is...”

Cathy: “Ja, ja, there isn’t that...that...That’s very interesting isn’t it?”

Interviewer: “It is very interesting. What you are saying is that even though you had the understanding that this was final your mind couldn’t quite grasp...”

Cathy: “Yes, yes. I think the pain of the whole situation that it’s a closed thing. There’s no longer that person. You don’t want to accept and you actually...in...you look ahead at the pain that is lying ahead, do you understand, and that not wanting to accept ...”

Interviewer: “That life will never be the same without that person...”

Cathy: “Yes, yes that’s right. That you think it hasn’t happened...It couldn’t have happened, so that you don’t have to go through all that...The strange thing as well that I thought...I’ve often thought about it. It never came up in my mind that why did God do this? Ja, you know it ...I never...perhaps I was blaming myself more than God... You know, it is like a whirlpool of all kinds of things...and... after, after it sort of happened, little things would come up, you know, they’d surface a bit and then

they'd vanish in the water again that type of thing and one's ability to cope later when they appear a little longer, you know, and before you suppress it again and hide whatever you're feeling..."

Interviewer : "When you're ready it comes through and..."

Cathy: "You can deal with it a little bit and then off it goes again...you close it up...it, um... and I often wonder...perhaps it is because I am inclined to run...from emotional...In anything you know, on T.V, you know...I switch [off]...and as a child I used to cry in movies that other people never cried..."

Interviewer: "You're very sensitive."

Cathy: "Yes. And I think that when you're like that you try and escape and I think that feeling was always with me. I can remember after 3 years I went to teach at X (school). And I never ...[I never] thought perhaps I would escape it. I never had that feeling, you know, I just knew I was going. I took everything that was at home with me. The thought of getting away from it never entered my mind. I just knew that for *my* health and for my *emotional* survival I had to get away from home...and at this stage I was 25-26 [years old]...I went to X... Yes, it all went with me. It was like I packed it in the suitcase..."

Interviewer: "When you say "all" you mean?"

Cathy: "The emotions, the..."

Interviewer: "Oh, I see. So you're not talking about tangible memories of your brother or things that belonged to him."

Cathy: "No, no. I also have a little parcel of his with...with his watch, and...but I've never opened it. It's still there, it's still closed. I move with it wherever I go and...and...you know ...as I say, *running...running ...*"

Interviewer: "What I think you are saying is that you had an overload. You had just too much to cope with and you dealt with it as best you could at the time..."

Cathy: "Ja. I think so. You know I don't even know when he died. Isn't it terrible! It's a strange...as you said or as I said, it's not accepted...the reality...perhaps...I mean I used to go, even after my dad died, my mother and I used to go to the cemetery and we'd... put flowers on my brother's grave, on my dad's grave and my little sister's grave, the one that died. I mean, I must have looked at the grave stone a thousand times and cleaned it and I still don't know when he died...I think..."

Interviewer: "You're like keeping him alive?"

Cathy: "Um...And yet he was much younger than I was. We were never...just about a year before he died we started becoming friends...He was also younger...and...on...on looking back, we had very little in common. We did very little together. I was always the older one, I was always playing the piano and he had other things. He was...he also had a friend who shot himself when he was at High School...Life is so...whew! He was at boarding school, my brother, and we didn't tell him ... my mother didn't tell him, and when he came back my mother told him. He was then also in Std 6. And he just turned round and he walked out. Strange that no one ever asked him...how he felt. We were never asked you know...it was... a...a...I don't think my dad ever spoke to him or my mother about it...he...I can't even remember my mother telling him why we thought he (i.e. the friend) did it..."

Interviewer: "It was something you didn't talk about."

Cathy: “As I say, I think on looking back, bereavement counselling would have helped a lot, you know. But now even you doing your PhD on this, I’ve often thought, I wonder how parents would take to a child going for counselling. You know, it’s also still very much a new area, this counselling thing. They *counsel* children that have emotional problems but they don’t regard a *loss* as a counselling problem. You know, I see this at school as well, you know. There are two little...[no] one little girl and...both parents were killed in a helicopter accident, and I said to the school the other day ...she’s now gone to CT: ‘Is she receiving counselling?’ And they said, ‘No’, they don’t think so. And I looked and I thought...to me it’s become such an important...you know...after having gone to Lifeline and realizing what it *did* do and I think if people become more aware of counselling and as you are working on ...for children as well. Children need help because it is very traumatic, you know...”

(Switched over to side B of tape)

Cathy: “I ran...My whole life I ran away. I think circumstantial death like that is...is...is a terribly hard thing to come to terms with. I could see it in my mother as well. My father died years after my brother and there was acceptance but in a death like that...”

Interviewer: “More difficult when the person is young and the loss is...”

Cathy: “...sudden...and of a child as well, you know, of a young person...You accept when someone is older and has had a life and you don’t accept...And I think that was also a part. Well it’s harder and I didn’t want to accept...”

Interviewer: “You said that you were not particularly close to your brother in sense of ... he was younger, different interests, that sort of thing...”

Cathy: “I...Do you know, I...I often...he was quite a bit younger. I think he was 5 years younger and my interests were totally different to his. I actually can’t even remember...at school...I can remember him going to school. He went to...(gave name of primary school) and then he went to boarding school, and...I remember him as a young man not so much as a child. I remember him as a young man. I think my mother was always very protective of him and she sort of kept...um...each one had his own little world, you know. I can’t remember ever going to flick...him coming with us to flick. I went to boarding school in Std 6 and he stayed at home. Then he must have been in Std 3? 4? 2?. Then, after Std 10, I came home. You know, he was there. He was there at supper and we got into serious trouble if we weren’t home in time for afternoon tea, you know. There were times that I remember he was there but I can’t remember...ever being really close...until he grew to a young man...until he was about seventeen, eighteen, then we started chatting and...and I started picking him up wherever he was in the afternoon in the car...I suppose it was normal. I never really...He was very quiet, he had a very dry sense of humour...um...”

Interviewer: “Who was he more like?” [Attempting to get better idea of the sibling relationship but not successful – better question would have been to ask her to elaborate on the period when they “started to become friends”]

Cathy: “I don’t know, he definitely wasn’t like my mother. He didn’t have my mother’s nature...but I think he was like her family...although I don’t know...because my father...he had more my father’s nature. My mother, um...after he died she’d make remarks to me that, ‘you’re not a C----- you’re a M’ ---- you know, in a very nasty way, and my brother was a C-----, and I have a cousin in CT whose surname is C----- and she said, ‘He’s not a C-----, he’s more like his mother!’, you know (laughed). But she (i.e. mother) developed a sort of a ...After I was born, I think she had a resentment towards me and it came out even after my brother died and I think that made me even more...feel even more guilty that my brother had died. You know, that she had lost the one that she was fondest of...that she became very peculiar. And looking back I realize that it was emotional instability...I mean, you lose 3 children you can’t be absolutely normal can you? I don’t think so and I think I

experienced it. You *cannot* ...and...But as she's grown older...I think she's...let me tell you, she was hard until she was about 85. Only now between 85 and 90 has she mellowed and I think that it was also her way of sorrowing. You know, I think when you lose a brother or a sister...you know, after your [research]question came, I thought if someone had counselled me on my mother's behaviour, I think that would have been a tremendous help because you fight in the dark, you know. You have this person that is your *mother* that is reacting so *abnormally* towards you and you don't know why. And here you are, you're battling with all this pain and there's no help. And it went on after his death for years. As I say only 85 she was still saying to me... about 86...that I'm not a C... (i.e. not like her mother's side of the family) and she would say it in such a nasty way, you're a M...(i.e. more like her father's side of family). Meantime, I was so proud that I was a M...but she...she, you know, she had to break that down. Really she became...and *that* I think is a very, very important aspect of...The mother's reaction towards the child...the children that stay behind, *that* perhaps is even more important than how the child feels about the loss. To me, I think it meant...because it became an abnormal situation."

Interviewer: "And your life could have turned out very differently if your mom had been..."

Cathy: "Yes, yes. If someone had helped *her* and helped *me*. Perhaps even after my sister's death if someone had helped her *then*. But my mother's a very proud person and...I think *that* in many ways caused a lot of extra pain...*With* the loss and the guilt and everything else that came with the death of my brother, her very strange behaviour...um..."

Interviewer: "Her anger at the loss that perhaps kept her going otherwise she might have become depressed?"

Cathy: "Yes, yes and of course you don't realize that because you yourself are destroyed...I mean I was destroyed after that...emotionally, and you know what else happened? Our friends couldn't cope with our sorrow so they stayed away. So here I was left as an only child and all my friends were running away. No one ever discussed...they'd say to you, 'Have your parents got over the death of your brother?', you know. That sort of thing and um...there was no one that I could talk to...um...or ...and even tell about my mother's behaviour. Sorry, it was strange before my brother died. Ja, it was already...as I say, she was a bit unbalanced, quite unbalanced, before my brother died um...and I think it was all wrapped up with my sister's death and um...I never even knew that I had a sister that had died. I can remember looking through a photo album and saying 'Who's this?' and my mother saying, 'Oh it's just a child, a cousin', or something. Never telling me that *that* is your sister. So she was also running you know and...and...trying really...and you know you don't shake off that baggage. It goes with you. Her baggage went with her and my baggage was mine."

Interviewer: "You've been through a lot. Has this strengthened you in any way?"

Cathy: "I think it has. I hope it has made me a nicer person and not embittered me like it did to my mother, you know. She became terribly possessive of my father. It was very strange. At times I thought she *hated* me...um...Lately it doesn't worry me (laughed). I think as I've grown older...and that is what I am saying, not only does the child encounter the loss of the [sibling]...but the mother *reacts* in strange ways to the loss of a child and I think it is so important that the child be counselled to that as well...to that part of the circumstances that come after..."

Interviewer: "I think that a lot of parents don't have that energy to actually help the children although they might be aware that they need the help..."

Cathy: "No. I don't even think that the parents even realize that the child also has pain...I mean at no time would it ever...the only time, when we sat at dinner, that my mother acknowledged that we were all hurting...I think she acknowledged that my father was hurting."

Interviewer: "To get back to the anger that is also part of grief; your anger. Do you have any anger?"

Cathy: “I have anger towards my mother. I don’t have anger towards what happened. I have sadness. I am sad about what happened but I am not angry...but I *am* angry with my mother. Her reaction and her insensitive behaviour towards me and I think that is why I never ever told her that I told him to use the car. Because, as it was, I was *suffering* her behaviour and I could never...relate that...I couldn’t tell anyone until I went to Lifeline. You know they don’t counsel. You just talk and then off you go home and you battle it out, you know.”

Interviewer: “It brought things out?”

Cathy: “Ja. It brought it out and for the first time I could say that I felt so guilty and that... They asked ‘what actually did the guilt do to you?’ and I think...you know, I don’t know... It’s such a...death is such a tricky...and the sorrow that comes with it. It’s many faceted. It isn’t just *sorrow*... Ja, ja, there’s so many aspects to sorrow and as I said it’s like a whirlpool. Something comes up then... whew! its away, and then a few months later, or a few years later, something else pops up. And um...”

Interviewer: “With the passage of time things come out that maybe could not be dealt with before...Sorrow is multifaceted and sorrow must be sorrowed. I think it’s almost like you’re saying that you were not allowed to sorrow (interrupted)...”

Cathy: “I think...if I look back as to how I feel about my brother’s death, it was a great loss for my parents, not for me. It...I don’t think it was...I ever acknowledged that I had the right to cry...or I had to feel sorry for...because I was alive, do you understand? Here I am alive how can I feel sad? They must feel sad because they’ve lost...do you understand? They’ve lost a child, you...you...I was... And I think after it happened, I went into that hazy world of...of ...you’re not allowed to be sorrowful because you’re alive and it’s their child that died not yours, do you understand? Do you know that on my brother’s gravestone...(very emotional - long pause)...on my brother’s gravestone...(weeping bitterly)...I’ve never, ever said this ... on my brother’s gravestone it says...“*Our Son*”. I was there shortly after he died when we were washing the gravestone and I saw then, “*Our Son*”, and I put it away, you know, just filed it away...and it has just come up now!”

Interviewer: “You felt excluded here as well. From my understanding it was not only your parents but other people as well that didn’t really acknowledge your relationship...”

Cathy: “Ja, ja. No one ever sympathized or asked me how I felt or...perhaps they did and then I closed up, I don’t know, you know. You...you...I think you cope with it the best you can and perhaps...but I cannot remember anybody, barring that person that came up after the funeral. I remember *that* very clearly so I’m sure I would have remembered other things. I think, you know, I always got the feeling that people *outside* your sorrow couldn’t cope with ...so what they did they avoid eventually and I always put it down to that, that they can’t cope so...”

Interviewer: “They avoid...”

Cathy: “But the fact that I could remember that one person at the funeral coming I’m sure no one else did otherwise I would have remembered it...But there was...um...I think there was an awareness of my sorrow but no acknowledgement...not my mother or even my father. I think perhaps they were, I don’t know, I’m just saying perhaps they were so involved in their sorrow that um...my...I do know I was outside the whole...I was an onlooker.”

Interviewer: “You spoke earlier on about becoming an only child. How did you experience that?”

Cathy: “I experienced the attention being on me. Ja, my mother’s total absorption with me ... but not my father. My father was a very sensible man. I mean he also lost three children. But my mother became totally absorbed in...and there I think if they had been counselled, if someone had told them



how to handle it instead of becoming frightened of it and running away from it as well and in many ways becoming obstinate...”

Interviewer: “When you say that she became absorbed and obstinate was that more in a protective way or...”

Cathy: “No. It became a...I don’t know. I often thought perhaps she was fearful that something would happen to me but she never expressed it. I perceived it as a mother that is over possessive. That’s how I felt about it. She never gave me freedom to express opinions or express ideas that...she was totally irrational...”

Interviewer: “She had been a bit like that...”

Cathy: “...before my brother died...”

Interviewer: “Before your brother died and then it got worse?”

Cathy : “Yes. She became...um...And then at other times...you know it wasn’t a permanent type of thing. At times she was normal and other times she was totally irrational and my father was fully aware that there was this but we never really discussed it. I knew [that] he knew and that made me feel safe, you know. The fact that he was aware of it but we never discussed why.”

Interviewer: “He was aware because you told him?”

Cathy: “No he was aware because of her behaviour.”

Interviewer: “He could see?”

Cathy: “Yes, and he’d wink at me or...he’d, you know, he’d try...”

Interviewer: “There was that understanding...”

Cathy: “Ja, ja. I had a terrific relationship with him...if it wasn’t for him I think I would have...it was very, very trying after my brother died. She became vicious. I think she used me as a sort of a hitting ... like a boxer hits at something and she could verbally hit. It was very destructive, that’s all I know.”

Interviewer: “You dealt with a lot.”

Cathy: “But also...it was destructive in as much that, as I said to you earlier, I felt I had no worth. I...only these last few years that I felt...I am free of...of...to a certain extent confined ...whole thing put on me. As though I’m starting to be my own person, not...trying to be someone else’s person...”

Interviewer: “Trying to be the person that mom wanted? Trying to make up for the loss somehow?”

Cathy: “Ja, ja. There was very little discussion. As I say, fifteen years we never mentioned his name and each one has developed into his own little cocoon. I think my father took his sorrow into his little cocoon and my mother into hers. And there was never any open talk or...how we felt or...you know, and I often wondered, do other families behave like that?”

Interviewer: “You’re wondering how other families deal with this?”

Cathy: “So they all...um...”

Interviewer: “Families do go through the phases of grief at different times and often do not have the energy to help each other because of their own sorrow. Grief is a normal process.... It is not pathological. It is normal to feel sad. On the other hand...”

Cathy: “But I do think there is a link between your health and sorrow. I think it became a very low...um...intellectual period. A period where I cannot remember anything happening. It was a stagnant period. Um...”

Interviewer: “How long do you think you stayed with that?”

Cathy: “Years. I think a lot of this had to do with my self image. If you got a self image...a good self image, then your growth is faster. If you have a bad self image...that’s how I worked it out...you know, now that we’re thinking about it. I’ve always felt that I am not capable of much because of ... and I never even thought about it, you know.”

(A brief discussion ensued relating to a serious illness experienced by Cathy before the loss of her brother and the fact that she had not shared this information with her mother. After her brother's death, she was less inclined to discuss this with her mother and this, as well as the circumstances leading to her brother's death, have remained her secrets.)

Cathy felt that she had exhausted the topic and after thanking her for her willingness to participate in the study, the interview was terminated.



## Research Participant 2: Dia

### Background Information:

Dia is the younger of two children. She was 21 years old when her sister was killed in a motor vehicle accident. Her sister was 25 years old and had been married for 18 months when she died. She and her husband were driving home after spending time with Dia and her parents at the sea when the accident occurred. She was killed instantly. Her husband suffered serious injuries and was hospitalised. This happened thirty years ago. At the time of the interview Dia was 51 years old. She is married and has two children.

Dia's interview will first be presented in the language used by the participant (i.e. predominantly Afrikaans, interspersed with English words and phrases). This will be followed by a translation into English.

### Original Interview:

Dia: "Wil net die agtergrond gee. Uh ... um ... Sy was baie ...uh ... ons ... uh ... on-seker van haarself. Goed. Ek dink nie onseker maar ek sukkel om 'n woord te kry daarvoor ... maar baie bevestiging gevra as sy ... as sy 'n ...'n ... Ek dink die beste wat ... Dit wat ek die beste kan onthou van haar stem was dat sy byvoorbeeld sou gese het 'nê?' En sy het so 'n naampie vir my gehad, jy weet, so dit was ... sy soek eintlik bevestiging 'nê'? Nou Goed...Aan die anderkant moet jy my ook ... ek het haar bietjie seker oordoen, ek weet nie. Jy weet dit was nou die verskil tussen die persoonlikhede. Ek het baie meer gewaag, sy sou nie gewaag het nie. Ek was ... [ek] weet ek het ongeduld ervaar en aan die anderkant het ek geweet sy's glad nie so effentjies as wat sy ... as wat ek dink sy is ... As ek baie vinnig dink ... Ek stel dit baie lomp. Ek het altyd vermoed en ek dink eintlik intuïtief geweet dat sy baie sterker is as wat dit op die oppervlak gelyk het. As sy 'n ding nie wil doen nie sou sy hom nie gedoen het nie. Nie hardkoppig nie maar ... 'she could' ... 'she could' ... ja ... en dit het baie gevat maar sy sou dit gedoen het ... 'you ... you have to push her up to that'. So sy het die voorreg gehad om bang te wees. Ek het nie want ek is groot mond ... ek het gemaak asof ek nie bang is nie. So as dit donker was moet ek saam met haar loop, jy sien, maar dit was my keuse soveel as haar keuse, so ek ... daar's geen verwyte as ek dit se. Geensins. Ek kan net half lag daarvoor ... (Lag) ... Ek besef ons het ons ... in sulke rol ... Ons het ons ..."

Onderhoudvoerder: "Julle het hierdie rolle gehad ..."

