

**PROACTIVE COPING, JUST-WORLD BELIEFS AND
FUTURE ASPIRATIONS OF AN ADULT SURVIVOR
OF CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE**

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2010



**PROACTIVE COPING, JUST WORLD BELIEFS AND FUTURE ASPIRATIONS OF
AN ADULT SURVIVOR OF CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE**

by

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submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree

MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS
Educational Psychology

in the

Department of Educational Psychology
Faculty of Education

at the

University of Pretoria

SUPERVISOR

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PRETORIA

October 2010

This dissertation is dedicated to...

The women will who find their own stories of courage, hope, and triumph in these pages, I salute you, I honour you, I celebrate you.

My loving mother Nelisiwe Dlamini, you are the wind beneath my wings. I dedicate this to you because you have been more than any daughter could have asked for, I am blessed to be able to call you mama. We did it!

My grandmother Magaret Dlamini and aunt Phutile Dhlamini who have long passed on to be with the Lord but are still very much alive in my heart; I know that your prayers for me have outlived you and through this dissertation many of them are answered. I thank you for being my very own super heroes. I so wished you could have lived to see this day.

My siblings, Fakazi, Thembumenzi and Sandzisiwe Nxumalo, I have started the path, follow suit; you have no excuse but to walk on it.

Tebogo Tsebe, my best friend and my biggest cheerleader, I am beyond blessed to have you, thank you for the support, for holding my hand and wiping my tears on the days when I felt like giving up.

My friends, classmates and sisters; Temnotfo Nkambule and Abigail Baloyi, we did it and it is only the beginning of greater things to come.

Tshepiso Matentjie, I do not know where to begin, but I thank you for being an inspiration on so many levels, for believing in me when I couldn't find a reason to, for challenging me to find me.

So many people on earth and beyond the grave, who have made invaluable contributions to building me up as a woman and as a student,
ngiyabonga kwandze lapho nitsetse khona!!



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the following people who contributed towards the completion of my study:

My Heavenly Father for having led and directed me on this journey, for providing me with the strength, resources and insight to conduct this study. All that I am is because of You and I give You the glory for this work.

My supervisor, Dr Human-Vogel for your guidance and support from the beginning of this study right up until the end, for not settling for less than my best, you were a blessing to work with.

The participant who agreed to share her experiences on such a personal experience. I thank you for your courage and willingness to open up to a stranger; you have taught me so much.

My sponsors, the Government of Swaziland and Canon Collins for their unique contributions towards my education, I could not have done it without you.

The MEd Educational Psychology group 2010, for all the support, it's been a quite a journey that we have taken together and because of that, I will never forget you.

My family, for their support throughout my studies.

Thendo Sinugo and Ntabiseng Mushi, thanks for your help.

My editor, Ms Sharon Donavon, thank you for your patience and hard work.



DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I Tebuhleni Phila Nxumalo (student number 25297415) declare that:

*Proactive Coping, Just-World Beliefs and Future Aspirations of an Adult
Survivor of Childhood Sexual Abuse*

is my own work and that all references appear in the list of references.

TP Nxumalo

Date



SUMMARY

This study represents a shift in focus with regard to studies related to traumatic events such as childhood sexual abuse (CSA). It endeavours to go beyond documenting the prevalence of CSA to understanding the moderating factors that encourage adaptive adjustment to CSA.

The rationale of this study was to understand how personal beliefs in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping in the context of an earlier traumatic event such as CSA, are related. My secondary interest was to understand how the aforementioned constructs feature in the development of resilience. I strove to do this by exploring the relationship between proactive coping, just-world beliefs (with specific reference to personal belief in a just world) and future aspirations of a survivor of childhood sexual abuse.

I made use of an instrumental case study design. A single participant was purposively selected for this study due to her unique features of being a self-identified resilient survivor of child sexual abuse. Data was collected over a period of three months by means of semi-structured interviews, drawings and theory-based scales. In this study I made use of qualitative data analysis to explore the theoretical relationships amongst the constructs.

The results of the study suggest that there is a relationship between personal belief in a just world and religiosity, and that this relationship may mediate the optimistic orientation in the participant of the present study. There also appears to be a relationship between the personal belief in a just world and future aspirations of the participant in this study, suggesting that the role of just world beliefs in terms of the active pursuit and investment in future goals need to be further examined. Finally, the relationship between positive future aspirations and proactive coping was less clear, requiring further investigation to elucidate this relationship.

Key Concepts

- Child sexual abuse
- Personal belief in a just world
- Future aspirations
- Proactive coping



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BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A perusal of current literature on child sexual abuse (CSA) paints a picture of widespread acknowledgment of and interest in the subject of CSA (Flanagan, 2001 & Whealin, 2007). CSA is a significant problem in communities all over the world and extends an open invitation to professionals to do their part in offering their professional expertise in a bid to generate solutions to the problem of CSA. The statistics on CSA are high and its sobering effects pervade all axes of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, (DSM-IV). However, there is also evidence that although the experience of traumatic events such as CSA increases the likelihood of maladaptive outcomes, some individuals demonstrate resilience (Brodhagen & Wise, 2008, p. 403).

Taking from the premise that it is possible to demonstrate resilience in the wake of traumatic events, this study seeks to move away from documenting prevalence of child sexual abuse to generating understanding of the processes and mechanisms that mediate positive adjustment to child sexual abuse. In the present study I explore the roles of just world beliefs (specifically personal belief in a just world), future aspirations and proactive coping of an adult survivor of CSA in positive outcomes related to CSA. The experience of CSA by the participant in this study provides the context for a deeper theoretical understanding of the interaction among the constructs in a participant who subjectively assesses herself as having developed resilience despite the experience of CSA.

Belief in a just world theory indicates that just world beliefs are fundamental in maintaining psychological balance and well-being (Aguar, Correia, Vala & Pereira, 2001, p. 51). It appears that belief in a just world acts as a protective resource to help victims of an unjust fate to cope so that they show more well-being after distressing events than those who do not believe in a just world. Studies reveal the positive benefits of holding just world beliefs (Furnham, 2003, p. 807) and have thus

inspired me to investigate the role of just world beliefs (with specific reference to personal belief in a just world) in the development of resilience.

Although “future aspirations” in itself does not represent an established theoretical construct, literature on future orientation suggests that imagining a possible future increases the chances that one may engage in behaviours that will bring the manifestation of that future. It has also been found to predict positive outcomes such as functional independence, life satisfaction, and engagement (Gan, Yang, Zhou & Zhang, 2007; Greenglass, Marques, de Ridder & Behl, 2005; Uskul & Greenglass, as cited in Sohl & Moyer, 2008 p. 139), making it a likely candidate for mediating positive adjustment.

Proactive coping is another phenomenon that is emerging as an important research construct insofar as its positive role in managing stressors is concerned. Scholars are now finding that it is possible for one to cope with a stressor *before* it occurs (Greenglass & Fiksenbaum, 2009, p. 30), making proactive coping theory particularly relevant in this study. The proactive coping theory presents proactive coping as a useful framework in making positive adjustment because it suggests that survivors of CSA can use negative past experiences as a resource to manage future potential stressors. This is done by cultivating the skill of anticipating a stressor and effectively managing it before it becomes a full-blown problem, making proactive coping an adaptive *goal* management strategy. It is against this theoretical milieu on CSA, personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping that I will explore the aforementioned constructs.

In the present study I embrace a positive approach by investigating mechanisms that may facilitate adaptive outcomes. This implies that the aim of the study is to examine constructs that may encourage positive adaptation and resilience following earlier trauma of CSA. This is an important area of focus because the effects of sexual abuse are suggested to be mediated by the formation of negative cognitive appraisals and the use of problematic coping strategies (Spaccarrelli, 1994, p. 343).

Using a qualitative approach, I explore the experiences of an adult survivor of CSA, who describes herself as resilient, in order to obtain an insider’s perspective on the

subjective experience of resilience as well as describing the relationship between personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping so as to better understand how these constructs are expressed on a practical level and this understanding can subsequently be used to inform intervention strategies as well as theory formation.

1.2 RATIONALE

The chief aim of this study is to generate understanding on the constructs of personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping in the context of an earlier traumatic event such as CSA. My secondary interest is to understand how the constructs feature in the development of resilience. I will particularly, examine the relationship between personal belief in a just world and future aspirations as well as whether and how future aspirations may motivate people to cope proactively. Research on these three constructs suggests that strong just-world beliefs may be linked to positive future orientation, and that positive future-orientation will encourage people to cope proactively to move towards the future they “see” for themselves. As such, this study can contribute to a better understanding of resilience and commitment processes.

Having examined the theoretical terrain on CSA, the following gap emerges from literature; we are yet to know with absolute certainty the specific types of cognitive appraisals and coping responses that are clearly linked to either positive adjustment or negative outcomes (Wright, Crawford & Sebastian, 2007, p. 598). Hence this study seeks to do its part in generating clearer understanding of the cognitive and coping responses that are linked with positive adjustment to CSA.

On a more personal note, my interest and calling in the field of psychology is in responding to the plight of women and children who have been abused by raising my voice for the muted voices of countless women and children that have been abused. It is in telling their stories so that through them we can learn how to help them heal and construct positive and meaningful futures, despite their past. I undertook to embark on this study because of the belief that through research that provides the platform for them to tell their stories; they can tell us more than what we

can imagine. In my own personal experience with loved ones who were sexually abused as children, I have found that one can never truly understand what it is like to experience a violation like CSA. And as such in our efforts as psychologists to reach out and help those who have been abused, we must be cautious in assuming that we understand the plight of our clients. When given the opportunity through avenues such as this study, we at least need to immerse ourselves in their stories and listen more than we speak so that we can hear them educate us on how they have transcended their past to a place where they can still experience life as positive and meaningful. I believe that through an investigation into the cognitive appraisals of a participant who has made positive adjustment to CSA, one is offered the unique opportunity to get an education and insider's perspective on the subjective experience of making positive adjustment to a negative situation.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and the proactive coping of a survivor of CSA. This is done with the expectation that the insight of this research will pave the way for a larger scale examination at a later stage where an understanding of the constructs and their relationship(s) thereof may be used to inform theory building on facilitating positive adjustment and commitment.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.4.1 PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the relationship between personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping in a resilient survivor of childhood sexual abuse?

1.4.2 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1. What are the participant's personal beliefs of justice in the world?*
- 2. What are the participant's future aspirations?*

3. *To what extent does a survivor of CSA engage in proactive coping?*

1.5 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

1.5.1 A SURVIVOR OF CSA

A survivor of CSA will refer to a female person over the age of 21 who, before the age 18, was sexually abused but is currently not being sexually abused nor living in the same house as the abuser.

1.5.2 PERSONAL BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD

Personal belief in a just world will refer to an endorsement of the belief in that, overall, events in one's life are fair (Dalbert, 2002, p. 127).

1.5.3 FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

Future aspirations will refer to the participant's identified set goals for the future which he or she is inspired in the present to progress towards (Quaglia & Cobb, 1996, p. 130). These will specifically refer to the value placed on the future versus current outcomes, the kinds of future-orientated thoughts that characterise thinking about future outcomes, possible selves, and goal pursuit.

1.5.4 PROACTIVE COPING

Proactive coping will refer to strategies employed by the participant to create opportunities for personal growth and building up resources that facilitate the pursuit of challenging goals (Greenglass, 2002; Schwarzer, 2001; Schwarzer & Taubert, 2002, as cited in Ouwehand, C., Ridder, D.T.D. & de, Bensing, 2005, p. 810). It will also include efforts made by the participant that may help to prevent future threats to personal goals (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997).

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.6.1 RESEARCH PARADIGM

This study will be informed by an interpretive paradigm which will serve as the lens that will be used to make sense of the data collected. This means that the study will be premised on the assumptions that reality is socially constructed by the participant and the researcher (Ponterotto, 2005) and that the findings of this study will express one of many possible realities. This is based on the understanding that reality is subjectively constructed and experienced, meaning that the meanings generated will capture the lived experience of an individual participant.

The participant's subjective experiences and meanings attached to the constructs of personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping will be accessed so as to generate insight on how these constructs are subjectively experienced by a resilient survivor of CSA as well as the relationships between these constructs in the context of resilience and positive adjustment to trauma.

1.6.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The current study is driven by a need to generate theoretical understanding of the constructs (personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping) and their relationship(s) rather than implementing intervention. Instrumental case studies lend themselves well to this type of research as they are used when one seeks to refine their understanding of something else and the case serves as a context to understand the primary issue (Stake, 1995 in Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 549). This essentially makes the case in itself a means to the end of gaining greater insight on the primary issue; which in this study is gaining deeper theoretical understanding of personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping. By way of an instrumental case study, the participant's history of CSA and emerging resilience will serve as contexts to generate deeper insights on the aforementioned constructs and their roles in mediating positive adjustment. The unique emphasis on the phenomenon not the case makes an instrumental case study design particularly useful for this somewhat atypical case because it allows for

the exploration of the phenomenon without concern over the typicality or atypicality of the case it's self.

It is hoped that with more research on a larger scale, with a multiplicity of research methods, enough data can be collected and used to generate a coherent theory on positive adjustment which can then be implemented in intervention practice.

1.6.3 SELECTION OF THE PARTICIPANT

The participant will be selected by means of purposive sampling. This is sampling based on knowledge about the population (Babbie, 2005). The participant in this study will be purposively selected due to her unique characteristic of being a female survivor of CSA who describes herself as resilient. It must be noted that findings from this study will not be representative of the population under study. This, however, does not in any way compromise the aims of this study as it is neither the aim nor the intent of this investigation to generalise but to generate preliminary understanding of an individual's experience of the constructs of personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping.

1.6.4 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data collection will comprise multiple semi-structured interviews, drawings and theory based scales which are presented in the form of questionnaires all of which will be used to elicit rich descriptions of the participant's experiences. Such a design is coherent and holds the promise of comprehensive results (Bryman, 2006). It lends itself well to achieving the objectives of the research as it is both flexible and allows for an inductive approach which is key in exploratory research. I also reason that such a design will position the research yielded to extend scholarship in the field of positive psychology.

Analysis will be performed simultaneously with data collection. This is particularly important to ensure the success of purposive sampling enabling me to reach a point of data saturation (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). This research will make use of the data analysis spiral suggested by Creswell (1998, p. 143) engaging in the procedures of data managing, reading and memoing, classifying, interpreting and presenting the

data. This requires that I engage in a process of moving in analytic circles, touching on several facets of analysis, circling around and around (Creswell, 1998, p. 143). In order to successfully manage the data, data will be organised into computer files and then converted into text (transcription). The text will be reduced and interrogated into summary form (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008) through a process of coding according to predetermined thematic ideas (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Data from transcripts will be rechecked to ascertain and verify whether insights from the selected categories have been elicited and captured. The participant will also be given an opportunity to verify the insights generated through member checking.

1.7 STANDARDS OF RIGOUR

In this study trustworthiness will be achieved by member checking and triangulation, while credibility will be enhanced by way of member checking and peer-debriefing (please see chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of these procedures). Although I will be the only researcher in the field, all data analysis and interpretation will be supervised by a research supervisor.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1.8.1 INFORMED CONSENT

The participant will be given a thorough explanation of the aims, potential risks and benefits of the research, following which she will be given the opportunity to make an informed decision on whether or not to participate in this study.

1.8.2 VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

The participant will also be made explicitly aware of the fact that she is in no way obligated to participate in the study and that she can withdraw from the research at any time without fear of persecution. I will make sure that comprehensive information with regard to the study is clearly conveyed to the participant, that her participation is voluntary and that she fully comprehends the nature of the study (Cohen, *et al.*, 2008).

1.8.3 CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality will be maintained through the exclusion of identifying information throughout the study and the participant will be given a pseudonym.

1.8.4 TRUST

A trusting relationship will be forged between the participant and I through effective rapport building before data collection by using knowledge of rapport building skills amassed throughout my training to be a psychologist.

1.9 CHAPTER OUTLINE

In this chapter I provided the theoretical background informing this study, the rationale as well as an overview of the procedures and principles that will be employed and adhered to in this study.

Chapter 2 will provide a review of both seminal and current literature on CSA, personal belief in a just world, future aspirations as well as proactive coping.

Chapter 3 will provide a detailed account of methodological choices and the reasons behind their use.

Chapter 4 will introduce the case by providing some background information so as to generate contextual understanding of the case as well as its appropriateness in answering the research question(s).

Chapter 5 will comprise the results of the study and analytic discussions of the data collected in the broad context of literature. The strengths and limitations of this study, as well as directions for future research, will also be discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Sexual abuse within our society is so widespread that virtually all children are at risk of abuse (Bolen, 2001). South Africa is not an exception; more than 67 000 cases of sexual assault against children were reported in 2000 in South Africa. Child welfare groups believe that this figure is modest; they propose that the number of unreported incidents could be up to 10 times that number (Flanagan, 2001). I reason that the high prevalence of CSA makes it something that cannot be ignored but rather calls for us to explore it in greater detail. There is a need for researchers to go beyond documenting prevalence to exploring mediating and moderating processes. This review is a response to the call for investigations into mediating processes of positive adjustment.

There are numerous maladaptive outcomes associated with CSA, for example Richter, Snider and Gorey (1997, as cited in, Gorey, Richter & Snider, 2001, p. 348), report that in their clinical experience with female survivors of CSA, they found that “one of every four survivors has identified themselves as a recovering alcoholic or drug addict. Nearly a third has reported a diagnosis of anorexia nervosa or bulimia, and approximately two-thirds of them have had some other problem with food such as compulsive eating or obesity”. In the same vein, an investigation by DiLillo (2001, p. 568) on the interpersonal functioning among women reporting a history of CSA revealed an unsettling picture of the interpersonal lives of women who were sexually abused as children. The study found a relatively stable pattern of difficulties across various realms of relationship functioning in the lives of survivors of CSA. DiLillo (2001, p. 568), found that survivors experienced dissatisfaction with intimate partner relations, a greater risk of revictimisation and difficulties maintaining appropriate boundaries with children, as well as discomfort with the emotional demands of parenthood.

Despite the known negative effects of CSA, authors such as Wright, *et al.* (2007, p. 597) and Lam and Grossman (1997) generally agree that there is potential for

positive adjustment following traumatic life experiences such as sexual abuse in childhood. Valentine and Feinauer (1993, p. 222-223) found that women who are resilient following CSA were able to find meaning in their lives, formed a belief that they control their destiny and are able to see CSA as a challenge instead of an insurmountable stumbling block. Similarly, Affleck and Tennen (1996, p. 914) confirm the possibility of positive adjustment following trauma by asserting that people can make positive adjustment to their adverse circumstances through benefit finding. Consequently, people use this knowledge to help comfort themselves in difficult times, and therefore bounce back from their adverse circumstances. Such findings beg the question; what are the mediating and moderating processes may contribute to the development of resilience? Especially since a history of CSA has the potential of leading to a loss of the victim's sense of life purpose and meaning (Wright, *et al.*, 2007, p. 597), thus making positive adjustment particularly important in the lives of those who have been sexually abused.

Although we are yet to fully understand the specific types of cognitive appraisals and coping responses that are clearly linked to either positive adjustment or negative outcomes (Wright, *et al.*, 2007, p. 597), Dalbert (2001, p. 175) has suggested that belief in a just world may be a possible mediator for positive adjustment. Thus, when people hold the belief that the world is a just world they are more able to invest in the future because their strong belief in a just world enables them to rely on a just world in which actions are justly rewarded at some point in the future. I make the submission that this way of thinking is adaptive and may facilitate resilient responses because it may encourage the development of a positive future-orientation, which is important for those who have been abused to develop resilience. My assertion is supported by Himelein and Mcelrath (1996, p. 747) who suggest that the belief that everyone will eventually get what they deserve, gives individuals confidence to invest in their own future.

Positive future-oriented thoughts and feelings such as optimism, hope, and proactivity have also been implicated as possible mediators of positive adjustment to CSA. For example, findings from a study by Brodhagen and Wise (2008, p. 408) on optimism and the experience of child sexual abuse revealed that optimism promotes resilience after traumatic events and mediates distress among individuals who have

experienced childhood abuse. However, the utility of optimism as a coping mechanism can be questioned. Dalbert (2001, p. 12) has offered preliminary evidence that although optimism is associated with good mental health, it cannot be interpreted as a coping resource because it is adversely affected by trauma. In contrast, the belief in a just world remains intact in the face of trauma and is thus argued to be a better buffer to stress than optimism.

Based on arguments from the literature in this review, I argue that personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping are compelling candidates for mediating positive adjustment following trauma and assist in the development of resilience. The goal of this chapter is therefore to engage in a theoretically based investigation of personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping as potential mediators of positive adjustment, whereby CSA serves as a context to understand these constructs and their meditative role. In the subsequent sections, I offer a review of literature on CSA, personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping.

I will be highlighting the factors that make it reasonable to nominate the previously mentioned constructs as candidates for positive adjustment to CSA. I will start by discussing CSA, personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping, and I will then conclude with a discussion on the conceptual framework that will guide this investigation.

2.2 CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE (CSA)

2.2.1 DEFINITION OF CSA

There are different ways of describing CSA, particularly because CSA is understood to be a social construction and how we conceptualize it is critically impacted by the theories that guide our thinking (Bolen, 2001). Internationally, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989) legally obliges countries to protect children's rights. Articles 34 and 35 of the CRC require states to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. This includes

outlawing the coercion of a child to perform sexual activity, the prostitution of children, and the exploitation of children in creating pornography.

One of the defining features of sexual abuse is that a peer or dominant adult forces or coerces a child into sexual activity. It includes fondling a child's genitals, masturbation, oral-genital contact, digital penetration and vaginal and anal intercourse. It is not solely restricted to physical contact, but also includes non-contact abuse such as adults exposing themselves to children, voyeurism and involving children in pornography (American Psychological Association, 2001). CSA can, however, be broadly defined as “the involvement of a child in sexual activity that the child does not comprehend, is unable to give consent to or is not developmentally prepared for, or that violates the laws and social norms of the community” (World Health Organisation, 1999, p. 15).

2.2.2 EPIDEMIOLOGY

A review of studies from 20 countries, including ten national representative surveys, showed rates of childhood sexual abuse of 7–36% for girls, and 3–29% for boys, with most studies reporting 1.5 to 3 times more sexual violence against girls than boys (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002, p. 1235). Most sexual abuse offenders are acquainted with their victims; approximately 30% are relatives of the child, most often siblings, parents, or other relatives; around 60% are other acquaintances such as friends of the family, babysitters, neighbours, teachers, or clergymen. Strangers are the offenders in approximately 10% of CSA cases (Whealin, 2007). Child Abuse Parts I and II (2007, as cited in Thompson & Henderson, 2007) found that boys are more likely to be approached by strangers and girls are more likely to be victims of incest. Most CSA abuse is committed by men; studies show that women commit 14% to 40% of offences reported against boys and 6% of offences reported against girls (Whealin, 2007).

South Africa is by no means an exception as the incidences of CSA in South Africa are also alarmingly high. The Human Rights Watch report on domestic violence and rape dubbed South Africa the ‘rape capital of the world’ and asserted that there were 35 rapes for every one reported to the police (Human Rights Watch, 1995, as cited in

Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002, p. 1231). These findings are in agreement with those of a South African based, non-governmental organisation called Childline. Childline conducted an overview of statistics of reported child abuse over a period of ten years (1991-2002) and noted that there was a 400% increase in the number of CSA cases in their centres in the past eight years and a decrease in the average age of the sexual assault victim (from 10-12 years old to 7 years old) (van Niekerk, 2004, as cited in Centre for Child Law, Faculty of Law, 2008, p. 5).

2.2.3 MEDIATING FACTORS IN CSA

The aforementioned statistics present CSA as a widespread challenge in our societies that may negatively affect adult psychosocial functioning. “The existence of a small but fascinating minority of CSA survivors, who have been able to withstand the expected negative impact of childhood trauma” (Himelein & Mcelrath, 1996, p. 747), gives rise to crucial questions. Questions such as what factors or characteristics might mediate the differential outcomes between this group from those who struggle to make the positive resolutions of their abuse? Such questions make it useful to seek insight into the possible mediators of CSA to get deeper insight into the mediating processes themselves as well as CSA. This is done with the hope that the deeper our understanding of the mediators facilitating positive adjustment to traumatic events such as CSA, the better informed we as researchers will be on the possible resources that may need to be mobilised to support victims of traumas such as CSA so that they can successfully cope with it. This is especially important because victims of CSA cannot change the fact that CSA has occurred, but through dedicated research survivors may be supported to make positive adjustment the abuse and therefore experience wellbeing.

Empirical studies, using samples of female survivors of CSA, report that cognitive strategies and coping styles play a significant role in psychological adjustment to the abuse (Perrott, Morris, Martin & Roman, 1998, p 1137). Similarly, Walsh, Fortier and DiLillo (2010, p. 2) suggested that the coping strategies employed by victims may be a potential determinant of the variation in long-term functioning reported by victims. Scholars, such as myself are now attempting to understand the mechanisms of the association between positive long-term adjustment and stressful events like CSA.

The literature makes empirically generated insights on the thoughts and behaviours that people use to manage the internal and external demands of stressful situations such as CSA vital if scholars are to generate insight on adaptive adjustment processes (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004, p. 746). The cited need for enquiry into adaptive coping mechanisms serves as the point of departure for this research and as such I nominate personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping as possible mediators of positive adjustment. I will commence my enquiry with a discussion on personal belief in a just world and will go to discuss future aspirations and proactive coping. This is done with the aim of justifying their nomination as likely moderators of positive adjustment.

2.2.3.1 Personal belief in a just world

In the course of their lives, people can be faced with serious losses and injustices (such as CSA). These losses, whether suffered by ourselves or by other people, oftentimes motivate people to seek an explanation so that they can understand their causes and guide their future behaviour (Correia & Vala, 2003, p. 379). Greenberg (1995 in Calhoun, Cann, Tedeschi & McMillan, 2000, p. 522) suggests that cognitive processing is an important component of the individual's attempt to rebuild their worldview and to adapt to trauma. Dalbert (2001, as cited in Fetchenhauer, Jacobs & Belschak, 2005, p. 126), offers the suggestion that a strong belief in a just world could serve as a personal resource when suffering from extremely unjust events and victimisation because it helps the victim to find psychological meaning in their experience, suggesting that personal belief in a just world may be a useful meaning-making framework in the lives of those who have been abused.

In an investigation of the influence of both causal attributions and belief in a just world on the degree to which victims of sexual violence are able to adjust to their victimisation, Fetchenhauer *et al.* (2005, p. 37) found that belief in a just world was positively correlated with improved adjustment to the victimisation. It further appears that belief in a just world presents itself as an important factor in moderating the experience of challenges and threats in potentially stressful situations (Furnham, 2003, p. 807). It specifically carries the potential of encouraging positive emotional responses in the face of injustice. Otto, Boos, Dalbert, Schöps and Hoyer (2006, p.

1081), found that a strong personal belief in a just world among German flood victims resulted in less depression, anxiety, and other psychological symptoms including social insecurity, depression, hostility and paranoid thinking.

From the above it appears that strong personal belief in a just world protects victims from engaging in maladaptive causal explanations for their victimisation (Fetchenhauer *et al.*, 2005, p. 37). On the other hand, Lench and Chang (2007, p. 134) found that “greater belief in an unjust world, was related to greater anxiety, depressive symptoms, neuroticism, defensive making such as denial and disengagement”. Such findings make it plausible to assume that personal belief in a just world, which is antithetical to belief in an unjust world, could significantly mediate the positive adjustment to CSA and invites further inquiry into just world beliefs and the role it plays with regard to cognitive appraisals and coping strategies of survivors of CSA.

2.2.3.2 Future aspirations

Aspinwall (2005, p. 205) noted that “the study of both normative and extraordinary life changes provide an opportunity for one to examine the role that controllability, uncertainty, and the presence of concurrent and anticipated negative feelings and outcomes may play in future thinking and behaviour”. CSA is certainly an extraordinary life change and based on Aspinwall’s (2005) assumption it appears reasonable to hypothesise that the experience of CSA may provide the survivor with the opportunity and challenge of reflecting on key facets of their life which have an influence on their future behaviour and thinking; that is how they go about managing their lives in the aftermath of the abuse.

Effective life management requires representation of the life that the person envisions so that concrete action may be taken guided by this future orientated representation. Having positive futuristic aspirations/goals may be an especially important resource for those who have been victims of CSA, facilitating a commitment to a positive future. Aspiring for a positive future is important because it is particularly predictive of wellbeing (Sohl & Moyer, 2009, p. 5). This suggests that the nature of the future that one aspires towards (i.e. on dimensions of positivity and negativity), has an influence

on how one adapts to CSA. It can further be argued that the nature of the future should also be influenced by personal belief in a just world because a strong personal belief in a just world may be more associated with positive future-orientation

2.2.3.3 Proactive coping

Literature on the meditational role of coping in victims' long-term adjustment suggests that coping may explain, in part, the inconsistency in outcomes associated with a history of CSA. Thus, CSA may promote certain coping strategies that may, in turn, be related to diverse outcomes (Walsh, *et al.*, 2010, p. 3). Gibson and Leitenberg (2001, p. 1344) caution that the methods of coping that are used to deal with the stress of sexual assault become risk factors for psychological distress. Their research specifically indicated that disengagement and avoidant methods of coping lead to increased psychological distress. It is however suggested that, even in highly challenging situations, proactive coping and particular ways of thinking about the future are associated with good mental and physical health outcomes (Aspinwall, 2005, p. 206).

Walsh, *et al.* (2010, p. 2) submit that the differences in the extent and range of long-term correlates of CSA brings to the fore the need to understand the various intervening processes that may contribute to the diverse outcomes associated with CSA. My argument is that high personal belief in a just world is likely to motivate the pursuit of long-term goals due to the belief that the goals will be attained because they will be deserved as a result of proactive efforts to attain them. Furthermore, proactive individuals may be more conscious of threats to the realization of their future aspirations and are therefore likely to act before such threats can undermine their attempts to secure that future.

In this section of this review just world beliefs, future aspirations and proactive coping were nominated as possible mediators of positive adjustment as well as possible avenues for intervention in the aftermath of CSA. In the subsequent section, I offer an investigation into these processes. What follows is a more detailed study of these constructs (personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping) as

an understanding of these constructs may be useful in providing preliminary insight into the specific cognitive and behavioural modalities that may be adaptive to women following the experience of CSA.

2.3 BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD

2.3.1 THE BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD HYPOTHESIS

The belief in a just world hypothesis is in essence the belief or attitude that people generally get what they deserve (Aguiar, Vala, Correia & Pereira, 2008, p. 51). Belief in a just world therefore provides a conceptual framework for making sense of the world. It is about the way people attempt to provide a sense of security for themselves in a world in which "bad things" can and do happen to "good people" (Lerner, 1997, p. 30). Dalbert (2001, p. 123) also posits that belief in a just world is a personal disposition that may have an influence on situational feelings and cognitions.

While some scholars in the field of psychology understand belief in a just world to be a positive illusion in that "it encourages people to see the world in a predictable and meaningful way thus likely contributing to subjective wellbeing by seeing the world as fair" (Loo, 2002, p. 703); others take a opposite stance. Scholars such as Marx argued that the belief in a just world represents a false consciousness (Loo, 2002, p. 703). Similarly Lerner (1998, as cited in Furnham, 2003, p. 797) goes on to argue that "in effect, belief in a just world remains a fundamental delusion: 'fundamental' in that it seems essential for most people's sense of sanity and security". This research aligns itself with the line of thought espoused by Marx (Loo, 2002, p. 703) and Lerner (1998, as cited in Furnham, 2003, p. 797) to the extent that I raise the argument that belief in a just world is an essentially subjective and personal way of thinking that is negotiated by the individual for the individual.

The phrase "belief in a just world" was originally intended to provide a useful metaphor rather than a psychological construct. It promotes processes of internalisation of early goal-related, scripts, and may include the adoption of societal norms and values, as well as the desire to ensure a stable, controllable and benign

environment (Lerner, 1997, p. 30). This then suggests that belief in a just world helps shape moral codes and may therefore be instrumental in averting social calamity.

Insofar as the just world beliefs are concerned, there are two distinct ways of cognising about an unfair or unjust scenario. The first is an immediate evaluation of blame allocation, that is who or what is to blame for the injustice. The principal aim is to execute justice with virtually no consideration of the circumstances. The second is a more systemic consideration of attributions of responsibility and culpability (Lerner, 2003, p. 398).

Lerner (1977, p. 135 as cited in Hafer, Bègue, Choma & Dempsey, 2005, p. 430), posits that “when children move away from gratifying immediate impulses, they commit to a personal contract by which they agree to act according to what they have learned is prescribed with the assumption that an appropriately more desirable outcome will accrue to them in the future”. Belief in a just world hence signifies a personal contract whereby the more people want to rely on being treated justly by others, the more obligated they should feel to behave justly themselves (Dalbert, 2009, p. 3). Individuals do not simply experience being treated fairly as expected but as something they are entitled to or deserve because they have held up their end of the contract. Thus, a belief in a just world helps to maintain the personal contract (Hafer et al., 2005, p. 430). Confrontations with injustice, either observed or experienced, threaten this contract and as a result individuals with a strong personal belief in a just world may respond to this threat by trying to restore justice either in reality or psychologically (Dzuka & Dalbert, 2006, p. 6).

According to the belief in a just world theory, unfair outcomes threaten the belief in a just world by providing evidence to the contrary. This threat leads to discomfort and the person may be more likely to reduce the discomfort by altering the situation so it becomes "fair," rather than by changing their belief in the fairness of the world (Hafer & Correy, 1999, p. 190). This means that people can react to what they perceive to be an injustice in one of two ways; firstly by compensating the victim and in so doing restoring what are perceived to be violations of justice, and secondly restoring justice by adopting the attitude that the victim probably deserved his or her fate (Chasteen &

Madey, 2003, p. 315). Either way, the person in question preserves their belief that the world is certainly a fair place where one in essence reaps what they have sown.

Confrontations with injustice, either observed or experienced, threaten the belief that the world is just. Individuals high in belief in a just world respond to this threat by trying to restore justice either in reality or psychologically. If the injustice cannot feasibly be resolved in reality, they try to assimilate the experience to their belief in a just world (Dzuka & Dalbert, 2006, p. 6). This begins to reflect the subjectivity of one's notion of belief in a just world and that people in various ways are trying to "balance" the scales of justice in their own subjective universe.

Taking the same basic premise into another sphere of thought, that of Judeo-Christianity, there is a body of scholarship that argues that just world beliefs represent an expression of religious faith – particularly Judeo-Christian themes connecting "sin and suffering," "virtue and grace," and the notion that moral behaviour is rewarded while transgressions are punished (Hunt, 2000, p. 329). Judeo-Christianity portrays a God of mercy and justice who ensures that no true believer or righteous person will suffer, certainly not unjustly (Lerner, 1997, p. 31). Furnham (2003, p. 796), similarly submits that "religious beliefs flourish when people believe in a just world and they serve to explain the problem of evil or why bad things happen to good people". This belief may be explicated in the New Testament book of Galatians in the Holy Bible. Galatians 6 verse 7 reads; "Be not deceived; God is not mocked for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (The Holy Bible, New International Version, 1973, p. 216). It is however outside the scope of this research to venture into an investigation of the role of religiosity in just world beliefs because the disciplinary focus of this study is in psychology, not theology.

2.3.2 PERSONAL BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD

Close inspection of individual difference measures of belief in a just world have repeatedly indicated that belief in a just world is not a uni-dimensional construct (Lench & Chang, 2007, p. 126), but is rather a multidimensional construct. The multidimensional nature of the concept of belief in a just world has received attention by scholars such as (Dalbert, 1999, p. 91) who suggested that there may be different

domains (or worlds) in which the belief in a just world may vary and specifically that personal and general belief in a just world ought to be differentiated. Dalbert (2002, p. 127) states that “personal belief in a just world reflects the belief that, overall; events in one’s life are fair while general belief in a just world reflects the belief that, basically, the world is a just place.” It may, for example, be possible, for individuals to believe in a just world in the personal domain, but not in the broader societal domain.

Having distinguished between general belief in a just world and personal belief in a just world, it should be noted that one can reasonably expect personal belief in a just world to be a more important factor in predicting success in coping with unfairness than general belief in a just world, because personal belief in a just world is more personally relevant and therefore the need to defend it will be more pronounced (Dalbert, 2002, p. 127). Moreover, when contrasted with general belief in a just world, personal belief in a just world appears to be more strongly correlated with subjective wellbeing and self esteem. (Dalbert, 1999, p. 83). Dalbert (2002, p. 127) is of the opinion that personal belief in a just world will endow people with more trust in being treated fairly by others than will general belief in a just world. Positive attributes of personal belief in a just world such as this inform my assertion that personal belief in a just world may be a useful cognitive framework in the wake of trauma, such as CSA.

2.3.3 CSA AND THE NEED TO BELIEVE IN A JUST WORLD

Adversity can threaten one’s most deep-seated truths about oneself and the world one lives in. Thus, personal belief in a just world becomes important because it presents people with a meaning-making framework (Strelan, 2007, p. 882). The literature on CSA suggests that CSA motivates a search for meaning to make sense of experiences that violate beliefs in a safe and just world (Feiring & Cleland, 2007, p. 1170). It is herein that the need to believe in a just world may be a useful framework to organise and make sense of the experience of the injustice faced by the victim because, following CSA the world may no longer be perceived as benevolent and meaningful (Gibson & Leitenberg, 2001, p. 1344). Just world research indicates that personal belief in a just world is vital in helping victims of critical life events such as

CSA protect their psychological functioning by encouraging them to trust that the world is meaningful (Dalbert, 2001, p. 204).

Dalbert (2001, p. 140) submits that people facing a stressful, but not intentionally self-inflicted fate (for example, parents of disabled children, cancer patients, etc.) may be seen as victims of an unjust fate. The aforementioned definition of an “unjust fate” can be applied equally and perhaps more appropriately to CSA as it is not only an event that is not normally engendered by the victim but also involves a profound violation of privacy and sense of self. Furthermore, unlike disability and chronic illnesses such as cancer, where there is often no clear “someone” to blame, with CSA the roles of the victim and perpetrator are precisely defined.

Even though the specific features of the abuse experiences are unchangeable, individuals could benefit from therapy that focuses on the individual’s beliefs about the abuse (Feiring, Tasksa & Lewis, 1996 as cited in Ginzburg, Arnow, Hart, Gardner, Koopman, Classen, Giese-Davis, & Spiegel, 2006, p. 931). Past research has revealed that individual differences in the belief in a just world foretell emotional responses to negative outcomes (Hafer & Correy, 1999, p. 200). It specifically appears that a strong personal belief in a just world assists people in coping with hurts and injustices as such individuals are less likely to dwell on the negative events or believe that an event was unfair. Instead, they attach less importance to transgressions or engage in cognitive reframing, making their personal belief in a just world more adaptive, even in situations that are highly adverse (Strelan, 2007, p. 883).

One can then assume that victims of an unjust fate with a strong personal belief in a just world are likely to lean towards interpreting their fate as at least partly caused by their own behaviour (Dalbert, 2001, p. 204). That is, victims might try to protect their personal belief in a just world by ascribing fault for injustices to themselves and by defining their fate as just and legitimate (Fetchenhauer, *et al.*, 2005, p. 26). This suggests that it may be beneficial for survivors of CSA to have a high personal belief in a just world because it may serve as an adaptive meaning-making framework that allows for an interpretation of the injustice that has befallen them as fair. Such an interpretation becomes adaptive in the sense that it protects the person from

ruminating on the abuse and experiencing significant negative emotions related to the abuse. This may be because it is not construed as a grave injustice against the victim due to the feelings of responsibility that the victim may have in relation to the unjust situation.

It can further be assumed that such a behavioural attribution is adaptive because self-blame gives meaning to the critical event and defends one's personal belief in a just world, and can hence enhance wellbeing since a strong personal belief in a just world is associated with facilitating engagement in long-term goals, promoting achievement behaviour, strengthening one's trust in other people and society as a whole as well as reducing feelings of anger (Dalbert, 2001, p. 201, 204). This assumption is supported by Hafer and Correy (1999, p. 191) who posit the argument that individuals with a high personal belief in a just world are likely to experience less negative and more positive emotion as they are prone to perceive the negative events that befall them as less unfair than individuals with low personal belief in a just world.

It can therefore be hypothesised that personal belief in a just world mediates positive adjustment to CSA because the level of personal belief in a just world a person has is linked to how a person responds to personal transgressions. Studies such as that of Strelan (2007, p. 882) examined the relationship between belief in a just world and dispositional forgiveness of others and the self and found that individuals with a strong personal belief in a just world are more apt to forgive others and themselves. However, individuals with a weak personal belief in a just world, who believe the world is unfair, are less apt to forgive. Moreover, If one accepts the presence of a dispositional need to believe that the world is a fair place as proposed by Dalbert (2001) as well as Furnham's (2003) argument that personal belief in a just world is functional for the individual, it then becomes vital that victims of CSA find a way of maintaining their personal belief in a just world if they are to have any hope of coping.

By virtue of the fact that people have a desire to believe that the world is a just and fair place and that they will be rewarded with positive outcomes if they invest time and effort into attaining their goals (Lench & Chang, 2007, p. 126), personal belief in a just world may be a resource that facilitates future aspirations or an investment into

the future through goal-setting. I therefore suggest that the next step in the search for mediators of positive adjustment may be to investigate the kinds of future aspirations that survivors of CSA may hold. This is done with the assumption that having positive and clearly defined goals may be a motivating factor that keeps the individual constructively engaged and committed to a meaningful future despite their traumatic past.

2.4 FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

2.4.1 FUTURE ASPIRATIONS DEFINED

The construct of future aspirations in itself does not represent a developed theoretical construct but rather a term describing a future oriented way of thinking about oneself and life. Future aspirations can include major life goals which involve a person's aspirations to shape their life context and establish general life structures (Roberts & Robins, 2000, p. 1285). In their pursuit for these futuristic representations, individuals are motivated to develop strategies and to invest effort in the pursuit of their goals (Lewin, 1943 as cited in Karniol & Ross, 1996, p. 595). By way of the preceding assertion, Lewin (1943 as cited in Karniol & Ross, 1996, p. 595) brings to the fore the suggestion that future aspirations and goals allude to the same concept of representations of a future that one strives towards. Similarly, Sirin, Diemer, Jackson, Gonsalves and Howell (2004, p. 445) in their research on the future aspirations of urban adolescents used the terms "goals" and/or "future aspirations" interchangeably alluding to the fact that these two constructs in essence describe the same phenomena. Taking from these theorists, it was elected to use the terms goal and future aspirations interchangeably.

The need for the construction of future goals is important because, people often wrestle with the tension between who they are and what they would like to become (Roberts & Robins, 2000, p. 1284). Goals may be useful in reducing this alienation as they provide a framework by which one may guide their thoughts about what they want to become. Abraham, Schubotz and Yves von Cramon (2008, p. 106) submit that the ability to ponder about the future is a hallmark of human imagination and has significant implications for cognitive and behavioural processes. In fact, "thinking

about the future is such an integral component of human cognition, that it has been claimed to distinguish us from other species” (Atance & O’Neill, 2001).

Acting in light of imagined futures is, however, not always a plain and simple process because of the role of processes such as balancing long- versus short-term interests, mental contrasting, the role of affective states and motivation, the ability to anticipate what you will want in the future, the value one places on the future outcomes versus the value placed on past and present outcomes, and the willingness to consider information that might improve future outcomes (Aspinwall, 2005, p. 207-213). This suggests that acting in light of subjectively constructed representations of the future may be more complicated than one may initially imagine. It requires that the person takes into consideration a wide variety of factors and the influence of processes such as those stated above, as they will have an influence on the realisation of those representations.

2.4.2 FUTURE ASPIRATIONS AND CSA

In a study that aimed to find out the variables that women who were sexually abused perceived to be important and helpful in helping them overcome the early experience of sexual abuse, Valentine and Feinauer (1993, p. 223) found that “finding a meaningful life task can be important in wellbeing in the aftermath of sexual abuse”. This suggests that a meaningful future goal is a very important resource in making positive adjustment to CSA. Belle and Mau (1971 in Karinol & Ross, 1996, p. 595) in their seminal work explain that potential futures vary on three major dimensions: positivity (i.e. Does the future hold good or bad outcomes?), controllability (i.e. Can one influence one’s future outcomes?), and temporal distance (i.e. How far away is the envisaged future?). What Belle and Mau are essentially suggesting is that the kinds of future that people imagine for themselves motivate certain behaviours directed at achieving it. This makes understanding the details of this imagined future very important as it carries significant implications for behaviour as well as understanding what motivates people to maintain their commitments.

If we accept the conclusion of Aspinwall (2005, p. 222) that different ways of thinking about future outcomes are related to the successful generation of the thoughts and

behaviours required to attain or to avoid those future outcomes; I reason that it is reasonable to suggest that It may be beneficial to investigate the contents of the thoughts of survivors of CSA with regards to the future as well as the relationship that the nature of these thoughts on dimensions of positivity, (i.e. Does the future hold good or bad outcomes?) has with the coping behaviour of someone who has experienced sexual abuse.

2.5 PROACTIVE COPING

2.5.1 AN ALTERNATIVE WAY OF COPING

In the introductory section of this review it was suggested that inquiry into proactive coping would be a beneficial focus of study due to its unique focus of moving away from simply reacting to stressors towards planning proactively how to deal with potential stressors. In this section, a discussion on proactive coping is offered. I will then go on to suggest that proactive coping may play a mediatory role in positive adjustment to stressful and traumatic events such as CSA warrants investigation. I have taken it upon myself to investigate proactive coping not only because there is merit in exploring proactive coping, but also as a response to the challenge I placed on researchers to invest themselves in the exploration of positive coping mechanisms such as proactive coping.

Recent developments in positive psychology and coping research have begun to look for alternative ways of coping that may promote positive adaptation to stressors. Proactive coping is one such avenue that has caught the attention of researchers as it posits a unique future oriented type of coping that “has to do with ways people cope in advance to prevent or mute the impact of events that are potential stressors” (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004, p. 757). Proactive coping suggests a temporal aspect of coping that has long been neglected by researchers. Researchers are, however, realising that it is possible for a person to cope *before* a stressful event takes place (Schwarzer & Taubert 2002, p. 7) making proactive coping a meaningful area of research for those who are interested in understanding coping.

PROACTIVE COPING

In the same way that the juxtapositioning of the words 'just' and 'world' may appear paradoxical, one can posit the same argument with the notion of proactive coping. One immediately wonders about the feasibility of coping *before* the fact. This is especially due to the fact that one tends to think of coping as "a process that unfolds in the context of a situation appraised as personally significant and exceeding one's resources for coping" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984 as cited in Greenglass & Fiksenbaum, 2009, p. 29), meaning that the stressful situation has either occurred or is in progress. From the above it emerges that coping has been traditionally construed as a reactive process, a response to a stressor that has occurred, hence the notion of coping prior to the manifestation of the stressor causes some disequilibrium to this "neat" conceptualisation of coping. The initial dissonance when broaching the subject may also account for the different definitions of this phenomenon offered by scholars.

Schwarzer and Taubert (2002, p. 8) posit that proactive coping has to do with the way an individual attempts to improve their life and develops resources that assure progress and quality of functioning. On the other hand, Aspinwall and Taylor (1997, p. 417) assert that proactive coping consists of efforts that are undertaken before a potentially stressful event occurs so as to prevent it from happening or to change its form before it happens. To reconcile some of the conceptual differences in proactive coping theory, Sohl and Moyer (2009, p. 7) found support for the finding that the proactive coping subscale of the Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI), which assesses Schwarzer and Taubert's (2002) definition of proactive coping (where proactive coping is understood to be a method of assessing future goals and setting the stage to achieve them successfully), should represent the standard assessment of this construct. Schwarzer and Taubert (2002) regard Aspinwall and Taylor's (1997) notion of "proactive coping" as being, in fact, "preventive coping" (Gan *et al.*, 2007, p. 853). What these scholars are proposing is that proactive coping is not a uni-dimensional construct but it is rather bi-dimensional where proactive coping is an overarching term used to describe preventative and proactive coping (Schwarzer & Taubert, 2002, p. 8).

The existence of different frameworks on proactive coping may be due to the limited research on proactive coping as it is an emerging field of interest in positive psychology. Based on current research, what seems to be clear is that proactive people accumulate resources, attempt to prevent the depletion of resources, and can make use of resources when required (Greenglass & Fiksenbaum, 2009, p. 30). This illuminates the fact that coping strategies play a critical role in an individual's physical and psychological wellbeing when faced with challenges, negative events and stress, and are therefore important areas of inquiry.

Schwarzer and Taubert (2002, p. 10) specify two main differences between proactive coping and preventive coping. First of all, "preventive coping aims at dealing with uncertain threatening events that will occur mainly in the distant future whereas proactive coping aims at uncertain challenging goals. Secondly, with preventive coping, people accumulate resources and take general precautions to protect themselves against a variety of critical events whereas with proactive coping people accumulate specific resources and develop skills and strategies in their pursuit".

While Schwarzer and Taubert (2002) have focused on describing the differences between proactive coping and other forms of coping, other scholars such as Aspinwall and Taylor (1997, p. 417) focused on the process of proactive coping, proposing that there are five stages of proactive coping which are: (1) resource accumulation; (2) recognition of potential stressors; (3) initial appraisal; (4) preliminary coping efforts; and (5) elicitation and use of feedback concerning initial efforts. From the above it becomes evident that "proactive coping integrates processes of personal quality of life management with those of self-regulatory goal attainment" (Greenglass, 2002, p. 38).

Schwarzer (2000, as cited in Greenglass & Fiksenbaum, 2009, p. 30) goes further and postulates that there are three key ways that proactive coping differs from traditional conceptions of coping in three main ways: First, traditional forms of coping tend to be reactive. They deal with stressful events that have already occurred and their purpose is to compensate for past harm or loss. Proactive coping is more future-oriented. The second distinction is that reactive coping involves risk management whereas proactive coping is about *goal* management. Third, the motivation for

proactive coping is more positive; it results from perceiving situations as challenging instead of threatening.

2.5.2 PROACTIVE COPING AND CSA

Gibson and Leitenberg (2001, p. 1344, 1355), posit that “the methods of coping that are used to deal with the stress of a sexual assault are implicated as risk and protective factors that affect psychological adjustment to CSA”, and specifically that “disengagement coping with a recent sexual assault is associated with more PTSD symptoms and general psychological distress”. A significant amount of research, however, points to the positive outcomes related to proactive coping. For example, Thoolen *et al.* (2009, p. 240) cite numerous studies that have demonstrated that “people who take a future-oriented and proactive approach to their lives are more successful in avoiding stressors and are more likely to achieve their long-term goals”. Their own study yielded results that suggested proactive coping to be a significant predictor of long-term self-care behaviour in newly diagnosed patients with type 2 diabetes.

Although significant strides have been made in trauma research in the area of protective factors and resiliency, there is still a gap in scholarship on the effects of proactive coping and positive emotion post trauma (Vernon, Dillon & Steiner, 2009, p. 117). What is known about proactive coping that sets it apart as a possible candidate for positive adaptation is that it has a unique quality of going beyond the traditional stimuli-reaction pattern; it is rather “the kind of search that makes an individual see the challenges and opportunities from a potential stressor. They gain opportunities for personal growth and actualisation of their full potential” (Gan *et al.*, 2007). Greenglass, Fiksenbaum & Eaton (2006, p. 17) found an range of data that suggests that proactive coping is a self-regulatory coping strategy that is associated with higher levels of well-being, lower levels of depression, and better psychological functioning. This suggests that it may be a useful coping strategy for victims of CSA.

The case for proactive coping as an adaptive way of coping with CSA is strengthened by findings such as those of Sansone and Berg (1993, as cited in Aspinwall, 2005, p. 206) who, using diverse methods and populations, asserted that, even in situations

that are highly challenging, proactive coping efforts can be associated with good mental and physical health outcomes. This is further supported by a cross-sectional study of community-dwelling seniors where proactive coping was found to be associated with less functional disability and that proactive coping can improve one's quality of life (Greenglass, *et al.*, 2006, p. 21). Correlational studies suggest that the use of avoidant or emotion-focused coping strategies both in the immediate aftermath of abuse and over time by survivors of CSA is related to greater psychological distress in adulthood (Walsh, *et al.*, 2010, p. 8). These studies encourage the expectation that proactive coping has the potential to be efficacious post CSA.

In light of the above one can assume that the coping strategies employed by survivors of CSA have profound implications for the survivor's ability to cope. Although very little is known about the relationship between proactive coping and CSA, the seriousness of the physical and psychological scars of CSA coupled with suggestions by scholars that proactive coping may indeed be a useful mediator for positive adjustment to adverse situations, undoubtedly summons me as a researcher to explore proactive coping in the context of CSA.