Dia: "Ja, en [dis] 'stupid' weet jy. Ek het gedink ek bewys iets en sy ... sy het die...die...die veiligheid geniet want natuurlik was dit vir haar belangrik. So as ons ... ons was net klein ... net vir jou 'n prentjie te gee van die verskille tussen die twee van ons. Sy't in matriek toe begin met 'n ou uitgaan wat saam met haar in matriek was. Ons het die gesinne geken. Jy weet, die gesinne het mekaar geken. Ook die niggies, jy weet, die tannie ... die suster van my ma, al drie gesinne het mekaar goed geken ... um ... Ek en die ou het nogal luidrugtig baie keer gebots want ons was baie dieselfde (lag). Um ... en ... en ...hy't baie idees gehad wat vir my *totaal* belaglik was ... so dat jy nie ... Goed soos, 'n meisie kan nie goed sonder moue dra nie. Jy moet darem onthou dit was 'n tyd toe ons nie eers kon ... ons moet langbroek pakke dra, jy weet. Dit was die ergste wat jy kon doen. So jy het 'n 'picture' van die ... van die tyd (lag). So dit was die tipe goed waar ons verskil het maar verder het ons eintlik baie goed klaargekom. En toe's hulle getroud ... toe's sy - sy't musiek 'ge-swot'. En toe het sy HOD gedoen, en toe't sy skool gehou ... dit kan ook wees terwyl sy ... nee, sy het haar HOD en toe het sy skool gehou. En ek dink sy was net 'n jaar en 'n half getroud toe's sy dood. En hy was nog besig met medies. Hy sou daai jaar klaar gemaak het. Hy was om die waarheid te se die ... die ... dit was 'n motor ongeluk gewees ... en ons was ... sy het saam met ons afgegaan strandhuis toe en ons was so tien dae daar en toe het hy gekom. Hy het prakties gedoen op Bloemfontein, toe't hy ook afgekom. En toe was hy 'n rukkie ook nou daar en toe het ons saam terrug gery maar hulle twee in hulle kar en ons het ... ek het nou saam met my ouers gery ... en hy wou toe gelukkig vinniger gery het as ons en ons ... ons vermoed hy het aan die slaap geraak... um ... *ek* vermoed, omdat ek kan

onthou van kere dat sy saam met my gery het, dat dit nie onmoontlik was dat toe hy van die pad af begin gaan het dat sy aan die stuurwiel gepluk het want sy was nog ... sy was geneig om dit te doen, jy weet, sy het so '*panicky*' geraak. So ek het ... maar nou ... maar ek sou nie verbaas wees nie. 'Anyway', daar was niemand anders betrokke nie. Sy was op slag dood ... en die ander (haar man) - daar't 'n dokter op hulle afgekom - en hy (suster se man) was eintlik heeltemal in 'n toestand. Hy't allerhande dinge: gebreekte been... en ... ag! allerhande goed gehad en hulle het hom toe baie gou gou B toe geneem. Dit was nou nog net anderkant C so dis 'n uur en 'n half, dink ek, se ry van B af. Um ... en 'n kar het van vooraf gekom en ons gestop en toe't hy nou gesê daar was 'n ongeluk en die vrou is ... of hulle het ... *hy't* (suster se man) blykbaar vir die ou gesê "Stop, stop die skoonma hulle", of so iets, jy weet. Hy kon nog daar ... en toe ... toe moes ons K toe gaan, dink ek ... Ja, K was die naaste lykshuis waar hulle haar geneem het, hulle het hom aangevat B toe. Toe moes ons eers K toe en ... om die lyk ... jy weet. Maar kan jy nou ... 'how terrible'. Kan jy dink vir my ouers? Toe't ons van daaraf ... dit het 'n hele ruk geneem. Snaaks ek kan 'n outjie onthou, dit was 'n predikant se seun, en hy was jonger as ek. Ek dink hy sou toe nou net begin swot, en hy't regtig ... weet jy, hy het moeie gedoen om *lank* met my te staan en gesels ... jy weet ... ek weet nie of sy ma en pa vir hom gesê: "Siestog. Praat met die meisietjie", jy weet, daardie tiepe van ding (lag). Ek onthou so ... so goed die gesprek. Hoe dierbaar hy was, jy weet, sonder om regtig te probeer te veel troosigerig te wees. Hy was net sommer dierbaar. En toe't ons B toe gegaan het en daar ook vir ure gesit by Ongevalle om uit te vind wat het nou van hom geword. En toe's ... toe't ons ... toe't my ma hulle se suster ... sy het 'n baie goeie vriendin wat patoloog is ... die 'doc' laat gou, gou kom, en sy ouers. So ons het, ek dink, omtrent 'n week in B gebly want toe's hy 'come and go' (i.e. 'touch and go'), jy weet, hy ... hy ... [het] dit ook amper nie gemaak nie ... Dis 'terrible'. Ja. Dit was ... dit was ... Ag, jy weet maar dit was 'n Volkswagen ... Ag daardie tyd was daar niks veiligheids ... Weet jy, sy't tog die veiligheidsgordel aan gehad en sy het net ... dit was al wat fout was ... sy het net hier (wys aan die kant van die nek) 'n vreeslike blou kol gehad. Ek dink amper dit was haar nek wat ... toe het ons ... toe hy beter is toe het ons [huistoe] gekom. Toe hou ons begrafenis en al - dit was 'terrible', maar my ervaring daarvan was dat ek kon uitsny - daar was mense wat my ouers as verantwoordelikheid geneem het, jy weet, wat met hulle ge-'cope' het en ek kon genadiglik een kant toe, jy weet. Ek kan ... ek kan nie onmiddelik sulke goed verwoord nie. Los my. Ek moet op my bed le. Ek wil my ding uit-'sort' - en dan sal ek ... by die tyd wat ek voel ek kan 'cope' sal ek daaroor praat, maar nie voor dit. Voor dit moet jy my los, asseblief! (lag). So ... wat vir my gered het, dink ek, dat ... dat ek het tyd gehad om alleen te wees. Weet jy, dit onthou ek, dat ek 'n paar keer hierdie vriendin van my gebel het ... uit die hotel uit. Dis reg . Ag! Dis lank terug. Vaderland! Elk geval ... toe was hy nog baie sleg maar toe moet ek my skripsie klaarmaak. So ek het dadelik 'n ... jy weet, 'n ding gehad waarin ek verskriklik moes inklim wat ook dit, op 'n manier vir my makliker gemaak het. Um... Sy is begrawe ... dit was vir my sleg dat sy begrawe is voordat haar man by kon wees. Ja, dit is amper asof hy 'n bietjie gesukkel het om ... om te 'closure'... jy weet dit was vir hom sleg. Um ... en toe ..."

Ond.: "En vir jou?"

Dia: "My ... my ouers dink ek was vir my die grootste ... ek het ... ek het 'n vriend op daardie stadium gehad maar nie ... dat ek hom so veel sou vertrou ... ek vat maar lankerig voor ek 'n ou regtig vertrou om te praat oor goed wat ek nog nie uitgesorteer het. Sulke praat (d.w.s. die onderhoud) is vir my nie 'n probleem nie, geensins, maar as ek dit nog nie uitgesort het nie ... 'emotional' ... soort van emosionele vertrou is vir my moeilik. So ek het nooit met hom regtig ... en my vriende was daar ... hulle was baie ... En van my vriendinne, ons was so vier, en haar suster het saam met my suster 'ge-swot', so hulle het haar ook goed geken wat dit dan ook nogal meer betrokke gemaak het, van hulle kant af ..."

Ond.: "So hulle was daar vir jou?"

Dia: "Absoluut. Maar, jy weet, soveel as jy 'n ander ou kan ondersteun as jy ook jou skripsie moet ingee, en jy is besig om jou troue te reel, en so aan, want hulle was toe nou heeltemal ... almal van hulle aan die reël ... en ...en ...dit was nie asof ek dit ervaar het dat hulle nie daar is nie, geensins, maar, hulle het ander prioriteite absoluut gehad. Daarna het dit vir my ... vir baie lank ... um ... was

dit vir my baie moeilik oor hoe my ouers dit hanteer het. Ek dink omdat sy so klein en fyn en dierbaar en broos en regtig 'n dierbare mens was, het ... het dit amper gegaan tot op 'n punt van verafgoden, jy weet. So veel so dat ek op 'n stadium gese het, "julle onthou verkeerd". Jy weet, 'they'... 'they'... 'they sort of' ... nie dat ek gevoel het ek, jy weet, ek kry nie genoeg aandag nie, nooit, nooit. Dit was nooit dit nie. Dit het my net 'factually' geirri[teer]... die verdraai van feite omdat daai mens nou nie meer daar is nie ... Dit ... dit is vir my ..."

Ond.: "Hulle onthou maar net die mooi goed ..."

Dia: "Ja, ja. Jy weet ... Dis te 'silly' ... dis vir my ... en dan daardie vreeslike gereelde begrafplaas gaan ... ek het sommer gou gou gese, 'nee dankie', ek het ... 'ek sal haar in my kop onthou, ek gaan nie klip toe nie'. Jy weet daardie tiepe van houding (lag). Vreeslik! En dit was vir my baie moeilik om mee te 'cope'... en hulle het dit ook baie verskillend hanteer, die twee (ouers), wat ook vir my baie ... opvallend was en wat hulle 'n bietjie ... ek dink hulle verhouding, bietjie skade gedoen het. Nie dat daar ooit drastiese probleme was nie, jy weet, die gewone verskil oor goed, maar hulle het definitief um ... My pa wou aanhoudend daaroor praat. Hy was 'n baie meer emosionele, sentimentele 'expressive' ou, en ... en ... en, ja, baie meer sy emosies uitgedruk het en my ma wou dit baie privaat hou en ek dink dit was vir hulle baie moeilik en ek het besef ... um ... dat ek sou ... dat ek dit eerder soos my ma sou hanteer as soos my pa. Ja, dis amper asof hy dit wou 'expose' en ons was nog nie reg vir die 'exposure' nie maar sy manier van 'cope' was om dit te 'expose', jy weet. So daar was 'n konflik wat bietjie moeilik was. Dit was nogal ... ja, en ... dit is ... ek meen dis altwee tiepes se behoefte en hulle het eweveel reg om dit op daardie manier te doen maar dan was daar nie ondersteuning vir mekaar nie. So dit was nogal 'n ... dit was die moeilikste van die hele ..."

Ond.: "Hoe was dit vir jou ...?"

Dia: "Op 'n stadium was ek geirriteerd met my pa. Omdat hy my gedreig het op daardie manier in die sin van hy ... hy ... hy ... hy wil goed uit my uittrek wat ek nie oor wil praat nie, jy weet ... 'he wants to talk about it', en ek wil nie, jy weet. So, ek sê nie hy as persoon was bedreigend nie maar hy het situasies geskep wat vir my 'n bedreiging was. En ek ... ek ... wou wegom. En hoe meer ek wil ... jy weet, ons altwee gevoel het ... siestog (lag), hy ... dit was 'terrible', ai mens, siestog! (lag). Dit was vir hulle verskriklik sleg gewees. Ek het daarna in J... die volgende jaar in J... gaan werk. Oe! en daardie *eerste* Kersfees, en die *eerste* verjaarsdag, ag, heerlijkheid wat 'n drama!. En *nou* nog, *nou* *nog* as jy haar verjaarsdag vergeet, en as jy die dag van toe sy dood is vergeet dan is dit so bietjie ongemaklik. Ek het dit nog nooit vergeet nie maar ek weet ek moet 'n 'effort' maak. 'n Mens sal dit seker doen, ek sal ... ek is seker ek sal ... ek onhou daarvan maar ek dink nie 'n mens moet dit al *vier* nie, jy weet. Um ... dit ... Ek sou 'n stil tyd by myself he ..."

Ond.: "Um. Maar nie ..." (onderbreek)

Dia. "Ja. Ek het verskriklik baie keer gewonder, as dit my kind was, hoe sou ek dit gedoen het. Die ander fak[tor] ... van my kant af ... die fases waardeur ek gegaan het. Ek onthou ... dit was ... (lang stilte)... Dit was nogal toe ek getroud is ... O! wag, dat ek jou eers vertel ... Dit was ... dit was 'n ding wat baie moeilik was ... om amper, nie regtig toestemming te kry nie maar 'emotionally' toestemming vir *myself* te gee om uit die huis uit te beweeg. *Dit* was baie sleg. Omdat ek die enigste een was wat oor was en ek ... um ... seker half besef het dat hulle ondersteun mekaar nie so goed nie en ek was vir hulle half 'n katalisator miskien tussen in ... was dit vir my ... ek onthou dit was vir my *verskriklik* om vir hulle te gaan sê ek wil nou in 'n woonstel intrek. Dit was vir my ... ah! ... dit was erger as om 'n eksamen te gaan [skryf]... jy weet. Dit was *erg* ... dit was regtig *erg* ... en ek het geweet hulle gaan reageer. Hulle het mekaar toe ook, verwyd nogal ... Ek onthou ... selfs daai aand toe ek vir hulle gesê het toe het hulle nogal ... net ligtelik, dit was nie 'n vreeslike bohaai nie maar hulle het so half opmerkings gemaak wat gesê het, 'Maar dis ....', jy weet. Hulle het definitief nie verstaan hoekom ek op my eie wil bly want daai tyd moet jy ook nou weet was dit nie 'n 'okay' ding om te doen, jy sien, en my suster het dit nie gedoen nie. Sy het by die huis gebly totdat sy getroud is. So dit was vir hulle 'n vreemde konsep dink ek."

Ond.: “En hulle reaksie?”

Dia: “Die opmerkings kan ek nie onthou nie maar ek dink hulle het gevoel ... dat ... dat daar was ... jy weet, nou dat ek daarvoor dink, miskien was dit wat hulle van die ander een se optrede gepla het, wat hulle aanvaar het het gemaak dat ek uit die huis wil gaan. Jy weet ... ek ... hulle het nie in soveel woorde ges[ê] ... jy weet in soveel woorde bespreek, regtig nie. Ek kan net onthou dat daar opmerkings was van, ‘Ja maar as ...’, jy weet ... ‘Jy maak dit ook maar moeilik’, of so iets, jy weet ... en ek dink hulle het ... dalk ... waarskynlik aangeneem ek ervaar dit, die ander een se optrede, so moeilik as wat hulle dit ervaar het - jy weet, my ma en my pa. My pa sou gedink het, ek neem aan ... dit is soos ek dit nou verstaan ... is dat, dit wat my ma ... miskien die manier wat my ma die situasie hanteer het en haar optrede daarna het dit dalk moeilik gemaak ... *vir my*, terwyl dit eintlik *vir hom* moeilik was. Ek dink nie hy het verstaan wat vir my moeilik is nie. Hulle het definitief nie verstaan hoekom ek uit die huis wil gaan en dit was vir my *verskriklik*, *verskriklik* traumaties om vir hulle te sê... om myself so ver te kry om te sê, ‘Nou gaan ek!’.”

Ond.: “Hoekom was dit vir jou so traumaties?”

Dia: “Um ... omdat ek dit moeilik aan hulle kon verduidelik ... um ... want hulle het my *ge-'smother'* letterlik, jy weet, ek het nie asemhaal kans gehad nie want toe was ek die enigste fokus. Eendag het my swaer vir my gesê, ‘Jy sal nooit 'n man kry nie as jy bly’ (lag). Dis nie hoekom ek gegaan het, maar (lag) hy het dit ook ... met ander woorde, wat ek nou dink is dat hy dit waarskynlik ook ervaar ... dat hulle so ... Weet jy, hulle was nie bewus daarvan nie, sekerlik nie, want hulle is die twee dierbaarste, ondersteunende mense mens seker kon kry. Maar nie, nie soveel *insig* as wat 'n mens sou gehoop het nie.”

Ond.: “Hulle het nie insig gehad in jou pyn. Dit was vir hulle baie moeilik en hulle kon nie verstaan wat vir jou belangrik was.”

Dia: “Ja. Ek dink nie hulle kon daarby verbykom nie. Nee, nee ek dink hulle behoeftes was waarskynlik nog heelwat groter as wat hulle insig was in ...in *my* situasie. Ek is seker daarvan. Dit het gemaak dat ... ek moet sê ... ek moes dit baie met ‘force’ moes ek dit van my probeer afskei. Um ... daar's nou nog onskrewe reels dat ons maar baie keer saam sal wees Kersfees. Om die waarheid te sê was ek net twee Kersfeese in my lewe nie by my ouers ... jy weet ... en dit is nie ... my pa is al oorlede maar (sug) ... dit ... dis dieselfde gevoel van ... Jy, jy het nie ... jy kan nie verduidelik hoekom ... daar's geen verduideliking wat vir hulle sal dit sagter maak hoekom jy nie beskikbaar is nie ... hoekom jy jou eie ding wil doen. So dit is ... maar ek het nogal, na my troue, het ek so vir die eerste ses maande het ek vir die eerste keer regtig gehuil daarvoor en ek kon vir my man sê dit was vir my ‘terrible’. Jy weet ... ek ... ek ... op daai ... ek ... ek kon ... jy weet ons ... hy is nie 'n groot prater nie ... maar ek kon regtig verwoord ... dit was ... O, weet jy miskien ... een, twee of drie episodes waar ek vir vyf minute lank sou kon sê dit en dit was aaklig. Dit is dit! En dit was vir my genoeg. Dit was vir my op daai stadium ... Toe's dit ‘all right’. Daarna was dit ‘all right’. Maar ek het ‘n *ge-wel-dige* angste oorgehou vir kar ry see toe ... ek het dit hierdie jaar, vir die eerste keer het ek besef ... weet jy dis ‘all right’. Ek ... ek ... weet jy dis naderhand so erg dat ek gedink het, ‘Okay, nou's ons by K, ons het dit gemaak ... nou's ons by B, ‘we've made it’ ... jy weet ... ek het so afgery see toe. Dit was ... dit was baie sleg. En ek ... deesdae lag ek vir myself want ek dink nog steeds dat jy gaan *net* 'n ... 'n probleem ... 'n ongeluk kry, as jy op die groot pad is. Ek sit ... baie onmiddellik my ‘safety belt’ aan terwyl ek hom hier nogal sal vergeet. So ek het ... dit het ‘ge-click’ ... Nou is daar sekere episodekies ... Ons het nog heeltemal kontak gehou met haar man - en met ... met ... hy's toe weer getroud - tot op 'n stadium en ... toe ... ag die verskille wat ek en hy gehad het het nooit enige iets met my ... my suster te doen gehad het. Ek onthou dat ons in die kar klim na die ou vir ons gesê het en ons het so 'n paar kilometers gery, toe het my ma vir my pa gesê, ‘Jy sal nooit daai ou verwy’, en dit was ... dit was haar houding dwarsdeur. My ... my ... my pa was nogal half, half die emosioneel ou wat dit sou kon ...jy weet, ‘Jy’ t haar nie goed genoeg opgepas nie’, daardie tipe van ding. My ma is die meer logiese een wat ge ... jy weet besef het, ‘Maar, jy weet, sy’s vir hom net so

belangrik’, en hy sou ... ten alle koste sou hy ... jy weet, dit was vir hom *erger* as vir enigiemand anders.”

Ond.: “En vir jou? Hoe het jy gevoel?”

Dia : “Nee. Nooit. Nooit. Definitief nooit [verwyt nie]. As daar enige, enige iets is wat ek vir myself weet ek kon dink is dat sy aan die stuurwiel geruk het. Want ek het nooit gevoel hy't te vinnig gery nie, hy't te stadig gery ooit nie, maar, ‘if he could have done anything better he would’. Jy weet. Hy was *mal* oor haar. Definitief nooit, nooit, nooit dit. Ek het baie keer daarna gewonder hoeveel hy haar sou domineer ... Hy kan emosioneel hard wees en dit het ek baie keer oor gewonder en baie keer gedink miskien is dit maar goed. Jy weet daar was ... daar was sekere optredes met die ... met die ander vrou wat ek gedink het, Whew!, as dit my suster was sou ek nie, waarskynlik nie, stil gebly het. Um ... so ek ... mens voel verskillend op versillende omstandighede jy weet. Ek meen dis erg op 'n stadium dan gebeur iets dan dink jy, ag weet jy dalk, um.... ‘it was better’, jy weet. ‘You view it that way’. So die ... hulle het nie kinders gehad nie so dit was nie ... Um ... en met die ... met my troue moet ek sê dat ek haar nogal begin mis maar jy weet hoe gaan 'n troue, dit is so ... meer met die beplanning as met die ... maar ons het nooit ... ons was te ver uitmekaar uit nog op daardie ouderdom, daai vier- vyf jaar, en ons was te verskillend, dat, dat sy regtig vir my 'n ‘pal’ was. Ek besef dit sou later gekom het. Ek het baie keer gewonder wat sou die situasie gewees het toe ek kinders gekry het, byvoorbeeld. Het ek gewonder hoe sou ons ...um ... hoe sou die verhouding verander het en ... en toe my ouers nou begin ouer word, het ... het ek baie keer gewonder hoe ... jy weet, hoe sou sy dit gesien het. Um ... eintlik kon dit moeiliker of makliker gewees het, jy weet, daar is verskille altyd oor hoe jy situasies hanteer so daar sou definitief *groot* verskille gewees het. Ook omdat die ... haar man 'n baie moeilike ou is. My man is 'n heeltmal rustige ou. Hy sal ... hy is entlik nie ‘difficult’ nie, nie omdat *ek* so sê nie maar dis hoe mense hom ervaar. Hy is 'n baie rustige ou. Hy val in by dinge en as hy dit nie wil doen nie, dan sal hy dit nie doen nie en hy gaan nie 'n lawaai daaroor maak nie, so ... ‘he gets away with things’ (lag) in die sin van goed doen wat vir hom onaanvaarbaar is. Um. um ...die ... die situasies wat ek nou aan dink ...wat ek ook nou die aand aan gedink het (nadat ons telefonies gepraat het) ... wat vir my interessant was toe ek dit besef. Ja, ek was op 'n stadium ... het ek besef dat my vriendinne met susters het ek so half ... weet jy, dis baie lekker, ondersteuning ... en dan het ek aan *my* suster gedink en besef maar dit sal nie so gewees het want ons was te verkillend. Um ... ons sou, ja, wel daar wees vir mekaar maar ons het geen ... daar sou min van saam doen gewees het. Ons het net nie dinge op dieselfde manier gedoen nie. Maar, jy weet, as mens ouer word ... ek weet nie. So daaroor het ek nogal gewonder en toe my pa dood is ... in die hospital was en so aan ... toe het ek ook besef dit sou waarskynlik makliker gewees het . Ek het nou Maandag 'n idee gekry dat ek dink my suster sou haar (d.w.s. ma) baie beter ondersteun het omdat hulle baie *nader* aan mekaar was op 'n manier, en tog ek weet nie of sy dit so ervaar het ... my ma ... ek weet nie. Moet haar vra! Snaaks, ons praat nie oor sulke goeters nie (lag). Is dit nie snaaks hoe jy ... Ek weet nie as ek sien hoe my ... hoe *my* dogter ... O ja, dit is 'n ander ding dat ek *nou* besef dat die ang wat ek gehad het so deur die tyd opgebou het van, ‘whew!’, jy weet, ek gaan op 'n stadium alleen sit. Ek meen 'n man is mos nie famielie nie. Op die ou end ‘he has a choice’, jy weet hy hoef daar te wees of hy hoef nie daar te wees nie en jou suster *moet* daar wees, jy weet, en jou kind ...”