2.6 DISCUSSION

CSA is undeniably a widely studied phenomenon and as long as studies continue to document extensive prevalence of CSA, we cannot afford to remove it from the agenda of social researchers. Having read the literature on CSA, I have made a shift from seeking to understand the conditions under which CSA occurs to understanding the conditions and processes that may lead to positive adaptation to those who have experienced CSA. Because one cannot change that the abuse has occurred, understanding the conditions under which the abuse occurred becomes less useful to those who have already experienced the abuse and need support to make meaning of the abuse and positively reconstruct their lives in spite the abuse. My assertion and the grand aspiration of this study is that, through research that specifically aims to understand the mechanisms that foster positive adjustment, we can learn how to guide survivors in making positive adjustment in the wake of traumatic experiences like CSA and remain committed to the pursuit of a positive and meaningful future.

This review has led me to draw the following four conclusions; firstly, the problem for scholars is firstly to interrogate what mechanism or strategies would be beneficial to a survivor of CSA to make positive adjustments in the aftermath of CSA, secondly that both coping behaviour and cognitive appraisals are amongst the most significant mediators of adaptation to CSA (Perrott, *et al.*, 1998; Spaccarrelli, 1994) and thirdly that personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping may be useful cognitive appraisal and coping strategies that mediate positive adjustment to CSA.

Dalbert (2009, p. 11) asserts that, theoretically, personal belief in a just world encourages investment in the future. Future aspirations (goals) represent a mental representation of a desired future and motivate certain behaviour directed at achieving the envisioned future (Markus, *et al.*, 1990, as cited in Karinol & Ross, 1996, p. 595). Lastly, proactive coping can be understood to be a way evaluating and managing one's future goals in order to successfully achieve desired goals (Sohl & Moyer, 2009, p. 139) by managing small problems before they become big ones (Aspinwall, 2005, p. 221).

Although literature has provided compelling support for the merits of the aforementioned coping and cognitive appraisal process, I desire to know on an empirical level, how a survivor of CSA experiences and makes meaning of the theoretical constructs of personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping. I am also inspired to construct an understanding of the relationships that they may have and their subsequent role in promoting positive adaptation to CSA in the life of a survivor of CSA. There are many ways of accessing the desired insights, however, having learnt from scholars such as Brodhagen and Wise (2008, p. 404) that experiencing traumatic events like CSA can increase the likelihood of maladaptive outcomes, yet some individuals are resilient, I have elected to examine the cognitive appraisals and coping behaviours of a resilient survivor of CSA. This is done simply because the consequences of childhood sexual abuse necessitate that CSA be understood from both sides of the coin (psychopathology and resiliency) in order to generate innovative prevention and intervention strategies (Lam & Grossman, 1997, p. 178). This research constitutes an attempt to understand CSA from the resilient side of the coin.

2.7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Although the literature offers personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping as possible resources for facilitating wellbeing and positive adaptation in the aftermath of CSA; we are yet to reach conclusions about the specific types of cognitive appraisals and coping responses that are mediate positive adjustment or negative outcomes (Wright, *et al.*, 2007), hence the relevance of this study. In this chapter, I have offered an extensive review of the literature on CSA, personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping. Drawing on literature, I have gone further to submit theory based justifications for the nomination of personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping as possible mediators of positive adjustment to CSA and the need to generate knowledge on these constructs. The subsequent chapter will concern itself with describing the process that in exploring the relationship between the aforementioned constructs.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to explore and describe the relationship between just world beliefs, future aspirations and proactive coping as experienced by a resilient female survivor of CSA. Empirical studies using samples of women who have experienced CSA report that cognitive strategies and coping styles play an important role in psychological adjustment to abuse (Perrott, *et al.*, 1998, p. 1137). Findings such as these make it reasonable to believe that there may be a relationship between just world beliefs (specifically personal belief in a just world), future aspirations and proactive coping as they represent specific cognitive strategies. This makes them important areas of inquiry as both coping and cognitive strategies are implicated as important in adjustment to sexual abuse.

This investigation is conducted with the expectation that the insights gained from this research will expand theoretical understanding of just world beliefs, future aspirations and proactive coping theory. Furthermore; the insights of this research are further anticipated to pave the way for a larger scale examination at a later stage where an understanding of the relationship(s) between the constructs may be used to inform psychological intervention with survivors of CSA. In this chapter, I offer a discussion on the processes I used to collect and interpret the data in a bid to realise the aims of this research.

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

3.2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As a researcher, I found myself with a particular interest in two seemingly opposing fields of study, the one being women and children who have been abused, the second being the propagation of justice in the world. Reconciliation of these subject areas appeared unlikely, and I wondered if it were possible for one to speak of grave

injustice like sexual abuse and in the same breath suggest the possibility of justness in the world.

The literature on just world beliefs espouses the idea that personal belief in a just world is fundamental to everyday life. Hafer and Bègue (2005, p. 130) noted that belief in a just world encourages people to invest time, energy and other resources with the hope that they will be duly rewarded for their efforts. The literature further suggests that the belief in a just world framework may facilitate meaning-making processes in relation to the experience of the abuse, particularly in finding meaning in victimhood and that finding meaning in victimisation (i.e. being able to incorporate the event in one's general schema of the social world) was of major importance in coping with adverse experiences (Bonanno *et al.*, 2002; Janoff-Bulman, 1992; Taylor, 1989 as cited in Fetchenhauer, *et al.*, 2005, p. 27).

Based on the above, I found that the just world theory offers a useful cognitive appraisal framework for reconciling the idea of justice in the lives of those who have experienced an unjust fate, where the implementation of justice is not so much a constitutionalised activity but rather a personal way of thinking about justice in one's personal universe. I wanted to know how the appraisal framework of personal belief in a just world would be manifest in the life of someone who, from their perspective, had positively adjusted to CSA. My reasoning was if we understand the cognitive appraisal framework(s) of those who are well adapted to CSA, then that insight could be useful in guiding those interested in supporting survivors of CSA on the kinds of cognitive appraisals that may be useful in encouraging and nurturing those who are struggling to adjust to CSA. This led me to ponder on the personal just world beliefs of a resilient survivor of CSA.

I also began to wonder about the kinds of mediating processes that could possibly lead to positive adjustment to CSA. A perusal of the literature on CSA suggested that coping mechanisms and cognition were fundamental to positive adjustment to CSA (Spaccarelli, 1994). Differences in whether people are predominantly cognitively focused on the past, present, or future were linked to a number of important behaviours and outcomes such as achievement behaviours and adaptation to negative life events (Aspinwall, 2005, p. 213). I began to muse over the kinds of

future orientated thoughts a resilient survivor of CSA may engage in. Once again my reasoning was if we understand the cognitive appraisals of those who have positively adjusted to CSA, then we are in a better position to help those who are struggling to cope with CSA based on what we know has a positive effect on adjustment to CSA.

In a review of coping literature, I found that the coping strategies employed by victims of sexual abuse represent a potential determinant of the variation in long-term functioning reported by victims (Walsh, *et al.*, 2010, p. 2). I was drawn towards proactive coping as it located the focus away from merely responding to negative events towards a broader range of risk and goal management that includes active construction of opportunities and the positive experience of stress (Schwarzer & Knoll, in press as cited in Greenglass & Fiksenbaum, 2009, p. 29). This led me to think about the extent to which a resilient survivor of CSA would engage in proactive coping strategies.

The culmination of my personal interest in CSA and an extensive review of literature was the assumption that each of these three constructs (personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping), offered a unique way of making sense of and dealing with CSA. I then decided to investigate the relationship between these constructs with CSA as a context to understand them and their relationships. Based on the above processes, I formulated the following research questions:

3.2.2 PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the relationship between personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping in a resilient survivor of childhood sexual abuse?

3.2.3 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1 *What are the participant's personal beliefs of justice in the world?*
- 2 *What are the participant's future aspirations?*
- 3 *To what extent does a survivor of childhood sexual abuse engage in proactive coping?*

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.3.1 EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND ONTOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Epistemology specifies the nature of the relationship between the researcher (knower) and what can be known (Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006, p. 7). The epistemological and ontological assumptions of any research are guided by the paradigm that informs the researcher. In this research the epistemological and ontological assumptions were guided by the interpretive paradigm.

The research paradigm is particularly important in qualitative research as the paradigm selected guides the researcher in philosophical assumptions about the research and in the selection of tools, instruments, participants and methods used in the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, in Ponterotto, 2005, p. 128). In a similar vein Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) argue that the research paradigm is such an integral part of the research process due to the fact that the choice of the research paradigm sets down the intent, motivation and expectations for the research. Without nominating a paradigm as the first step, there is no basis for subsequent choices regarding methodology, methods, literature or research design.

A paradigm can be defined as an all encompassing system of practice and thinking, which defines for the researchers the nature of their enquiry along the dimensions of ontology, epistemology and methodology (Blanche *et al.* 2006, p. 6). It may also be understood to be “a set of interrelated assumptions about the social world which provides a philosophical and conceptual framework for the organised study of that world” (Filstead, 1979, p. 34 as cited in Ponterotto, 2005, p. 127). In other words, the paradigm is the theoretical lens through which the researcher looks at the world and it subsequently informs how the researcher makes sense of what they perceive. Since the paradigm sets the basis for subsequent methodological decisions, it is vital that the assumptions of the paradigm be fully understood because of the pivotal role they play in the research process.

The interpretive epistemological assumption can be explicated in the following manner; Interpretivists advocate a transactional and subjectivist stance that

maintains that reality is socially constructed and, therefore, the dynamic interaction between the researcher and participant is central to capturing and describing the “lived experience (*Erlebnis*) of the participant (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 130). With reference to ontology, the interpretive paradigm has a relativist ontology in which there are as many realities as there are participants (plus one, the investigator) and in which meanings are often co-constructed by participants and researchers (Guba & Lincoln, 1994 as cited in Morrow, 2007).

Ponterotto (2005) asserts that a key disadvantage of an interpretive stance is that the close interpersonal interaction between researcher and participant characteristic of interpretive paradigm might be termed *enmeshed* and therefore riddled with bias. By the same token the laboratory-like conditions and the reductionist approach to research central to positivism and post positivism may be perceived as unable to capture, and possibly distorting, the complex lives of human beings (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 133).

3.3.2 AXIOLOGY

Axiology concerns the role of researcher’s values in the scientific process (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 130). Interpretivists maintain that the researcher’s values and lived experience (*Erlebnis*) cannot be divorced from the research process. The researcher should acknowledge, describe and “bracket” his or her values, but not eliminate them (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 130). Keeping in mind the foundational assumptions of interpretivism of a co-constructed reality in the research process, it would be a contradiction for a qualitative researcher to claim a purely objective stance where their own morals and values have no bearing on the research process. Following this line of thinking, I provide a brief overview of my own values.

As a developing student psychologist, I have discovered a seemingly insatiable desire to extend myself to women and children who have been abused, believing that the world needs to stop and listen to their stories as they teach us how to support them in the process of healing and restoration. I have realized that I aspire to be the voice that will stand in place of the many muted voices of this population and have hence taken upon myself an advocacy stance. I believe that only through

meaningful interaction with those who have experienced CSA can researcher's have any hope of understanding the experience of reconstructing one's life in terms of belief systems, cognitive appraisal systems and coping systems.

It can be assumed that the details of the particular methodology that the researcher will use will stem or progress from their paradigm and its epistemological and ontological precepts. Having discussed the paradigmic assumptions guiding this research, I turn to a discussion on the different procedures used in the research process, all of which are informed by the aforementioned methodological assumptions.

3.3.3 THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD

The aim of research methodology is to assist us in understanding the research process in the broadest possible terms (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 47). This means that the approach that the researcher employs to guide the process of the inquiry must be made explicit in order to support the reader in understanding the research process. The research questions generally inform the type of research approach that is to be used. In other words, will the question be answered best by qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods? Qualitative research is particularly appropriate for answering questions of "How?" or "What?" as opposed to "Why?" (Creswell, 1998). The questions in this study concern themselves with exploring *what* the possible relationship(s) are between personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping as experienced by a resilient survivor of CSA, making the qualitative approach an appropriate approach for this study.

Broadly defined, qualitative research means any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Strauss & Corbin, 1990 as cited in Golafshani, 2003, p. 600). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) further describe qualitative methods as referring to a broad class of empirical procedures designed to describe and interpret the experiences of research participants in a context-specific setting. One of the defining characteristics of qualitative researchers is their concern with meaning. That is, they are interested in how people make sense of the world and how they experience events.

At one level quantitative and qualitative refers to distinctions about the nature of knowledge, how one understands the world and the ultimate purpose of the research. On another level of discourse, the terms refer to research methods; how data is collected and analysed and the types of generalisations and representations derived from the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006 as cited in Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006, p. 198). In this research “qualitative” will refer to a distinct way of thinking about knowledge and how it is accessed and these assumptions then guide how I will go about collecting, analysing and presenting the data.

Like all research approaches, the qualitative approach also comes with some advantages and disadvantages. The chief strength of this method is the in-depth understanding that it permits by allowing the researcher to delve into complex processes and illustrate the multifaceted nature of human phenomena (Morrow, 2007, p. 211). One may argue that the fact that a qualitative approach cannot arrive at a statistical description of a large population (Babbie, 2005, p. 321) is a disadvantage to this study. However statistical descriptions are not regarded as an appropriate goal for this study and therefore their absence is not viewed as a limitation. Rather, the assumption that people actively construct their social world and that individuals are unique (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007, p. 21) is an important methodological assumption in this study that makes the choice of a qualitative method eminently suitable.

3.3.4 INSTRUMENTAL CASE STUDY

The past three decades of scholarship on case study research have produced more than 25 different definitions of case study, each with its own particular emphasis and direction for research (VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007, p. 2). In this study, a case study is understood to be an exploration or an in depth analysis of a bounded system (bounded by time and/or place) or a single or multiple case, over a period of time (Creswell, 1998 as cited in De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont, 2005, p. 272).

For this study, I have elected to make use of an instrumental case study because at this phase of my research, the primary aim is to extend theoretical understanding of the constructs of personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive

coping. An instrumental case study design lends itself well to the my aim to extend theoretical understanding in that it provides insight into an issue or helps to refine a theory whereby the case is of secondary interest, playing a supportive role and facilitating understanding of something else (Stake, 1995 in Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 549). The fact that the participant is a resilient survivor of CSA plays a supportive role in formulating the understanding of personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping. The atypical nature of the case (the participant being a resilient survivor of CSA) offers a unique context and opportunity to understand how personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping are manifest in an atypical case.

An instrumental case study is a particularly useful design under such circumstances as it allows the researcher to be simultaneously orientated towards the general (deeper theoretical understanding of theory) and the particular (understanding of this particular case, its own context issues, interpretation and thick description) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 437) and hence provides insight into the issue (CSA) while at the same time helping the researcher to refine theoretical understanding (Luck, Jackson & Usher, 2007 as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 549).

In the current study I am particularly interested in understanding how the my participant, who describes herself as a resilient survivor of CSA, makes meaning of justice in the world, particularly because the experience of CSA can be viewed as such an unjust fate. In addition, I wish to explore the role that future aspirations and proactive coping may have played a role in the emerging resilience of the participant so as to formulate a better understanding of these constructs. Particular efforts will thus be made to study human action from an “insider’s” perspective, hence the goal of this form of research is defined as “describing and understanding rather than explaining or predicting human behaviour” (Babbie & Mouton, 2005, p. 53).

VanWynsberghe and Khan (2007, p. 4) suggest the following as necessary for a case to be considered a case study: 1) small population size (in this study there was only one participant); 2) contextual detail, the contextual details of this study are offered in chapter 4; 3) natural settings (in this study the interviews were conducted in the participant’s home and place of work, all of which can also be understood as

the “natural” environments of the participant as they are the contexts in which much of their life is experienced); 4) boundedness (in this study the bounded system comprised the specific case of a South African woman who is a survivor of CSA); 5) multiple data sources (this research benefited from multiple interviews, drawings and qualitative observations).

A key strength in using this design lies in the fact that because researcher is immersed in the data they collect, they are able to get intimate familiarity with the details of the case being examined (Neuman, 1997). The weaknesses of this method must also be acknowledged, such as the problem of the validity of the information, causal links are difficult to test and generalisations cannot be made from single case studies (Terre Blanche, *et al.*, 2006). The issue of validity in this case was addressed through the use of multiple data sources, member checking as well as the fact that I have conducted the research under supervision. A more detailed discussion on ensuring the trustworthiness of the study is offered in section 3.6 of this chapter.

3.3.5 CHOOSING THE UNIT OF STUDY

The participant in the present study was referred from a doctoral study where the selection criteria required participants who were survivors of CSA, who describe themselves as resilient and have not received therapy. The participant for the present study only met the first and second criteria and was therefore referred to this study where she met the inclusion criteria which required that the participant be a survivor of CSA, who was no longer living with the abuser and is above the age of 21 years making her an *adult* survivor of CSA.

One of the most distinguishing features of an instrumental case study is that the primary interest is often in extending knowledge on an existing theory (Ruddin, 2006, p. 806). The case is of secondary interest, it rather plays a supportive role (Stake, 2000, p. 437), facilitating understanding of the theoretical constructs of personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping. This case lends itself well to providing a context to understand the aforementioned constructs and also has the potential of giving unique insights into the constructs because of the unique

feature of the participant subjectively assessing herself as having developed resilience despite the experience of CSA.

Reiterating a point made earlier by VanWynsberghe and Khan (2007, p. 4), one of the most significant features of a case study (and therefore an instrumental case study) is a small population size. In this study one participant was sufficient to realise the aims of the study to both explore and describe the relationships between the constructs under study as subjectively experienced by a resilient survivor of CSA. Furthermore, there was no need for a large sample as it is neither the intent nor the purpose of this research to obtain generalisable results at this point but rather to gain insight and theoretical understanding of the relationships between the main constructs in the study. The participant was a member of a sensitive/vulnerable population that can be difficult to access (a survivor of CSA); especially if one requires that the survivor must have experienced positive posttraumatic growth, making a small sample size more reasonable as opposed to a large one.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

3.4.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

The aim of qualitative interviews is to see the world through the eyes of the participant, “to obtain rich descriptive data that will help one understand the participant’s construction of knowledge and social reality” (Maree, 2007, p. 75). Babbie (2005, p. 314) offers the following definition of a qualitative interview; “A qualitative interview is an interaction between an interviewer and a respondent in which the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry but not a specific set of questions that must be asked with particular words in a particular order”. It is essentially a conversation in which the interviewer establishes the general direction for the conversation and pursues specific questions raised by the respondent. The assumption is that through intense interaction and dialogue, both the participant and the researcher will reach deeper insights into the *Erlebnis* (lived experience) (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 131). In this study the lived experience included the subjective meanings that the participant has constructed around belief in a just world, future

aspirations as well as proactive coping. These “meanings” are expected come the fore by means of a guided conversation in the form of a semi-structured interview.

It must be understood that the construction of a research interview schedule is influenced by the researcher’s ideas about what is relevant to explore in a particular area as well as what is possible to elicit in an interview as well as by the kind of analysis that the researches envisages using (Burck, 2005, p. 241).The semi-structured interview was used due to its conversational nature which facilitates an intimate and natural interview process. Keeping in mind the fact that I sought to explore the meanings that the participant held concerning the constructs of personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping, use was made of an interview schedule composed of questions on the constructs (personal belief in a just world and proactive coping) that were adapted from the Personal Belief in a Just World (PBJW) scale (Dalbert, 1999) and the Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI) (Greenglass, Schwarzer & Taubert, 1999) while questions on future aspirations sought to access what the participant’s goals are.

The Personal Belief in a Just World scale (Dalbert, 1999) requires that the participants respond to the following statements: 1) I believe that, by and large, I deserve what happens to me; 2) I am usually treated fairly; 3) I believe that I usually get what I deserve; 4) Overall, the events in my life are just; 5) In my life injustice is the exception rather than the rule; 6) I believe that most of the things that happen in my life are fair; 7) I think that important decisions that are made concerning me are usually just. These statements were adapted into questions that would help me attain qualitative data. For example, the statement “I believe that, by and large, I deserve what happens to me” was adapted to “Would you say that you believe that by and large you deserve what happens to you?” This was then followed by probing questions for clarity and deeper understanding.

Similarly the statements in the Proactive Coping Inventory (Greenglass, *et al.*, 1999) also served as a guide for the semi-structured interview schedule. These were: 1) I am a "take charge" person; 2) I try to let things work out on their own; 3) After attaining a goal, I look for another, more challenging one; 4) I like challenges and beating the odds; 5) I visualise my dreams and try to achieve them; 6) Despite

numerous setbacks; I usually succeed in getting what I want; 7) I try to pinpoint what I need to succeed; 8) I always try to find a way to work around obstacles; nothing really stops me; 9) I often see myself failing so I don't get my hopes up too high; 10) When I apply for a position; I imagine myself filling it; 11) I turn obstacles into positive experiences; 12) If someone tells me I can't do something; you can be sure I will do it; 13) When I experience a problem; I take the initiative in resolving it and 14) When I have a problem; I usually see myself in a no-win situation.

Although the interview schedule provided a general guide of the interview, I did however remain open to pursuing specific topics raised by the participant that were relevant to this study, hence the interviews were flexible. The advantage of this method lay in that it allowed the use of paraphrasing, clarification, reflection, probing, showing and allowing time for elaboration. All of these techniques allow for the acquisition of the rich and thick descriptions I strove to capture. Yet another advantage of this method is that it allows the researcher to follow feedback and unpack meanings as well as entertaining and eliciting multiple and contradictory perspectives while keeping an eye on themselves as interviewers (Burck, 2005).

3.4.2 AUDIO RECORDINGS

Reiterating a point made earlier, the interviews were recorded and thereafter the contents transcribed. The advantage of the utilisation of audio recorder was that I was not consumed by trying to capture the words of the participant verbatim, therefore granting me the opportunity to be immersed in the data being provided by the participant, and to reflect on the data. This allowed for the generation of emergent insights. However, the use of such a tool runs the risk of 'stage fright' in that the use of tape recorders and open-ended questions can make the participant feel vulnerable (De Vos *et al.*, 2005, p. 290).

I assert that the vulnerability of this research to the aforementioned pitfall is greatly reduced by the fact that rapport was established with the participant prior to the interview as well as the fact that the participant was informed beforehand that the interview would be recorded. However, should it have been noted that had the participant was experiencing some form of distress or stage fright due to the audio

recording device, the apparatus would have been placed out of the immediate view of the participant so that it would not be a constant reminder of the fact that they are being recorded.

3.4.3 PROACTIVE COPING AND PERSONAL BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD SCALES

One of the features of a case study is the use of multiple data sources (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p. 108) and hence I also made use of the Personal Belief in a Just World scale (Dalbert, 1999) and the Proactive Coping Inventory (Greenglass, *et al.*, 1999) as sources of data. The results of these scales were used to triangulate the findings of the other data sources rather than to give a statistical measure of the participant's just world beliefs and proactive coping behaviour.

3.4.4 DRAWINGS

The participant was asked to draw a wheel of influence (Bitter, 2009) which is a diagram where the person draws themselves as a circle and portions the circles into smaller circles which represent significant people in their life; where the size of each circle is relative to the amount of influence that the person has on the individual. The participant was also requested to draw a relational drawing (Rober, 2009) using the theme of a tree, as well as a lifeline (Patton & McMahon, 2006, p. 164). Relational drawings are used to illicit clients' perceptions of their relationships with others. They have the unique potential of picking up crucial yet unspoken aspects of relationships by offering a special kind of lens through which they can observe themselves in their relationship from a distance (Rober, 2009, p. 125).

The participant was asked to imagine that she was a tree and to then think of the significant people in her life and draw them in relation to her (as the tree), thereafter she was asked to explain the drawing. This was done to get an idea of the participant's support system as literature suggests that social support contributes directly to proactive coping (Schwarzer & Taubert, 2002). Similarly the participant was asked to draw a wheel of influence in order to investigate the social support system in her life. The lifeline was used to help the participant review and narrate her

life story by citing the significant events in her life on dimensions of positivity and negativity. This information will be useful in describing the participant.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of data collected (De Vos *et al.*, 2005). A well prepared and well documented analysis is what distinguishes a scientific approach from superficial conjecture (Malterud, 2001, p. 486). Below is documentation of the processes of analysis that the research underwent, however these will be further clarified in the next chapter of this work.

This study made use of qualitative data analysis which is a method for examining social research data without converting it to a numerical format. It is done for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships (Babbie, 2005, p. 387). What must be kept in mind is that in qualitative studies, there are multiple meanings of a phenomenon in the minds of people who experience it as well as multiple possible interpretations of the data due to the existence of multiple realities. In using this form of analysis my aim as a researcher is neither to attempt to unearth a single “truth” from the realities of participant nor is it an attempt to achieve outside verification of analysis (Ponterotto, 2005), it is rather to refine theoretical understanding.

I made use of the data analysis spiral suggested by Creswell (1998, p. 143) engaging in the procedures of data managing, reading and memoing, classifying, interpreting and presenting the data. This required that I engage in a process of moving in analytic circles, touching on several facets of analysis, circling around and around (Creswell, 1998, p. 143). In order to successfully manage the data, I organized the data into computer files and converted it into text (transcription).

Reading and memoing required of me to make sense of the data, immersing myself in the details with the aim of getting a sense of the interview as a whole before breaking it into parts (Creswell, 1998, p. 144). As I read through the transcripts, I made notes of key ideas and “impressions” that occurred to me. This required that I engage in processes of decontextualization and recontextualization. *Decontextuali-*

sation allows parts of the subject matter to be lifted out and investigated more closely, together with other elements across the material that tells about similar issues (Malterud, 2001, p. 486). Decontextualisation was achieved through becoming immersed in the data generated from each transcript by reading and re-reading the transcripts and “lifting” out data that I construed to merit either further clarification or explanation in relation to previous statements. These new questions that arose in light of the current information were written down and used as guides for the subsequent interviews.

Recontextualisation ensures that the patterns still agree with the context from which they were collected and are important to prevent reductionism and to maintain the connections between the field and the informants’ accounts of reality (Malterud, 2001, p. 486). This was done through member-checking and analytic discussions with my supervisor on emerging themes.

Classifying is the process that is at the heart of the qualitative data analysis that involves a process of winnowing the data into manageable set of themes and categories. It called for me to take the text apart so as to describe in detail themes that emerged (Creswell, 1998, p. 144). Thematic analysis required that I identify the most important themes, recurring ideas or language and patterns of belief that link people and settings together, making it the most intellectual phase of data analysis and one that can integrate the whole process (De Vos *et al.*, 2005).

The data collected was voluminous hence in a effort to manage the data, I had to temporarily suspend my curiosity on data that was not directly instrumental in facilitating understanding of personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping, and how it manifested in this case. Hence my analysis drew heavily from themes inducted from the literature. An example of such a theme is: “I generally deserve what happens to me”. This was based on literature on personal belief in a just world which suggested that such reasoning is characteristic of people who believe in a just world for themselves (Alves & Correia, 2010).

Once themes were identified, I looked for multiple forms of evidence from the data to support each theme (Creswell, 1998, p. 144). This was achieved by imposing order

to the data through coding which is a process which involves the mechanical reduction of data and analytical categorisation of the data (Neuman, 1997). The codes themselves are mnemonic devices used to identify or mark the specific themes in a text. They can be either words or numbers, whatever the researcher finds easiest to remember and to apply (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 781). Both words and numbers were used as codes. The result of this process was “the effective collection of rich data that provides the basis for shared constructions” (De Vos *et al.*, 2005, p. 335) between my participant and I.

Themes were generated until theoretical saturation was reached, that is the categories or themes accounted for all of the data that was gathered. This made it reasonable to assume that redundancy had been achieved in a practical sense (Strauss, 1987 as cited in Morrow, 2007, p. 217). Interpretation and presenting involves making sense of the data in light of the literature (Creswell, 1998, p. 144) and then reporting the findings in a narrative. This called for me to organise, compare and validate alternative interpretations (Malterud, 2001). The processes of interpretation and presenting the findings of this research are dealt with in chapter 5.

3.6 STANDARDS OF RIGOUR

3.6.1 TRUSTWORTHINESS

My role as a research instrument necessitates particular attention to ensuring the trustworthiness (veracity or validity) (Nastasi & Schensulhe, 2005, p. 185) and the credibility of the findings. In this study trustworthiness was achieved by member-checking, triangulation and having an audit trail.

Member-checking refers to checking factual errors in the production of transcripts, or to offer the participant the opportunity to add further information (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007, p. 108). After each transcription was made, the participant was given a copy of the transcription and given the opportunity to confirm or disconfirm whether the data recorded was indeed what she had said. Upon completion of the research, the participant was given an opportunity to read through the interpretations so that she could confirm that the integrity of her meanings was kept in the interpretation. The

participant indicated that she was satisfied with the themes and the interpretations generated from this study.

An audit trail refers to the systematic documentation and record keeping of all the procedures and data relevant to the study, the purpose of which is to permit review (audit) of the study and potential replication of the research process (Nastasi & Schensulhe, 2005, p. 185). Referential adequacy refers to setting aside (archiving) a portion of the data for the purpose of verifying findings. The report will be archived in the University of Pretoria's archives for a period of 10 years (Nastasi & Schensulhe, 2005, p. 185). Peer-debriefing was used to enhance the accuracy of the study so that the account would resonate with people other than the researcher (Creswell, 2003, p. 196). This was achieved through meetings and analytical discussions with supervisor.

3.6.2 CREDIBILITY

Case study research design principles lend themselves to including numerous strategies that promote data credibility or "truth value" of the research (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 556). Put differently; it is "the alternative to internal validity in which the goal is to demonstrate that the research was conducted in such a manner so as to ensure that the subject was accurately described and identified" (De Vos *et al.*, 2005, p. 346). Taking from the advice of Cohen, *et al.* (2007, p. 108) who argue that the use of multiple sources (triangulation), member-checking and peer-debriefing are useful techniques to enhance credibility, credibility was enhanced using the aforementioned techniques.

Multiple sources of data were used so that findings could be triangulated. Semi-structured interviews, drawings, questionnaires as well as qualitative observations were used. Although I was the only researcher in the field, all data analysis and interpretation was supervised by a research supervisor. The processes of member-checking and peer-debriefing were discussed in the preceding section.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.7.1 VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Social research often represents an intrusion into people's lives where a participant may have to disrupt their regular activities to be part of the research. Hence it is vital that the participant is made aware that their participation is completely voluntary (Babbie & Mouton, 2005). This means that they are under no obligation to be involved in the study and they face no adverse consequences for refusing to be part of the research. The informed consent form given to the participant made this point very clear, highlighting the fact that the participant's decision to be part of the research was not a forced one. The participant was advised that she had the choice to voluntarily participate as well as withdraw from the research at any point of the research process should she no longer feel that she wants to be part of the research.

3.7.2 INFORMED CONSENT

The importance of obtaining informed consent from the participant(s) is key in any ethical research study. The participant must be given a thorough explanation of the "risks, rights, benefits and dangers" of the research (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007 p. 50) as a result of their involvement. Informed consent implies that all the above information is clearly presented to the participant, together with information on their rights to refuse and withdraw at any time. The participant was provided with a consent form stating the purpose potential risks and benefits of the study to sign at her own discretion.

3.7.3 CONFIDENTIALITY

It was particularly important that confidentiality be maintained in this study as the research participant is a member of a sensitive population (sexually abused persons). "A research project guarantees confidentiality when the research can identify a given person's responses but promises not to do so publicly" (Babbie, 2005, p. 65). Confidentiality was maintained through the exclusion of identifying information throughout the study and the participant was given a pseudonym.

TRUST

Cohen, *et al.*, (2007) submit that it is very important to create a comfortable environment within which the participant feels that they are able to express themselves truthfully. This can only be done through a relationship of trust. Trust is a very important aspect that should be developed between the researcher and the participant. A trusting relationship was forged between the participant and I through effective rapport building before data collection, where the participant and I communicated electronically via email and telephonically concerning the logistics of the interview and the details about the purpose of the research. By the time I met the participant, I was not a stranger to her. This set the tone for the easy and quick creation of a safe space for the participant to speak truthfully and openly.

3.8 ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Ethical clearance to conduct this research was obtained from the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee. The committee requires that researchers respect the human rights and dignity of human respondents in the research process and subscribe to the principles of *voluntary participation* in research, *informed consent*, *safety in participation*; *privacy* and *trust*. The present study was reviewed and approved by the said Ethics Committee.

3.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I offered an account of my methodological choices and the reasons behind their use. The subsequent chapter comprises of an introduction to the participant and her unique contextual circumstances that make her a suitable participant for this study. .

CHAPTER 4

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PARTICIPANT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I discussed the research process that I have elected to use in collecting and making sense of the data. In this chapter, I offer some background information about the case to facilitate better understanding of the context upon which I will be attempting to gain deeper insights into personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping. Introducing the context upon which will be attempting to understand the phenomena under study, is important in instrumental case studies because the case in itself allows us the opportunity to explore how the phenomena are expressed and experienced within that particular case. Furthermore, in instrumental case study designs, individuals who are experiencing the phenomena under investigation become suitable cases for analysis (Willig, 2001, p. 73) hence in introducing and describing this case, the suitability of this case in answering the research question is made accessible to the reader.

The participant in this study was specifically selected because of her having experienced CSA, and her description of herself as a resilient person despite the trauma she experienced. This was done with the assertion that her unique circumstances offer a rich context in which to better understand the constructs of personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping and to also explore the more subtle and sometimes overlooked facets of these constructs

Below I offer a description of the case using data generated through interviews, drawings and structured questionnaires. I will begin by presenting an account of the participant's story as related to me over four interviews. I will then present the drawings and the structured scales, highlighting the unique features of the case that make it instrumental in answering the research questions. Below is the participant's story as she related it to me and as read and approved as accurate by the participant.

4.2 KATE'S¹ STORY

The story presented below constitutes a concise version of the participant's life story. This summary is presented in an attempt to provide the reader with contextual understanding of the participant's life circumstances, particularly the sexual abuse as well as the extent of the trauma(s) which she faced. Although the summary is presented as my account of her story to make it easier to follow as is constitutes data collected over separate interviews, it represents the participant's own assessment of her life.

Kate is a 36 year old mother of twin girls and will have been married for 5 years in November 2010. She was born in Potchefstroom but moved to Pretoria when she was five years old. Kate describes her parents as people who were prominent figures while she was growing up, an experience she feels made a positive impact on her character because it made her assertive and strong. Her father was a minister and her mother worked in the television industry. Kate has one other sibling, her younger sister. She reports a loving and close bond with her sister and mother; however she carried some resentment towards her father while growing up because her mother often confided in her and her sister about any trouble that she was going through with their father. Nonetheless, Kate asserts that she and her father have since settled their differences and currently have a healthy relationship.

Kate describes herself as a devout Christian as well as a typical Aquarian in that she is fun, loving, not too worried about what happens and quite relaxed. She describes herself as a laissez-faire kind of person who lets things go. Kate also describes herself as a very responsible person who often tries to please people because she does not like conflict.

Kate was sexually abused when she was six years old by a family member. Because her abuser was still a minor (under 18 years old) when the abuse happened, the psychologists whom Kate consulted told her that what she had experienced was not

¹ This is not the participant's real name but is a pseudonym given to the participant so as to protect the participant's right to confidentiality.

really abuse but was rather sexual play. Although Kate reports that she does not remember much of what happened, she does remember that they (Kate and her abuser) were sitting in a car when one of the incidents occurred and she does not think that her abuser sexually penetrated her. Kate shared that she had begun to doubt if the abuse had indeed taken place because she remembered so little about it, so she asked her mother about her recollection of the abuse. Her mother confirmed that the abuse did happen as she remembers, the day Kate told her about it when she was 6 years old. Furthermore, Kate recently arranged a meeting with her abuser where she told him that she forgives him and he said that it had bothered him for years and that he thought about it at least once a week, further suggesting that the abuse did take place. Kate points out that following the abuse, she developed an infatuation with her abuser which made it even harder for her to deal with the abuse as her feelings were not reciprocated by her abuser. Kate reports numerous negative outcomes that were related to the abuse whilst growing up. She specifically shared that as a result of the abuse she developed an addiction to pornography and engaged in sexual experimentation.

About 12 years after the abuse by a family member, she was sexually abused while in Belgium. Kate gives an account of an evening where she met a man and they started chatting. The man offered to take her home. She then remembers walking up the stairs of the man's apartment thinking that she should not be there, but she relates that she did not want to say no because of her fear of rejection. She further related how she remembered thinking that being in the man's apartment was a bad idea. Recollections of this experience are also unclear hence she strongly believes that the man in question may have slipped something into her drink that drugged her. She does, however, remember her abuser telling her not to worry, that it was going to be okay and that it (referring to the rape) would not be that bad. Following the rape she asked her abuser to take her home and he obliged. She then ignored the whole experience for a while, denying that it ever happened to such an extent that she went out on a date with her abuser after the abuse.

Kate notes the discovery of the fact that her sister had a mild form of brain damage as one of the turning events in her life that encouraged her to pursue a degree in psychology so that she could help children like her sister. However, following an

undisciplined university life she failed her first semester and it was then decided that she go and au-pair for family friends in Canada. Whilst in Canada Kate had her first (consensual) sexual experience which resulted in an unplanned pregnancy. Upon telling her mother of the news of her pregnancy her mother advised her to get an abortion as the family would not be able to handle such an ordeal, especially since Kate's grandmother was ill at the time. Although Kate was disappointed with her mother's response to the news and did not want to have an abortion, she made the appointment for the abortion. Before she could go through with the abortion, she had a miscarriage, for which she thanks the Lord because she feels that she would have not been able to cope with killing her own baby. It was during this time that she made the decision to give her life to God and be a born again Christian.

Kate has gone through extensive psychotherapy and feels that she has healed from her past experiences of abuse. She does, however, note that she experienced some depression following the birth of her twins but says that it was not related to the experience of sexual abuse. She is adamant that she has been able to bounce back from the experiences of being sexually abused and that she is not a victim.

Kate currently trains teachers in a Montessori school and reports that she has never been happier in her life.

The inclusion criteria for this study was that the participant be a survivor of CSA who was no longer living with the abuser and is over the age of 21 years, making her an *adult* survivor of CSA. From Kate's story it became evident that she meets all of the above criteria as she was sexually abused at the age of six, is currently 36 years old and does not live with any of her abusers. It also begins to introduce the dynamics of her family life all of which are important in understanding her resilience.

4.3 LIFELINE

Below is the lifeline which chronicles the participant's life journey thus far. Similar to the life story, the lifeline provides insight into the participant's unique life circumstances, but it goes further to offer an indication on dimensions of negativity and positivity of meanings that she ascribes to the events. The lifeline offers a

broader picture of the participant's life including events other than the abuse that have been significant in her life. The numbers on the left represent a numerical rating of the experience, and the numbers on the top part of the page rate the experience on a scale of 1 to 10 on the dimension of positivity and those on the bottom half of the page rate the experience on the dimension of negativity. 1 is the lowest experience of positivity and 10 is the highest, similarly 1 on the bottom half is the lowest experience of negativity and 10 is the highest. The numbers along the horizontal line are years that the participant has lived starting from the year she was born to the present time (2010).



FIGURE 4.1: LIFELINE

What is interesting to note from this lifeline is the fact that, not only did she go through numerous traumas outside of the abuse, (i.e. her first epileptic seizure at age 14 and the death of her grandparents) but the fact that despite these experiences she still experiences herself as the happiest that she has ever been in her life, was according to her, evidence of her resilience. The fact that she indicates that she experienced both Canada and Belgium as positive experiences in her life,

yet these are places where she miscarried her first child and was sexually abused also begins to suggest positive meaning-making.

4.4 TREE OF LIFE DRAWING

Drawings have the unique ability to elicit rich descriptions of the participant's relational experiences in a non-confrontational manner. The tree of life was specifically used to assess how the participant perceives herself in relation to significant people in her life. The participant was asked to draw herself as a tree and to include significant people in her life in relation to the tree, and she drew the picture below.

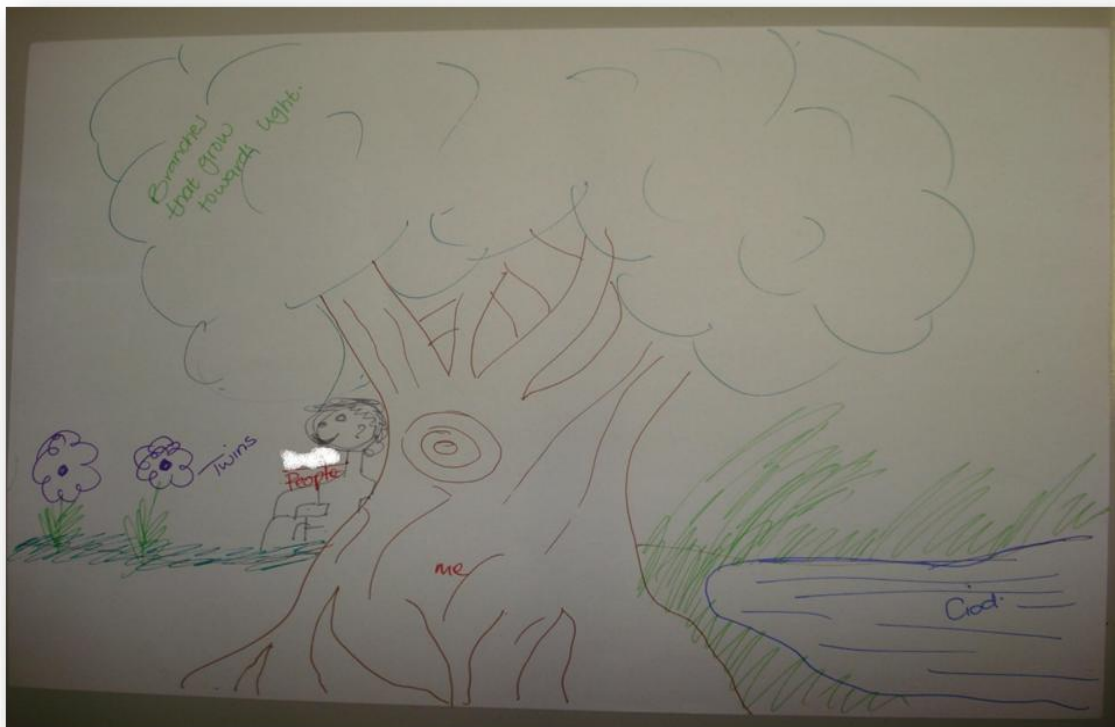


FIGURE 4.2: TREE OF LIFE

In her explanation of the drawing, the participant indicated that the tree represented her citing that “So I’m a supporting strong tree...It’s not a beautiful perfect tree...but when it is the right environment or the right season, the tree is helping anything and anyone that is around it”. (TOL, pg. 1, line 9, 14-17). Concerning the pond, she indicated that it represented God “who is the one who nourishes the tree and is the wellspring of life” (TOL, pg. 1, line 3). The branches represented her support system

(TOL, pg. 1, line 15), the person next to tree represented her husband (TOL, pg. 1, lines 5-9) and the flowers represented her twin girls (TOL, pg. 2, line 6). Through this drawing the participant revealed that she experienced herself in a positive light citing that she was a strong tree, yet she was aware of her shortcomings in that she was not a perfect tree, suggesting that she has a balanced view of herself. It further emerges that she is a resilient person not only because the tree is strong but as she explained the drawing she said, “A tree grows towards the light and then sometimes something happens that disturbs the growing or the growth and then that branch will actually turn and grow to another way and I think that’s sort of the resilience part” (TOL, pg. 1, lines 12-14). Lastly her relationship with God emerges here and how she experiences God as her source and nourisher. In summation this drawing reveals the participant’s experience of herself as resilient which created a context to understand the constructs under study (personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping) as experienced by a positively adjusted person.

4.5 WHEEL OF INFLUENCE

The participant also drew a wheel of influence, which is also a relational drawing. In this drawing the participant depicts the people she perceives as having an influence in her life as well as the degree of influence in her life.

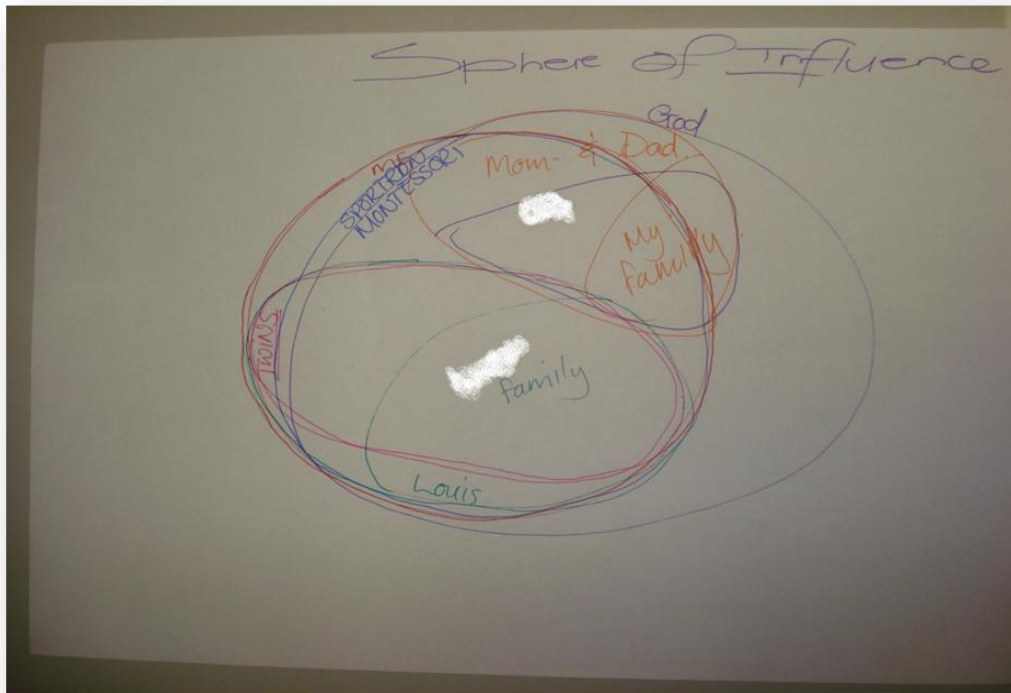


FIGURE 4.3: WHEEL OF INFLUENCE

The participant indicated what or whom the different circles represented, namely that the red circle represented her, the purple circle was God, the green circle was her husband, the pink circle was her twins, the orange circle represented her family, the green circle was her husband's family and the blue circle represented Sportron and Montessori. What is interesting to note from this drawing is that she ascribed God as having the biggest influence over her life. From this drawing and the previous drawing it appears that God, and therefore her spirituality, is a significant part of the participant's experience.

4.6 STRUCTURED INSTRUMENTS

4.6.1 THE PERSONAL BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD SCALE

Both the Personal Belief in a Just World Scale and the Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI) were used qualitatively to triangulate the findings of the semi-structured interviews. They were specifically used to gain information about the constructs in

relation to the participant. Below are the results of the Personal Belief in a Just World scale and the Proactive Coping Inventory respectively.

4.6.2 PERSONAL BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD SCALE (DALBERT, 1999)

TABLE 4.1: RESULTS OF THE PERSONAL BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD SCALE

Personal Belief in a Just World	Strongly agree	Agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree
1. I believe that, by and large, I deserve what happens to me	6	5	4	3	2	1
2. I am usually treated fairly	6	5	4	3	2	1
3. I believe that I usually get what I deserve	6	5	4	3	2	1
4. Overall, the events in my life are just	6	5	4	3	2	1
5. In my life injustice is the exception rather than the rule	6	5	4	3	2	1
6. I believe that most of the things that happen in my life are fair	6	5	4	3	2	1
7. I think that important decisions that are made concerning me are usually just	6	5	4	3	2	1
Total = 37						
Average = 5.3						
Strong Personal Belief in a Just World						

The participant's score of 5.3 is well above the average score of 3, suggesting that the participant's score is above average, therefore representing a strong personal belief in a just world. What is interesting to note in these scores is that the participant strongly agreed with those statements that used the term "just" as opposed to "deserve" or "fair", for example she strongly agreed with the statement: "Overall, the events in my life are just" but she slightly agreed with the statement: "I believe that, by and large, I deserve what happens to me" and she agreed with the statement: "I believe that most of the things that happen in my life are fair", suggesting that she may construe fairness, deserve and justice as different ideas.

4.6.3 THE PROACTIVE COPING INVENTORY (GREENGLASS, ET AL., 1999)

TABLE 4.2: RESULTS OF THE PROACTIVE COPING INVENTORY

Questions	Not at all true	Barely true	Somewhat true	Completely true
1. I am a "take charge" person.	1	2	3	4
2. I try to let things work out on their own.	1	2	3	4
3. After attaining a goal, I look for another, more challenging one.	1	2	3	4
4. I like challenges and beating the odds.	1	2	3	4
5. I visualise my dreams and try to achieve them	1	2	3	4
6. Despite numerous setbacks, I usually succeed in getting what I want.	1	2	3	4
7. I try to pinpoint what I need to succeed.	1	2	3	4
8. I always try to find a way to work around obstacles; nothing really stops me.	1	2	3	4
9. I often see myself failing so I don't get my hopes up too high.	1	2	3	4
10. When I apply for a position, I imagine myself filling it.	1	2	3	4
11. I turn obstacles into positive experiences.	1	2	3	4
12. If someone tells me I can't do something, you can be sure I will do it.	1	2	3	4
13. When I experience a problem, I take the initiative in resolving it.	1	2	3	4
14. When I have a problem, I usually see myself in a no-win situation.	1	2	3	4

The scores of the Proactive Coping Inventory tell a story of a person who strongly experiences herself as a person who does not see herself in a no-win situation when she experiences challenges; who usually gets what she wants despite numerous setbacks; who turns obstacles into challenges and who takes initiative in solving problems that she may encounter. These convictions about herself demonstrate the participant's cognitions about challenging situations, particularly that she experiences herself as equipped to meet and overcome any challenge that she may encounter, all of which are important in resilience. What is also important to note in these results is that the participant presents herself as someone who does not actively pursue and manage goals, for example she barely agreed with the statement: "I visualise my dreams and try to achieve them", she somewhat agreed

with the statements: “I like challenges and beating the odds” and “I try to pinpoint what I need to succeed” both of which are critical aspects of proactive coping.

4.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I introduced the case offering descriptions of various aspects of the participant’s experiences in an attempt to show the appropriateness of this case in answering the research question. In the following chapter, I will offer an in-depth look at the themes related the participant’s life story and the constructs in the study.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I introduced the participant and her personal life circumstances that form the context of this study. In the present chapter the overarching goal is to offer a description of the data that goes deep enough to provide analysis (VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007, p. 7). The process of analysis that engaged in will be discussed and documented by way of offering thick descriptions of the data collected as well as referring to literature that provides further theoretical understanding of the data. It must be noted that as a qualitative researcher working from an interpretive lens, I am also a research instrument and therefore the analysis I offer reflects my own insight into the participant's experiences of the constructs under study.

The main themes that emerged from the participant's story as related in the previous chapter were that, despite numerous unjust and traumatic experiences, she still experiences herself as the happiest that she has ever been in her life and that God, and therefore religion, is a significant part of her experience. Qualitative analysis of results of the theory based scales suggested that the participant may construe 'fairness', 'deserve' and 'justice' as different ideas and that she experiences herself as someone who does not actively pursue and manage goals. I believe that the aforementioned themes are pertinent to the thematic analysis and are therefore addressed in this chapter.

I will start by discussing the themes generated from the data together with the interpretations based on literature, following which I will discuss the strengths and limitations of this study. I will then conclude by offering suggestions for future directions in research.

5.2 GENERATING THEMES AND CATEGORIES

It must be noted that a researcher's own experiences as well as literature reviews are rich sources for themes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 780). Bearing this in mind, themes were generated from the Personal Belief in a Just World scale (Dalbert, 1999), the participant's personal experiences and literature on future aspirations, the proactive subscale of the Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI) (Greenglass *et al.*, 1999) as well as the participant's experiences of positive adjustment.

In Figure 5.1 below, I offer a breakdown of the themes and sub-themes generated from the research data. Note that the themes were derived from the scales and the main constructs in the study, whereas the sub-themes were derived from a deeper analysis of the data related to the theme.

TABLE 5.1: THEMES IN THE PRESENT STUDY

Themes	Theme code	Sub-themes	Sub-theme code
Personal belief in a just world	PBJW (Dalbert, 1999)	Responsibility	• PBJW-RESP
		Rationalising	• PBJW-RAT
		Religion	• PBJW-REL
Future aspirations	FA (Greenglass <i>et al.</i> , 1999)	Low value placed on future vs. current outcomes	• FA-FUT
		Positive future orientated thoughts	• FA-POS
		Low goal pursuit	• FA-PUR
Proactive coping	PAC	Initiative	• PAC-INT
		I turn obstacles into positive experiences	• PAC-POS
		I often (don't) see myself failing	• PAC-FAL
Positive adjustment	PA	Optimism	• PA-OPT
		Resilience	• PA-RES
		Religious coping	• PA-REL

In the following section of this work, I offer a narrative account of the categories and themes generated from the research process. I will also provide extracts from the interviews that will serve as evidence and support of the themes generated as well as literature that further guides understanding of the themes. I will commence my discussion by analysing the data on personal belief in a just world, followed by a discussion on future aspirations and proactive coping, and will conclude with a discussion on positive adjustment.