Ond.: “Sy bly tog altyd jou suster.”

Dia: (lag) “Ja, ja. Of sy lus is om te loop of nie, sy gaan nog ... (lag) ... maar my dogter het nogal, dink ek, baie in daardie rol ingegrooi van ... van ... jy weet, ons is baie, baie ‘close’. Ons het baie dieselfde humorsin ... ons deel baie ... ons is baie verskillend ook. Sy is 'n ‘performer’, ek sal liewers asseblief agter die gordyn staan, maar (lag) sy verstaan baie goed ... so daai ... en party keer doen sy dinge en ek het baie hard gedink toe sy musiek ... toe sy gesê het sy wil musiek ‘swot’, of ek haar probeer, jy weet, daar in ... Dit was glad nie. Ek het vir haar gesê ek weier, sy kan nie musiek neem ... toe sy op skool was. Um ... want ons het 'n sessie gehad, jy weet, toe sy klein was en sy wou nie oefen nie en toe kom sy in Standaard 6 toe sê sy sy wil alweer. Toe sê ek, ‘Nee, ek is jammer. Jy het jou kans gehad, nou is dit verby!’ Maar toe na so 'n ruk ... intussentyd hoop ek sy wil want sy is so musikaal ... ek kan sien dat die kind self ... weet dis 'n ... dis 'n ... en toe regtig het sy weer



teruggekom en gesê, 'Nee regtig', sy wil regtig. Toe sê ek, 'Okay as jou punte dieselfde is en ek hoef nie vir jou te sê gaan oefen'... ek het daarna nooit vir haar hoef te sê sy moet gaan oefen. So ek het nogal daai uitgesorteer van dat ek haar nie geprobeer in 'n rigting ... um ... ek het haar eintlik ontmoedig. Vir haar gesê, 'Jy moet baie mooi dink. 'n Mens moenie jou stokperdjie jou rigting maak nie', want sy stel nie vreeslik in onderwys belang nie. Maar, maar weer ... jy weet, selfs met die musiek ... My suster en ek ... sy het geblad lees. Baie gemaak wat die boek gesê het. Ek het die boek gekyk en dan het ek, 'Ja, okay. Ek dink dit klink so', en dan het ek my ding gedoen, jy weet, en duidelik nie so ver gekom nie ... so haar manier is ... (lag). Ja. 'She was very willing to ...' Ek dink die ... die ... jou ... jou ... die persoonlikheidsverskille, dink ek, tussen die 'siblings', en die posisie in die gesin wat ek sou sê is baie belangrik. En dan ek dink, die ouderdom waarop dit gebeur ... jy weet as altwee nog steeds in die huis is, dan is dit 'n dag vir dag ... en dit was amper wat ... hoe dit vir ons gevoel het want ons het 'n vakansie saam met hulle gehad het."

Ond: "Vir daardie rukkie was sy by julle."

Dia: "Ja, ja . So dit op sigself, net die terugkom huistoe is al 'n bietjie van 'n afskeid weer want hulle was so kort getroud en ... um ... daar was nog 'n ding wat ek nogal gedink het ... ek dink daar's ... daar's waarskynlik 'bonds' tussen 'siblings', jy weet, as daar meer as een in die huis is dan dink ek is dit ... is dit ..."

Ond.: "Het julle daardie 'bond' gehad? Was dit anders toe julle ..."

Dia: "Um ... Weet jy, omdat ... omdat ons altyd met die niggies, met die suster's (ma se suster) se kinders ook alles saam eintlik gedoen het, was hulle die *groties* en ons was die *kleintjies* so bedoelende dit was ... ek het 'n neef gehad wat net so oud is soos ek en 'n jonger nefie. Dis die twee wat dood is. En die ouer suster en die een wat presies so oud soos my suster was, hulle was altyd saam. So ons was die *kleintjies*. So ons het ... die spelery het dan altyd gegaan ... as hulle sal kuier, het ek saam met die seuns gekuier en sy saam met haar ... so ons het ook nie daar, jy weet, daar ... ek dink ons het daar mekaar nogal 'n bietjie..."

(Onderbreking - Dia maak opmerking dat die band amper vol is)

Dia: "Um ... Daar was nog een ding wat ek besef het ... [ek vergeet] dit sal nou, nou kom..." (lang pause)...

Ond.: "Om terug te gaan, julle het nie baie saamgespeel nie. Sy was nie eintlik die ouer suster in die sin van besluite neem...?"

Dia: "Nee. Sy was die ouer suster met 'n sin van verantwoordelikheid. Um ... Dit was 'n verantwoordelikheid omdat sy so bang was om fout te maak wat my natuurlik vryer gelaat het ... toe maak ek 'n fout! jy weet. So ... ek bedoel ... jy weet, al bietjie ... so daai ... as ons ooit konflikte gehad het was dit op daai, omdat sy my probeer keer het want ek het haar getreit[er] Omdat ... wel dit was 'fascinating' as sy 'panicky' raak oor ek nou 'n ding wil doen wat ... kyk ek praat op klein skaal ... ons was *vreeslike* beskaafde ou dogtertjies, jy weet. Ons het nooit ... (lag) ... so dit is baie subtiel wat ek nou van praat ... ek wil net verduidelik hoe was die situasie. My ... my ouma het byvoorbeeld gese, 'She was not made for this world', en dit was omtrent die ding, jy weet. Sy was baie anders. Sy ... sy ... ek dink as 'n *kleintjie* ... (afgelei deur die bandopnemer) ... Wat het ek nou gesê?"

Ond.: "She was not of this world"

Dia: "Ja. Toe sy heel klein was het sy asma so nou en dan gehad. So ek dink sy was 'very protected.' Nie dat ek dit so ervaar het nie. 'I was on my own mission', ek dink ... ek was te klein en 'stupid'... Um..."

Ond.: “So jy sê die verskille tussen julle en ...” (poging om op te som onderbreek deur Dia)

Dia: “Ja. En as jy my hierdie selfde [vrae] ... [as ek] hierdie situasie gehad het vyf jaar na sy dood, sou ek heeltemal ander goed waarskynlik ... ek weet nie ... waarskynlik heeltemal anders ... want ... die ... die ... Nee, ek sal tog nie vir jou ... miskien oor ek ... ek was altyd bang oor hoe sal dit wees as ons ... jy weet dis nogal 'n ding, dat 'n mens vreeslik baie wonder hoe sou sy gewees het nou. Want jy onthou haar met haar jong ... alles, jy weet, en as ek moet dink hoe my persoonlikheid verander het ... ‘maybe not totally’ ... (lag) maar baie, baie. Baie geduldiger, baie minder ... jy weet. Ek kan dink dat sy waarskynlik baie meer self vertrou ... jy weet ... baie meer ‘assertive’ selfs, somer makliker ‘assertive’ sal gewees het want dit was vir my ... ek onthou ... interessant ... ek kon haar *nooit* sien as iemand wat sal skoolhou. Wat sal kan ‘cope’ met 'n hele klasvol nie want ek se skool kinders is vir my baie bedreigend om mee te ‘cope.’ Jy weet die studente is 'n ander saak, maar skool kinders bly nog altyd vir my ... en ek kan onthou dat ek gewonder, hoe op die aarde! En sy het aangegaan. ‘Okay’, goed dis kleiner klasse want dis musiek, maar aan die ander kant is dit klasmusiek waarvan nie almal hou nie. So dis 'n ... en ek ... ek kan nie onthou dat sy gekla het dat dit vir haar onhanteerbaar was nie. Dit is hoekom ek, jy weet, half altyd die ‘feeling’ gekry het van as sy wil ‘cope’ sal sy ‘cope.’ Sy was definitief baie sterker en ek weet dat ... dat ek klein mensies nooit onderskat nie en ek dink ek baseer dit op haar en toe later op X (vriendin) ... en my ma. My ma is baie klein. Klein, klein... klein asempie. En *ek* weet jy moenie klein mensies onderskat nie (lag). ‘Physically timid doesn’t mean anything!’ (lag)... (lag aanhoudend) Nou dat ek daaraan dink, het sy in my bewussyn gegroei.”

Ond.: “That's interesting. It's amazing how much we learn from our siblings.”

Dia: “Isn’t it! O, maar ek dink jy maak ook ‘assumptions.’ En stillerige mense moet jy ook nie onderskat nie. Dit is ook... ‘I think, basically, that was based on my knowledge of her strength ... I think.’ Daar is regtig geweldig ondersteuning in die familie en vriendekring vir my ouers en vir my. Ek dink dit is ook 'n baie ... baie belangrike ding.”

Ond.: “Jy het gese dat van die begin af het iemand saam met jou gesels.”

Dia: “Ja. Die vriendin van my ma ... sy's nou hier ... sy is nou net mooi 'n jaar dood en ek het 'n geweldige spesiale gev(oel) ... jy weet ons het baie goed ... klaarge[kom] ... Eintlik wat gebeur het is haar ouers ... ek het ... um ... my pa se ma het nog geleef dis nou die ouma X en dis al ouma of oupa wat ons geken het, maar *die* vriendin se ouers het op 'n stadium besluit ... die vriendin en die twee susters, ons drie gesinne was altyd saam maar sy was nooit getroud nie en sy het die twee ouers gehad. En hulle het ... was soort van vir ons almal ouma en oupa maar van die hele lot het hulle blykbaar, vir een of ander rede, het hulle besluit ek is hulle kleinkind. So dit was ... almal het dit so aanvaar daar was nooit enige probleem wat ek kon agterkom nie. So sy't tot 'n mate ... ons het haar ouers gedeel, jy weet, wat die ander ... wat die ander niggies en nefies nie gedoen het nie. En sy was 'n tipe persoonlikheid wat ... as daar 'n *krisis* was, was sy daar. Sy het nooit regtig vreeslik ... ek dink, ja, weet jy, ek dink sy was nogal vir my 'n *ma* ... 'n ‘*idol*’ op 'n manier ... want sy het nooit gepraat oor dinge nie, ‘but she acted’ ... sy was *daar* jy weet ... sy was altyd ... *dit* het sy my geleer van vriendskap wat jy nie kan ... jy sal nooit weer maklik by ... by ... of jy kry dit nie in baie mense nie ... daardie onvoorwaardelike vriendskap. So sy het onmiddelik alles neergesit en vir die suster gese, ‘ek ry, ry jy en jou man saam.’ En ‘obviously’ het hulle toe saamgekom B toe. En hulle was saam met ons daai ... daai week ... daai paar dae ... ek dink nie dit was 'n volle week nie. En dit was soos ... jy weet hulle het onmiddelik gery, wat wonderlik was. En dit het *herhaaldelik* gebeur ... jy weet. So daai ondersteuning was daar en dit was baie waardevol. So van my kant af het dit die las van my afgeneem want ek het al gevoel, jy weet, nou moet ek hierdie mense dra op 'n manier. Hulle het nie die energie regtig om ... en ek dink seker maar uit die aard van my persoonlikheid het hulle ... ek het nie baie gevra nie ... ek het juis gevra dat hulle my los. Jy weet want hulle kan aangaan en ‘cope’ met hulle probleem en ek het ‘ge-cope’ met myne...”

Ond.: “Jy wou op jou eie manier ‘cope’.”

Dia: “O, absoluut!”

Ond.: “So daar was nie baie met jou te doen ... die ondersteuning?”

Dia: “Bra ... regtig. ‘Okay’, nee ... Ons, ons het saam reelings getref en sulke goed maar nooit, nooit gevra hoe voel 'n mens daaroor nie. Genadiglik nie ... dit sou baie erg gewees het. Maar aan die anderkant my ma was nie 'n vreeslike prater nie en my pa was nie ... um ... um ... eers dit uitsorteer. Eers... eers uitvind wie fout gehad het ... alhoewel sy sou altyd eers gedink *ek* die fout gemaak het ‘want ek ken my kinders goed’ (lag). Maar sy is absoluut daarvoor ... sy was ... jy weet, ‘sort die ding uit.’ Jy kan ... jy kry die prentjie van hoe moeilik dit vir hulle twee was en ek het gevoel ek staan in die middel. En ek dink as daar ander kinders was dan sou dit anders gewees het ... Anders hanteer het ... (ingedagte). Ek het ... nou ... toe ... my neefs is dood toe hulle nou klaar getroud is en die manier waarop haar suster dit hanteer, my ma se suster dit hanteer, en die manier waarop sy (Dia se ma) dit hanteer het, was vir my totaal al ... verskillend. Alhoewel, nie soseer die twee susters, as die twee gesinne nie. Maar nou, die kinders was *ouer*, jy weet. Ek dink dit maak 'n *groot* verskil.”

Ond.: “You just feel ...”

Dia: “Ja, O ja. Hy was 'n *dierbare* ou gewees ... ek het die dag toe hy dood is, toe besef ek ... die een ou wat onvoorwaardelik altyd ... jy weet dit is die ‘stupidist’ ding ... altyd my kant sal vat en nog verskoning vir my sal soek, is nie meer daar nie (lag). My ma sal ... um ... um ... eers dit uitsorteer. Eers... eers uitvind wie fout gehad het ... alhoewel sy sou altyd eers gedink *ek* die fout gemaak het ‘want ek ken my kinders goed’ (lag). Maar sy is absoluut daarvoor ... sy was ... jy weet, ‘sort die ding uit.’ Jy kan ... jy kry die prentjie van hoe moeilik dit vir hulle twee was en ek het gevoel ek staan in die middel. En ek dink as daar ander kinders was dan sou dit anders gewees het ... Anders hanteer het ... (ingedagte). Ek het ... nou ... toe ... my neefs is dood toe hulle nou klaar getroud is en die manier waarop haar suster dit hanteer, my ma se suster dit hanteer, en die manier waarop sy (Dia se ma) dit hanteer het, was vir my totaal al ... verskillend. Alhoewel, nie soseer die twee susters, as die twee gesinne nie. Maar nou, die kinders was *ouer*, jy weet. Ek dink dit maak 'n *groot* verskil.”

Ond.: “Hoeveel ouer was die neefs?”

Dia: “Wel, jy weet, sy was ... sy (suster) was nou net uit die huis toe sy dood is en die neefs is dood ... die oudste ou ... ons was seker omtrent vier ... twee-en-veertig, drie-en-veertig daar rond en die jonger outjie ... hy was so vyf jaar jonger as ons en hy was seker in die dertig miskien, maar hulle het altwee gesinne gehad het met kinders en was lankal uit die huis ... alhoewel nee, ek jok. Die nefie was nie uit die huis nie. My ma se suster het nog saam met hulle in die huis gebly. Hulle het 'n woonstel ... haar man was dood toe ... so hulle ... ja, hulle was eintlik nog daaglik saam. Maar dit was vir my opvallend oor hoe die persoonlikheid van die mens ... alle mense in die gesin ... die persoonlikhede, veral die ouers, in die gesin, hulle manier van dit hanteer bepaal grootliks hoe *jy* dit ervaar en die ... en die ... ‘Okay’ hoe jy ‘cope’ daarmee is sekerlik nou maar jou saak, maar ... maar die eise wat aan jou gestel word, bo en behalwe die feit dat jou broer of suster dood is ... die onmiddellike eise ... dit word bepaal deur die persoonlikhede van die ander mense in die gesin ... en dit kan ‘even more taxing’ wees as die feit dat jy nou 'n verlies gely het, jy weet. Dit was 'n ding wat ek agterna besef het ... *dit* was vir my die een ding wat uitgestaan het. Ek dink ... ek dink nie enige iemand kan se my ouers was, jy weet, ‘outrageously’ dit of dat nie. Dis net, ek moes ‘cope’ daar ... ek moes ‘cope’ op die manier wat hulle ‘cope’ ... en dit was vir my 'n *dubelle* ding. Jy weet soos ... stel jou voor jou seun het 'n ... verloor 'n vriendin. ‘You cope with it the way *he's* coping with it’ ... al was sy ook 'n baie dierbare, jy weet, persoon wat jy geken het. Dit was ... ja, jy weet, dit het oor en oor en oor gebeur ...”

Ond.: “dat jy die pyn van jou ouers gevoel het, en hoe hulle daarvoor gevoel het, het jou ook ge-afekteer - jou hele ‘mood’.”

Dia: “O, absoluut. Ja, ja. En dit stel *eise* ... en ek neem aan dat as jy meer kinders is dan sou die kinders kon half mekaar *begryp*, jy weet, en half saam dra aan daai ding van: ‘Kom ons help ma en pa ‘cope’.’ En my ma en pa dink ek nie is ... hulle is nie eintlik vreeslike ... ons is 'n baie bedaarde famielie (lag) ... so, jy weet, as ek van hulle praat ... is ... is dit baie subtiel (lag) ... maar dit het vir my ... dit het die eis aan *my* gestel.”

Ond.: “Dis hoe jy dit ervaar het alhoewel eise nie direk aan jou gestel...”



Dia: “Nee, nee. Nee, glad nie. Nee!”

Ond.: “Dit was jou gevoel.”

Dia: “Ja. Ek het aan die ... ek het klaar gemaak (met studies) ... dit (die ongeluk) was die Julie in my vierde jaar ... toe het ek die Desember klaargemaak. Ek het werk in J...gekry maar ons het gery. So ek het daarem in die huis gebly en daai (volgende) Oktober, *dit* was nogal die eerste ding. Kyk, juis die vriendin waarvan ek nou gepraat het, het ons besluit ons gaan oorsee. Toe was die rand so goed, ons praat nou die dag daaroor. Dit was sewentig sent teenoor die dollar...[Nee] die *dollar* was sewentig sent teenoor die rand. So dit was ... dit was 'n ding wat ons graag wou doen en sy (die vriendin) was toe al klaar daar. Om net daai drie maande weg te kom was ... daar was nie vaste adresse nie en dit was vir hulle seker baie erg maar dit was vir my baie ... Ek wou net 'n bietjie net ... uit die ... 'n bietjie uit die vashou want die vashou het begin al hoe erger raak. En toe's ek weer terug ... Desember dink ek, en in 'n woonstel ingegaan. Ek het baie keer gewonder as ek nie die enigste kind was nie, ek is seker dit sou 'n makliker situasie gewees het. Baie keer dat jy wonder hoe ... hoe sou dit gewees het as sy nou daar was en soos ek sê ek het baie ... baie positief en baie negatief. Ek besef dat daar dalk baie struweling sou gewees het omdat daar twee gesinne sou gewees wat misk[ien] ... Jy weet ons gesin wat ... ek en my man en die kinders sou moes ‘cope’ met haar en haar man ... Dit is interessant toe dinge vreeslik verkeerd geloop het tussen hom en sy tweede vrou ... sy't bietjie probleme gekry met dwelmmiddels en goed, jy weet. Nee, nie dwelms nie... ‘depression drugs’ ... Wat noem jy dit?”