5.3 THE PARTICIPANT'S PERSONAL BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD (PBJW)

5.3.1 SUB-THEMES ON PERSONAL BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD

The present study was framed by Dalbert's (2001, p. 123) assertion that belief in a just world is a personal disposition which may not necessarily be affected by experimental manipulations or situational unfairness. In chapter two, I argued that belief in a just world is a subjective experience by the individual for the individual. This assertion is supported by Dalbert (1999, p. 93) who advised that that it is imperative that one gets an idea of the personal meaning that a person has ascribed to the concept of justice. In the present study it emerged that the respondent experienced the construct of justice and fairness in the following manner:

"You see just is eternal, justice is where God comes in, but fair is a human thing, we thought up fair. We thought up the concept of everything is fair, or it's not fair. But I can't really explain why I believe this (laughs)" (Int 1, pg. 7, lines 13-15).

"I think that fair is a perspective. Maybe I should say that. Fairness is a perspective because what's fair to you might not be fair to someone else. But just is a principle that is always the same because I believe that just and justness and justice ultimately come from God" (Int 1, pg. 7, lines 28-30).

Both extracts bring to the fore that belief in a just world is both a "positive illusion" (Loo, 2002, p. 703) in that "we thought it up for ourselves" (Int 1, pg. 7, line 14), as well as that general belief in a just world is distinct from personal belief in a just world because there are differences in whether people regard a circumstance as fair or unfair in that "what's fair to you might not be fair to someone else" (Int 1, pg. 7, line 29).

The remainder of this discussion is premised on the understanding that for the participant justice is executed by God and relates to the unchanging principle that through and by God people reap what they sow; suggesting a strong correlation between religion and just world beliefs. This association is consistent with findings by

Dzuka and Dalbert (2006, p. 13) who found a positive association between belief in a personally just world and intrinsic religiosity. Fairness, on the other hand, is understood by the participant as the execution of judgment of deservingness by human-made standards and discretion, making it subjective and inconsistent.

5.3.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Responsibility (PBJW-RESP)

One of the most noticeable sub-themes that emerged in the participant's experience of the unjust events in her life (for example her sexual abuse at the age of six and when she was in Belgium, as well as being mugged in Belgium), is that she took responsibility for these events that had befallen her. For example, she said the following:

"... So, I think that we get what I said before, what you speak or what you believe of yourself. I think that's what you are going to get. And that comes back to what you sow you will reap" (Int 1, pg. 10, lines 4-6).

"I was raped when I was in Belgium, I went to Belgium to au pair but that was a consequence of me being irresponsible, I went totally overboard in Belgium because it was the first time I was out and I had freedom. So we went drinking almost every night and I took a ride home with this one guy from Canada and he said, 'Well, let us stop at my home.' So then I said, 'That's fine.' I can remember walking up his stairs to his flat and thinking or maybe it was the Holy Spirit telling me that you should not be here now, this is not responsible, you should turn around and tell him to take you home, take a bus or something. And I didn't ..." (Int 1, pg. 3, lines 18-25).

"So my choice was not to listen and to put myself in that situation. If I had listened maybe it would have turned out quite differently (Int 1, pg. 10, lines 30-31).

Further support for this sub-theme may be seen in the results of the personal belief in a just world questionnaire, which was administered for qualitative purposes. On all the justice-related statements that pertained to her experiencing the unjust events in

her life as deserved, she consistently offered responses that suggested that she experienced the injustice as deserved and fair. For example she agreed with the statement “I believe that I usually get what I deserve” (see table 4.1).

According to the just world hypothesis this may be understood as an attempt by the participant to restore justice in the wake of injustice. Dalbert (2009, p. 1-2) asserts that when people are faced with a situation that threatens their belief in a just world, they try to restore justice in reality (e.g. by compensating or blaming the victim). However when it seems that the injustice is unlikely to be resolved in reality, people restore justice by assimilation of injustice, that is they cognitively re-evaluate the situation in line with their belief in a just world. It appears that in her evaluation of the unjust situations, the participant in this study constructed the meaning that the unjust events that had occurred in her life were a consequence of her actions and she therefore assumed some responsibility (i.e. by blaming herself) for them. She viewed her concrete behaviour (behavioural self-attribution) (Fetchenhauer, *et al.*, 2005, p. 25) as directly responsible for the unjust fate that she experienced, making the attributional style of the survivor crucial.

Similarly with reference to being mugged in Belgium, the participant highlighted her responsibility for the injustice of being mugged, providing further support for Dalbert’s (2009, p. 8) assumption that it can reasonably be expected that people with a strong just world belief are expected to be motivated to defend their belief by making internal attributions of negative outcomes, thus maintaining their subjective well-being. This is seen in extracts such as the following:

“But I think that it is fair to say that if you walk on your own in any city in the world at six o’clock, five-thirty, six o’clock in the morning after partying all night and someone, three people walk past you, I think it’s fair to say that you are looking for trouble” (Int 3, pg. 3, lines 30-33).

When asked if she thought she deserved to be mugged, the participant said the following:

“No, but it was interesting because I was at a place that I was not supposed to be in again.”

“Once again I was totally silly. I was fed-up with my friend who wanted to hook up with this one guy which I knew was not into her and I wanted to go home because I was working the next day and it was like five o’clock in the morning and I walked home by myself which was totally stupid. That was a really stupid thing to do” (Int 3, pg. 3, lines 2-5).

The causal attribution of behavioural self-blame that the participant engaged in may be understood to be adaptive and functional in the sense that “it offers concrete explanations for victimisation and thereby enhances the feeling of control and the perception of being able to avoid future victimisation” (Janoff-Bulman, 1979 as cited in Fetchenhauer, *et al.*, 2005, p. 27). This is consistent with the postulation by Hafer and Correy (1999, p. 191) that strong believers in a just world may stress internal attributions (e.g. blame their own behaviour) for negative outcomes more strongly than weak believers, and thus perceive these outcomes as less unfair. Alternatively, strong believers in a just world may minimise the role of external agents in producing the outcome compared to weak believers; again resulting in less perceived unfairness (Hafer & Correy, 1999, p. 191). This is seen in statements such as the following:

“Obviously in an ideal world anybody should be safe whenever they are walking anywhere. But it’s also ridiculous to think that in a place where they have normal crime and things like that ... it’s an opportunistic thing for anybody and these three Moroccan dudes were probably, they were probably just having fun” (Int 3, pg. 3, lines 35-39).

The above extract further suggests that the participant’s behavioural self-blame allowed for the minimisation of the roles of the men who mugged her and therefore lessened her perceived unfairness of being mugged. It further allowed her to protect her personal belief in a just world. Although it came out very strongly that the participant assumed much responsibility for the unjust events of her life, she did not always experience them as deserved, for example she made statements such as:

“Now I am getting on rocky ground, I don’t know if deserve is the right word. I really truly believe in consequences” (Int 1, pg. 6, lines 3-4).

“I don’t think I deserved to be raped, but I think I was irresponsible and I put myself in a situation where, I don’t know, I don’t think I deserve that in a sense that I did something wrong , but it was the consequence of my irresponsibility” (Int 1, pg. 4, lines 17-19).

“I don’t think that God wanted me to get molested or raped, but even though I was six ... no, I can’t no ... that wasn’t because when you are six, you can’t make a decision of what’s right or wrong. I just wanted to have the attention of this person and he gave it to me (laughs and clears her throat). But when you are older, you are supposed to know right from wrong ... With every choice that you make, everywhere that you go, you are being guided and it’s a matter of listening to that and I think that if you don’t listen to it, then yes ... I didn’t listen. So my choice was not to listen and to put myself in that situation. If I had listened maybe it would have turned out quite differently” (Int 1, pg. 10, lines 19-31).

It therefore appears that the deservingness of the unjust may even be contextually related, meaning that it may vary depending on the contextual factors of the injustice for example the degree of unjustness of the event as experienced by the individual. This was captured in the following remark made by the participant:

“Yes, it was unfair it’s not, but nobody died, nobody got hurt so, and we just go on.” (Int 2, pg. 9, line 29).

The reason for the variation in perceived deservingness may be explicated by Lerner’s (2003, p. 397) assumption that “the greater and more vivid the perceived injustice, the greater will be the emotional arousal and motivation to restore justice and therefore the more likely that people will engage in moral intuition at that time.” However, in the absence of strong arousal and justice-based motivation, people will have sufficient time and cognitive resources to engage in systematic processing of information and therefore engage in moral reasoning (Lerner, 2003, p. 397).

5.3.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Rationalising (PBJW-RAT)

Confrontations with injustice, either observed or experienced, threaten the belief that the world is just. One of the ways in which people respond to justice-related events is to engage in careful and systematic consideration of the important circumstances in the scenario by making use of sufficient time and cognitive resources to engage in systematic thought processes (Lerner, 2003, p. 389). This then allows the victim to construct rational explanations for the injustices that preserve their belief in a just world as seen in the extracts below:

“... but although he was older than me, he still was quite a young boy and he probably didn’t quite know the consequences of what he was doing. So I took that into account as well, I mean you have to be rational about these things as well ...” (Int 1, pg. 4, lines 10-12).

“It’s seeing the timeline of your life not only in the years that you are on earth, but the eternity that you will spend in heaven. Then what you deserve and what you don’t deserve here on earth doesn’t really matter because grace is taking us to heaven” (Int, 1, pg. 6, lines 24-26).

“So then things might happen here on earth, but it might be choices that other people make, like when I was raped; it might be my irresponsibility, being at the wrong place at the wrong time. It might be what the devil did to Job, trying to test his faith. It might be that God is trying to test my faith, if I go through something (Int 1, pg. 6, lines 26-30).

There was also evidence of self-blame in the participant’s explanations for the abuse, for example when asked about why she did not report the sexual abuse that she experienced in Belgium, the participant ascribed blame for the incident to herself:

“I don’t know...It’s probably because I knew that it was my fault in a sense because I knew that I wasn’t supposed to be there” (Int 3, pg. 4, lines 6-8).

Further evidence for the use of self-blame as a form of causal attribution is reflected in the statements below:

“But on the other hand I also believe that what you speak will come into being (clears throat). So if you are constantly afraid, and constantly saying, ‘Oh I am going to be robbed’, or, ‘Oh something bad is going to happen to me’, or, ‘Oh I am so afraid of going into the street’, if you are constantly (emphasis) saying that, then it’s just actually waiting to happen with you or to you” (Int 1, pg. 6, lines 36-40)

“...So for us it seems unfair and unjust because we are not necessarily getting what we want or what we feel we deserve. But from their side, we are. I really struggled with this. We moaned and groaned about what they were doing wrong. But when I look back or when I started really thinking about it, I was getting what I deserve because, I was getting what I thought I deserved because that’s what I asked for” (Int 1, pg. 9, line 38; pg. 10, line 4).

According to just world literature, when people with a strong belief in a just world are confronted with unjust experiences, they put in place strategies to restore justice, either in reality or psychologically. (Dzuka & Dalbert, 2006, p. 6). All of the above statements may be understood to be psychological attempts made by the participant to preserve her belief in a just world by blaming herself for the injustices she faced. In that way, the suggestion that the world is not a fair place and that bad things happen to good people like her is muted, and the threat to her personal belief in a just world is averted. The participant’s self blame may also be understood to reflect the inclination of some women who, even after reaching adulthood and becoming aware of the inherent wrongness of what they experienced as children, find reason to continue to blame themselves (Filipas & Ullman, 2006, p. 666).

5.3.1.3 Sub-theme 3: Religion (PBJW- REL)

Throughout the interviews it came out quite strongly that the participant’s Christian beliefs provided a guiding framework for her beliefs about justness in the world. This was seen in the following statements:

“So that works, it’s in the Bible, it says that, whatever ... there is a lot of ways of saying it, like, what goes around comes around” (Int 1, pg. 2, lines 32-33).

“I believe that Jesus Christ is my Saviour and he died for me on the cross and because of that I do believe in the system of what you sow you will reap” (Int 1, pg. 2, lines 30-32).

Dalbert (2009, p. 2) suggests that one of the ways in which people try to redress injustices is to restore cognitively by blaming the victim or justifying the status quo. It appears that the participant engaged in this cognitive process where she blamed the victim (which was herself) and justified the unjust events in her life by ascribing them to divine orchestration by God.

“I really truly believe in consequences. If you believe in the Bible and constantly in the Bible it tells you that the Lord will bless those who follow his commandments or who follow His way. Or if you do right then you will have a good life. I believe that that is a logical consequence to doing what is right in the eyes of God” (Int 1, pg. 6, lines 3-21).

“And I can say that from my experience in Belgium, I know now, I didn’t then because I didn’t have the same relationship with God then that I do now. I know that it was a warning because God knew what this guy was going to do but I didn’t listen” (Int 1, pg. 10, lines 27-305).

“It might be that God is trying to test my faith, if I go through something” (Int, 1, pg. 6, line 30).

“So then things might happen here on earth, but it might be choices that other people make, like when I was raped; it might be my irresponsibility, being at the wrong place at the wrong time. It might be what the devil did to Job, trying to test his faith (Int, 1, pg. 6, lines 27-29).

All of the above statements reflect attempts by the participant to protect and preserve her belief that the world is a fair place to her. For example, in the last

extract she makes use of both demonic reappraisal whereby she redefines the abuse as the work of the devil as well as reappraisal of God's powers whereby she believes the situation (her abuse) may have been influenced by God's power (Harrison, Koenig, Hays, Eme-Akwari & Pargament, 2001, p. 87). Lerner (2003, p. 390) suggests that individuals may care so much about maintaining and protecting their belief that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get, that if they are unable to restore justice by their actions they will try to do so by other means, such as persuading themselves that they would be compensated later, possibly in the next life. Such an assertion is seen in the following statement made by the participant:

"I don't think that justice always comes at the time that we expect it, and it might not be an earthly justice but I do believe that in the end that God is justice of that and I think that helped me" (Int 1, pg. 3, lines 8-10).

Such cognitions may be beneficial to the participant because the belief in the recompense of heaven and a just (or better, merciful) God may enable her to be less demoralised by her own plight, and definitely less frightened by the implications of someone else's suffering or victimisation because religious people can feel certain that justice will triumph (Lerner, 1997, p. 31). Furthermore, this trust in future justice has several implications such as encouraging an optimistic outlook for and therefore investment in the future (Dalbert, 2009, p. 10-11). Moreover, traumatic experiences can lead to a deepening of religion and spirituality that can be beneficial to people in dealing with the aftermath of trauma because spirituality and positive religious coping are typically associated with posttraumatic growth (Shaw, Joseph, & Linley, 2005, p. 1).

It can be surmised that the participant's experiences are in agreement with current literature on personal belief in a just world which submits that given that there is a basic need to maintain the belief in a just world and that when this belief is threatened, individuals with strong personal belief in a just world may be more likely to lessen the discomfort by altering the situation so that it becomes "fair," rather than by changing their belief in the fairness of the world (Hafer & Correy, 1999, p. 190). The participant tried to preserve her belief in a just world psychologically by putting in

place cognitive appraisal strategies that allowed her to take responsibility for the abuse by making negative causal attributions such as behavioural self-blame. It further appears that the participant's use of her religious beliefs as a framework to make sense of the abuse strengthened her personal belief in a just world as her religious beliefs gave her confidence that through her God justice will ultimately prevail.

5.4 THE PARTICIPANT'S FUTURE ASPIRATIONS (FA)

5.4.1 SUB-THEMES ON FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

According to Bruininks and Malle (2005, p. 327) one of the most "remarkable human capacity is the ability to flexibly represent future events, imagine diverse possible outcomes, and act in light of those representations." Thus, people construct desired mental targets (goals) which are in essence visual images in the mind about a desired future. The contents of these mental targets vary depending on the individual but it is important to formulate these mental representations as they have implications for future outcomes. These imagined end states motivate current behaviour to the extent that people can link their present condition to these potential outcomes through a set of self-representations that lead to the desired end states (Markus, *et al.*, 1990 as cited in Karinol & Ross, 1996, p. 595). With reference to the participant's desired end states which are her future aspirations or goals, the following sub-themes emerged:

5.4.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Low Value Placed On Future versus Current Outcomes (FA- FUT)

Bruininks and Malle (2005, p. 327) submit that imagining possible future outcomes is an important process because "even considerations of far distant or highly unlikely events can affect current action", however people differ on the value they place on current versus future outcomes. Aspinwall, (2005, p. 209), suggests that that effective future-oriented behaviour may require the individual to make a trade-off between motivations to enjoy the present and motivations to accomplish tasks that will bring future gains or avoid future losses. With regard to these trade-offs it

emerged that the participant placed a higher premium on current outcomes as opposed to future outcomes.

“I don’t look back and I tend to not look forward, I look to what’s happening today, so I try to control what is happening today, because I know that I can’t control anything that happened yesterday. And I will, only when I get there, only be able to control the things of tomorrow ... because my goal is to go through today (laughs). That’s my biggest goal” (Int 2, pg. 5, lines 18-23).

“... I’m very much for the moment. I do, I plan, it’s not that I don’t plan. I wake up every morning not knowing what is going to happen. I do plan; it’s just that I don’t put too much faith in what I plan. I think you ... the Lord says we plan and He decides (laughs). So in that sense, it’s not really, wise is to put much faith about tomorrow, because you don’t know what’s gonna happen” (Int 2, pg. 10, lines 33 –pg. 12 line 4).

The above statement suggests that the participant perceives herself as having limited control over the manifestation of a future that she may envision and therefore places little value in the future because she feels that she can’t fully control how it unfolds as reflected below:

“... I so much believe in the now and because I tend to not feel things are really as important as everybody else thinks they are...” (Int 2, pg. 12, lines 31-32).

“...you can only do what you do nowone thinks about what’s going to happen or how would you handle it if this happens. You go through scenarios in your head. But yes, I don’t think one should make too big of a deal of it” (Int 2, pg. 11, lines 28-31).

The suggestion from these findings is that the participant was more vested in the present as opposed to the future and hence her behaviour is more orientated towards meeting present situations instead of directing current behaviour in order to realise desired end states. This may be due to the fact that one of the functions of

personal belief in a just world is that it endows people with trust in the fairness of the world (Dalbert, 2002, p. 124). This may encourage one not to be too vested in the future because they trust that good things will happen if they do good things. Moreover the participant's trust may be mediated by the participant's religiosity as previous studies have suggested that religious beliefs are both linked with trust in people and just world beliefs (Bègue, 2002, p. 377).

5.4.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Positive Future Orientated Thoughts (FA-POS)

It appeared that the participant generally had positive expectancy about the future. This is succinctly captured in statements such the following:

"I have no problems about the future, it will ... I am not being irresponsible or unrealistic when I say I'm sure that there will be difficulties, I'm sure that ... My husband is very, very responsible with money so I have much hope and faith in the future. And with our country as well, if I just might add that" (Int 3, pg. 10, lines 20-28).

"...God wants the best for me, so If I don't make the wrong choices it is going to be a life of abundance because that is what He wants to give us" (Int 2, pg. 16, lines 9-10).

It may be hypothesised that the participant's dreams of the desired future/state are a function of her sense of calling or purpose in life; driven by her passion, values and operating philosophy (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006, p. 627) which she specifically singled out to be her Christian beliefs as well as the assumptions of the Montessori schooling system and the principles of Sportron.² Evidence for this assumption is seen in the following statement:

"You have to believe in something with all your heart. And I have only three things that I believe in like that. And that is God and then Montessori

²Sportron is a wellness company that sells natural medicines and products for weight management, home skin and body care.

education, what Montessori does for children and then Sportron” (Int 3, pg. 12, lines 17-19).

The participant’s future aspirations also comprised of the construction of a positive hoped for self who was in essence a good Christian, a good mother and wife. The following may thus be understood to be the imagery of a desired future which is fuelled by the participant’s aforementioned values (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006, p. 626).

“And then I want to, I want to continuously grow in my relationship with God, that should have been first and foremost (laughs)” (Int 1, pg. 14, lines 14-15).

“I am here to show people God’s love; I am here to be the best me I can be in God’s glory. Or to ... like the moon, reflect God’s glory. Like the moon reflects the sun. If you make the wrong choices then that doesn’t happen” (Int 2, pg. 17, lines 2-4).

“... my relationship with God would just be that I would be able to hear His voice more clearer. I’d be able to know and do [emphasis on do]. Because now I am at a point where I know what is right, but I still don’t do it. But I mean Paul had the same problems (laugh), why would I be better than Paul?” (Int 1, pg. 15, lines 2-5).

With regard to being a good mother and good wife she said the following:

“And then I want to be ... You’ll find out that my hopes and aspirations are about being and not having. I want to be a good wife and a good mother” (Int 1, pg. 14, lines 20-21).

“I think it’s wonderful that God gave me these two little lives to help bring to Him. And that is my first and foremost priority, anything else, concerning my life and the decisions I make has to do with that. Because I think that’s my purpose, it’s to be their mother (pensive pause) (Int 1, pg. 12, lines 6-12).

“I would love to be an at home mom and just be constantly with them, but we want to have a life style that helps them become all they can be so then I have to contribute” (Int 1, pg. 2, lines 10-11).

According to Ebner, Freund and Baltés (2006, p. 665), the aforementioned extracts represent a growth orientation whereby she is striving for gains as well as positive and desired change, meaning the essence of her future goals is to progress from her current level of functioning/state of being in her different goal areas to a higher level of functioning/state of being. Her future goals can also be construed as her personal vision of her ideal self. The construction of the ideal self is important because once it is activated it plays a motivational function within the self by monitoring and guiding all actions and decisions in a direction which ensures deeper self-satisfaction, increased clarity and mindfulness (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006, p. 625-626). Moreover Roberts and Robins (2000, p. 1287) propose that major life goals provide a link between people’s identities and the roles they enact, meaning that people select goals that reinforce their identity. In light of this one may then assume that the goals that the participant has reflect her current identity as a Christian woman, a mother and a wife.

5.4.1.3 Sub-theme 3: Low Goal Pursuit (FA-PUR)

Although the participant had some goals, she appeared not to be highly motivated to pursue her goals. She made this evident in the following statements:

“... I was looking through my diary this morning and I saw that I wrote down three goals for the year, which is like really good for me to write down three goals. And the first was to be credit card debt-free in May, that didn’t happen (laughs). I think that actually my credit card looked better in May than it does now” (Int 3, pg. 9, lines 4-7).

“I would like to ... Have my own school one day, I think. Just because I would ... I wish it would have been with my children now because then I can sort of affect what they are learning. But I don’t think that that would happen, I don’t think that we have the resources to do that. And that’s fine, I don’t mind, I

don't mind it that much, but it would have been nice” (Int 3, pg. 14, lines 29-33).

“I'll just let it go, it was not meant to be. There will another situation were maybe I can do this” (Int 2, pg. 22, line 2).

“I believe that what should happen, will happen. So I don't think I'll be too disappointed if the one doesn't come to fruition” (Int 3, pg. 15, lines 16-17).

Insofar as future aspirations are concerned the participant appears to have positive expectancy about the future but places less value on the future as opposed to the present and hence does not actively pursue future goals. The low pursuit of future goals need not necessarily need to be assumed to stand in contradiction to the assumption that personal belief in a just world allows for the investment in and the pursuit of future goals (Dalbert, 2002) but may rather be explained by the suggestion by Lerner (2003, p. 388) that the general consensus is that people's desire for justice is not of great motivational importance. This suggests that although personal belief in a just world may be a significant meaning-making framework, it may not be a robust motivator of active goal pursuit.

5.5 THE PARTICIPANT'S PROACTIVE COPING (PAC)

5.5.1 SUB-THEMES ON PROACTIVE COPING

Proactive coping also emerged as an important theme during the interviews with the participant. Reiterating a point made earlier, proactive coping involves the creation of opportunities for personal growth and building up resources that facilitate the pursuit of challenging goals as well as efforts to prevent future threats to personal goals (Schwarzer & Taubert, 2002; Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997). The following sub-themes reflect the nature of the participant's experiences with regard to proactive coping.

Sub-theme 1: Taking Initiative (PAC- INT)

According to the Proactive Coping Inventory (Greenglass, *et al.*, 1999), one of the indicators of proactive coping is the inclination to take initiative in making things work and this is a theme that became pronounced throughout the interviews.

“I get things done regardless. You do what you have to do” (Int 3, pg. 8, line 23).

“... .but, if I really want something I will (brief pause) do it until I get it ...” (Int 2, pg. 2, line 5).

“I make a plan (laughing). I either call someone else or I call everyone I know or someone else, I try to make a plan to fix it” (Int 2, pg. 18, lines 29-30).

“... if I can’t fix it, then we make another plan” (Int 2, pg. 19, line 6).

When the participant was asked about her response to situations where one may say that “the odds are against you”, she indicated that she perceived such situations as a challenge as reflected below:

“As a challenge, that you either get around it or you ignore it (bursts out laughing), or you try something to get over it. I cope with it, I don’t moan about it. I don’t ... It’s the way it is and I accept it” (Int 1, pg. 15, lines 11-13).

This assertion by the participant is consistent with literature on proactive coping which proposes that people who engage in proactive coping strategies tend to view problem situations as challenges (Greenglass & Fiksenbaum, 2009, p. 30). It can further be asserted that the participant’s initiative to make things happen may be a reflection of the successful integration of “motivational and intentional aspects with volitional maintenance processes” (Greenglass, *et al.*, 2006, p. 16), all of which are significant processes in proactive coping. The participant’s motivation to take initiative to make things work and the extent to which she tried to make things work may also be a reflection of her religious convictions which she may have used as an

asset that allowed her to endure and cope with the immediate demands of stressful events (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004, p. 760) by working collaboratively with God to solve the challenges that she may be facing. This assumption is reflected in the extracts below respectively:

“Yeah but I don’t believe that you can just sit and wait for it to happen. There is definitely responsibility. The book of Proverbs says that the person who works for his money is happy and he will prosper. So there are definitely things that you must do to make sure you know you have done your part. It’s a 100%, 100% percent thing. But I must trust that God will put the ... or give me the possibilities to get what I want or to do what I want” (Int 1, pg. 16, sec. 1, lines 7-12).