Ond.: “Anti-depressants; medication?”

Dia: “Medication, ja, dis hy. En toe's hulle geskei en hy's nou weer getroud en nou ... hier seker einde laas jaar, toe's die een niggie wat so oud soos my suster was, se man ... wat hulle almal saam - ek praat van my swaer en my suster en sy en die niggie se man - was saam in Matriek. Dit was 'n groep wat ek baie goed geken het ... wat almal ... jy weet dit was 'n baie bekende groep ... vir mekaar. Toe's die man van haar dood en dis ... hoe kan ek sê ... dis amper soos 'n reunie. Jy weet, toe's al die vriende weer terug. En toe het dit my weer opgeval hoe verskriklik hierdie derde vrou weer... lyk soos my suster; klein en donker en fyn en, jy weet ...”

Ond.: " ‘Weer?’ Was die tweede vrou ook soos sy?”

Dia: “Nee. Glad nie. Sy's pragtig so lank ... maar baie jonk ... ek dink hy het gedink miskien kan hy haar ‘mould.’ Dit was vir my interessant net na die ... na die ongeluk, het ek baie keer ... moes ek ... ek het tussen klasse na hom toe gegaan en gehelp met oefeninge en so aan, maar ek het geweet dit gaan vir hom oor praat, jy weet. Dit was vreeslik aaklik vir hom. Hy het lank in die bed moes lê. Hy het 'n breek gehad wat baie probleme gegee het. Um ... so dit was ook 'n ... dit was ook iemand ... omdat ek en hy vriende was eintlik, moes ... moes ek hom ook half ondersteun. Jy weet dit was ook ... ook 'n ander ... 'n ander situasie.”

Ond.: “Dit lyk asof jy het baie van die verantwoordelikheid oorgeneem ...”

Dia: “Dis hoe ek dit belewe het, jy weet. En ek dink, uit die aard van my persoonlikheid, ek kan nie ‘cope’ ... ek kan nie maak asof ek nie ... of ek kan nie *toegee* ... ‘admit’, dis die woord. Ek kan nie dat ek nie ... dat ek nie ‘cope’ nie want die oomblik as ek dit doen dan vou ek heeltemal ... jy weet ... vir 'n ruk lank moet ek ... my ... my ... my ‘mind’ moet oorneem eerder as my emosies. Ek meen ... ek moet my daardeur dink, nie ... ja, ek dink, kognitief daardeur kom. Um ... en ek dink dit was deel van die proses om dit te ... dit was erg, ek kon nie onmiddelik ‘cope’ nie. Ek sou in elk geval op daardie stadium met niemand daaroor kon gepraat het nie. En ek dink *daar* gaan dit ook vreeslik verskil ... want seker van die behoeftes wat ... jy weet, die ... die persoonlikheid sal bepaal watter behoefte het jy. Wat sleg was van die eerste ervarings van iemand wat dood is om jou, ek dink die ... die oupa, die vriendin se pa wat ek 'n ‘oupa’ genoem het... Hy was op daardie stadium die enigste een wat ek ooit in my gesin ervaar het en dan die vriendin se suster. Sy is ook in 'n motorongeluk dood ...

en ek dink die skielikheid daarvan ... dis die ander ding wat ek al gedink het ... um ... die manier waarop hulle dood is ... um ... sal ook seker 'n groot verskil ... Jy weet, as 'n ou siek is vir 'n lang tyd dan's dit heeltemal iets anders ... as hierdie onverwagte ... veral as daar geweld by is kan dit nog aakliker wees, jy weet. Weet jy dat ek altyd gesê dat ek ... ek ... ek ... en ek het dit definitief gevoel ... 'I honestly felt', 'Why not...why her and not me.' Ek meen, ek was nie in 'n verhouding nie. Ek was nie getroud nie. Ek was amper 'disposable' op daaie stadium. Want, dit sou nie vir almal so erg gewees het nie ... um ... natuurlik ek is nie so 'stupid' nie ... (lag) dit sou erg gewees het (lag) ... natuurlik sou ... So wat ek bedoel is dat hulle sou sleg gevoel het vir 'n tyd lank, jy weet ... niemand sou enigiets ... Hulle het baie meer realisties geword later. Onthou dat ek vir hulle gesê op 'n stadium, 'Nee wag 'n bietjie. Julle is besig om hand uit te ruk hier.' Maar ek het werklik gevoel ... as ek ooit enigiets skuldig gevoel het, het ek skuldig gevoel omdat dit nie *ek* was [nie], omdat sy nou net getroud was, net gekwalifiseer was. Ek was nie seker oor wat ek wil 'swot' nie, niemand ... of wat... watter werk ek wil begin doen nie ... of ek daai tipe werk wil doen nie. Ek was nie in 'n verhouding wat êrens heen gegaan het nie, so jy weet ... dit sou sommer logies gewees het. Ek dink sy ... sy was mos dalk ... so dit was die enigste wat ek gedink het, jy weet."

Ond.: "Die enigste skuldgevoel was die feit dat jy oorleef het ..."

Dia: "Ja. Ek sou nie sê ek het regtig skul-dig (gevoel)... hoe sal jy dit beskryf ... maar ek weet ek het sulke 'thoughts' gehad ...wat ... jy weet, as *ek* nou die planne moes maak sou ek hulle *so* gemaak het ... jy weet." (lag).

Ond.: "If you could!"

Dia: "Ja. (lag). En dit was 'n ander ding ... die godsdiens. Ek het gelukkig op 'n stadium so ver gekom wat ek besef het, ek *mag* kwaad wees. Ek *mag*, maar dan ek moet nie oor God skinder nie, ek moet dit vir Hom sê. Dit was vir my 'n groot verligting. Daai ervaring dat, 'Okay', jy mag kwaad wees maar dan draai jy nie weg nie en praat agteraf van ... die ... die ... die ... wat die ...wat die ... wat die mag het, het verkeerde goed gedoen en daarom haat ek Hom, en sulke goed. Jy weet. Ek het genadiglik besef dat jy kan ... en dit is goed wat ek vir myself moes ... jy weet ... Ek besef ek sou nie so iets van iemand anders aanvaar het. Dit sou nie vir my 'n oplossing gewees het om dit van iemand anders to hoor. Soos op 'n begrafnis jy weet, dit sou nie ... Omdat ek *self* daarby uitgekom het, het dit vir my ... ja, ja ... dit het ook nie onmiddelik gebeur. Vir *lank* het ek gevoel, ja ek is vies en dit is 'n baie 'stupid' ding om te laat gebeur. Dit was onnodig, kyk hoeveel lewens is opge-mors en mense wat daai ... maar dit was vir my 'n baie, baie groot verligting om te besef ek mag kwaad wees solank as wat ek dit dan *direk* sê, dat, 'Ek is kwaad, help my uitsort.' Ek dink dit was vir my 'okay' ... nou kan ek 'cope.' Dit was vir my nogal ... En die een wat vreeslik godsdiens praat ... dis vir my 'n 'fact' ... um...dis 'n gegewe, jy weet. En al hierdie vreeslike emosionele dinge oor godsdiens was vir my 'terrible.' Ek wil niks daarvan weet nie ... dis ... dis vir my baie erg en ... en jy bearbei nie 'n ander ou met godsdiens nie ... jy ... as jy hom nie kan beindruk met hoe jy jou lewe hanteer nie dan kan jy nie ... dan is jy nie 'n 'ambassador' nie soort van ... (lag). So, ek sê nou nie hierdie goed omdat ek 'n godsdiens-praterige mens is. Glad nie. Verder van weg. Maar ek onthou ek het ... um ... [Dit is] 'Job', hey? ... Joob ... is daar op 'n stadium dan ... dan ... as ou ... as ou ... Joob kla, kla, kla en sy pêle en almal gesit en gekerm het, dan maak ... die ... (dan maak) God die goed so bymekaar en sê Hy vir hom, 'Man, bly julle stil dat ek jou sê van al die goed wat ek gemaak het. Kan jy *dit* doen, kan jy *dit* doen, het jy al *dit* gedoen, het jy al *dit* gedoen ... eintlik is jy 'stupid', jy weet niks. Jy maak glad nie planne nie. Ek maak beter planne (lag).' En dit was vir my ... jy weet, dit was die ding wat my laat begryp het ... Dus ek aanvaar dat daar iemand is wat kan beplan, en ek is ... ek ... ek is absoluut 'amazed' oor ... um ... beplanning. Ek is *fanaties* oor beplanning (lag). So, as iemand so voorsorg kan tref vir dinge soos dat hierdie ding 'resulted' in 'n subtiele hele ketting van hoe dingetjies bymekaar steek ... as 'n ou dit kan uitdink, dan moet ek Hom met my lewe se beplanning kan vertrou, en dit is 'n ding wat toe met my 'ge-click' het. So die verwyd wat ek in daai opsig gehad het, het toe nou vir my ... Goed ... 'Ek weet beter. Ek hoef nie vir jou te verduidelik hoekom ek dit gedoen het, maar ek weet beter', en ek moet dit so aanvaar. So dit was vir my 'n ...'"

Ond.: “Daar is 'n groter plan wat jy nie so mooi kan verstaan nie.”

Dia: “Ja. Mm ... En ek dink dit was nogal ... want op daardie stadium, een-en-twintig, um ... is ook 'n tyd wat jy jousef nie so mooi uitgesorteer het in daai opsig nie. Jy's emosioneel, miskien baie ... Jy weet hierdie skool godsdienste kan mos nogal vreeslik ‘overboard’ gaan ... dis ... dis ... amper 'n massa ... histerie. Ek ... ek wil dit nie afskiet, geensins nie. Dis vir baie van die kinders van baie waarde maar 'n mens moet kyk hoe lank hou dit, jy weet. Dis hoe ek voel oor die saak. En um ...”

Ond.: “So its almost like you went through a personal religious experience ...”

Dia: “Ja, ja. En dis my saak.”

Ond.: “It became more meaningful ...”

Dia: “Ja, ja. That's it. It was a test. Dit was baie maklik om enig by 'n CSV (Christelike Studente Vereniging) kamp te sê, ‘Ja, ek ... ek ... wonderlik...die Here is alles’, maar as jy *in* so 'n situasie kom dan is dit 'n ‘double take’ van *regtig* in so 'n situasie te ... met my het dit baie goed gegaan (by die CSV). Ons het nooit probleme gehad ... jy weet dit was niks wonderlik maar dit was altyd baie mooi georden en als het goed gegaan en so aan ... so dit was die eerste ... soos ek sê met die vriendin se suster en myne, omdat dit net ses maande uitmekaar uit was, was dit amper een ding ... in die ... in die ... in die opsig ... in daai opsig van, ‘Hoekom?’, jy weet; om dit te verwerk. Jy is nog half aan die werk daaraan dan kry jy die tweede een wat jy ook moet verwerk ... en ons was van laerskool af altyd baie, baie naby aan mekaar. En ook weer die gesinne het mekaar ook geken. Weet die ... die ouers ... die suster wat dood is was dan weer 'n vriendin van die oudste niggie van my ... my ma se suster se oudster dogter. So dit was als ... dink soos onder trouery maar dit was (lag) ... ek bedoel ... en ons het naby aan mekaar gebly almal. Dit was eintlik 'n gemeenskap wat onder mekaar betrokke was.”

Dia: “You've given me so much here Dia. I was just wondering what helped you?”

Dia: “Dit het my regtig gehelp dat ek my eie tyd gehad ... dat ek kon terugtrek. En dit was die grootste hulp ... en ...um ... nou die vriendin met dieselfde ondervinding. Ek dink daai twee ... Ek dink dit was regtig vir my 'n redding dat ek kon ... um ... dat ek nie geforseer is om ... om ... om dit *saam* te beleef saam met die gesin nie ... jy weet ... of saam te verwerk ... hoef nie saam te verwerk nie, dat ek dit op my eie kon verwerk en ... en ... miskien daai dat ek ... dat ek onmiddelik 'n groot ding moes afhandel (tesis) en daar waar ek die gemaklikste voel ... jy weet ... kon aangaan. Ek ...ek ... ek analiseer en bedink baie makliker as wat ek verwerk ... as wat ek emosioneel erken... verwerk. So ek dink ek het ... ek het ... jy weet, dit was die omstandighede wat uitgemaak het dat ... ja, ek kon myself besig hou. Ek het 'n doel gehad en julle moet my los want ek is ... besig ... so almal het my gelos. My kamerdeur was toe en hulle het my gelos want ek was nou besig om ... en ek dink in die proses van die tesis klaar maak het ek ...” (lang pouse/pause)

Ond.: “You threw yourself into the task. Kept yourself busy...”

Dia: “Maar ek het tog tyd vir myself gekry en die storm hier buite ... uh ... uh ... ek hoef nie alles daarvan te gesien het nie ... en ek was tevrede dat hulle genoeg ondersteuning het omdat hulle ... regtig mense naby aan ... aan mekaar ... aan hulle daar gehad het ... (Skielik ingedagte) Ek ... ek ... het net gewonder, as dit 'n jonger broer of suster is ... hoe mens dan dit sou hanteer het ... of as jy die oudste was en die middel een sou dood ... gewees ... en jy moet dalk bietjie help met die jonger een. Ek dink al daai goed gaan ... Jy weet, dan's die jonger een jou verantwoordelikheid. Dit sou vir my gal gewees het ... omdat my ouers het hulle vriende, jy weet, dat hulle naby mense gehad ... Dit is regtig duidelik dat die ouers geen energie regtig oor het ... ek ... kyk, ek se glad nie dat hulle nie belangstel in wat ek doen nie ... dis hoe *ek* dit ervaar het. Ek het hulle miskien *weggestoot*. Jy weet, dalk het hulle die boodskap hard en duidelik gekry, ‘Moenie met my sukkel nie.’ Ek weet nie. Ons het nooit regtig gepraat daaroor. Maar dit was definitief die ... die ... vir my die grootste hulp is dat ek tyd gehad het, dat ek nie, jy weet, ingesuijg was nie. Dit sou baie erg gewees het. En dit was vir my ... die feit dat my suster was wie sy was, was vir my baie maklik want dit het vir my regtig ... Baie keer

kon ek myself troos dat sy sou in elk geval swaar 'ge-cope' het met al die moeilike goed en sy het eintlik die beste deel van haar lewe gehad ... en sy was getroud, sy het daardie ervaring gehad, so, jy weet, van daaraf dink ek kom net die moeiliker goed. So dit was vir my lekker om te dink ... jy weet hoe voel jy as jy een-en-twintig is, trou is die 'ultimate.' Nooit weer sal daar enigiets in daai ... so wonderlik gebeur nie. En ... en ek het gedink, 'Wow!', jy weet. 'Sy is ... sy is nie ge-cheat' (lag). 'n Mens voel half ... hierdie heel jong mense [wat dood gaan], jy weet, hulle het nog regtig nie ervaring van ... Dit kan 'n lekker verbintennis wees ... Ag, ja, mens soek maar sulke goed."

Ond.: "With young people there is a sense that they have been robbed of a lot of important things."

Dia: "Ja. In die tye daarna het ek baie keer ... baie keer besef sy is dit nou soort van gespaar ..."

Ond: "She was spared, as you said, of going through what you went through."

Dia: "Ja. Dit sou seker ook sleg gewees het ... nie dat ek gedink het dit sou (lag) die grootste probleem gewees het. Um ... ja, seker."

Ond.: "You mentioned earlier that she was quite a dependent person."

Dia: "Um, 'I think it was sort of immediate dependency' in die situasie maar ek dink nie ... ek dink nie sy het my genoeg vertrou ... ek dink ek was vir haar bietjie onvoorspelbaar. Um, in die sin van ... (lag) ... jy weet, ons was so verskillend ... nie dat dit enigsins regtig dit was nie, maar ek dink ... ek het kans gesien vir goed waarvoor sy nie kans gesien het nie. So ek dink nie sy sou ... jy weet, sy...sy...sy sou haar lewe op my vertrou het. Ek was heelwaarskynlik *te onverantwoordelik* vir haar op daardie stadium en ek het goed gedoen wat vir haar seker *onaanvaarbaar* was. Jy weet, kanse gevat - in *haar* boek, kanse gevat. Wat nie ... Ek was nie ... maar sy was regtig baie ... um ... nie avontuurlustig nie (lag). Sy was nie baie waagsaam nie. Glad nie. Sy sou *NOOIT* na sy geswot het vir drie maande oorsee gegaan het sonder om presies te weet waar gaan sy heen, jy weet, na plekke, jy weet, na mense toe. Sy sal gaan kuier het seker maar sy sal nie gegaan het en kans gevat het want daai tyd het mense dit nog nie so gereeld gedoen en nou's dit niks snaaks nie. Maar daai tyd was dit nogal heeltemal ... jy weet, jy het maar gedoen het wat die Amerikaanse boeke gesê het jy moet doen. Daar was niemand om uit te vind regtig nie. Dit was..."

Ond.: "That is the way you remembered her but later ..."

Dia: "Ja, en dit is hoekom ek wonder as daar nog broers en susters was hoe sou mens daarmee ... jy weet ... of dit meer ondersteunend sou gewees het en of dit meer 'n vrag ('n las) ... (thoughtful, concerned) ... ek wil nie dat dit klink asof ek dit as 'n vreeslike verantwoordelikheid gesien het, maar dit is net 'n ding wat om jou gebeur en jy sien die mense om jou swaarkry, jy weet, en dit maak nie *jou* swaar eintlik soveel makliker."

Ond.: "These are the feelings that you are busy with and what I heard you say earlier on about your husband, is that when you had somebody of your own you could share this ..."

Dia: "Ja. Ja. Toe kon ek laat gaan."

Ond.: "That was the first time you acknowledged that ..."

Dia: "Ja. And ... and ... I had the emotional trust. Um ... And he is the type of guy who wouldn't be upset with it, jy weet. So hy ... dit het my, dink ek, die ... dis nie ... eerder ek dink, ek het geweet ek kon net soveel sê as wat ek wou. Hy sal nie ... (End of tape) aandring daarop dat ek meer vertel."

### Interview translated into English:

Dia: “Just want to give [you] the background. Um...um...She was very...un...un...un-sure of herself. Right! [No] I don't think 'unsure' but I am struggling to find a word for it...[not unsure] but she asked for a lot of confirmation if she...if she...I think that the best...what I can remember the most about her voice was that she would say, for example, 'Not so?' and she had a little [pet] name for me, you know. So it was...she did seek confirmation - 'Not so?' Very well. On the other hand, perhaps I am overdoing [the description of] her (i.e exaggerating), I don't know. You know, that was the difference between the personalities. I was much more daring, she would not take chances. I was...I know I experienced some impatience, and on the other hand I knew that she was not as fragile as she...as I thought she was...if I think very quickly...I am expressing this very clumsily. I always suspected and I think almost intuitively knew, that she was stronger than what appeared on the surface. If she did not want to do something, she would not do it. Not stubborn, but she could...she could... she could...yes...And it took a lot, but she would do it...You had to push her up to that. So she had the privilege of being afraid, I did not because I am a loud mouth...I pretended that I was not scared. So if it was dark, I had to walk with her, you see, but it was my choice just as much as it was hers. So there is no resentment if I say this. Not at all. I almost want to laugh about it (laughs)...I realize we...we...had certain roles...we...”

Interviewer: “You had these roles...”

Dia: “Yes! And it was stupid, you know. I thought that I was proving something and she ... well, she enjoyed the safety that naturally was very important to her. So if we...We were small then...just to give you a picture of the differences between the two of us. In Matric (final year of High School) she started going out with this chap who was in Matric with her. We knew the family. You know, the families knew each other. Also the nieces, you know, the aunt - my mom's sister, all three families knew each other well...This chap (sister's boyfriend) and I clashed volubly many times because we were very similar (laughs). Um... and...and...he had many ideas which were totally ridiculous to me...so that you couldn't... things like, a girl should not wear something without sleeves. You must remember, that that was a time when we were not even allowed to...We had to wear slack suits, you know. That was the *worst* that you could do. So you have a picture of the time (laughs). So that was the type of thing that we would differ on but further than that we actually got on very well together. And then they were married. Then she...she had studied Music and then she did her higher diploma in teaching (HOD) and started teaching...it could also have been...No, she did complete her teachers' diploma first and then she started teaching. And I think they were married for only one-and-a-half years and then she died. He was still busy with his medical studies. He would have finished that year. He was...to tell the truth...It was a motor vehicle accident...and we were...she came down with us to the seaside house and we were there for about ten days and then he arrived; he did his practical in B and then he also came down. So he was also there for a while and then we drove back together, the two of them in their car and I travelled with my parents...and luckily he wanted to drive faster than we did (i.e. fortunate that they were ahead of parents and D) and we...we suspect that he fell asleep... you know. It is...I suspect, because I can remember times that she travelled with me, that it was not impossible that when he started to go off the road that she grabbed at the steering wheel because she was...she was inclined to do that, you know, she became so *panicky*. So I...I don't know...but I wouldn't be surprised. Anyway no one else was involved. She was killed instantly...And the other (i.e. husband)...A doctor arrived at the scene...and he (i.e. the husband) was actually in a terrible state. He had all sorts of injuries: a broken leg...and (unclear on recording)...ag! all sorts of things and they quickly took him to B. This happened just outside C so it's about an hour-and-a-half, I think from B. Um...and a car came from the front and stopped us and [the man] said that there had been an accident and the woman is...and they had...that's apparently what *he* told them to say, "Stop, stop the mother-in-law and them" or something (to that effect), you know. He could still...and then...so we had to go to K, I think...Yes, K was the closest mortuary where they took her; they took him on to B. So we first had to go to K...to...[identify]...the body, you know...But now, can you ...How terrible!



Can you think, for my parents? So from there...that took a long time...Strange, but I can remember a youngster, he was the son of a minister of religion, he was younger than I was. I think he had just started studying (at university), and *he* really...you know, he went to a lot of trouble to talk to me for a *long* time...you know...I don't know if his mother and father said to him, 'Shame. Talk to the young girl', you know, that sort of thing (laughs). I remember the discussion so...so well, you know. How dear he was without trying trying to be too consoling. To me he was such a dear. And then we went to B. and sat at Casualties for hours to find out what had happened to him (i.e. sister's husband). And then...then we...then my mother's sister who had a very good friend who was a pathologist, she got the doc(tor) to come quickly and his parents. So we stayed, I think, about a week in B. because at that stage it was touch and go with him, you know...he almost didn't make it...It was terrible. You know it was...it was...Oh! You know it was a Volkswagon...Ag, at that time there were no safety...you know, she actually had the safety belt on and she just...that was all that was wrong...just here she had a terrible blue bruise. I almost think it was her neck that...Then we ...When he was better then we went [home]. Then we had the funeral and that, that was terrible. But my experience of that was that I could cut out. There were people who took responsibility for my parents; people, you know, that coped with them and, mercifully, I could then withdraw...I cannot verbalize such things immediately. I have to lie on my bed. I need to sort out my thing and then I will...Only when I feel that I can cope, then I'll talk about it but not before. Before that you must please leave me alone (laughs). And I think that is what saved me. I had time to be alone. You know, this I remember, that I phoned this friend of mine a few times...from the hotel...that's right...ja...whew!...that was long ago, good heavens! Anyway...then...he (i.e. the husband) was still very bad, but then I had to finish my thesis. So I had something that I needed to get to work on immediately which also, in a way, made it easier. Um...She was buried...I felt bad that she was buried before her husband could be there. Yes. It was almost as if he had difficulty with...with closure...you know. It was bad for him. Um...and then...

Interviewer: "And for you?"

Dia: "My...my, I think my parents, for me, were the greatest...[concern]. I had a friend at that stage but not that I would trust him so much...It takes longish for me to trust a guy (fellow) to talk to him about things that I have not yet sorted out. This sort of talking (i.e. the interview) is not a problem for me, not at all, but if I haven't yet sorted it out...emotional... emotional trust I find difficult. So with him I didn't really...and my friends were there... they were very...and some of my female friends...and her sister who studied with my sister...so they also knew her well, which made it more involved...from their side."

Interviewer: "So they were there for you."

Dia: "Absolutely! But as much as you can support someone else when you also have to hand in your thesis, you know, and you are busy arranging your wedding, and so on, because they were all, you know, in line...and, you know, it was not as if I experienced it that they were not there, never, but they had other priorities, absolutely. After that, for me...for a very long time, it was terrible the way my parents handled it. Because she was so small and delicate and lovable...Really a lovable person...it almost went to the point of idolatry, you know. So much so that at one point I said, 'You are remembering incorrectly'. You know, they...they ...they sort of...not that I felt that I was not getting enough attention, no, never, never. It was never that. It just factually irritated me...the twisting of facts because that person was no longer there...that was for me..."

Interviewer: "They remembered only the nice things."

Dia: "Yes, yes. You know...it's too silly...For me it was...and then those terrible regular visits to the cemetery...I very quickly said, 'No thank you! I...I will remember her in my head. I am not going to a stone'. You know that sort of attitude (laughs). Terrible! It was very difficult to cope with...and they also handled it very differently, the two of them, which for me was also very...noticeable and which...I think, did some damage to their relationship. Not that there were ever drastic problems, you know, just the usual differences over things, but they definitely um...My father wanted to speak about

it continuously. He was a very emotional, sentimental, expressive person and...and...and yes, and expressed his emotions much more, and my mother wanted to keep it very private and I think it was very difficult for them. I realized that I would have to...that I would rather handle it like my mother did than like my father [did]. It is almost as if he wanted to 'expose' it and we were not ready for the 'exposure' but his way of 'coping' was to expose it, you know. So there was a conflict which was a little difficult. It was actually...yes, and...it is...I mean it is both their need(s) and they had an equal right to deal with it in their own way but then there was no support for each other. So it was actually...that was the most difficult of the whole..."

Interviewer: "How was it for you?"

Dia: "At one stage I was irritated with my father. Because he threatened me in a way, in the sense that he...he...he wanted to drag things out of me that I did not want to speak (about)...you know...he wanted to talk about it and I didn't want to then. I'm not saying that he as a person was threatening, but he created situations that were a threat to me. And I wanted to get away. And the more I wanted to...you know we both felt...Oh shame! (laughs)...It was terrible. Shame! It was terribly bad for them. After that I went to J...the next year I went to J. to work. Oh!...and that *first* Christmas, and the *first* birthday, good heavens what a drama! And *to this day*, even *now*, if you forget her birthday, and if you forget the day that she died, then things are uncomfortable. I have never forgotten but I know I must make an effort. A person will certainly do it. I will do it...I remember it, but I think one should not actually *celebrate* it. I would like a quiet time by myself..."

Interviewer: "Um. But not..." (interrupted)

Dia: "Yes. Very often, I have often wondered, if it were my child, how I would handle it. The other factors...from my side...the phases that I passed through. I remember...it was...it was when I was married...Oh wait, let me first tell you...it was...this was a thing that was very difficult...to... almost to, not really to get permission, but *emotionally* to give *myself* permission to move away from home. *That* was very bad. Because I was the only one that was left and I...um... half realized that their support for each other was not so good and I was for them...a sort of catalyst between them...for me it was...I remember it was *terrible* to have to go and tell them that I wanted to move into a flat. For me it was...ah!...it was worse than going into an examination...(laughs)...you know. It was grim...it was really grim...And I wondered how they would react. They did in fact blame each other...I remember...even that evening when I told them they actually...only lightly, it was not a terrible scene, but they made these half comments which said, 'but it's...', you know. They definitely did not understand why I wanted to stay on my own because at that time you must know it was also not an okay thing to do. You see my sister did not do this. She stayed at home until she got married. So it was a foreign concept for them I think."

Interviewer: "And their reaction?"

Dia: "I cannot remember the comments but I think they felt...that...that there was...You know, now that I think about it, maybe it was what worried each one about the other one's behaviour that they accepted had made me want to leave home. You know...I...they did not say [this] in so many words... really discuss this in so many words. I can just remember that there were comments such as, 'Yes, but if...', you know,...'You also make it difficult', or something like that, you know...and I think that they perhaps...probably [they] assumed that I experienced the other's behaviour with as much difficulty as they experienced it, you know, my mother and my father. I assume that my father would have thought, that is as I understand it now, that what my mother...maybe...the way in which my mother handled the situation and her subsequent behaviour, perhaps made it difficult...for *me*, while in fact it was difficult for *him*. I don't think that he understood what was difficult for me. They definitely did not understand why I wanted to leave home and it was *terribly, terribly* traumatic for me to say this...to get myself so far as to say, 'Now I am going!' "

Interviewer: "Why was it so traumatic for you?"

Dia: “Um...because I found it difficult to explain it to them...um...because they literally *smothered* me, you know, I did not have a chance to breathe because *then* I was the only focus. One day my brother-in-law said to me, ‘You will never get a husband if you stay’ (laughs). That’s *not* why I left but (laughs) he also...In other words, what I think now is that he probably also experienced it...that they are so...You know, they were not aware of this. Certainly not, because they are the most dear, most supportive people you can get. But they did not have as much *insight* as one would hope for.”

Interviewer: “They did not have insight into your pain. It was very difficult for them and they could not understand what was important to you.”

Dia: “Yes. I think they could not get over it. No, no. I think that their needs were obviously considerably greater than their insight in...into *my* situation. I am sure of that. That made it...I must say...I had to try and shake it off forcibly. Um...Still today there are unwritten rules that we will, more often than not, be together at Christmas. To tell the truth, I have only spent two Christmases away from my parents...you know...and that is not...My father is now deceased but (sighs)...it...it is the same feeling of...you, you do not have... you cannot explain why...there’s no explanation as to why you are not available, why you would like to do your own thing, that would soften it for them. So this is...But after my marriage, for the first six months I was able to really cry about it for the first time and I could say to my husband it was *terrible* for me. You know...I...I...at that...I...I could...you know we...he’s not one for speaking much but I could really verbalize it...it was...you know perhaps ...one, two or three episodes where for five minutes I could say, ‘that and that was terrible for me’. That was that! And that was enough for me. For me at that stage...Then it was all right. Afterwards it was all right. But I retained a *tre-men-dous* anxiety about travelling by car to the sea...this year for the first time I realized...you know, it’s all right. I...I...you know afterwards it got so bad that I thought, ‘Okay now we’re at K., we’ve made it...now we’re at B, we’ve made it’, you know. That’s how I travelled to the sea. It was...it was very bad. And I... these days I laugh at myself because I still think that you are just going to...[have] a problem ...an accident, when you’re on the main road. I immediately put my seat belt on whereas here I would forget. So I...it clicked...now there are certain little episodes...we kept absolute contact with her husband and with...with...he remarried...until a [certain] stage and...then ... ag, the differences that he and I had never had anything to do with my...my sister’s death. I remember that we got into the car after the fellow told us and we rode a few kilometers, when my mother said to my father, ‘you will never blame that fellow’. And that was...that was her attitude throughout. My...my...my father was really the more emotional one that could have [reproached him]... you know, ‘You did not look after her well enough’, that sort of thing. My mother is the more logical one who...you know realized but, you know, to him she is just as important and he would...at all costs he would...you know for him it was *worse* than for anyone else.”

Interviewer: “And for you, how did you feel?”

Dia: “No. Never. Never. Definitely never [blamed him]. If there is anything that I myself know is that she was the one that plucked at the steering wheel. Because I never felt that he drove too fast, or that he drove too slowly, but if he could have done anything better he would, you know. He was *mad* about her. Definitely never, never, never that! Thereafter, I often wondered how much he would have dominated her...he can be emotionally hard and that’s what I often wondered about and often thought, perhaps it’s all for the good. You know, there were certain incidents with the...the other woman when I thought, ‘whew!’ If that were my sister, in all likelihood, I would not keep quiet. Um...so I...one feels differently in different situations, you know. I mean it’s bad at a stage and then something happens then you think, you know, perhaps...um... ‘It was better’, you know. You view it that way. So the...they had no children so it was not...um...and with the...with my marriage I must say that I began to miss her, but you know how it is at a wedding...It is so...more with the arrangements than with the...but we never ... we were still too far apart at that age, that four - five years and we were too different, that, she really was a pal to me. I realize that it would have come later. Um... frequently I wondered what the situation would have been once I had children for example. I wondered how we



would...um...how would the relationship have changed and...when my parents began to get older I often wondered how...you know, how she would have seen it. Um...actually it could have been easier or more difficult, you know, there are always differences in the way you handle situations so there would definitely have been *great* differences. Also because the...her husband is a very difficult chap. My husband is a very calm person. He will...he's actually not difficult. Not because *I* say so but that's the way people experience him. He's a very peaceful chap. He goes along with things and if he doesn't want to do something, he won't do it and he won't make a big fuss about it. So he gets away with things (laughs), in the sense of not doing things that are unacceptable to him. Um... um... the... situations that I'm thinking about...that I thought about the other night (after we had spoken on the phone)...what was interesting was when I realized it. Yes. At one stage I...realized that my friends with sisters I sort of...you know, it's very nice - [to have] support - and then I thought of *my* sister and realized that it wouldn't have been like that because we were too different. Um ... we would, *yes*, be there for each other but we had no...there would be little of doing things together. We simply did not do things in the same way. *But*, you know, as one grows older... I don't know. So I wondered about that and when my father died...in the hospital, and so on. Then I realized that it probably would have been easier. Last Monday I had an idea that I think that my sister would have supported her (i.e. mother) far better because they were much *closer* to each other in a way, but still I don't know if *she* (mother) would have experienced it like that ...I don't know. Must ask her! (laughs). Funny, we don't speak about such things (laughs). Isn't it strange how you...I don't know when I see how my...how *my* daughter...oh yes. That is something else that I *now* realize that the anxiety that I had gradually built up of, *whew!* you know, at some stage I will be alone. You know a husband is not really *family*. In the end, he has a choice, you know. He has to be there or he doesn't have to, and your sister *must* be there, you know...and your child..."

Interviewer: "She will always be your sister!"

Dia: (laughs) "Yes, yes. If she feels like going or not, she will still...(laughs)...but my daughter, I think, grew into that role...of...you know, we are very, very close. We have the same sense of humour. We share a lot...we are also very different...She is a performer, I would rather, please, stand behind the curtain (laughs) but she understands very well...so that...and sometimes she does things and I really thought hard when she...when she said that she wanted to study music, whether I tried, you know, [to influence her]...That was not the case at all. I told her that I refuse. She could not take music...when she was at school. Um... because we had a session, you know, when she was little and she didn't want to practise and when she got to Standard six then she wanted to again. Then I said, 'No, I'm sorry. You've had your chance, now it's over!'. But then after a while...meantime I hoped that she would want to because she is so musical...I can see that the child herself...knows it's...it's ...and then really she came back again and said, No, really...She really wants to. Then I said, 'Okay, if your marks remain the same and *I* don't have to say to you go and practise.' And after that I never had to tell her to go and practise. So I managed to sort that out, that I did not try to [push her] into a direction ...um...I actually discouraged her. Said to her, 'you must think very carefully. One should not make your hobby your career', because she's not terribly interested in teaching. But then again...you know, even the music...my sister and I...she used to sight read. Always did what the book said. I looked at the book and then I...yes, okay, I think it sounds like that and then I did my thing, you know, and clearly did not get as far [as she did]...so her...way is...[more effective]...yes (laughs)...She was very willing to...I think the...the...your...your...the personality differences, I think, the position in the family, I would say, is very important. And then I think the age when it happens...you know, when both are still in the home, then it's a day-to-day...and it was almost...how we felt because we had a holiday with them."

Interviewer: "For that while she was with you."

Dia: "Ja, ja. So that in itself, just the return home was again a bit of a separation because they were married for such a short time and...um...there was something else that I thought of...I think there's...there are apparently bonds between siblings, you know, if there is more than one in the home then I think it is..."

Interviewer: “Did you have that bond? Was it different when you were...”

Dia: “Um...you know, because...because we always did things together with the cousins, also with the sister's children, they were the big ones and we were the little ones so it means that...I had a cousin who was just as old as I was and a younger cousin. Those are the two who are dead. And the older sister and the one who was exactly the same age as my sister, they were always together. So we were the little ones. So we...the play always...when they visited I played with the boys and she with her...so even there, you know, there...I think we...”

(Interruption -- Dia commented that the tape was nearly finished)

Dia: "Um...There was something else that I realised...[I forget] it will come to me now, now..." (long pause).

Interviewer: “To go back, you and your sister did not play with each other as such. So she was not the elder sister in the sense of making decisions...?”

Dia: “No. She was the elder sister with a sense of responsibility. Um...it was a responsibility because she was so afraid of making a mistake. Which of course left me more free ... then I made a mistake, you know! So...I mean, you know...if we ever had conflict it was about *that* ...because she tried to stop me because I...um... provoked her. Because...well it was fascinating when she became *panicky* because I wanted to do something that...look I'm talking on a small scale...we were extremely civilized little girls, you know. We never...(laughs)...so what I am saying is very subtle...I only want to explain what the situation was (like). My...my grandmother would say, for example: 'She was not made for this world', and that was what it was about. She was very different. She ... she...I think as a little one...(distracted by recorder)...What was I saying?”

Interviewer: “She was not of this world?”

Dia: “When she was very little she had asthma now and then. So I think she was very protected. Not that I experienced it that way. I was on my own mission, I think...I was too small and stupid...Um...”

Interviewer: “So you say the differences between you and...” (attempt to summarise interrupted by Dia)

Dia: “Yes and if you had (asked) me these same (questions)...[if I were in] the same situation five years after her death I would have probably [mentioned] totally different things...I don't know...probably [would have responded] very differently...because...the...the...No...Perhaps because I...I was always afraid how it would be if we...it really is a thing that a person really wonders what she would be like now. Because you remember her with her young ... everything, you know, and if I have to think of how my personality has changed...maybe not totally...(laughs) but...very, very. Much more patient, much less...you know. I can imagine that she probably [would have] much more self confidence...you know...much more assertive even, would have been more easily assertive because for me it was...interestingly enough I remember that I could *never* see her as a school teacher who could cope with a whole class full of children. Because *I* say school children are, for me, very threatening to have to cope with. You know students are a different matter but school children always remain, for me...and I can remember that I wondered, how on earth! And she carried on. Okay. Good. They were smaller classes because it was music but, on the other hand, it was class music and not everyone enjoyed it. So it is a...and I...I can't remember that she ever complained that it was unmanageable for her. That is why I, you know, had the feeling that if she wanted to cope she would. She was definitely much stronger and I know that...that I never underestimate little people and I think I base that on her and then later on X [friend]... and my mother. My mother is very small. Small, small, ...'a little breath' and I know that you must not underestimate little people (laughs): 'Physically

timid doesn't mean anything!' (laughs)...(Still laughing) Now that I think about it, she has grown in my mind (consciousness)."

Interviewer: "That's interesting . It's amazing how much we learn from our siblings."

Dia: "Isn't it! Oh, but I think you also make assumptions. And quietish people...you should also not underestimate. It is also...I think basically that was based on my knowledge of her strength...I think. But now, there is really tremendous support in the family and circle of friends for my parents and for me. I think it is also a very...very important thing."

Interviewer: "You said that from the beginning somebody spoke to you."