“But I do believe that you decide up until a certain point and then God takes over. I read somewhere that you give 100% and God gives 100%, and then you meet each other half way. And that is what I truly believe, so, it will happen” (Int 2, pg. 16, lines 1-3).

It further appeared that taking initiative and making things work also included getting help from other people who may be in a position to help; meaning that taking initiative was not limited to her own efforts but also imploring the assistance of others to make things work. For example when asked about who specifically sorted out her problems/challenges, the participant responded as follows:

“I try to do it myself, that’s how I grew up, you sort out your own problems. If I can’t, I’ll ask my husband” (Int 1, pg. 17, lines 30-32).

Further evidence for seeking and obtaining assistance as an effort to make things work is seen in the extracts below:

“I can’t be the best mom and wife if I don’t get help. So then, I get help if things happen ... So, if things go wrong, I tend to get help, I don’t just sit and wait for tomorrow” (Int 2, pg. 19, lines 23-27).

“One day ... I was getting into my car from the shops and I was driving home and I was thinking this thought, I thought ‘I can understand why some mothers run away’. And I stopped (emphasis) the car literally next to the road and I thought, ‘I have to get help, I don’t want to run away. I don’t want to leave those precious little ones. I don’t want to just fall down and break; I don’t want to not cope, I wanna cope.’ And then I started sharing with people about how I was feeling and I started to go see someone ...” (Int 3, pg. 17, lines 14-20 I).

“I tried to handle the situation and I tried to get someone to help me handle the situation, until it’s solved. I am very solution driven; I don’t just go and say, ‘Well there you go, I can’t do anything for the rest of the day because I am not putting my foot out of my house because this day would just get worse.’ I can never do that. I know people who can actually do that but I don’t understand it at all. So, I find the solution and even I if am a half an hour late” (Int 2, pg. 22, lines 15-19).

The above extracts suggest that the participant may have incorporated social support and resources in others into her own behavioural and cognitive coping, all of which is adaptive, as Greenglass *et al.* (2006, p. 18) have suggested that social support is a psychological resource that is associated with better psychological functioning. The participant’s determinedness to be active in finding solutions suggests a strong resolve to take charge of her situations (for example through collaboration with God or people in her life) all of which are indicative of proactive coping. However the results of the Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI) (see Appendix) suggest that although this desire to take charge is present, it is not a strong desire. For example the participant felt that it was somewhat true that she was a "take charge" person, and she felt that the statements "I like challenges and beating the odds" and "I visualise my dreams and try to achieve them" were only barely true concerning her. These two results are, however, not irreconcilable, it may be that although the participant makes an effort to resolve challenges there are circumstances where there is very little that she can do to change the situation, but must rather trust and accept that in the future things will work out as they should. This active trust in the future is seen in the extract that follows:

“I believe that what should happen, will happen. So I don’t think I’ll be too disappointed if the one doesn’t come to fruition” (Int 3, pg. 15, lines 16-17).

“I try something and then if I see that after a couple of tries, okay this is going to be too much effort, I try something else that is not as much effort. So think that’s where my personality of being lazy comes in” (Int 3, pg. 11, lines 26-28).

“Typically to something that is not important, I would just let it go. I think it depends on how important it is to me in the greater scheme of things” (Int 2, pg. 21, lines 33-34).

The extract above is consistent with literature on goals which suggest that the goals a person aspires towards are related to their identity (Roberts & Robins, 2000, p. 1287) suggesting that a person is likely to engage in proactive efforts to achieve a goal that is personally experienced as important for the individual as it may be a reflection or an extension of their identity, meaning that there will be some goals that are not experienced as meaningful for one individual but are meaningful to the next individual. For example, a person who values education and constructs their identity as an intellectual person is more likely to manage their life to secure education for themselves by saving up funds for their university fees; however if education is not highly esteemed as an important part of their identity, then the individual in question may be less likely to engage in proactive coping mechanisms such as initiative taking. It is further reasonable to expect that people are not equally committed to the same goals in life, especially since those things that people are committed to, are connected to their identity (Roberts & Robins, 2000).

When asked about her most likely reaction in a situation where an adverse outcome was likely, the participant gave the following response:

“I’ll accept it” (Int 2, pg. 21, line 18).

Such a statement may reflect initiative taking, but in a different way, by choosing to accept a situation which may not be in one’s immediate control. This orientation is further validated by her response to the Proactive Coping Inventory where she

completely agreed with the statement “When I experience a problem, I take the initiative in resolving it” yet she indicated that she thought that the statement “When I have a problem, I usually see myself in a no-win situation” as not true at all. Furthermore she only somewhat agreed with the statement. “I try to let things work out on their own.”

5.5.1.1 Sub-theme 2: Turning Obstacles into Positive Experiences (PAC-POS)

It also emerged that the participant experienced herself as a person who turned obstacles and negative experiences into positive experiences. Evidence for this sub-theme is seen in the extracts below where she reflected on the experience of being sexually abused as a child:

“As an optimist, this doesn’t make sense to most people, I am grateful for what happened because it helped me to deal and to help others to deal with the same things that happened to them. It gave me empathy for people and I think I also learned to look for the deeper reason behind actions ...” (Int 2, pg. 9, lines 30-32).

“...because of the fact that I could have gone through quite traumatic events and come out okay helps me to know that okay, you know almost anything can happen to me and I’ll be alright ...” (Int 2, pg. 12, lines 5-7).

“... But when I really think about it, I am just extremely grateful because even though these things have happened to me that might not be fair, (brief laugh) it has made me; it has matured me into someone that I think is quite worthy” (Int 1, pg. 8, lines 23-25).

“... by the grace of God. Because He led me through a phase or He led me through the realisation that everything that has happened to me was for the greater good. The reason I say this, because most people look at me funny when I say this, I mean how can you say that being raped was for the greater good? But at one stage I did camps with underprivileged children and we took

them on a December holiday for ten days and we'd, you know, we'd share the gospel and do fun things with them. And because of my situation I could have a talk with the girls and explain to them that, although this might have happened to you, although this happened, God can make it so that you can still be functional, you can still be a happy adult, you can get past it, it's not something that should rule your life. You can overcome it by God's grace and because you overcame it by God's grace, your life will be more full with it. Because every now and again there will be an opportunity where you can help someone else because of the experience that you've had" (Int 1, pg. 18, lines 24-33).

The extracts above suggest an optimistic outlook by the participant whereby she is able to see beyond the negativity of her experiences and focus on the positive aspects. She is therefore able to turn a negative experience into a positive one. Further evidence that turning negative experiences into positive ones may be the participant's characteristic way of thinking about negative experiences is reflected below where she speaks about the meaning that she constructed around her miscarriage:

"And I still have dreams about him sometimes, I think it was a 'him', I don't know whether it was but I think it was a him. And I think that is what made it so special when we got twins because it felt to me that the Lord gave me back the one baby and an extra one, which is lovely" (Int 3, pg. 6, lines 11-14).

Statements such as the one above and the one immediately preceding it suggest that the participant engaged in positive reappraisal, by reinterpreting the negative events in terms of her values and beliefs (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004, p. 766). She used her religious beliefs and optimistic life orientation as frameworks for making positive meaning of her experiences. Yet another explanation for turning negative experiences into positive experiences may be found in Lerner's (2003, p. 396), suggestion that as emotional arousal dissipates over time, people get a chance to become more receptive to incentives that elicit thoughtful reactions. It may be that the fact that the participant has had almost 20 years to come to terms with the abuse, coupled with psychotherapy that she received, have afforded the participant

the opportunity to engage in more thoughtful and systematic reflection and meaning-making over the abuse, hence she made positive meaning of the abuse.

5.5.1.2 Sub-theme 3: I Often Don't See Myself Failing (PAC-FAL)

During the interviews with the participant it emerged that she perceived herself as someone who is more likely to achieve what she has set out to achieve as opposed to failing. For example whilst relating a story about complications that emerged during a visit to South Africa where she experienced difficulties in obtaining a visa that would allow her to return back to Canada, she concluded by saying the following:

“But I knew it will probably work out ...” (Int 1, pg. 17, lines 11-15).

Further evidence for this sub-theme may be seen in the following extracts:

“.. Like I said I don't tend to plan something but, (brief pause) I tend to think that if I plan something it will probably turn out right ...” (Int 2, pg. 15, lines 28-29).

“If there is something that's a block between you and your goal, you just know that you will be able to overcome it since you have overcome so much, or I have overcome so much that is really not that bad” (Int 3, pg. 9, lines 23-26).

“For instance if ... an uncertain time like ..., when my husband, I don't know if my husband is coming home safely. Or I don't know where he is ... then even an optimistic person in South Africa will get all the scenarios, what will happen if something happens to him, if he was in an accident, even I go through that. And then I deliberately go through, if this happens, then this will be okay, I'll go and stay with my mom. And if something happens to him the girls and I will be fine. If something happens to the both of us, I do think of those possibilities” (Int 2, pg. 17, lines 19-26).

Whilst waiting for a response to a job application that she had made, the participant related that she was confident that she wouldn't fail to get the job as seen in the extract below:

"I just thought that I would get it. It wasn't a question. I never think of the negative things, I never think I won't get it ..." (Int 1, pg. 16, 22-23).

On the whole, it appears that the participant moderately engages in proactive coping behaviour and cognitions by taking initiative as well as making positive cognitive re-appraisals of negative situations.

5.6 POSITIVE ADJUSTMENT (PA)

5.6.1 SUB-THEMES ON POSITIVE ADJUSTMENT

It is widely acknowledged that trauma has the ability to significantly transform one's life leaving nothing as it was before the traumatic event. It is further accepted that following trauma people engage in numerous attempts to adapt to the trauma (Saakvitne, Tennen & Affleck, 1998, p. 281). Furthermore negative events like CSA threaten one's global meaning and as a result the person attempts to understand what has happened. If they are unable to integrate the negative event into life's course, they are likely to experience emotional distress and have difficulties with adaptation (Skaggs & Barron, 2006, p. 159-560), making positive adaptation a crucial aspect of healing and overall life satisfaction, since traumatic experiences may question important assumptions about life and one's place in it.

Throughout the interviews with the participant it emerged that she experienced herself as someone who had been able to transcend the negative experiences of the past and reconstruct her life in a positive way as well as experience overall satisfaction and meaning in her life. Her positive outlook on her life despite her past hurts is seen in statements such as the following:

"I think life in general is a gift and it's wonderful, and it's just fabulous to be alive and God is so good to us" (Int 2, pg. 14, line 18).

“I think the fact that I am so happy with who and what I am now, makes it pretty clear that I’m quite okay with what happened in the past” (Int 3, pg. 16, lines 36-37).

“I think my world is fabulous (laughs). I have these two wonderful children” (Int 3, pg. 9, line 33).

“I’ve got a lovely family who supports me, I’ve got a lovely church, I have a wonderful job ... I think the Lord has just blessed me in so many ways” (Int 3, pg. 10, lines 14-18).

“I think I’m as happy ... I haven’t been happier, in my life ...” (Int 3, pg. 10, line 5).

Such statements suggest what Linley (2003, p. 602) terms as a “homeostatic return to baseline” meaning that the participant has positively adapted to the trauma such that the experience has propelled her to a higher level of functioning than that which she previously held. Evidence for the participant’s positive adjustment was seen in the fact that optimism, resilience and religious coping emerges as significant sub-themes in her life. These sub-themes are discussed below.

5.6.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Optimism (PA-OPT)

Keeping in step with the interpretive paradigm that informs this study, I believe that it is crucial that the subjective definition of optimism as understood by the participant be acknowledged as providing a framework for understanding the subjective way that she made sense of herself as an optimistic person and how that was expressed in her story. The participant defined optimism/ being optimistic in the following manner:

“I think optimistic means to see everything in the most positive light, or yeah, the most positive light you can. If there’s a ..., I know it’s a cliché, but the glass half-full, half empty thing” (Int 2, pg. 2, lines 35-36).

The participant also provided practical evidence for the fact that optimism was a principle that she applied in her life. For example following being mugged on the streets of Belgium she got a lift from a couple who took her to a coffee shop. Despite the negative experience of being mugged and then getting a lift, she was able to use the mugging incident to construct positive meaning:

“And they thought that it was a huge joke. But I saw the goodness of humanity that day” (Int 3, pg. 3, lines 1-2).

“So it was lovely to sort of get the balance of the bad of humanity and the good helping me” (Int 3, pg. 3, lines 16-17).

These statements suggest that she conceptualised optimism as a positive outlook despite negative circumstances. She attributed this way of cognising to both genetic factors as well as an act of volition or choice. For example when asked if optimism was something that was inherent she said the following:

“I think its, its part personality and part choice” (Int 2, pg. 3, line 18).

“I choose to focus on the positive ...” (Int 2, pg. 3, line 10).

The participant indicated the fact that she also believed that optimism was part genetic in the following statement;

“No, I think maybe I have had it. I think maybe with me it’s a little bit part genetic because my dad is very optimistic as well” (Int 2, pg. 3, lines 22-23).

When asked about being positive in the wake of negativity that she has personally experienced, she again emphasised that it is a choice that she makes:

“... it comes back to the optimism, the fact that they have happened to me, gave me a better understanding when something like that happens to other people, and it helps towards my compassion for other people. But it doesn’t take away from the choice that I have to be positive about things in general,

about life in general. I think life in general is a gift and it's wonderful, and it's just fabulous to be alive and God is so good to us" (Int 2, pg. 14, lines 14-18).

"I tend to then run through the scenarios that can happen. And then I make a choice that it will be okay whatever happens ..." (Int 2, pg. 17, lines 16-17).

The thinking reflected in the above extract that "things will be okay" is in line with the assertions of Bruininks and Malle (2005, p. 330), who submit that optimism can be construed as a positive anticipatory state. Evidence for this positive anticipatory state emerged throughout the interviews and was captured in comments such as:

"There's always something positive that could happen out of it ..." (Int 2, pg. 3, line 7).

"If there is something that's a block between you and your goal, you just know that you will be able to overcome it since you have overcome so much, or I have overcome so much that is really not that bad" (Int 3, pg. 9, lines 23-26).

The participant's optimism can thus be understood to be adaptive, firstly because she experiences it as adaptive in her own universe, and secondly because literature on optimism states that optimism positively influences perceptions of personal efficacy, thereby supporting and prompting benefit-finding in adversity (Bandura, 1982, as cited in Linley, 2003, p. 603). Further evidence for the adaptive nature of her optimism is seen in the fact that she sees a relationship with her optimism and her emotional state of happiness and the fact that she sees optimism as a strength that helps her face future challenges as reflected below:

"... if you see the positive in everything or you can see the positive in most things, then it helps you, if something negative happens. Then it helps you see that it will become better, it helps you, your belief in tomorrow, your belief in the fact that even if it gets worse, it will get better again" (Int 2, pg. 4 lines 2-5).

“I think one should be happy, and I don’t want to be unhappy ... It’s what makes me choose to believe in the positive things” (Int 2, pg. 18. lines 1-3).

According to Brissette, Scheier, and Carver (2002, as cited in Kivimaki, Vahtera, Elovainio, Helenius, Manoux & Pentti, 2005, p. 413), the participant’s positive (optimistic) life orientation may be beneficial to health, as highly optimistic individuals appear to attract supportive social relationships, use adaptive coping strategies, and have different health habits than pessimists, who tend to give up and turn away in stressful situations. This was true for the participant as she indicated in the tree of life drawing she made (See Appendix) that she experienced herself to have a lot of support. For example, she drew a pond behind the tree and the tree represented her whilst the water forming the pond represented God. In her commentary of the drawing she indicated the following:

“...the water signifies, for me, God because He nourishes me and He is the wellspring of life. He gives me the water that nourishes the tree” (TOL, pg. 1, lines 4-5).

The participant also drew the tree with many branches and made the following comment:

“... all these branches are the support system of thick shady leaves” (TOL, pg. 1, line 16).

The participant also singled out the support from her family and God as having been instrumental in her positive adjustment. Evidence for this is seen in the following extracts:

“I have to give credit to my mom, because I think she was a very stable person in my life, and she wasn’t rigid in a sense that she told me exactly what to do, but she directed me quite clearly into, mostly to the right direction” (Int 2, pg. 14, lines 21-24).

“It’s been my family and my faith and the fact that my mom was strong enough to send me to psychotherapy ...” (Int 3, pg. 16, lines 29-31).

“XP³ helped a lot, he was very gentle with me and patient ... The children helped just by being there” (Int 3, pg. 20, lines 19-20).

5.6.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Resilience (PA2)

Resilience has emerged as an important area of inquiry on how people grow through adversity (Richardson, 2002, p. 207). Literature on positive adjustment to traumatic events suggests that people can, in the face of irrefutable knowledge that bad things happen, reclaim faith (Saakvitne, *et al.*, 1998, p. 296), they can bounce back and still find meaning in life. This is the essence of the concept of resilience. Mrazek and Mrazek (1987, as cited in Lam & Grossman, 1997, p. 178) amongst other things conceptualised resilience as the ability to “bounce back and actively problem-solve because of an ability to see that obstacles can be surmounted.” Evidence for the assertion by the participant that obstacles in her life can be overcome is reflected in the following quotations:

“... they say, ‘What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger’ if you chose it to be” (Int 3, pg. 7, lines 10-11).

“When you get out of that deep winter depression then you are stronger for going through that ...” (Int 2, pg. 4, lines 28-29).

“... my resilience has helped me ... Because to be a good wife, you have to be resilient because another person will inadvertently disappoint you or hurt you and you have to be able to get past it otherwise your relationship is going to suffer because of it” (Int 3, pg. 9, lines 12-14).

In describing her own resilience, the participant made use of a metaphor of the response of African Elephants following the close of borders between countries like

³Pseudo name for the participants husband

South Africa and Namibia which restricted the area that they had accessible to them to roam and seek good pasture. She said the following:

“They didn’t necessarily die out because there was for ages a fence that kept them in, they did what they had to do to survive and then when the path opened, they just went back there” (Int 3, pg. 8, lines 11-12).

The participant’s resilience is also captured in statements that speak of the life satisfaction that she currently experiences in spite of her past. This is reflected in statements such as:

“I think I’m as happy ... I haven’t been happier, in my life” (Int 3, pg. 10, line 5).

Moreover, despite multiple incidences of sexual abuse the participant did not identify herself as a victim; in fact she was adamant that she was not a victim

“I’m not a victim; I’m nobody’s victim. I refuse to be someone’s ... anybody’s victim” (Int 3, pg. 19, lines 32-33).

The above statement echoes the postulations of the resilient theory which submits that people are at liberty to choose, consciously or unconsciously, the results of disruptions (Richardson, 2002, p. 310). It may also be said that one of the choices that the participant made was to refuse to assume the identity and role of a victim as well as forget the details of the experiences, which is a significant factor in relation to resilience. According to Harvey (1996 as cited in Harvey, Liang, Harney, Koenen, Tummala-Narra & Lebowitz, 2003, p. 90) one of the domains of resilience is authority over memory, namely, the point in the recovery process at which the trauma survivor is able to choose to recall or not recall the experiences that are intruded unbidden into consciousness. It appears as if the participant exercised authority over her memory by forgetting aspects of her hurtful experiences. The following statement lends itself as evidence for this assumption:

“I think the fact that I probably forget so easily (bursts out in laughter), it really does play a key role because I don’t hold on to the past. So that pain and that

disappointment and those feelings that I had doesn't play any role in my feelings of how I am or who I am today" (Int 3, pg. 8, lines 17-19).

"I'm very forgetful. That helps me being positive, because if you don't forget, I mean if you don't remember all the bad things, it's much easier to remember the positive stuff" (Int 2, pg. 4, lines 21-23).

5.6.1.3 Sub-theme 3: Religious Coping (PAC-REL)

People are able to effectively cope with traumatic experiences by using their spirituality as a meaning-making framework for coping (Saakvitne, *et al.*, 1998, p. 296). This is a coping avenue that emerged as a significant way in which the participant has made meaning of and coped with her sexual abuse and mugging. This was seen in how the participant made use of a variety of religious coping mechanisms, for example in the extract below she made use of benevolent religious reappraisal (Harrison *et al.*, 2001, p. 87) whereby she redefined the stressor through religion as benevolent and potentially beneficial. When asked if she felt that she had been able to overcome the setbacks that she has had in her life, the participant gave the following response:

"But what I want to say is that I think that if you believe that God is your rock then you know that you can overcome any challenge, so you know that you are never going not to succeed" (Int 2, pg. 1, lines 23-25).

"Yes, but by the grace of God. Because He led me through a phase or He led me through the realisation that everything that has happened to me was for the greater good" (Int 1, pg. 15, lines 22-33).

"God can make it so that you can still be functional, you can still be a happy adult, you can get past it, and it's not something that should rule your life. You can overcome it by God's grace and because you overcame it by God's grace, your life will be more full with it. Because every now and again there will be an opportunity where you can help someone else because of the experience that you've had" (Int 1, pg. 15, lines 29-33).

Such statements also begin to suggest that the participant may have reached a point of biopsychospiritual homeostasis which refers to a point in time where one has reached a point where she has adjusted spiritually and mentally to the circumstances of her life (Richardson, 2002, p. 311). Moreover, the above statements are consistent with findings by Lerner (1997, p. 31) that highly religious participants may have less of a need to explain a victim's misfortune away, because they believe that God would eventually set things right. In this case the participant appeared not to need to explain the abuse away but used her religion as a framework to make peace with the abuse as something that was for the greater good. This orientation is one of the hallmark beliefs of the Christian faith and is seen in verses such Romans 8 verse 28, which states "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (The Holy Bible, New International Version, 1973, p. 177).

It can be surmised that the participant experienced has made positive adjustment to her experiences of CSA. This is evidenced through qualities such as resilience, optimism and biopsychospiritual homeostasis.

5.7 INTEGRATED DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.7.1 SECONDARY QUESTION 1: WHAT ARE THE PARTICIPANT'S PERSONAL BELIEFS OF JUSTICE IN THE WORLD?

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping in a resilient survivor of CSA. In the third chapter of this study, I presented the methodological processes that I elected to use in order to answer this question. I specifically chose to first investigate these constructs separately in the previous section of this chapter; however in this section I offer an integrated discussion of these constructs, so as to illuminate their relationships. I will commence by answering the secondary questions and will conclude by answering the main question that directed this study.

The first secondary question was *what are the participant's personal beliefs of justice in the world?* Results of the present study appear to be consistent with

previous studies on the just world theory in that belief in a just world moderates positive adjustment by allowing victims of an unjust fate to cognitively re-evaluate their unjust experience(s) as deserved (Hafer & Correy, 1999; Bègue & Muller, 2006). The results further suggest that the participant in this study (who was a resilient survivor of CSA) had a strong personal belief in a just world despite the fact that she was sexually abused, and this belief may have been maintained through cognitive distortions of the injustices she experienced, (i.e. through processes of assuming responsibility for the abuse by way of behavioural self-blame, rationalising the abuse and drawing on religious beliefs as a meaning-making framework for making sense of the abuse). In fact, religiosity emerged as a motivator for strong personal belief in a just world, suggesting that religious coping is a positive resource following CSA. This assertion is supported by Shaw, *et al.* (2005, p. 1) who submit that religiosity is typically associated with posttraumatic growth. These findings, however, appear to be in contrast to the submissions of Gall, Basque, Damasceno-Scott & Vardy (2007).

Gall, *et al.* (2007, p. 102) cite numerous studies that found that following their abuse, survivors of CSA perceived God as distant, unloving, wrathful, and unkind and therefore experienced a lot of anger toward God. These seemingly opposing findings make it imperative that scholars generate knowledge that reconciles these findings. This would require of researchers to investigate the mechanisms of religiosity that encourage one survivor to maintain faith in God and therefore the idea of justice and personal belief in a just world while encouraging another to hate God and lose trust in His justice. One possible area of investigation in the former situation would be that of the just world beliefs of a person who is experiencing negative religious coping. It may be that personal belief in a just world may play a significant role in religious coping by supporting better religious coping. This relationship, however, needs to be further investigated.

5.7.2 SECONDARY QUESTION 2: WHAT ARE THE PARTICIPANT'S FUTURE ASPIRATIONS?

The second secondary question that was examined in the present study was *what are the participant's future aspirations?* The results suggest that the future aspirations of the participant in this study focused on states of being or broad

identities, namely to be a good Christian, a good mother and a good wife. The results also suggest that the participant had an overall positive expectancy about the future. I further found that although the participant was more vested in the present as opposed to the future, she did not actively pursue future goals. It may be that the participant's positive expectancy about the future may be mediated by her belief in a compassionate God and this belief may serve as a springboard toward the attainment of a positive outlook and a strong sense of self (Gall, *et al.*, 2007, p. 115).

5.7.3 SECONDARY QUESTION 3: TO WHAT EXTENT DOES A SURVIVOR OF CSA ENGAGE IN PROACTIVE COPING?

Finally, with regard to the question *to what extent does a survivor of CSA engage in proactive coping?* The results suggest that the participant engaged in proactive coping and that the most dominant proactive coping mechanisms that she employed were taking initiative, positive reappraisal by way of turning obstacles into positive experiences, and positive expectancy in that she often does not see herself failing in her endeavours. It may be that the participant's ability to turn obstacles into positive experiences may be a reflection of her optimism. This assertion is supported by Linley (2003, p. 603) who asserts that optimism prompts benefit-finding in adversity. This then suggests that there may be a strong relationship between optimism and proactive coping begging the question; what is the relationship between optimism and proactive coping?

5.7.4 PRIMARY QUESTION: WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONAL BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD, FUTURE ASPIRATIONS AND PROACTIVE COPING IN A RESILIENT SURVIVOR OF CSA?

The primary question addressed in this study was, *what is the relationship between personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping in a resilient survivor of CSA?* From the above findings one may understand the relationship between the constructs in the following manner: A strong relationship between personal belief in a just world and religiosity may encourage an optimistic orientation because both of these frameworks allow for the "illusion" that one will reap what they sow and therefore ignite positive future aspirations through positive expectancy.

Findings of this study suggest that the participant's strong personal belief in a just world encouraged this process making evident the relationship between personal belief in a just world and positive future aspirations. This general positive expectancy about the future may be supported by the assurance (provided by a strong belief in a just world) that justice will inevitably prevail in one's life circumstances (Dalbert, 2001).