Dia: "Yes, this friend of my mother's...she's been dead just on a year and I have an extremely special feeling [for her]...you know we got on very well...Actually what happened is that her parents... I...um...my father's mother was still alive, that is grandmother X and that was the only grandmother or grandfather that we knew, but *this* friend's parents at one stage decided...the friend and the two sisters, our three families were always together. But she was never married and she had these two parents. And they...were sort of for all of us, our grandmother and grandfather but of the whole lot they, for some or other reason, apparently decided that I was their grandchild. So it was...everyone accepted this, there was never any problem that I noticed. So she...to a certain extent, we shared her parents, you know, something the other...that the other cousins did not do. And she was the type of personality that...if there was a crisis then she was there. She never really...I think, yes, you know, I think she was really a *mother* to me...an *idol* in a way...because she never spoke about things, but she *acted*...she was *there*, you know...she was always...that's what she taught me about friendship that you cannot...that you will not easily...or you don't find this in many people...that *unconditional* friendship. So she would immediately drop everything and say to her sister, "I'm going. You and your husband travel together". And obviously they came along to B. and they were with us that...that week...those few days, I don't think it was a whole week. And it was like...you know they left immediately which was wonderful. And this happened *repeatedly* you know. So that support was there and it was very valuable. So from my side it took the burden from me because I felt, you know, now, in a way, I must carry these people (i.e. parents). They did not have the energy really to...and because of the nature of my personality they...I did not ask much...I actually asked them to leave me alone. You know because they can carry on and cope with their problem and I coped with mine..."

Interviewer: "You wanted to cope in your own way."

Dia: "Oh, absolutely!"

Interviewer: "So they did not have much to do with you ... the support?"

Dia: "Very little really. Okay, no...we did make the arrangements together and that sort of thing but they never, *never* asked how one felt about it. *Mercifully* not...It would have been very bad. But on the other hand, my mother was not a great talker and my father was not ... um...was not at all analytical in the sense of, 'Come let's think how we feel about this matter.' You just feel, you know. You don't wonder why you feel."

Interviewer: "You just feel."

Dia: "Yes, oh yes. He was a lovable person...the day when he died I realized...that the one person who *un-con-di-tio-nally* always...you know it is the stupidist thing...would always take my side and look for excuses for me, is no longer there (laughs). My mother would...um ... 'first sort everything out. First...first find out whose fault it was'...[she would] always think *I* was at fault, 'Because I know my children well!' (laughs). But she is absolutely for...she was ...you know, 'Sort the thing out!' She could...you get the picture of how difficult it was for those two and I felt that I stood in the middle. And I think if there had been other children, perhaps it would have been different...handled differently...(thoughtful).I...when...my cousins died (after they were married) and the way in which

her sister handled it, my mother's sister handled it, and the way in which she (i.e. mother) handled it was totally different. Although, not so much the two sisters as the two families. But then the children were *older*, you know. I think that makes a *big* difference.”

Interviewer: “How much older were your cousins?”

Dia: “Well, you know, she was...she (i.e. sister) was just out of the house when she died and the cousins died...the older one...we were about forty two, forty three or thereabout and the younger fellow...he was about five years younger than us and he was in his late thirties, but they both had families with children and had been out of the house for quite a long time ...although no, I lie. The younger cousin was not out of the house. My mother's sister still stayed with them in the house. They had a flatlet...her husband was dead at that stage...so they...yes, actually they were together daily. But it was striking to me how the personality of the person...all the people in the family...their personalities, especially the parents, in the family, their way of handling it largely determines how *you* will experience it and the...and the...Okay, how you cope with it is certainly your affair, but...but the demands that are made on you, apart from the fact that your brother or sister is dead...the immediate demands... that is determined by the personalities of the other people in the family...And this can be even more taxing than the fact that you have suffered a loss, you know. That was something that I realized afterwards...*That* was for me the thing that stood out. I think...I think that nobody can say that my parents were, you know, outrageously this or that. It was just that I had to cope with...I must cope in the way that they cope...and that was a *double* thing for me. You know like...imagine that your son has a...loses a girl friend. You cope with it the way that *he's* coping with it...even if she was a lovely person that you knew. It was...yes, you know, this happened over and over and over again...”

Interviewer: “That you felt the pain of your parents and the way they felt affected you - your whole mood?”

Dia: “Oh, absolutely. Yes, yes. And it places *demands* on you...and I assume that if there are more children then the children could half *understand* each other, you know, and almost jointly bear the (burden)...that thing of, ‘Let us help mom and dad cope.’ And my mother and father, I think, are not...they are not extremely...we are a very civilized family (laughs)... so, you know, if I speak of them...it is...it is very subtle (laughs)...but it did...It did place demands on *me*.”

Interviewer: “That is the way you experienced it although demands were not directly made on you”

Dia: “No, no. Not at all. No.”

Interviewer: “It was your feeling.”

Dia: “Yes... And I finished (studies)...It (i.e. the death) was in July in my fourth year... and I finished in December. I got work in J but I commuted. So I still lived at home and that October...*That* was the first thing. The very same friend of whom I spoke earlier on and I decided to go overseas. Then the rand was very strong...we were speaking about that the other day. It was seventy cents to the dollar. No, the *dollar* was seventy cents to the rand. So it was...it was something that we very much wanted to do and she was already there. Just to get away for those three months was...there were no fixed addresses and it was certainly very bad for them (i.e. parents) but for me it was...I just wanted to get away a little from the clinging because the holding on became more intense. And then I came back...in December I think, and moved into a flat. I often wondered if I was not the only child, I am sure that the situation would have been easier. I often wondered how...how it would have been if she had been there and, as I say (there would have been) many positives and many negatives. I realise that there may have been a lot of conflict because there would be two families which may...you know, our family which...my husband and I and the children would have had to cope with her and her husband...the brother-in-law...It is interesting when things started going terribly wrong between him

and his second wife - she had a small problem with drugs and things, you know. No, not 'drugs' ... 'depression drugs?' ... What do you call them?"

Interviewer: "Anti-depressants, medication?"

Dia: "Medication, yes, that's it! And then they were divorced and he's remarried now. And now...here towards the end of last year, the one cousin who is just as old as my sister was, her husband...they were all together in matric...I am talking about my brother-in-law and my sister and the cousin and her husband...it was a group that I knew very well...that everyone... you know, it was a well known group...to each other...then her husband died and it was... how can I say...almost like a reunion. You know, then all the friends were back. And then it struck me *again* how much this third wife...looked like my sister - small and dark and fine - and...you know...it was strange."

Interviewer: "*Again?* Was the second wife also like her?"

Dia: "No. Not at all. She was beautifully tall...but very young...I think that he thought he could perhaps mould her. It was interesting to me just after the...after the accident, I often went...I had to...I went to him between classes and helped him with exercises and so on, but I knew that for him (the visits) revolved around *speaking*, you know. It was awful for him. He was bedridden for a long time. He had a fracture that gave many problems. Um...so it was also a ... it was also someone ... because he and I were actually friends, I had to almost support him as well. You know, this was also...also another...another situation."

Interviewer: "You seem to have taken on a lot of the responsibility."

Dia: "That's the way *I* experienced it, you know and, I think, because of the nature of my personality. I cannot cope...I cannot make as if I...or I cannot *give in*..."*admit*" that's the word. I cannot, not...I cannot, not cope because as soon as I do this, then I collapse completely... you know. For a while I must...my...my...my *mind* must take over rather than my emotions. I mean...I must *think* myself through this...yes, I think, come through this cognitively. Um...and I think this was part of the process too...it was bad. I could not cope with it immediately. I would, in any event, not have been able to talk about it with anybody at that stage. And I think *there* it would also differ a lot...because the need which...you know, the...the personality will determine what your needs are. What was bad about the first experiences of someone close to you who has died, I think the...the grandfather...the friend's father whom I called grandfather...his (death) was at that stage the only one in my family that I had ever experienced and then the friend's sister. She also died in a motor accident...and I think the suddenness of it...That's the other thing that I have thought about...um...the manner in which they die...is...um...will also certainly make a difference. You know, if a person is sick for a long time, then it is something completely different...to this unexpected... especially when it is accompanied by violence, it can be even more awful, you know. You know that I always said that I...I...I...and I definitely felt it...I honestly felt : 'Why not...Why her and not me?' I mean I was not in a relationship. I was not married. I was almost disposable at that stage because it wouldn't have been so bad for everybody...um...naturally I'm not so stupid...(laughs)...it would have been bad (laughs)...obviously...so what I mean is that they would have felt bad for a time, you know...nobody would have...They became much more realistic later on. I remember that I once said to them: 'No wait a bit. Now you are going overboard.' But I really felt...if I ever felt in the least bit guilty, I felt guilty because it was not me, because she had just got married, just qualified. I wasn't sure what I wanted to study...nobody...or what work I wanted to do...if I wanted to do that sort of work. I was not in a relationship that was going anywhere so, you know, it would simply have been logical. I think she...she was perhaps...so that was the only thing that I thought of, you know."

Interviewer: "The only feeling of guilt was the fact that you survived..."

Dia: "Yes. I wouldn't say that I really felt guilty...how shall I describe it...but I know that I had such thoughts...which...you know if I had to make the plans, I would have made them like this, you know" (laughs).



Interviewer: “If you could!”

Dia: “Yes (laughs). And that was another thing...religion...Fortunately at one point I got as far as to realize that I *was* allowed to be angry. I *could* but then I should not gossip about God, I must tell Him that. That was a great relief. That experience that, okay, you may be angry but then you do not turn away and speak behind [God's back]...the...the...the...[one] who ...who...who has the power, has done the wrong thing and therefore I hate Him, and things like that. You know. Fortunately I realized that you could...and those are things that I had to [work out] for myself ... you know ... I realize I would not have accepted anything like that from anyone else. It would not have been a solution for me to hear this from someone else. Like at the funeral, you know, it would not...but because I came to this *myself*, it was...yes ...yes...it also did not happen immediately. For a long time I felt, yes, I'm annoyed and it's a very stupid thing to let happen. It was unnecessary. Look at how many lives have been messed up and people who...but for me it was a very, very big relief to realize that I may be angry as long as I could say this *directly*. That, ‘I am angry, help me sort it out.’ I think it was okay for me...now I can cope. It was for me...and those who talk a great deal of religion ... for me it is a fact...um...it is a given, you know, and all these terribly emotional things about religion are terrible for me. I don't want to know anything about it. For me it was very bad ... and you don't belabour someone else with religion... You...if you cannot influence the person with how you handle your life...then you are not a good ambassador sort of (laughs). So I'm not saying these things because I am a religious-speaking person. Not at all. Anything but. But ...I remember that I...um, [it is] Job hey? [Yes] Job...there's a stage when...when...old...old...Job complains, complains, complains and he and his pals sit and moan, then...then...God puts things together and He says to him, 'Man you keep quiet and let me tell you about all the things that I've done. Can you do *this*? can you do *this*? Have you done *this*? have you ever done *this*? Actually you're stupid. You don't know anything. You don't make any plans. I make better plans' (laughs). And for me...you know, that was what made me understand...so I accept that there is someone who can plan and I am...I...I'm absolutely amazed by...um... planning. I am fanatical about planning (laughs). So if someone can make provision for things so that this whole thing resulted in a whole subtle chain of how things are connected...if someone can conceptualize this, then I must trust Him with the planning of my life. This is something that clicked with me. So the accusation that I had in that respect has become for me...good...I know better. I don't have to explain to you why I did this, but I know better', and I must accept it like that. So for me it was a ... ”

Interviewer: “There is a greater plan that you cannot quite understand?”

Dia: “Yes. Mm. And I think it was...at that stage, twenty one, um...is also a time that you have not sorted yourself out properly in that respect. You are emotional, perhaps very...you know, this school religion can actually go terribly overboard...it's...it's...almost a mass...hysteria. And I don't want to shoot it down, not at all. For many children it is of great value but one must see how long it lasts, you know, that's how I feel about the matter. And um...”

Interviewer: “So it's almost like you went through a personal religious experience...”

Dia: “Yes, yes. And that's my business.”

Interviewer: “It became more meaningful...”

Dia: “Yes, yes, that's it. It was a test. It was very easy at a Christian Student Society camp to say, 'Yes, I...I...wonderful...the Lord is everything', but when you find yourself *in* such a situation then it is a double take...of *really* being in such a situation to...With me it went very well (with the Christian Student Society). We never had problems...you know it was not really wonderful but it was always very well organized and everything went well and so on...so that was the first...as I say with the friend's sister and my (sister's death) because their deaths were only six months apart it was almost one thing...in this...in this...in this respect...in that respect of, 'Why?', you know...and to deal with it. You are half involved in working through it when the second one occurs and you have to deal with

that as well. And from primary school days we were very, very close and also the families knew each other. You must realize that the parents...the sister that died was a friend of my eldest cousin...my mother's sister's eldest daughter. So it was all...like intermarriage (interrelated) but it was (laughs)...I mean...and we stayed close to each other, all of us. It was actually a community that were involved with each other."

Interviewer: "You've given me so much here, Dia. I was just wondering what helped you?"

Dia: "It really helped that I had my own time...that I could withdraw and that was the greatest help...and...um, this friend who had the same experience. I think those two...I think it was really my salvation that I could...um...that I was not forced to...to...experience this *together* with the family...you know...or to work through it together...did not have to work through it together, that I could do it by myself...and...and maybe that I...that I immediately had to deal with a major task (thesis) and could continue with something that I felt the most comfortable, you know...I...I...I... analyze and reflect much more easily than I am able to work through...than what I can emotionally acknowledge and work through. So I think I... you know, those were the circumstances that resulted in...yes, I could keep myself busy. I had an objective and you must leave me alone because I am...busy...so everyone left me alone. The door of my room was closed and they left me alone because I was busy...and I think in the process of finishing the thesis I..." (long pause)

Interviewer: "You threw yourself into the task. Kept yourself busy."

Dia: "But I still found time for myself and the storm outside...uh...uh...I didn't have to see it all...and I was satisfied that they had enough support because they had...people close to... to each other...and to them...they had their...(suddenly very thoughtful) I...I...just wondered, if it were a younger brother or sister how one would then have handled it...or if you were the eldest and the middle one should die...and perhaps you had to help with the younger one. I think all those things...you know, then the younger one would be your responsibility. That would have been gall to me...because my parents had their friends, you know, they had people close to them...it is really clear that the parents have no energy left over...I...look, I don't say that they were not interested in what I was doing...that's how *I* experienced it. Perhaps *I pushed them away*. You know, perhaps they got the message loud and clear: 'don't bother me', I don't know. We never really spoke about it. But there was definitely the...the...for me the *greatest* help was that I had time, that I was not, you know, sucked in. That would have been really terrible. And you know for me...the fact that my sister was who she was, that for me was very easy because it really...Very often I could console myself that she would, in any case, have struggled to cope with all the difficult things [of life] and actually that she had lived the best part of her life...and she was married, she had that experience. So, you know, from then on, I think, only the more difficult things come. It was nice to think...You know how you feel when you are twenty-one, marriage is the ultimate - never again will anything...so wonderful ever happen again. And...I thought, 'Wow', you know. She was...'she was not cheated!' (laughs). A person almost feels these very young people, you know, they really have not yet had the experience of ... it can be a wonderful union...Oh yes, one seeks such things."

Interviewer: "With young people there is a sense that they've been robbed of a lot of important things."

Dia: "Yes. Thereafter I often...very often...very often realized that she was sort of spared ..."

Interviewer: "She was spared, as you said, of going through what you went through."

Dia: "Yes. It would surely also have been bad...not that I thought that it would (laughs) have been the biggest problem. Um...yes, definitely."

Interviewer: "You mentioned earlier that she was quite a dependent person."



Dia: “Mm...I think it was sort of immediate dependency in the situation but I don’t think... she trusted me enough...I think I was a bit unpredictable...um, in the sense of...(laughs)... you know we were so different...not that it was really that, but I think...I was prepared to tackle things that she was not...So I don’t think she would have...you know, she...she...she would have entrusted her life to me. I was in all likelihood *too irresponsible* for her at that stage and I did things that were probably unacceptable to her. You know, took chances - in *her book*, took chances. Which did not...I was not a...but she was really...um...not adventurous (laughs). She was not very daring. Not at all. She would *never* go overseas for three months, after she had studied, without knowing exactly where she was going, you know, to places, you know, to people. She would have gone to visit, sure, but she wouldn’t have gone and taken a chance because at that time people did not do it so often and nowadays there’s nothing strange about it. But at that time it was really altogether...you know, you did what the American books said you had to do, there was no one really to find out. It was...”

Interviewer: “That was the way you remember her and later ...”

Dia: “Yes and that is why I wonder if there had been more brothers and sisters how one would have...you know...if it would have been more supportive or more of a burden... (thoughtful, concerned) ... I don’t want it to sound as if I considered it to be a tremendous responsibility but it is just a thing that happens around you and you see people around you struggling, you know, and this does not make your task actually so much easier.”

Interviewer: “These are the feelings that you are busy with and what I heard you say earlier on about your husband, is that when you had somebody of your own, you could share this...?”

Dia: “Yes. Yes. Then I could let go.”

Interviewer: “That was the first time that you acknowledged that...”

Dia: “Yes. And...and...I had the emotional trust. Um...and he is the type of guy who wouldn’t be upset with it, you know...so he...it made me think that I...it’s not...rather, I think, I knew I could say as much as I wanted to (say). He would not insist...[that I tell more].”

Interviewer thanked Dia for her contribution and asked if she was prepared to sign the Consent Form. She readily agreed and the form was signed. Dia expressed surprise at how much she had had to say about the loss of her sister. We greeted each other and she went home to her family.

### Research Participant 3: Elena

#### Background information:

Elena (25yrs) is the youngest of three children. Her second brother, Tom, was killed two-and-a-half years ago at the age of twenty-five in a motorcycle accident. Elena was 22 years old at the time of the accident. She has one elder brother who is married. Elena is unmarried and living at home.

Initially Elena was hesitant about participating in the study. She was given time to consider this and after a week when I contacted her again she said that she was willing to share her experience with me. As she has a very full work schedule, arrangements were made to meet at her home for the interview.

#### Original Interview:

Elena: “Um...in October it will be about...it will be three years...It's about two-and-a- half years now. Um...I think him being...well, very...of course not just...well obviously a brother...he was very involved in the businesses. I think on that side of things it's taken a big knock...because of that emotional side. Because the last shop we opened was his and...um...the shop in B was basically for him. So like *me* working in *that*, I did in a way for *him*...It's a strange thing almost, ja (yes), but ja, I did it for him and obviously...What I felt when it happened was...well look, because it was obviously a great shock to us all...and um...I felt I needed to help the family through it...like support the family. Um...my mother...I think it [he] was her soft spot (half-hearted laugh), he was a soft spot so I think she...she took it very hard. I think as any mother would...um...He was twenty five, ja, so it was very young and...a lot of energy. He was...um... he was...if he wasn't here at home, he was always talked of, you know. We'd like sit down if he wasn't here and we'd discuss Tom, you know. It was always about him and what he did...and... He was...um...like I said, a lot of energy, so when he was gone, it...it...it changed our lives totally. I think up to today, it's...ja, it's not nice...at all...obviously...”

Interviewer: “He left a gap. You feel it...”

Elena: “A lot...Obviously Christmas and things like that are like...terrible...they're dreaded...Um ...ja, I think, the last one we tried to go away from...you know, like from the home because we always used to be here and stuff, but...um...also it doesn't work. Ja, it's...a *hole* - in our hearts, in our lives, in our...Although I'm not...I'm not angry about it...I don't know...I...my brother was a success story for me. Ja, I don't know, like the way he changed and the way he was, like towards the end...the way he felt about himself, the way he showed it to other people...I don't know...as if he knew he was going, I don't know...if that's the way it goes...(rather desperate), I don't know ...” (little laugh).

Interviewer: “You say he lived life fully and...”

Elena: “Ja, but towards the end he changed almost to a better person and a lot of people saw that and that's...that's why I say he was a beautiful story because even though he'd...um...maybe spoken aggressively before or...um...towards the...the end, I think it was the last three months, he was not ...he was *soft*, I don't know, he wouldn't shout, he...you know, he told my mom, 'I love you', he wouldn't...used to treat her so badly sometimes...I don't know, he was content with himself, I think that's the biggest...and that's how I see it as a success story. My mother was very ...very...you know...angry about it...not angry...you know, disappointed. She'd always say, you know, like, 'My biggest fear is to lose a child', and I guess it happened. Ja. Um...I know even up to today, I don't think, ja...it's...the pain is still there. You miss him a lot, you know. I always wonder what he'd be like, you know, how...you know, what he'd say to me in a certain situation or whatever and...um...you know, how our kids would be one day and I think the saddest part is that I can associate *now* more because I can remember him now, you know, because I'm also young...In twenty

years time I won't...I won't be able to see him older and I think that...you almost feel like you're losing touch and that's very sad...Ja. It was beautiful...Um...he was loved ...a *lot*. I don't know if you heard about his funeral. That church was full. It was...Ja...He was a people's person. He loved going out and speaking with people...and, ja, he obviously did his rounds very well...(laughs) because he was very...That church was very full. I've never seen it that full for any funeral before. Not that I've been to many but I think those words came out of everybody's mouth. Um...a good...like a good...a good boy, he was, you know. He was naughty and he was like cheeky...but you know what I mean? Ja...and...You know how it happened?"