Lerner and Miller's (1978, as cited in Hunt, 2000, p. 326) assertion that a strong belief in a just world enables individuals to commit themselves to the pursuit of long-range goals makes it reasonable to expect that the participant's strong personal belief in a just world and positive future aspirations would encourage her to invest herself in future planning. However, findings from this study suggest that a strong personal belief in a just world does not necessarily motivate future planning. The findings further indicate that it is possible to have a strong personal belief in a just world and also ascribe little value to future outcomes as opposed to the present ones and therefore to not engage in the active pursuit of goals. These findings question the relationship between personal belief in a just world and future aspirations insofar as goal pursuit is concerned. In fact, findings from this study suggest that personal belief in a just world may not be a significant motivator for the active pursuit and investment in future goals.

The participant's low pursuit of future goals may be related to her religious beliefs. Gall, *et al.* (2007, p. 114) suggest that a relationship with a higher power (God) has significant implications for personal growth and meaning-making, hence it is possible that the participant did not find the active pursuit of goals as a personally meaningful venture due to her relationship with God who, in the book of Saint Mathew chapter 6 verse 33 and 34, specifically asks that His children "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well" (The Holy Bible, New International Version, 1973, p. 7).

The participant's positive expectancy of the future in terms of her future aspirations may have been expressed in her proactive coping efforts as an inclination to turn obstacles into positive experiences. However, the relationship between these constructs (future aspirations and proactive coping) was unclear. On the one hand

future aspirations and proactive coping appeared have the common approach of positive cognitive appraisals, on the other hand, even though the participant's proactive coping allowed her to take charge of situations, her future aspirations reflected poor goal pursuit. Linley (2003, p. 602) suggests that it is possible for individuals to reflect positive adaptation in one facet of their functioning but there may still be some facets/domains in their functioning that are still wanting. It therefore may be that the participant's positive cognitive appraisals (i.e. strong personal belief in a just world, resilience and optimism) may reflect adaptive aspects about her adjustment to CSA. However, her "laissez faire" attitude with regard to the pursuit of future goals may reflect a part of her that is less adaptive.

It may alternatively be argued that the participant's "laissez faire" attitude stems from her trust in the future (positive expectancy) and is adaptive because it saves her from unnecessary stress. The participant's religious beliefs may allow her to be positive about the future and trust in and rely on God to bring that goal to pass; hence there is no urgency to make the goal happen. However, in the absence of data about the participant's functioning prior to the trauma with respect to cognitive appraisals, it is hard to draw informed conclusions about her post-trauma functioning or adaptation.

5.8 MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

5.8.1 SECONDARY QUESTION 1: WHAT ARE THE PARTICIPANT'S PERSONAL BELIEFS OF JUSTICE IN THE WORLD?

- The participant had strong personal belief in a just world despite the fact that she was sexually abused.
- The participant used her strong personal belief in a just world to make sense of her CSA in such a way that she rationalised the abuse and assumed some responsibility for the abuse.
- There appears to be a relationship between personal belief in a just world and religiosity (specifically Judeo-Christianity).

5.8.2 SECONDARY QUESTION 2: WHAT ARE THE PARTICIPANT'S FUTURE ASPIRATIONS?

- The future aspirations of the participant in this study focused on states of being or broad identities, namely to be a good Christian, a good mother and a good wife.
- The participant had an overall positive expectancy about the future.
- Although the participant was more vested in the present as opposed to the future, she did not actively pursue future goals.

5.8.3 SECONDARY QUESTION 3: TO WHAT EXTENT DOES A SURVIVOR OF CSA ENGAGE IN PROACTIVE COPING?

- The participant engaged in proactive coping.
- The most dominant proactive coping mechanisms that she employed were taking initiative, positive reappraisal by way of turning obstacles into positive experiences, and positive expectancy in that she often does not see herself failing in her endeavours.

5.8.4 PRIMARY QUESTION: WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONAL BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD, FUTURE ASPIRATIONS AND PROACTIVE COPING IN A RESILIENT SURVIVOR OF CSA?

- There exists a relationship between personal belief in a just world and positive future aspirations.
- A strong personal belief in a just world does not necessarily motivate future planning.
- A strong personal belief in a just world may not be a significant motivator for the active pursuit of and investment in future goals.
- The relationship between future aspirations and proactive coping was unclear.

5.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study is not without limitations, the first being that I did not measure the religiosity of the participant. Religiosity emerged as an important theme in this study,

but because it was not part of the original constellation of constructs under study, it was not measured. In retrospect, it appears that it could have been useful to have more detailed data on the religiosity of the participant.

In the present study, the participant was a Christian female. In future studies, it will be beneficial to have also had a participant of a different religious system as this may have provided deeper insights into the role of religiosity in relation to the constructs under study. Different religious systems may interact with personal belief in a just world differently and this could not be accounted for in the current study. Including a male participant in this study may also have been helpful in generating clearer understanding on the gender specific differences in positive adjustment as Linley and Joseph (2004, p. 16) and Tedeschi and Calhoun (1996, p. 498) found that men and women differ in their responses to trauma specifically in areas of coping and spirituality.

Lastly, this study could have benefited from greater methodological rigour insofar as data collection techniques are concerned. I found that over-reliance on self-reports makes it hard to verify the data, for example an objective measure of positive adjustment may have increased the trustworthiness of the findings of this study.

5.10 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study represents a paradigm shift within the field of social science to move beyond the deficit-vulnerability model to a strength-based model (Lam & Grossman, 1997, p. 178) in an effort to better understand and serve those who have experienced traumatic experiences. This study contributes to the body of knowledge in positive psychology with specific reference to insights on resilience. It does this by raising important questions with regard to the relationship between personal belief in a just world and resilience. For example, what are the specific features of personal belief in a just world that encourage resilience? And under what conditions would the “illusion” of personal belief in a just world become maladaptive in one’s attempts to bounce back from adversity? It further raises the question, what processes are involved whereby an individual who has a strong personal belief in a just world can blame themselves and take responsibility for injustice inflicted on them and yet still

be able to experience themselves as resilient and make positive adjustments to the trauma of the injustice they experienced?

Research on personal goals, life meaning and religion suggests that in most religious systems spiritual maturity is understood to be a process of goal attainment, with the ultimate goal being intimacy with the divine (Emmons, 2005, p. 736). This raises questions about the participant's low goal pursuit. If religion is a personal meaning-making framework and religion is about the lifelong pursuit of an ultimate goal (which in the Christian faith may be a relationship with God), one would expect that a deeply religious person would have a proclivity towards the active pursuit of those goals that are in line with their religion, yet this was not the case in this study. Such a finding invites investigation on the relationship between religion (specifically Christianity) and goal pursuit.

This study provides supportive evidence for the strong relationship between religion and personal belief in a just world generally reported in the literature by Dalbert (2002). It also provides preliminary insight into the relationships, cognitive appraisal and coping mechanisms of survivors of CSA that can further be used to generate a coherent theoretical framework about these constructs (personal belief in a just world, future aspirations and proactive coping). This can be done through studies that specifically investigate the cognitive appraisals of weak and strong believers in a just world. Furthermore, such studies carry the potential of enriching scholarship on cognitive appraisal and trauma.

By virtue of the fact that the participant's religious belief system emerged as an important aspect of her life and the manner in which she made sense and subsequently coped with the experience of CSA, this study suggests that religious belief systems may be important areas of attention for social scientists, especially those in the field of psychology. My sentiments are backed by Harrison *et al.* (2001 p. 90) who submit that acknowledging and respecting religious coping helps to reinforce this type of coping behaviour and may therefore make it more effective in the long run as well as a more holistic intervention. Therapists may benefit from acknowledging and engaging in discourses about religion and spirituality with their client(s) as it may form a significant part of who they are.

Furthermore, the finding that religiosity may not be a motivator of goal pursuit and that it may have instead encouraged the laissez faire attitude of the participant in this study has profound implications on the goal pursuit and motivation towards learning and development of religious clients. This may call for extra sensitivity on the part of therapists working with religious individuals in terms of techniques and strategies that encourage the active pursuit of therapeutic goals. Furthermore, based on these findings, it appears that high belief in a personally just world is an adaptive mechanism that may be accessed and strengthened in survivors of CSA in order to enable optimism and hope in survivors of CSA. This calls for psychologists and other professionals who seek to enable clients to experience hope and optimism following trauma and injustice, to invest themselves in learning and developing strategies that which will focus on strengthening personal belief in a just world.

Finally, since the findings of this study suggest that there is a relationship between personal belief in a just world and positive expectancies about the future and that these may encourage positive adjustment to trauma, it may be useful for psychologists working from a positive psychology framework to consider incorporating personal belief in a just world and positive expectancies during asset mapping, as part of their clients reservoir of assets that can be mobilized to deal with internal and external barriers to learning and development across various levels of the system.

5.11 RECOMMENDATIONS

The relationship between personal belief in a just world and religiosity was so evident that it raises questions about the mechanisms of this relationship. It may be beneficial to focus future research on investigating whether or not different systems of religion would have an equally strong effect on personal belief in a just world. One might, for example, pursue the question *what are the effects of Christianity on personal belief in a just world as compared to Buddhism?* It may also be useful to investigate the point at which strong religiosity becomes maladaptive in terms of goal pursuit. Specifically, when and under what circumstances would religiosity begin to interfere with goal pursuit and investment in the future?

Given the dearth of research on religiosity and CSA, it may be necessary to generate knowledge on religious coping and other adaptive coping mechanisms (for example one may investigate the favourable and unfavourable aspects of religious coping in relation to other forms of coping).

Lastly, future studies involving sensitive populations would benefit from strategic advertising of the study, for example in organisations that deal especially with the population under study (i.e. sexually abused women). It may also be beneficial for researchers to form a network that allows them to assist each other in accessing members of vulnerable populations.

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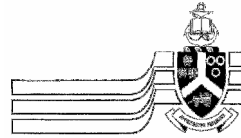
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APPENDICIES



**APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT AND ETHICAL CLEARANCE
CERTIFICATE**



UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

DEGREE AND PROJECT

INVESTIGATOR(S)

DEPARTMENT

DATE CONSIDERED

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE NUMBER :

EP09/11/06

Med: Educational Psychology

Proactive coping, just-world beliefs and future aspirations of an adult survivor of childhood sexual abuse

T. Nxumalo

Department of Educational Psychology

17 August 2010

APPROVED

Please note:

For Masters applications, ethical clearance is valid for 2 years

For PhD applications, ethical clearance is valid for 3 years.

CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE Prof L Ebersohn

DATE

17 August 2010

CC

Dr S Human Vogel
Ms Jeannie Beukes

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1. A signed personal declaration of responsibility
2. If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted
3. It remains the students' responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.

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APPENDIX B: EXCERPTS OF TRANSCRIPTS

1

2 **T: Tell me about yourself**

3 **R:** I am 34 years old, and I have been married for 5 years this November. I am a mother of twins
4 which has been the, I think culmination of everything that I have been dreaming my whole life. I just
5 always knew that I wanted to be mother. And there was never any doubt, in my mind I was always
6 the one who babysat and was looking after the family children. I was always a mom, but I promised
7 myself I wasn't going to get married before I was 26...

8 **T: Why 26?**

9 **R:** My mother got married at 26 and it just seems like a good number. And eventually I only got
10 married at 29, well, it wasn't an issue, but yes, I grew up. I was born in Potchefstroom but we moved
11 to Pretoria when I was five. My dad was a minister and mom worked in the television industry, she
12 worked with SABC. They were quite prominent figures and some people knew them. I grew up sort
13 of behind the spotlight if you understand what I mean. I don't think that affected me badly at all, I
14 think it made me quite assertive and very strong, but yes, I am basically a trailer kid, I love to convey
15 information and I love to teach. So whether it's about nutrition or whether is about Montessori or
16 whether it's about my faith.

17 I love to teach, so that's a little bit. I sing as well, I love to sing, I just enjoy it so much and it doesn't
18 take any effort because am basically quite lazy, so that is why. I did play the piano as well at some
19 stage, but I never got any further because I really don't want to practice, and singing doesn't take
20 practice, it just goes, you just open your mouth.

21 **T: That's if you're gifted...some of us are....OK.**

22 **T: What kind of person would you describe yourself as?**

23 **R:** I don't really believe in astrology in the sense that you can plan your future according to it, but I
24 do believe that, I am an Aquarius, I am a typical Aquarius, I am fun, loving and not too much worried
25 about what happens. I am quite relaxed, as I get older I stress a lot about things, but I normally don't
26 stress about things, I am just really laizze fait, just let it go. But I am very responsible, I try to please
27 people, I am a very big people pleaser. I am the first child, I only had one sister, so you know, and the
28 oldest child is always the one responsible for everybody, trying to keep everybody happy, so I
29 constantly make jokes. I don't like conflict at all, although I have learned to be assertive enough to
30 stand on my ground and say listen, this does not work or.... But yes, I rather let it be, that's where
31 the aquarium thing comes in, were the water just goes over the, it doesn't try to get the rock out of
32 the way, it just goes around it. So, it is just easier to go around it.

33 **T: And where are your siblings?**

34 **R:** My sister is actually, she just finished her master's degree last year at Potch (*meaning,*
35 *Potchefstroom*) and now she is lecturing there. And she is into, she did her masters in educational
36 law and management, but she is now at the faculty of the languages, she is helping with the, we are
37 not supposed to call it bridging course, but it's a bridging course.



1 **T: So it was only the two of you?**

2 **R:** Yes, my mother lost a little boy, when she was six months pregnant, her body was not healthy
3 enough to keep the baby going and he died.

4 **T: Where are your parents now?**

5 **R:** They are at Potch,

6 **T: And your relationship with them?**

7 **R:** Very good, my dad and I's relationship, our relationship was not always really good, we, I thought
8 about this a lot and I will tell if you want now, but I, when I turned twenty, I told him ok, I am tired of
9 being angry with you, so I am not going to be angry with you, I want to start anew, let's start fresh,
10 and since then we really had a good relationship. My mom and I have always been extremely close,
11 the three of us, my mom, my sister and I, we were like the three musketeers, we very, very close and
12 we love each other; although my sister and I do not get along though when we were under the same
13 roof for very long. It's a little bit of sibling rivalry, and well, that's very fun loving. But, we push each
14 other's buttons very easily. But, since she is in Potch, and she has been living there I think since 2000
15 with my parents, they moved there in 2000, her 2001, we have a really, really good relationship
16 because we don't see each other every day, we just phone, so it's quite nice. But yes, my mom was
17 very lonely when I grew up; my dad is a workaholic, so he works tremendously hard. And she is not
18 used to that, her father was at home in the afternoon, and she had a tough time, she was quite
19 depressed for a long time when I was younger and the only people that she could talk to was the
20 two of us. Because my dad was a minister at the church and then it's difficult, you can't really make
21 friends in your circle or in the church and then confide in them. But well you can, but I don't think
22 she felt it was proper. She is very much into doing the right things. So in trying to be loyal to him,
23 she didn't want to discuss anything that bothered her and then she discussed it with us. Which I
24 don't think was really fair to us, because it made us a bit biased against him. That's were think a lot
25 of my aggression came from towards him, but then I realized that I was not supposed to, I am not
26 supposed to get involved. And I think that was a very big learning experience for me, in that you can
27 help people by listening without doing anything about the situation, just your listening helps.

28 **T: I want to know, what you would say are your fundamental beliefs about the world, your beliefs**
29 **in general, the way that the world works, your beliefs about life?**

30 **R:** I am a Christian, a devote Christian I would like to believe. I believe that Jesus Christ is my savior
31 and he died for me on the cross and because of that I do believe in the system of what you sow you
32 will reap. So that works, it's in the bible, it says that "whatever...", there is a lot of ways of saying it,
33 like, what goes around comes around, some people call it karma, some people call it kismet, I don't
34 know all those kind of things, but I do believe in an Almighty God who sent his Son and his Holy Spirit
35 to come to use to sort of guide us and to be with us and if you listen to the Spirit, you will be able to
36 use him as a guide. And I do believe that there are consequences to actions. So, whatever happens,
37 not just the teacher in me, so if you have good actions, the consequences to those actions will be
38 good. And if your actions are irresponsible or bad or not according to the social norms, the
39 consequences are going to be vile or negative.

1 ***T: Do you believe it always works that way?***

2 ***R:*** Yes, I do.

3 ***T: So, there is no exception to the rule?***

4 ***R:*** I don't think so because it's a fundamental principle of the universe, there is, for every action
5 there is reaction, even not doing anything is an action and the consequence will be nothing, but
6 nothing is still something, we going into philosophy very deeply. For instance in South Africa, if you
7 do nothing to stop a crime, crime is going to continue but there is a consequence to doing nothing.
8 So yes, I believe that is the principle of life it's there, I just believe in the just world, I don't think that
9 justice always comes at the time that we expect it, and it might not be an earthly justice but I do
10 believe that in the end that God is justice and I think that helped me, If you want, I am more than
11 willing to share that.

12 It really helped me forgiving the people who abused me because I was molested when I was six
13 years old by a family member. He was young, he wasn't yet an adult, so most, some of the
14 psychologist that I spoke to early said that no man it wasn't really abuse, or it wasn't really
15 molestation, it was sexual play. But, after much thought and the way I reacted to it, my feeling of
16 guilt, I realized that it is sexual play when it is two willing participants of the same peer group and
17 me being six, and him being at least eight years older, seven to eight years older than me, does not
18 make it sexual play. I did not know what it was, so, and then, I was raped when I was in Belgium, I
19 went to Belgium to Au pair but that was a consequence of me being irresponsible, I went totally
20 overboard in Belgium because it was the first time I was out and I had freedom. So we went drinking
21 almost every night and I took a ride home with this one guy from Canada and he said well, let us
22 stop at my home so then I said that's fine. I can remember walking up his stairs to his flat and
23 thinking or maybe it was Holy Spirit telling me that you should not be here now this is not
24 responsible, you should turn around and tell him to take you home, take a bus or something. And I
25 didn't, and I am sure he slipped me something in a drink because I can't remember everything but I
26 knew he raped me early. So, but it was strange because I totally ignored it, I actually went on a date
27 with him afterwards again which is really...when I think of it now, I can't ...

28 ***T: Did you know?***

29 ***R:*** Yes, I am sure that I knew but I totally blocked it out and only after I went on this date with him
30 and he was a total ass, sorry for the word but he was a total idiot. I realized then, that ok, I am not
31 going to pursue this, it's really just...but it was only later on when the feelings started surfacing and I
32 actually sort of came to terms with what happened, but this was when I was eighteen, and it took
33 me ten years to get to a point where I actually forgave him them. I have to sometimes when I am, if I
34 am, at the stage where I might feel a bit vulnerable, I sometime have to forgive him again, I don't
35 think forgiving is just one part and you can put it out of your head, I think that is what Jesus meant
36 when he said seventy times seven. It has to be again and again whenever that feeling of resentment
37 comes. It's actually quite interesting we, on our sermon on Sunday, it was about Joseph and his
38 brothers. And I was reading the Amplified (Bible) and in the Amplified his brothers asked him to
39 forgive them and it brackets it says, "To take up and put away all resentment and feelings of
40 requital" so feelings of entitlement of getting justice. So that is quite interesting for me that God

1 asks us to forgive and let him be the judge of the people, so that is what I believe. I believe that
2 people who have done bad things to you, you must forgive and if you have done bad things to them,
3 you must go and ask for their forgiveness. But ultimately, you must ask your forgiveness from God.

4 ***T: May I ask if you have ever pursued anything legally?***

5 **R:** No, I didn't, probably because first of all, the one was a family member and my family is not the
6 kind that will survive something like that and it's just, and also being older now, I can realize that, I
7 actually forgave him face to face, the family member. I took him for drinks because we saw each
8 other constantly over the years. I can't remember how many times it happened and when I forgave
9 him, he said he was quite relieved obviously because he said that there wasn't a month that went by
10 without remembering and feeling extremely guilty, but although he was older than me, he still was
11 quite a young boy and he probably didn't quite know the consequences of what he was doing. So I
12 took that into account as well, I mean you have to be rational about these things as well. And the guy
13 from Canada I would not know where to start, in finding him first of all, I can't even remember his
14 surname and second of all I felt sorry for it.

15 ***T: Ok, I was going to ask, now with regard to the way you perceive and explain justice, that you***
16 ***get what you deserve, how do you place yourself in that?***

17 **R:** I don't think I deserved to be raped, but I think I was irresponsible and I put myself in a situation
18 where, I don't know, I don't think I deserve that in a sense that I did something wrong, but it was
19 the consequence of my irresponsibility.

20 ***T: So you would say it is the consequence of you being irresponsible?***

21 **R:** Ya....

22 ***T: And with regard to the guy, you'd say that you feel like somehow, justice has been served or it***
23 ***will be served at a later point in time?***

24 **R:** Yes, I mean obviously I don't want him to be judged by God now that I have forgiven him, because
25 I am hoping that God has forgiven him as well. That is why ...all right, but I had to forgive myself as
26 well just for the record because part of this all is, I think part of you being human but mostly being a
27 woman is we think that it was our fault. And it is not at all. I mean, even being irresponsible, didn't
28 necessarily, he still had a choice. But that is one of the things you can't get away from. It really, it
29 took me much longer to forgive myself than it did to forgive them. And it is interesting that only
30 now when I look at my two goals, I am, I can understand that is why God will forgive us
31 unconditionally and why I can forgive myself unconditionally because if I think that He loves me
32 much more than I love my girls, I mean I can't love them as much as he loves us. But the fact that I
33 love them so much, I will forgive them anything.

34 ***T: It is really coming out that a lot of what you believe is based on your religious beliefs.***

35 **R:** All of it, I believe that you, especially if, well all major religions have that in common, I mean, the
36 devote people, are the people that truly believe it, live it, they live it, sorry. They don't just say I am
37 Jewish but I eat everything, then you can't really, that's a culture then.

1 **T: You have answered a lot of question actually**

2 **R:** I talk a lot.

3 **T: Which is fine because my next one was what your philosophies are about life and how the world**
4 **works? But I just want to go back a bit. OK, I get it with justice, any other thing, any other**
5 **foundational beliefs that you have that guide your life or with regards to life?**

6 **R:** Thankfulness for your blessings, then passing it on. I believe that one of the biggest principles
7 should be in thanking God every day and in what you are and showing that you aspire to be a good
8 person, helping others when they need it, giving as much as you can. It's a bit of a problem because I
9 turn to give a lot. I am an enthusiastic giver, I will give away everything that I have and in the
10 beginning it was, and I have to be honest about this, in the beginning it was because I was just a
11 people pleaser, so I wanted people to love me. But it turned into being just because I believed if
12 that's what God expects us to do, he expects us to be his hands, feet, and arms, we are His body and
13 if you can't show other people kindness or grace in that way, you are not being Him. So, not that I
14 am saying I am God, you understand that I am just a person. So I believe that in giving your tenth or
15 doing tithing is one of the fundamental things that you should be doing because of thankfulness, not
16 out of duty. It starts out of duty, but it ends as something much more, I believe.

17 **T: There is a verse in Lamentations where king Solomon speaks about the people who are cruel,**
18 **why do good thing happen to them and why do they prosper and things. How do you reconcile**
19 **that with the notion of always getting what you deserve, and especially because of your Christian**
20 **beliefs and grace because grace is something you don't deserve?**

21 **R:** Yes, yes, I know that there is a lot of theologians who believe in the prosperity theology where
22 God wants us to be fruitful and he wants us to be rich and he wants us to be happy and all of those
23 things but that doesn't coincide with all the Christians who are being..... I don't know the English
24 word for this, (*Afrikaans word verfoo*) who are being tortured for their faith. So it's a difficult one
25 and I have actually just finished Proverbs where they also say the whole thing about..The, but in
26 Proverbs they also say that it might seem that way on earth but they don't in the end. I sometimes
27 get frustrated with other Christians they don't see this yet. But I believe that God's prosperity for us
28 is not material. Its joy and spiritual maturity. And being able to be thankful and blessed even though
29 you don't have everything that you want.

30 **T: So for you the whole idea of grace does not take away from the belief that you will get what you**
31 **deserve?**

32 **R:** On no! (Voice pitch goes up), not at all! Although I get what you are saying because grace is not
33 what I deserve, not at all. But I am also thinking that grace is also a consequence of God's love for
34 me. So it comes into that, if that makes any sense.

35 **T: I do get it, but I want to understand, do people apply grace or is it just God that works in grace?**

36 **R:** I think Christians should apply grace, but I don't think they always do, cause they are human
37 (giggles). Shame!!

1 ***T: On a personal note, would you say that you believe that by and large you deserve what happens***
2 ***to you?***

3 **R:** Yes (giggles). Now I am getting on rocky ground, I don't know if deserve is the right word. I really
4 truly believe in consequences, maybe because I am an educator. I see things in...Ok let me just back
5 track a bit. Montessori doesn't believe ...Do you know Montessori?

6 ***T: Yes, I have heard of it but I am not very well versed in it***

7 **R:** Ok, It's just a different way of looking at children. She didn't believe in rewards and punishment,
8 she said that children should be shown that work is its own reward. That if you give them reward
9 and punishment constantly, they are either going to do something out of wanting to please you and
10 that doesn't help them with self discipline. Or it's going to let them do something out of fear and
11 that also doesn't help them when they are older because when they lose the fear they lose the
12 motivation to work. So that brought her into something that another psychologist...and I can't
13 remember his name, had a workshop and he talked about natural consequences and logical
14 consequences? And a natural consequence is something like if you jump out of a tree and you land
15 the wrong way you are going to break a leg. A natural consequence is not that you are going to be
16 punished if you break something. But a logical consequence is that you might be punished if you
17 were warned not to do that. So I believe that if you believe in the Bible...and I haven't actually
18 thought of this through so it might not come out (giggle) the way... If you believe in the Bible and
19 constantly in the Bible it tells you that the Lord will bless those who follow his commandments or
20 who follow His way. Or if you do right then you will have a good life. I believe that that is a logical
21 consequence to doing what is right in the eyes of God. I think that a natural consequence might not
22 be that you will always get what you deserve on earth. But this is what I think I wanted to say a bit
23 earlier and I think that I got a bit side tracked. If you an eternal perspective, in Afrikaans it's called a
24 (ewigeperspektif). It's seeing the timeline of your life not only in the years that you are on earth, but
25 the eternity that you will spend in heaven. Then what you deserve and what you don't deserve here
26 on earth doesn't really matter because grace is taking us to heaven. So then things might happen
27 here on earth, but it might be choices that other people make, like when I was raped; it might be my
28 irresponsibility, being at the wrong place at the wrong time. It might be what the devil did to Job,
29 trying to test his faith. It might be that God is trying to test my faith, if I go through something. My
30 husband and I have this..., it's not an argument, it's a discussion because he doesn't see this justice
31 thing. He doesn't see it as a just world, he looks at the crime in South Africa, and especially the farm
32 murders and things that happen to good people, the hijacking the murders and he says "where is
33 God in that?" And my answer to him is it is not necessarily God but it's the choices that people
34 make. And that is the one thing that God gave us with grace, because everyone has a choice. So I
35 might be the consequence of someone's bad choice, but that does not mean that God wanted that
36 to happen. I am maybe just rationalizing it. But on the other hand I also believe that what you speak
37 will come into being (clears throat). So of you are constantly afraid, and constantly saying oh I am
38 going to be robbed, or oh something bad is going to happen to me or oh I am so afraid of going into
39 the street, if you are constantly (emphasis)saying that, then it's just actually waiting to happen with
40 you or to you. I have made the decision not to be afraid in South Africa. No one could understand
41 why I made the decision to come back from Canada because I was six months away from
42 immigrancy, I could actually have had a Canadian passport. Which would have actually made it
43 easier to go and live there, but I am a South African. I believe that this is where God put me and this

1 is where He wants me to make a difference. And I came back and I was mugged, well actually it was
2 a smash and grab a week after I came back. But I decided (emphasis) not to be afraid because that is
3 one of the things that God asks of us “Do not be afraid but trust in me”

4 ***T: But in that incident would you say that you deserved to be mugged?***

5 **R:** No, but it was interesting because I was at a place that I was not supposed to be in again.