Interviewer: (shakes head)

Elena: "It was a motorbike accident. He'd gone away with two friends to S...ja, they all had bikes, they all went like on a run...ja, and one corner too fast..."(visibly upset - no tears).

Interviewer: "Mm ..."

Elena: "Ja. Although one picture I have in my mind...when we saw him...when we *first* saw him there at S. after he died...um...I remember his face because he wasn't injured. His face was still perfect. His body was still perfect. He...he just...obviously his neck had...um...you know, broken neck...but his face was still perfect and I'd never...I'd never seen him that beautiful in my life. He was a good looking boy, you know, but he...I don't know...he looked...he looked *beautiful*, I don't know what it was...peaceful...I don't know...he never, ever looked that good to me. Just...*cold*...and that...that was very..."

Interviewer: "So you were there. You went to identify him."

Elena: "Ja, ja we all went together...It was, ugh!...It was a terrible day. It's also...we drove...it was terrible, and the weather was terrible, it was cloudy and it was drizzling and the whole...ugh!... the whole thing was really ugh...and I'm a very...I think, like straight person, so *I* had to break it to my parents that he died, you know, cause they kind of knew but no one would like come forward and say it. So...I remember sitting at home...here...it was...because I was writing my Honours exams at university when it happened and I was sitting here with a friend and my cousin phoned me, she says to me they're on their way from J, I mustn't go anywhere...Is this detail too much?"

Interviewer: "No, this is fine. Please carry on."

Elena: "She said I mustn't go anywhere they're on their way. She said something happened to Tom. So I said, 'Okay well...like what...what?' No, she can't tell me. So then from there I knew, look something's happening. I phoned her back, 'Tell me if he's hurt. I'm old enough'...you know, 'Just tell me.' 'No, we're on our way'. Then I thought, no...obviously something was up. So I tried to phone friends...I phoned his friends who were there...obviously...but [they] must have switched off the phone, or something. It's not the easiest thing to say. Um...I phoned his girl friend...um... she didn't know anything. Eventually I got...a...a...anyway by the...you know, I got hold of [telephone] numbers...eventually she [brother's girlfriend] phoned me back and she told me, 'No, he died'. So basically I just went to the shop and...look it's going to get said...it's...you know, so I just...I told them... 'Tom is dead!' Very straight and not very tactful I guess but, ag, it's not the easiest thing to say and it's..."

Interviewer: "It's not..."

Elena: "Ja, and from there...my mother's *never* been the same person; my father's never...; our *lives* have never been the same... we're just not the same people, you know. It...it changes you a lot...um..."(long pause)

Interviewer: "How has it changed you?"

Elena: “Um...*harder*, I guess. I've become a lot harder...generally in life. I don't know...Um... religion-wise it's changed me. I used to be a lot more religious (self- conscious little laugh). Not a lot more but...um...I won't say I'm angry with God. I won't say I'm upset with Him but I've just *distanced* myself from Him...although lately it is better, you know, I am getting closer...but before I didn't...not that I wouldn't go to church on...'It's Easter, I'm not going', type of thing, you know, but I wouldn't *feel* it, as I felt it before...you know. I really don't know why, maybe you can explain that to me, I don't know...um...and I tried to feel stronger...especially for my parents...because...I see...I don't know, I guess I love my family a lot you know. We are very close as Mediterranean families are. And I think...um...I've tried to be there for them as much as I can, you know. In a funny way though, like my mother will never like sit down and like, 'Are you okay?' and...it's like she knows I'm there, you know, the things I do, but I won't necessarily like phone her up, 'Are you okay?' you know. But, ja, she knows I'm there. The love's there...the fundamental love is there...and things like that...”

Interviewer: “You feel that you don't have to say those things. Do you talk much about *him*?”

Elena: “About him...um...if...um...if I really feel like I need to, I will just say something but not really much. I won't elaborate my feelings as much, you know. I think it's...even though I am very close with my friends it's almost...I don't want to put them in that position because they feel awkward and...I might just say, you know, 'I wonder what my brother would think' or...I think, especially in the beginning I would just like hear happy stories about him and... 'ah, he would do this!' ...and I'd love to hear things he did and...I think initially I wanted to find out everything about him from all his friends that I didn't know because I obviously knew the brother-side of him, you know, and I didn't know the friend-side and I wanted to know the friend-side, the boyfriend-side, the every-side of him. And...I don't know, it's a strange thing...it's almost as if when he left, he left me with that little magic, I always say (spontaneous laugh)...with that little magic, ja. Like people will tell me, ja, like, 'How did you know...?' or...I don't know... especially when it comes to his friends, you know, and it was...I don't know...I just feel he left ...I can't explain, he had such an air about [to] him and such a...um...I don't know...(long pause) an *energy* ... an energy to him that I loved and in a way, I don't know, he's left me with it, I feel he's left me with it, but...which is beautiful and I think I'll carry it through with me...”(pause)

Interviewer: “So you're carrying something of him with you now.”

Elena: “Ja, a *feel* of his...Ja, but...um...I think I've...ja...it's been a fight, a struggle, you know, it's an emotional fight, you know. You always try and...block it...not...not...I...I won't say block ...ja, in a way it might be blocking it, I don't know, if I blocked it or dealt with it. I actually...I still don't know to this day. I don't really know...you know. Obviously I don't feel as much pain, you know because time has gone by...”

Interviewer: “Feels a bit better with time but it's still there?”

Elena: “Ja...I don't know what else...”

Interviewer: “I was just wondering if you could tell me a bit more...you say that you are a little confused about the way you feel about your religion. It's like the loss has struck at your faith?”

Elena: “Ja...I would say...which is not nice but I think it's just something I have to like work through. I can't...I think the worst part is I can't really pinpoint it because it's not anger because I'm not angry with God for taking him away because...um...He obviously has reasons or whatever to have done what He did...um...I don't hate Him for it...um...I don't know, I'm not angry with Him...I'm just, I guess...disappointed...Ja...I guess a bit disappointed...but, um, I must work my way through that, you know. I'm already much bet(ter)...well better...ja...just a bit more time...it will come. Ja.”

Interviewer: “You say that at the beginning you also were wanting to know more about him (brother) in terms of other relationships. Can you sort of...?”

Elena: “Elaborate on that?”

Interviewer: “Yes...”

Elena: “OK, my brother was *always-here* but he was *never-here* type of thing, you know. He was here but if we were having a family dinner he was in and then he was like out because he was going to see a friend or something. He was a busy body, he wanted to do everything, you know. I think he wanted to live life to the full...it was almost...he wanted to do anything and everything that he could, you know and it almost makes sense, you know, after he'd gone, I don't know... maybe that's *why* he was like life-hungry...Um...I don't know, any little story, you know, it's like almost like I can latch onto it for some *more*, or like remember him even *more*...so you know, having heard everybody's like little stories, or...especially closely afterwards, his friends would come up to me and...like a friend I'd never met and he says to me, ‘You don't know what your brother has done for me’, you know, he was...he did things that really touched people in...you know he'd obviously helped them with a specific problem but...I don't know...they'd come and tell me, ‘You don't know what he's done. He's the greatest person’, you know. ‘He's helped us so ... he's helped me’ - it was a specific guy - he said, ‘He's helped me so, so much. I'm so grateful’ ... and like hearing things like that, I think that makes me...you know, proud of him and...ja... ja, and...and you hear...That's like *real* stories you know...not just like what he wore...where he went, and...and...it's like actual...ja”..

Interviewer: “Like you said, he touched people's lives.”

Elena: “Ja!...and I think it was also very sad for his girl friend. She was...she also had a child, I guess, and he was almost like a father...you know...like a father-*figure*, I guess, for the child because the child was about seven when my brother...[died]”

Interviewer: “Had they been going out for long?”

Elena: “Ja...almost for like *five* years...they went out for long and that's another nice thing, you know, he took a girl and, *yes*, she is a beautiful girl and all, but she had a child and I think a lot of men won't take a woman, as beautiful as she might be, with a child. I know I discussed that with some of my friends and they were like, ‘I don't want the extra baggage’, type of thing, you know, and he took her and...shame the little boy's...ja, he...he was a father-figure to him...and it was ...it was beautiful. Just, he was...ja...he was a speed freak. Look, he is my brother he's...ja, he would always drive fast...and, ag, the fastest car and...the bike was just too powerful, I think, for him and he took a wrong corner...and ja...it was sad...”

Interviewer: “Very sad.”

Elena: “Ja...”(long pause)

Interviewer: “And your relationship with him, what was that like?”

Elena: “With *him*?...um...I had a weak spot for him (laughs). I did, ja...He was two years...ja, three years in...ja, two years older than me. Um...I think if I had a problem and I'd really...you know...I'd go and sit down with him, although I would rather pick a friend, you know, because the girls usually understand better or whatever...you know, but if it was a problem that...you know...I think I'd like approach him on that, you know, we were close in that way. I think he ... um...he loved me a lot for what...okay, obviously for what I was, but [also for] what I did for him because every time he'd ask me for something I'd tell him, ‘This is the last time I'm doing it, do you understand?’ and the next time he asked me I'd do it again, you know, that's the kind of soft spot I had for him, and I would always tell him, ‘No, I'm not going to do it!’ and ...Ag, we used to fight a lot as well, you know, not speak to each other for like...(laughs)...like a week or something (laughs) and then, ag, it was fine, and...ja... it was fine. But I think...ja...I think he... he respected me a lot and that...that means like the world to me, you know. He'd obviously told my friends, you know, ‘She's...she's the *best* in our family’ ...you

know, she... 'She doesn't...she doesn't obviously understand her value as much as she should', you know, and, 'She can just ask for anything and she'll get it.' That's how much, you know, he thought that I was like worth...it was nice, you know, because he *never* really...he *never* really communicated his feelings to me. We never had the type of relationship like, 'I love you,' or...or...you know...it was...I don't...I think it wouldn't mean very much...it's like you *feel* it's there, so you don't have to say it that much. You know, they're always *there*...you take for granted that they're always *there* until... And I think...ja...I would have *loved* to have spent more time with him but I guess that's impossible...my mother says the same and...but I...I would have really loved to have spent more time with him. He was always just [so busy]...So difficult, you know, life gets so busy...the one person gets this, the other gets that, and you don't really spend as much time with each other as you should, and I think especially us with businesses there is not really much family time, you know...it's a lot...um... 'got to work, got to work!'...Ja, my father is also taking it a bit...he's obviously not as, you know, forward as my mom. My mother like...she'll express it more and she'll cry and she'll talk to him more or whatever she, you know, she feels helps her. My father is more quiet about it. It's also hit him hard, I think...um...He, my brother, was very like similar in character to my father, you know, so that's why like the things that my brother did my father would understand and you know he...Ja...I think he understood him *very* well...because he was also...himself...Ja, and it...it...Ja, I think the worst part for me is to see my...my parents like this, you know...um...it, it like hurts me and it upsets me, you know, because it's...ugh!...it's just not the same people, you know, and it's just really sad...it's really, really sad..."

Interviewer: "So it's a double loss in a way. You lost your brother and..."(interrupted)

Elena: "Ja, ja. It feels like I've lost my...not *lost* my family but, it's ja, definitely changed us in many ways...Ja, ag, and all his things we've left, you know, and...I guess it's like a way of not... trying not to let go? I don't know...you don't want to let go, you just keep his [belongings]...as long as you can..."(half-hearted laugh)

Interviewer: [unclear on tape - keeping a part of him with you - brief discussion on letting go; no rules about when, how, or what a family should do - part of the grief - when you're *ready* you will do it]

Elena: "Ja, it's just how you *feel*. (long pause) Ja...Mm...I can't think of anything else..."(nervous little laugh)

Interviewer: "You have another brother?"

Elena: "Ja, an older brother, ja. I think for him it was a bit easier because he's living, you know, in another home with his wife and...I think it was easier for him, you know, like you're *here* but then you go away to your *home* and it's not so, you know, difficult whereas for me I'd live it, eat it, breathe it all the time, you know. I won't say it's any easier on *him*, you know, I won't say that either. It's just ..ja...it was just *different* in that way...um...I don't know, I felt...I felt really strong...I don't know how I did it especially close to when it happened, because...I...it was: 'I'll take it all and I'll deal with it', and I think...ja...from leaving...my Honours exams, I was writing at that point in time, I didn't write my first one (exam) because it was a week after his death, I wrote all the others and I passed them and then I went straight into the shop and then I just took it in my hands, 'Come, I'll do it' you know, because...obviously because of the emotional loss my parents couldn't deal with things and , I mean, you...you can't stop life, unfortunately...it feels like you want to stop life...you don't want to know anything but I mean you...it would be worse to sit in the house and cry all day."

Interviewer: "Gosh, you were strong. I mean it's almost like, as you say, you felt you had to keep going and it was also keeping them going in a way..."

Elena: "Ja. Yet I felt very weak. You know, like the way I looked. I'd lost a lot of weight, you know...um...ja, terrible...(long pause) And I hate going to his grave...ja...(little laugh). I don't see the point of it...I don't...it was...it's his last like...physical state type thing, you know, but I don't



want to associate a graveyard or anything with him. I think he was too happy a soul to ... you know...to associate that and...I really don't like it. I don't go...I'm hardly involved. Ja, I'll go ...like (clicks tongue) five times a year maybe, or six, but I don't like it. I'd rather look at a photo and that way..."

Interviewer: "Remember him that way."

Elena: "Ja. I hate to see his name on that cross. I think that's ugh...it's just...I don't know, I guess it hits you in the face, but I don't like it. You see my mom is totally different. She *loves* to go. Every weekend she'll...flowers and the whole thing, ja...(little laugh). I don't know...just different, ja, just different..."

Interviewer: "She feels closer when she's there whereas for you, you feel closer if you think about him or look at a photo or...remember him as he was."

Elena: "Ja. And I love to see his friends, you know, especially people he was close with although it's very difficult to communicate with them because when they see me or whatever, they...they obviously [think], 'Tom', you know...get a picture of him, so for *them* it's difficult as well as for me because I can sense that, even though I would love to sit down and ask them, you know, 'Tell me a story', or...'What did he say when you did this?' you know, but...ja...it's not like that, unfortunately..."

Interviewer: "You sense that they might feel that hurt..."

Elena: "Ja...ja, they do...they do...Ja, death's a very strange thing (little laugh) to deal with...I fear it...(little laugh). I fear death. Ja. Like I've seen...you know, before it has never really happened to anyone...it has never touched home. It's not really an issue, you know, because...look people die, but yes, I guess, they're old and things like that but from experiencing my brother's death I fear...I fear losing my parents...or anybody close to me, you know...it's just like..."(long pause)

Interviewer: "Suddenly it is something that's real. It can happen."

Elena: "Ja...Mm..."

Interviewer: "And when you say there is this fear, how does it affect you?"

Elena: "Well I don't fear it every day and stuff but...um...it doesn't really...I won't say it really affects me...I just...I'd appreciate maybe people mo(re)...like my parents, more...because I know they won't be here anymore...you know, like forever type of thing, because you've been born and they've always been here type of thing and you...and, you know, they will always be here type of thing but through the death I've basically realised it doesn't happen...you know, they're not always going to be there, so I appreciate them more in ways, you know...ja..."

Interviewer: "You've become aware of that possibility, of your own mortality and of people close to you. So it's not your own death that you fear?"

Elena: "No, not my own. No. I don't think I'll die soon (hearty laugh). You get some people who say, 'No, I'll never live old'. I don't know if they know, but I...I think I'll live [to be] old" (laughs again).

Interviewer: "You say this is really the first death experience you've had. You haven't had a grandparent..."

Elena: "A grandmother, but she was overseas so it's not really, you know, you're not...although I was very close to her when I was little. She brought me up. Apparently my mom was [busy]...and...she used to stay here for a while (came from overseas) and...ja...a beautiful woman, you know... like



...in her heart, you know...and...I lost her but that was almost, you know, she was *old* and I wasn't *that* close, you know, with her as I was with my brother, you know. Ja, so it was...um... (long pause) I don't know, it's harder..."

Interviewer: "I was just wondering can you remember doing things with your brother when you were little. Three years is not a big age difference."

Elena: (laughs heartily) "Ja, fighting."

Interviewer: "Very natural!"

Elena: (laughs) "Ja, I remember ... I remember him ... like we were playing hopscotch down this little thing here (points to the spot outside the kitchen window) and he'd trip me and I'd fall and then I'd cry. I remember things like that very clearly. And I remember like running frantically to the phone to phone my mother and tell her... 'huhhh!'...and as I'd get to the phone, he'd like pull the cord out, you know...he loved to tease his little sister, you know (laughs). Especially when you're little, you know...when you're younger...it's like more of an age gap. I think lately it wasn't that much of an age gap. We'd go out more, you know, together, whereas before it's like, 'Don't speak to my friends!' and that, you know...but...um...(long pause)...Ja, I was always covering up for him, I think (laughs), very often...I was always, ja, picking up his pieces and like covering up for him which he *never* knew really because I would never tell him, 'Guess what I did?', you know but...um...ja, I don't know, I just did it...I think he would have appreciated it." (laughs).

Interviewer: "You would cover up for him...so he would go out and not supposed to or something like that?"

Elena: "Ja, something like that and ja, I'd be at the shop and I'd tell my dad...look small things ... I'd always let him go and get away with murder sometimes, you know...um...as I said, soft spot ... he was a soft spot, you know. Ja, ja."

Interviewer: "He was the closest in age to you?"

Elena: "Yes, although when we were younger, with my oldest brother I was...we were much closer... ja, it was like almost we'd always go like the two of us and then, 'Oh, come let's just call Tom'. You know the stage. It was like that. So I was *very* close to my oldest brother but...um...I think we'd...that changed...there wasn't...I don't think anyone was closer than anyone else for quite a few years before his death."

Interviewer: "Do I understand correctly that your elder brother was quite close to you and he'd take you along and exclude Tom?"

Elena: "Ja. Not in a big way or [that] we did it for years...maybe like for a few months...at a stage. I just...maybe it's just left a mark in my head because my mother...I remember the one time she said, you know, 'Tell Tom to come with you guys,' and I, 'Okay', you know. It was never a problem but we just didn't *think* of it. It wasn't like a *thing* and it didn't become like a thing between us ever, you know. It was never like you don't ask...or...it was never like that...ja."

Interviewer: "Lot of memories."

Elena: "Ja. I think what I hate most about this is that the older like I get the more distant the memories will become, you know. I won't remember his smile or the way he said something, you know, or...and I think that saddens me most because it's obviously distancing him from me, you know, and like...sometimes (clicks tongue) the way I say something it's exactly like *he* said it, you know, or like the *way* he said it, and I *love* it. I just...I *love* it, although not everyone will realise it obviously

because they don't know him or...but...ag...I *love* it, it just like...it brings a smile to my face, you know..."

Interviewer: "Whenever you say something like he would have said it?"

Elena: "Yes, that reminds me of him. I won't say it like on purpose...you know, like I'll say it because he said it, but obviously from being together and stuff you pick up things he says you know and as I say it, it will come out...and *Wow!*...(delighted smile)...ja..."

Interviewer: "Almost like a little part of him lives on."

Elena: "Ja, but , as I said I'm just scared it...becomes...like you forget...ja, that's very sad.... (long pause)...Ja, and the fact that like he can't be here for like my big days, for instance, you know. I would love to...you know, one day when I get married, I would have loved him to be there, you know...and...ja...that's really sad, you know, because...Ja, just being *there*...you know...being *him* (laughs)...Ja..."

Interviewer: "Having him there to share with you."

Elena: "Ja..."(long pause)...

Interviewer: "So you say that for the future as well anticipating that gap makes you feel very sad."

Elena: "Ja-no...definitely...(long pause)...Ja, I was godmother not so long ago...you know, I would have loved to see how he would...you know, what he'd say, or...you know..."

Interviewer: "So you obviously shared a lot and this is also something important for a brother or a sister who are close, to continue sharing those special occasions, special events."

Elena: "Ja...um..."(long pause)

Interviewer: "Has the loss impacted on you in any other way. I see there is a lot of missing..."

Elena: "I...I guess just like dealing...dealing with it or fighting it, or whatever, you know...it's been very hard...and um...ja, I don't know. I know like...my entire like being...it's not been, you know, good...as good, you know...I obviously...you know, I'm not looking as healthy, not being as healthy, what shall we call it...you know. I think it's normal that people...if you're not like psychologically fine it like shows on you, type of thing. And a lot of stress. I lost a lot of hair, I think, initially and stuff, you know...um...Ja...it's just...it's like a fight, you know...it's a fight and especially seeing your parents like that, it's almost...you don't want to accept it like that...I don't want to accept them as they are, you know, these are my parents...um...comparing to what they were, you know, as people...and like a smile...Every time I see my mother laugh it's like, I get so *happy* because she doesn't do this, you know, often. Like to *giggle*, or like...especially lately she's been like *talking* more and it's like: '*Wow!*', you know, I'm glad she can like almost touch upon it again because it's...it's, you know, it *hurts* to see them like that...a lot. I don't blame them for it, you know, I don't blame anyone for anything...it's like, no one *did* it, you know. It's just that's the way it's become, you know..."

Interviewer: "It's the way it is and it takes time..."

Elena: "Ja..."

Interviewer: "You said you went on holiday last year. You tried to get away for a bit, you said."

Elena: “Oh yes, well, ja...ag, you know. You go, you stay for a while and you come back to exactly the same thing...so...it's...it's not...even though you might talk about it and deal with it, it's almost like you have to come back to the exact same thing...so...It was nice on holiday...ja, (laughs)...ja, even th(ough)...although I spoke *about* him a *lot*, you know, because obviously there (i.e. overseas) everybody wanted to know about him but...and obviously seeing all my family and they all had questions to ask because I was the first one to go after his death, you know, so they'd all, ‘and how are your friends?’; and ‘how is this?’; and ‘Tell me’...and like one of my cousins, extremely close [to] me, but she like couldn't believe it...she would like: ‘Tell me. Tell me stories’, and we would discuss it...and, you know, it wasn't as if I never...as if I went there and I just blocked him off, never spoke to anyone about him. He was very much a part of that but it was...I think maybe not dealing with my parents, you know, it was like...like a weight off my shoulders. Although I don't mind doing it and I do it with the greatest of ...but it is a...a ...responsibility...”

Interviewer: “You feel the responsibility.”

Elena: “Ja, absolutely. Its not just something...you know...”

Interviewer: “It's almost like it (the situation) makes demands on you without them making demands.”

Elena: “No they don't...they really don't ask for anything.”

Interviewer: “But you feel it.”

Elena: “Ja...ja, towards them, you know. Like I'm me. I just want to [help]...if I can...(laughs)...ja, it's just that you don't think that you're that strong, you know. I've obviously become a lot stronger. ...Ja, it's...ja: ‘Okay, so take it when it happens’, you know ...”

Interviewer: “You found the strength somewhere...”

Elena: “Ja. I don't know how I was that strong. I really don't...God send?...(laughs)...ja...”

Interviewer: “Maybe ...”

Elena: “Mm...”(Long pause).

Interviewer: “Can you think of anything else?”

Elena: “Initially it was difficult because you don't...I am not the type of person who likes to show my feelings to a lot of people and even though like my friends would come maybe the next day I wouldn't like burst out crying or like go... ‘huuuh’...you know. I'm not that type of person and I like to maybe share it with one or two people I feel very close to me, you know. So in that way it was ... I think I actually put people in an awkward position because they'd come and I'd smile at them and, ‘How are you?’ type thing, you know, and they'd like but, ‘Hang on...!’, you know, and it's as if I don't...I mean I would smile at them although inside me you could see that I was hurting and like sad, you know, obviously not the same as I would *now*...it would be...you can't compare but my friends would still tell me, ‘If you want to talk about it, just say’, ‘Come and tell me’, you know, and...I don't know, I just don't open up to people easily at all.”

Interviewer: “Were you always like this or is it since the loss experience?”

Elena: “I think I'm more now...I'm more closed now than I was before. I don't let people into my space easily...like...like personal space. You know I'll get along with people and I'll speak but...um...not just to anyone and everyone. I won't just go...if I'm upset I'll try not to show it to a lot of people, or, you know...(Long pause). Ja...I don't know what else...”

Interviewer: “This is fine. Unless you have something else you would like to add?”

Elena: “I don’t know if you meet again as souls or if it happens like that, but if you do I’d love... I’d love...to somehow be with him again if it is, because I don’t know if there are answers but... these are theories, everyone’s got a different theory, you know. I don’t know, I’ve never been there and come back, you know.” (laughs)...

Interviewer: “Nobody’s been there and come back to tell.”

Elena: “That’s exactly it...But geez, I’d be the happiest chappie! (laughs) Ja...And I think I am really glad that I can still look on him in a positive light, you know, with a smile on my face or... you know, like share a story about him with...and whatever...ja, I think that’s very nice and I’d hate to obviously like feel the intensity of my mother’s pain, you know what I’m saying...um... Obviously when I have a child of my own then I’ll understand what it would be like but...I don’t want to look at *him* in that light...I don’t want to look at him as...like a *pain*, you know...it’s obviously very confused feelings because it is *that*, and it is...but I’d like to like remember him as a happy person...not as a happy person... in a happy light...um...you know...you know and it’s like...ja, I don’t know...I’m not very good with words...”

Interviewer: “You’re doing fine and it’s an interesting idea, that you don’t want to remember him with pain.”

Elena: “Ja, ja. I want to remember him as happy as he always was, you know, the energy he had and that...that you know I just don’t want to ever let go of that and just see it as, ‘Tom: tragedy; Tom: dead’, you know; ‘Tom: bike accident’. I don’t want to see that, I want to see like, ‘Tom: happy’...Like he used to hoot a thousand times before he came in the house, you know, that... that energy that he had...he was always like, like...”

Interviewer: “Like: ‘Here I am!’”

Elena: (Laughs) “Ja, ja, ja! You know, and that’s what I want to remember and like associate with his name, you know, and that beautiful person people saw in him, you know, and the things he did for people and like the way he touched my heart and...um...”

Interviewer: “You want to associate him with the good memories, the good things. Have you been able to let go in the sense of being able to cry about him?”

Elena: “Ja. Initially, ja, it was very difficult. I remember I wouldn’t cry...at all. My mother like, ‘Please cry’. I’d say like, ‘I can’t. I cannot cry’. I don’t know why, what, how...and if I did, I did for a little bit all by myself or maybe...on the *odd* occasion with a friend and for so short...I don’t know. I *couldn’t* and I don’t know what it was and it wasn’t always like that because I remember boyfriend stories before that...uhh!, if a boyfriend upset me a little bit I would be like in tears, you know, I’d get upset and cry bitterly and then it was over, you know, but with my *brother* it was *not* like that, I don’t know *why*. Was it...I don’t know if it was being strong enough but it doesn’t mean that you’re not strong if you cry, you know...if you cry it doesn’t mean that you’re not strong, but I just, you know, I couldn’t cry. I don’t know why...”

Interviewer: “There is no right or wrong way of dealing with the loss but there are phases that you go through, you know. Maybe it is part of the denial...”

Elena: “Maybe. Ja...”

Interviewer: “You’re still holding on. It’s okay. I don’t think you ever let go fully...as you say there are important occasions when your grief becomes more intense and then it gets better again.”

Elena: “Ja.” (long pause)

Interviewer: “You said that you're getting back into your career...”

Elena: “Ja. I think I was doing something just for *me*, you know, which I know is...I'm not really a selfish person, you know, I'll do a lot for others if I know them...Um...I don't know. I guess I did this for *me*. I think I was just accepting something for *me* and not living...ja, just for me basically ... It was a path I was taking, you know, and...ja, I won't say specifically my goals are in that direction but it was...it was something that I...if I didn't do...if I didn't do I think I'd regret one day...if I never did that for me, I would turn around one day and say I should have and I didn't want to do that, for me. So I might as well give it a try.”

Interviewer: “Yes, and you say you're working in a laboratory.”

Elena: “A research company. No, it's not a [laboratory] ... but its marketing research, you know, it's business orientated. I did a B.Com.... Ja...[It's] interesting...”

Interviewer: “You're enjoying it.”

Elena: “Mm. It's nice. Totally different to...like the business. It's different to work for someone else and [to work] for you[rself], as well. That is my latest dilemma here (laughs)...you know, should I work for someone else or should I work for me.”

Interviewer: “How do you feel about working for somebody else?”

Elena: “I enjoy the environment, I enjoy the...the...it's obviously so much more like intellectual and you deal with...the people you deal with are so much better than what you deal with in the businesses and...um...ja, it's a communication thing. It's just...ja. And you feel like you're always furthering yourself in this...obviously my career, because obviously I'm learning and it's a whole new learning experience, whereas the business it's...you know...okay I'm...you know, I'm basically the boss...you *do* learn I guess but [it is] not as stimulating...”

Interviewer: “You're doing something for you that is both stimulating and interesting.”

Elena: “Yes...I don't know what else you want to know...?”(bit distracted because had to return to the family business)

Interviewer: “This is fine Elena. Thank you so much for sharing your experience with me.”

I asked if she had a photo of her brother to which Elena responded: "Oh yes, lots". Seemed happy to show me her brother as she wants to remember him.

**APPENDIX C**

**FORMS**

**FORM A:****Letter to Research Participant***Doctoral Research Project – The experience of the loss of a sibling*

I am a registered Clinical Psychologist and am engaged in a Doctoral study on the loss of a sibling (PhD. Psychology, University of Pretoria). In my professional and personal capacity I have been involved with bereaved siblings and am interested in further exploring the individual's lived experience of the loss of a brother or sister.

Your participation in the search to understand the essence of this experience would be helpful to the many young people who go through such a loss. I would be very grateful if you would be prepared to share your experience with me in an interview to be arranged at a time convenient for you.

This is not an evaluation. You will not be required to fill in any questionnaires and no specific assessment procedures or tests will be applied. The only requirement is that you attempt to describe in as much detail as possible what it was like for you to lose your brother or sister. Please note that there is no one right or proper way to experience the loss of a sibling. I am interested only in your own experience of this loss.

The interview will be audio-taped and it is likely that some descriptions will be recorded in the present study but the names of all participants will be omitted and other identifying information will be changed in order to preserve anonymity and confidentiality. Audio-taped recordings as well as all written descriptions will be treated in strict confidence.

It is possible that the recall of certain memories may be painful for you and I would like to offer a follow-up interview during which you will have the opportunity to discuss your feelings related to our initial interview and at which time we can also share reflections on what this loss has meant to you.

Should you be prepared to participate in the above study, please read through the enclosed Consent Form which you may sign following the interview.

Please note that you are at liberty to withdraw your consent to participate in the study at any time.

Yours sincerely,

Eleferia (Freda) Woodrow



**FORM B:****Participant Consent Form**

**Doctoral Research Project :** The experience of the loss of a sibling.

I hereby consent to participate in the above doctoral research project on the loss of a sibling and agree to share my experience of the loss of my brother/sister in an interview with Mrs E. Woodrow at a time and place that will be decided jointly. My participation is voluntary and I understand that the interview will be audio-taped and transcribed and that the data will be used for the above thesis.

I understand further that confidentiality will be maintained throughout and that my name and any other identifying information will be changed or disguised in order to preserve anonymity and confidentiality. Audio-tapes and transcriptions of the interview will be treated in the strictest confidence and will be used solely for the purpose of the above research project. Should the need for further research arise, my written consent will be obtained prior to *any* further use of the data.

I understand that I can withdraw my consent to participate in the study at any time.

Research Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No. ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No. ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

**FORM C:**

**Thank you Letter**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for meeting with me in the extended interview and for sharing your experience of the loss of your sibling. Your willingness to share your feelings, thoughts and recollections is greatly appreciated. It is contributions such as yours that can expand psychological knowledge in the field.

I sincerely value your participation in this research. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the present study, or wish to take up the offer of a follow-up interview, please do not hesitate to contact me. I may be reached either at (012) 8020945 or at 082-6962383.

With very best regards,

Eleferia (Freda) Woodrow.

**APPENDIX D**  
**Preliminary Study**

## Written Descriptions

### Volunteer 1: Angie

As part of the preliminary study for the thesis, I contacted Angie telephonically to ascertain whether she was willing to participate in a study on the experience of sibling loss. She readily agreed to provide a written description of her experience to the following research question:

*“Could you please describe how you felt at the time of the death of your sister and how you experience the loss now”*

#### *Background Information:*

At the time of volunteering to participate in the study, Angie was 23 years old and pursuing her studies in the Human Sciences at the local university. Her sister accidentally shot herself with the family revolver at the age of 16 years. Angie was 13 years old at the time. Her parents were totally devastated. She had two younger brothers who appeared to be unaffected by the death. Angie was referred for psychotherapy because of behavioural problems and a reluctance to speak about the death of her sister.

Angie's written description was followed by an interview where she was asked to elaborate on certain statements. Her responses follow the written description and are indicated in bold script:

### Original written description

The death of my sister when I was 13 years old was a pivotal point in my life. I had just entered high school and her death was sudden and a shock. My family was tested severely, luckily though, my younger brothers were very young. It is difficult to describe how I felt when she died. At first I was numb. I avoided talking about her at all, even with my parents. I think I mostly did not know how to deal with what my parents were feeling. I did not want to feel her absence and so I learnt to close off myself to what I was feeling. If it had been up to me, I would have just ignored that anything had happened at all. I merely wanted to continue with life as it always was.

Anger then took over me and I rebelled as strongly as I could against my parents. I broke free from the person I had been my whole life. Looking back on those two years after her death, I realise that I luckily found a balance between who I was and who I always wanted to be – *her*. I am now me, though.

What stays with me the most is that I have surpassed her age and her experiences. I am now the oldest and I'm paving my own way and the course that my brothers may follow. I cannot turn to her for her advice though. I guess I miss that the most. I am the first in my family to achieve the large milestones. My sister's death has taught me to value and treasure my family. I know how quickly everything can change, so suddenly they can be taken from you. I am not as independent as I would like to be, in that I mean I still have an intense fear of losing my family. We are extremely close, and I fear my feelings may prevent me from pursuing opportunities in the future.

### Follow-up interview:

Interviewer: "You avoided talking about her at all?"

**Angie: “I was always the quiet one and preferred to deal with things on my own. It was a stage when I wanted to go out but I felt guilty about this...as if I was not allowed to have any fun. The family more or less ignored the children. It was always: ‘how is your mom doing? You must**

help her.' This suited me in a way because I preferred not to talk about her (i.e. about her sister). I wanted everything to be normal again but in retrospect I realise that it is a heavy burden and it is better to talk about the loss than keep it all inside; all to myself"

Interviewer: "You mentioned your brothers..."

Angie "My brothers were young. Only later that I realised how badly the death had impacted on my nine-year old brother. He never really wants to talk about her but I know it affects him badly ... he was very close to her and I am not sure whether mom or dad ever discussed the death with him."

Interviewer: "Can you tell me more about 'breaking free' from the person that you had been?"

Angie: "I became the eldest in the family ... big change from always looking to someone else for guidance and advice, to breaking the ice with all new milestones. I could see when I became the eldest how much easier it was for the second child...for my brother now. Maybe because he's a boy as well but I think mainly because the eldest takes a lot of the flack and paves the way for the younger ones."

Interviewer: "How did you feel immediately after the death?"

Angie: "At the time of the funeral some children from school wanted to come to the funeral and when they asked me if they could come I said, 'No!' ... such a weird response. I used to get so angry with people who felt that *they* had lost someone valuable. I still don't understand why I said 'No'. All I can think is that I felt it was a family thing. Also I had to go to school and face everybody and it would be harder if they had been to the funeral and shared the experience with us. Actually I said 'No' to those that I felt were not particularly close to her. Good friends were asked to come. The others just seemed curious. Still I think it was a weird reaction. There were also rumours of suicide ... perhaps I wanted to protect her memory and reputation. It was not suicide but we were always confronted by these stories. How I feel now? I feel that I have grown a lot because of this experience – I have become softer, more outgoing, more expressive of my emotions. I have also got a lot closer to my family – mom and dad, the whole family. There were other changes too. Four years after the death, my parents adopted two children. I cannot imagine what life would have been like without them ... they have enriched our lives. They were not a replacement for Dawn. My parents wanted to adopt before her death but the church would not allow them to do so because there were 'too many children in the family.' Four years later, when adoption was the furthest thing from their minds, my parents got a call ... two needy children. I feel terrible saying this but this would never have happened if Dawn had lived. They filled a gap at the time and got mom back into life ... but were not a replacement for Dawn."

Following the above description and the interview, the research question was rephrased in order to obtain a more spontaneous, non-reflective description of the loss experience. A modified form of the "Letter to Research Participants" (Form A) containing the following research question was subsequently posted to the second and third volunteers in the preliminary study requesting a written description:

"Could you please describe in as much detail as possible, just as the thoughts and feelings come to you, what you experienced at the time of the death of your brother or sister. Please focus on your feelings, on what it was like for you, at the time of the loss and how you feel now".

**Volunteer 2 - Mary**

Mary was twelve years old when she lost her twenty-one-year old brother in an aeroplane accident fifty-one years ago. She has one surviving elder brother. At the time of volunteering to participate in the study, Mary was 63 years old, married with a family of her own.

***Written Description:***

Fifty one years ago when I was twelve years old and a boarder at school in K - I was summoned to the Headmistress' office to be told that my brother, nine years older, had been killed in a small aeroplane accident on his first solo flight. I can remember the shock and disbelief that I felt then - I spent a lot of time in the School Chapel talking to God about why him, and where was he now? I remember being fetched to be with my parents and other brother (3 years older) at our great friend's farm in M. My Mother was absolutely stricken with shock and had tick bite fever on top of it. My father was also in a bad way - after the post mortem there was a burial in M. to which I did not go - in hindsight regrettable as there was no finality of goodbye for me. I have never been to see his grave but my brother has, and perhaps that is what I will do this year. After the initial wave of press photos and letters of condolence from his friends in D. and schoolmates in the U.K. a blanket of silence came over us. My Mother couldn't hear or speak his name without breaking down. Photos of him were put away so the only persons to speak to were my father and brother until we met with a friend he had made in D. who was a poet and an artist as was John although he had joined big business in the form of T. Bros. Incorp. So I developed quite a crush on him as a surrogate! That was four years later. A few months after the accident I changed schools to be a day scholar and although I had been to umpteen different schools I took a long time to make friends this time. I became quite a loner, introspective, I read a lot and because I was the only one at home - I was in adult company most of the time. Then I bought myself a horse which made a great difference to my life. I was able to get out for hours on end, explore a large area of H. and northern suburbs of M. (no danger in those days except summer storms). These were marvellous times to think and brother John became a hero to my mind - somebody who had achieved a lot in his short life - the ache of loneliness and regret that I hadn't known him better. Due to the war years when he was stranded in England for 6 years - he only came into my life when I was 8 so I would never know him as an adult - just a kid sister. The atmosphere at home was sombre - my mother who used to be a gay person - play the piano, have parties with sing songs - was not the same anymore; compounded by the fact we had only settled in South Africa the year before the tragedy - we only knew a few people. The M. family was very good to us and our happiest times were with them. They taught me how to ride a bicycle and horses and enjoy farm life (which I do to this day!) Then the school holidays were highlights when brother Jack came home and sometimes brought friends, so life became slowly more normal. Looking back I feel that I was rather robbed of my youth and was far too mature for my age. By eighteen I felt "old" - seen too much, felt too much, quite world-weary in fact. I was confirmed an ... but we never went to church as a family (my Mother couldn't forgive God for her loss) which was a pity in hindsight. The spiritual life means a lot to me now.

The third volunteer was unable to provide a written description but was very willing to *speak* about her loss experience and an interview was arranged. Her description is included in the main body of the thesis.