6 ***T: So you think that it might have been a consequence of that?***

7 **R:** It definitely was a consequence of that. It wasn't my car, it was my mom's car and she definitely
8 (emphasis) did not deserve that (giggle) because it was brand new, so she definitely did not deserve
9 it. But it was one of my choices and it was a consequence of a choice I made.

10 ***T: Is the world usually a fair place to you?***

11 **R:** Oh no, I don't think it's fair, not here. I see a difference between just and fair.

12 ***T: Ok please explain that to me***

13 **R:** You see just is eternal, justice is where God comes in, but fair is a human thing, we thought up
14 fair. We thought up the concept of everything is fair, or it's not fair. But I can't really explain why I
15 believe this (laugh)

16 ***T: You can try and we can always come back and think it through.***

17 **R:** Something is fair if everything always happens to everybody in the same way. That's what fair is,
18 same.

19 ***T: For example?***

20 **R:** For example if I treat you the same as I treat anybody else, I am being fair to both of you. Fair can
21 be something that is attributed by people.

22 ***T: So can it be negative? So if you treat both of us in a negative way then you are fair?***

23 **R:** Ya, I'm also fair and that happens with children a lot. I mean I can remember when I think I was in
24 grade three. And I wasn't in class; I went to the bathroom or something. And when the teacher came
25 back, there was something wrong, or someone did something wrong, or whatever. And the whole
26 class was punished. And I felt that that was quite unfair because I did not do it. But she felt that she
27 was being fair because she wasn't sure who it was so she punished everyone.

28 I think that fair is a perspective. Maybe I should say that. Fairness is a perspective because what's
29 fair to you might not be fair to someone else. But just is a principle that is always the same because I
30 believe that just and justness and justice, ultimately come from God.

31 ***T: So with regards to your own perspective on fairness, are you saying is the world fair to you?***

1 **R:** No because I would like everyone to have as much money as I do. I would love to be able give ¹AX
2 a salary that is more than what I earn because she is doing so much more in my house than just
3 looking after my babies. I would love that for her. But I can't because I am also getting money from
4 someone else. So no I don't think it's fair but that's my perspective.

5 **T: But personally to you?**

6 **R:** Personally I don't think it's fair because of the choice that people make.

7 **T: Some of these questions are going to sound repetitive.**

8 **R:** That's fine; I feel that I am contradicting myself.

9 **T: That's fine don't worry. We will get a second chance if there is something that you want to think**
10 **over its OK. And if you feel that you do not have an answer right now we can always come back to**
11 **it.**

12 **R:** I think that your first response is normally what you believe

13 **T: Do you believe that overall the events in your life have been just? How do you place the events**
14 **that have occurred in your life within the idea of, just, justice, a just world personally, to you?**

15 **R:** I actually believe that... I think it's in Romans, but it says that "for the chosen, God let's everything
16 work out positively". So I don't.., I don't actually know, I have never actually thought of it that way.
17 But what I do know is that everything that happened to me has made me the person that I am now.
18 And I am extremely blessed being the person I am now, I am more happy than I've been, ever in my
19 life because of the grace God, because of the twins, and my husband. I am not always feeling this
20 way obviously (laughs) because you go through emotions and hormones. And I had a bit of a
21 problem this year where I was very depressed again. I think it was burnout with the twins and myself
22 trying to do everything at once and everything by myself. But when I really think about it, I am just
23 extremely grateful because even though these things have happened to me that might not be fair,
24 (brief laugh) it has made me; it has matured me into someone that I think is quite worthy.

25 **T: What you are talking about are consequences of decisions, have they been direct consequences**
26 **of decisions, do you think that the decisions that you have taken have progressively led you to**
27 **today?**

28 **R:** Yes definitely. And I think that if I had made different choices, I would not be in the same
29 situation I am in now, I wouldn't be the same person that I am now

30 **T: Would you say that injustice is possible in your realm of thinking? The way that you explain**
31 **justice is that it is from God and it's a fundamental principal, but is injustice something that is**
32 **possible? Is it possible not to get what you deserve?**

33 **R:** I think that if people try to give justice...yes then they are going to be unjust because they are not
34 totally unbiased and they are not objective and they are not God, they are human. So there are

¹ Refers to domestic helper

1 constantly going to be their perspectives. Even if you just think about two parents looking at the
2 same thing that the child did wrong, even if they have known each other for a very long, they might
3 have different views of what the child did.

4 ***T: Has it ever happened in your life where there has been an instance where you have faced***
5 ***injustice where you have not gotten what you deserved?***

6 **R:** Yes and no (laugh) But this is also my perspective. I was...once, one of my very good friends at
7 school is a teacher in the preschool and her boy was with me in my class. But I was really struggling
8 to get along with him in class; he tended to push boundaries a lot. He did not accept my authority;
9 maybe because I was such a good friend of his mom, we visited a lot. He was a bit of a trouble maker
10 in class. And I discussed this with her and she said that at one point if it gets too far, I actually have
11 to take him aside and...I might now use a bad word (giggle) I hope that you don't hold it against me.
12 She said that I must tell him...ok I'll use nonsense; she said that I must actually tell him to stop his
13 nonsense, but obviously it wasn't that word. Because now this is the last thing. She said that that
14 would normally help because then he will get afraid. So I did this with him because this is what she
15 told me. But what I didn't know is that the head of my department was behind me when I did this
16 (clears throat) excuse me...and he was quite shocked obviously because it is seen as verbal abuse. So
17 I got a written warning, he wrote me up. Without discussing it with me, he just called me in and said
18 this is what I witnessed and I want you to sign this because now you have a written warning and I
19 tried to explain to him that this is what the mother told me to do. But he did not want to listen he
20 just thought it was straight forward. I mean I am not someone who abuses children, I don't like it
21 (laugh), I felt very, I felt it was quite unjust, it was quite wrong, but it was more unfair because if I
22 am being true to the letter of the law, I got what I deserve because I did verbally abuse the child. Just
23 because the mother gave me permission or just because the mother told me to do it didn't mean
24 that I didn't have a choice in doing it. I still had the choice to find another route instead of verbally
25 abusing the child.

26 ***T: In your life would you say instances like that, where, we can say in quotes, "there has been***
27 ***injustice", would you say that they are the exception or are they the norm?***

28 **R:** Ya, they are definitely the exception, I mean that is the only one I can think of

29 ***T: And then decisions made concerning you, any decision that has been made concerning you let's***
30 ***say by some external person, are they normally just? Do they normally give you what you deserve***
31 ***or in accordance to what you deserve?***

32 **R:** I think so. Maybe one other thing that I can think of ...The school that I work with has a tendency
33 to underpay their staff, because it's a business, I mean they are running it as a business. They don't
34 necessarily pay you what you are worth but what you ask for. I didn't really know what to ask for so I
35 asked for the bare minimum and only later on did I realize that I shouldn't have asked that but then
36 it was too late. You can't all of a sudden say you want more, why more? Why would you now want
37 more? So from a human perspective, once again it may seem unfair, because they are supposed to,
38 well, according to us, according to the staff members, they are supposed to pay us what we are
39 worth. But according to them, they are paying us what they can. So for us it seems unfair and unjust
40 because we are not necessarily getting what we want or what we feel we deserve. But from their

1 side, we are. I really struggled with this. We moaned and groaned about what they were doing
2 wrong. But when I look back or when I started really thinking about it, I was getting what deserve
3 because I was getting what I thought I deserved because that's what I asked for. So, I think that we
4 get what I said before, what you speak or what you believe of yourself. I think that's what you are
5 going to get. And that comes back to what you sow you will reap.

6 ***T: So even with the negative things?***

7 **R:** Even with the negative things... I believe...just with a different example. I then went away from
8 the school because I was totally over worked and I never saw my husband because I was constantly
9 working and I did not get this huge salary. But then they asked me to come back to do the training.
10 And I actually went into the negotiation process, thinking that I am going to ask more than what I
11 thought she would be able to give me just to prove my point and then I can come back to what I
12 really want. And when I said I wanted this per hour or this per session, she said 'Ok that's fine" and
13 I'm like alright, well that's lovely. So I don't know if it's something you get what you deserve, but I
14 think you get what you ask.

15 But...I am now thinking of the good things maybe, I am not necessarily thinking of the bad things

16 ***T: I want us to look at the bad things and see if the same principles apply. Any negative experience***
17 ***that you may have had, would you say that it has been just?***

18 **R:** I don't know, I think it depends on your perspective once again... I don't think that God wanted
19 me to get molested or raped, but even though I was six...no, I can't no... that wasn't because when
20 you are six, you can't make a decision of what's right or wrong. I just wanted to have the attention of
21 this person and he gave it to me (laughs and clears her throat). But when you are older, you are
22 supposed to know right from wrong .I think that there is always, in every situation there is a voice
23 that some people call it the Holy Spirit some people call it your sixth sense, that warns you to be
24 careful or that warns you not to go there. With every choice that you make, everywhere that you go,
25 you are being guided and it's a matter of listening to that and I think that if you don't listen to it,
26 then yes. There was a reason why it warned you. And I can say that from my experience in Belgium, I
27 know now, I didn't then because I didn't have the same relationship with God then that I do now. I
28 know that it was a warning because God knew what this guy was going to do but I didn't listen. So
29 my choice was not to listen and to put myself in that situation. If I had listened maybe it would have
30 turned out quite differently.

31 ***T: Alright, I want us to move into something else. Imagine a scene, let's say that you are seventy***
32 ***and you are sitting outside by your porch. And you already have great grandchildren by then***
33 ***(excited laugh). Tell me what have you done with your life by then? If I came or you're great***
34 ***grandchildren asked you to tell them a story about yourself (ag shame!) What would you tell them,***
35 ***what story would you like to tell them?***

36 **R:** I would have to make up, because I can't remember half of the things that happened to me
37 (almost hysterical laugh)

38 ***T: I am more interested actually in the things that would happen from now till then.***

1 **R:** I think I would like them to know that I made the right choices and listened to the guidance of the
2 Spirit. But I think that the most, the most important thing is that I would like to say that I have had
3 what God wanted me to have and that's a life of abundance, not materially speaking. I mean I don't
4 think I can ever be rich because I give away too much (giggle) and I spend too much, I love spending.
5 So I don't think that I will be materially abundantly rich ever. But joy is for me a very big thing. I think
6 that's it. I think it's Isaiah that says "the joy of the Lord is my strength" and I think whether you
7 believe in just or unjust or fair or not fair, if you basically keep your joy close, then it's not really
8 going to matter if everything is just or fair.

9 **T: *Ok, But I just want the story, what would you say that nana did, she went on to do this and***
10 ***this..?***

11 **R:** I would love to teach the gospel at one stage, I don't know if that's what God has planned for me.
12 But I have had this dream for a while, to have a ministry. I would love to play the piano again. I think
13 I would love to be able to tell them that I helped in the molding of the best parents that my girls can
14 be. I think my stories would have to do with making a difference in people's lives.

15 **T: *With regards to your goals, would you say that you have a very clear picture of what you want***
16 ***to do, or do you just have general picture?***

17 **R:** I have a very general picture (hesitates a bit, I, I), at the moment, I'm str...I am not struggling, but
18 I am contemplating opening my own school, just because, for the twins. I don't really know where to
19 really take them; I am a bit of a busy body as well and a perfectionist. So I know what Montessori
20 can do for children, but I don't see it happening in the schools around Pretoria. So I am thinking of
21 that. I do know that training will be a central part, whatever training it will be, it in nutrition with
22 Sportron training, with Montessori or teaching the gospel. But training, talking to people, to groups
23 of people. Yes it's very vague still. The fact that you have two little lives all of a sudden makes plans
24 seem immaterial (laughs).

25 **T: *Let's go back to when you were 15, what kind of goals did you have, what dreams or aspirations***
26 ***did you have?***

27 **R:** You are going to laugh. My mom was so disgusted with me, they asked me this in matric, "what
28 would I like to be when I grow up?" I said retired (laughs).

29 I am a very lazy person (still laughing then tones laughing down), I would love to have a lot of money
30 and just do nothing, no, no I am joking. I wanted to become a doctor, but my marks weren't good
31 enough. Then I wanted to become a teacher, but then I did not get the scholarship, so I thought,
32 that's not meant for me, I saw that as a sign. Which was silly because I eventually became a teacher
33 anyway? My sister had problems with her brain, she was brain damaged and we only found out
34 later about it because she was compensating so well. So then I wanted to become a psychologist.
35 But in the course of my studies, I realized that I don't have the emotional capacity to be a
36 psychologist. I can't be objective enough, I get involved too easily and emotionally involved easily. So
37 then the Montessori thing worked for me because when I am with the children, I am with the
38 children totally. And I can't remember last year's children's names because I am done with them. I
39 have got the children in front of me. I am interesting like that because I can totally shut off from the
40 past and from what happened and focus on the now. So it's very difficult for me, to look to the

1 future and think on what I was going to be or remember what I wanted to be, I never had a clear cut
2 picture.

3 **T: And now you still..?**

4 **R:** And now I still don't, I think it's wonderful that God gave me these two little lives to help bring to
5 him. And that is my first and foremost priority, anything else, concerning my life and the decisions I
6 make has to do with that. Because I think that's my purpose, it's to be their mother (Pensive pause)

7 **T: You can go on**

8 **R:** I would love to be an at home mom and just be constantly with them, but we want to have a life
9 style that helps them become all they can be so then I have to contribute.

10 **T: What would you say are you three most important or pressing hopes for your life?**

11 **R:** I do want to have money (bursts out laughing)

12 **T: Ok... (Inviting her to continue)**

13 **R:** Not just because I want to have money, but I want to be able to do what I want, when I want to
14 do it

15 I know that sounds...

16 **T: No it's fine, it's ok...**

17 **R:** No but it's...not (bursts out laughing again)

18 **T: It's ok**

19 **R:** I know its ok, it's not a material thing, I think that most people, who want money, want it because
20 they want to compensate for something. They feel unsure of themselves or unsafe without money. I
21 am not like that at all. I haven't had money most of my life and I'm fine, I just would like to go out
22 and have coffee with a friend without thinking I won't be able to buy food for the children this
23 month. So I want, I want to be comfortable.

24 And then I want to, I want continuously grow in my relationship with God, that should have been
25 first and foremost (laughs)

26 **T: That's fine, we can always move it up...**

27 **R:** No that's fine, but it should be the most important, but obviously it is not at this moment. But yes
28 that relationship for me is quite important. And then I want to be. You'll find out that my hopes and
29 aspirations is about being and not having. I want to be a good wife and a good mother.

30 **T: Do you know what these things would look like if you were these things? If for example you**
31 **attained the money that you want, what would your life look like? If you had the relationship that**
32 **you want with God, what would it look like? Do you have a picture of what it would look like?**

1 **R:** Probably, it would be more of this... I don't know how to say... I mean obviously if we had the
2 money, we have a plot of land of land that my dad helped us to buy that's one hector and we would
3 love to build there a house that the children can have more space. So we would probably have a
4 house there. And I would be able to stay at home, you know do my thing on my own time but when
5 the children are at home, I am there as well.

6 **T: *And your relationship with God?***

7 **R:** And my relationship with God would just be that I would be able to hear his voice more clearer.
8 I'd be able to know and do [emphasis on do]. Because now I am at a point where I know what is
9 right, but I still don't do it. But I mean Paul had the same problems (laugh), why would I be better
10 than Paul?

11 **T: *And then the wife? When you are a good wife and good mother?***

12 **R:** I think that being a good mother is being there in the moment with your children, so that they can
13 feel that someone loves them unconditionally. I feel that that is a pre-requisite for a good
14 relationship with God later on. Only when you have had someone who loves you unconditionally can
15 you really experience God's love.

16 And a good wife I think is one who understands her husband and doesn't expect him to be
17 something that he is not.

18 **T: *So you wouldn't be expecting your husband to be anything that he is not?***

19 **R:** No, I want him, I expect him to be the best that he can be. But I don't believe in trying to change
20 him, I believe that God can change him if He wants to.

21 **T: *You just went on to next question...?***

22 **R:** What would I want to change?

23 **T: *I wanted to ask you what kind of person would you describe yourself as in relation to what you***
24 ***just said, other people would say I am a doer and others would say I'm a thinker...?***

25 **R:** I am definitely a be-er (laugh)

26 **T: *So I have picked it up a bit but I want you to explain it to me. With regards to now these plans***
27 ***that you have. Let's use one, let's say getting the money, how would you make sure you get there,***
28 ***or would you let it all work out or would you draw up a plan?***

29 **R:** Oh, ok, there is a balance between trusting God to make it happen and doing your part, so I am
30 busy doing my part and I am praying and trusting God that He is going to help and multiply (laugh).
31 There is a balance.

32 **T: *So which one would you say is more...?***

33 **R:** God.

1 ***T: So you would just leave it to God?***

2 **R:** Yeah but I don't believe that you can just seat and wait for it to happen. There is definitely
3 responsibility. The book of Proverbs say that the person who works for his money is happy and he
4 will prosper. So there are definitely things that you must do to make sure you know you have done
5 your part. It's a 100%, 100% percent thing. But I must trust that God will put the...or give me the
6 possibilities to get what I want or to do what I want.

7 ***T: So you would trust God for the 'window of opportunity' but it would actually be you who does***
8 ***the work?***

9 **R:** See it would be a different thing, because I believe that everything I get comes from him, even the
10 salary that I get at the end of the month. That is why I can give him 10% back because it's actually
11 his, I am just borrowing it.

12 But...Let me tell you, I am in a network marketing business as , I do the training, but then I have my
13 own network marketing business as well where you train or inform or tell people about Sportron,
14 which is a nutritional product or a wellness product. We have different products and they all work
15 towards total wellness of body and mind, being. The way it works is that you have to tell people
16 about it, they start using the product, and the company says thank you to you. It's not a commission;
17 it's called a rebate system. Now I am not good with that, I am not good at getting you to sign up and
18 use the product.

19 ***T: So it would be more just leaving it?***

20 **R:** Now I am not good with that, I don't, I am not good at getting you to use the product and then
21 signing up and recruiting. But it's a recruiter's business, I am good at training. But I can't get the
22 success in the business without doing the recruiting. But if I did the recruiting and I put a bit of effort
23 in it, and the people enjoy the product so much that they use the product for the rest of their lives,
24 then I get the benefit of them using the product for the rest of their life, every month that they use
25 it. So then I put the initial effort in but then I get the consequence or the benefits of it forever, and I
26 think that's how it works with God as well. You put the effort in and show the willingness to do
27 whatever it takes and then He blesses it.

28 ***T: After you have attained a specific goal that you had had, for examples kids, you have always***
29 ***wanted to have kids, what do you do after you have reached one goal?***

30 **R:** I sit back and say "thank the Lord" (bursts out laughing then says) no, no, I don't know I think that
31 there will always be another goal. I mean we have now had the twins and I think that it was two
32 months after we had the twins that my husband started to talk about the twin boys that we are
33 going to have next. So I think then, we have decided on four children. But after you have the four
34 children, then there is the school and getting them to school, then there is getting them to
35 university, then there is getting them married (laugh).

36 ***T: So for you attaining one goal means...?***

37 **R:** It's just your next step to do another thing; it's just on the way. I don't think that you can ever

1 decide that you have arrived. I think that's just silly. People who do that, when they retire, get
2 depressed and most probably commit suicide because they don't feel purposeful or useful anymore.
3 Um Yah...

4 ***T: I Understand. Sometimes a lot of things happen to you, sometimes, we say "the odds are***
5 ***against you" Sometimes life will give a lot of things that are very negative. A lot of challenges,***
6 ***whether or not they are just, have you ever had experiences like that?***

7 **R:** Not really, I'm, I'm extremely optimistic most of the time and I think that makes me look at it
8 totally different.

9 ***T: How do you look at it?***

10 **R:** As a challenge, that you either get around it or you ignore it (bursts out laughing), or you try
11 something to get over it. I cope with it, I don't moan about it. I don't...It's the way it is and I accept it.
12 I think it's because if you are a Christian and you believe that everything comes from God, then it's
13 easier to accept things the way they are. I have to say that I have never had it difficult; things have
14 come quite easily for me. I mean I haven't struggled to get a job it was given to me. I haven't
15 struggled to have money. I haven't always had lots of money. To me, I haven't struggled to have
16 money, I didn't always have lots [emphasis] of money, I had to eat out of cans you know. I had my
17 sweet corn dinners. But because you believe that everything is from God, you get to appreciate it
18 even though it might not be what you expected. So I can never really say that the odds are gains me
19 because they are not.

20 ***T: With the few set back that you may have had, would you say that you have overcome?***

21 Yes but by the grace of God. Because He led me through a phase or he led me through the
22 realization that everything that has happened to me was for the greater good. The reason I say this,
23 is because most people look at me funny when say this. I mean how can you say that being rapped
24 was for the greater good? But at one stage I did camps with under privileged children and we took
25 them on a December holiday for ten days and we'd you know, we'd share the gospel and do fun
26 things with them. And because of my situation I could have a talk with the girls and explain to them
27 that although this might have happened to you, although this happened, God can make it so that
28 you can still be functional, you can still be a happy adult, you can get past it; it's not something that
29 should rule your life. You can overcome it by God's grace and because you overcame it by God's
30 grace, your life will be more full with it. Because every now and again there will be an opportunity
31 where you can help someone else because of the experience that you've had.

32 ***T: Let's go back to some of the hopes and dreams that you have given me, would you say that you***
33 ***know what it would take to get there? Do you have an idea of exactly what it would take to get***
34 ***there?***

35 **R:** Yes. Perseverance, which I don't always have. I think so, it's just, it's just continuing. That thing
36 where you keep on doing what's right, and you keep on doing what you think is right.

37 ***T: But when you set goals, do you think about it and strategize and look at...***

1 **R:** (cuts in), Yes how is it going to work, I do the pros and the cons but basically, I go with what I feel
2 the Spirit is telling me. Oh well I try...I don't always hear very well, probably because I try to plan too
3 much (laugh). But , I do, yah, I do think, you strategize and think this will work, this won't work and
4 then in the event that you actually have to make the final decision, you know what you are supposed
5 to do or not.

6 **T:** When you have strategized and you see that there is this huge obstacle in front of you, normally
7 what happens then?

8 **R:** I say that it's God's plan not to do this (bursts out with laughter) I don't know I have never had
9 this... well, yah then, I'd just then accept it

10 **T: *Ok, you wouldn't force or sort of try to get around it?***

11 **R:** No, I don't think so.

12 **T: *So you say that you have never ever had to apply for a job?***

13 **R:** No.

14 **T: *Ever?***

15 **R:** Ever. Well I did apply to go and au pair, but then I got accepted straight away. I had to wait for
16 three months, but I got accepted, basically straight away.

17 **T: *During that waiting period, what were your thoughts?***

18 **R:** I was working at the Spar.

19 **T: *But what were your thoughts about the application that you had made?***

20 **R:** Oh no, I just thought that I would get it. It wasn't a question. I never think of the negative things, I
21 never think I won't get it...I can't say never, but I, I, went there, and then I came back, I went to
22 university, and then I didn't finish my university studies at Potch, because my grandmother got ill. I
23 stopped going to class, I stopped writing tests, so I failed, basically my second year, but then
24 someone heard about it and invited me to come and work for them in Canada. So I went to Canada. I
25 came back after Canada, I finished my studies and then I started studying Montessori. And After that
26 I got a job, well as a student. I worked at a school, doing my prac-teaching. I just continued working
27 there until I stopped and then I started to try to do the Sportron thing from home full time. But that
28 [emphasis] didn't work; I did not have the self discipline to do that. If you have your own business
29 you have to actually, not sit and play computer games all day and actually work. So that didn't work.
30 That was an obstacle; I was my own obstacle, that wasn't an immovable object. And then I got called
31 to come and work for the school where I was for seven, eight years.

32 **T: *For example when you do something like applying for your visa or drivers license or anything.***

33 **R:** Ok I can tell you about one situation, where I felt I had no control over it. I came back to visit
34 from Canada, for two weeks, I was supposed to be only here for two weeks. And my passport got

1 stolen. And then I had to go to the Canadian High consulate to get my visa reinstated, but they
2 [emphasis] wanted to have a work permit from Canada before they can give me my visa. So I phoned
3 there, and the guy I worked for went to the consulate there and they said that they will give me a
4 work permit if I have a visa. So now they are saying here they won't give me a visa, we were at an (in
5 pass, can't make out the words). So it went on for six weeks

6 ***T: What were you thinking then in your mind?***

7 **R:** I was probably thinking that I am not going back, because I mean, what can you do? You can't
8 have both ways. So eventually I went to a person, and then I went back and back and back, to say
9 "but I have to go back, this is my job, I have a contract with these people". I did get my visa what is
10 the problem. So eventually they say "alright", they'll give me a travel permit to get into Canada and
11 there the person will give me the worker's permit and they will give me a visa there, but I am not
12 allowed out of the migration before all of this. But I knew it will probably work out, I never thought,
13 I've never felt, well, ok I can't say never, because I have been depressed, where I felt you know
14 what, I don't feel, as if anything is worth it.

15 ***T: But is that the norm or the exception?***

16 **R:** No that is the exception; I have only ever had that (pause) two or three times in my life.

17 ***T: You speak about your relationship with God and the three main things, if somebody were to tell***
18 ***you can't do it. If somebody just comes and challenges you says you can never do it, or you can't***
19 ***do it, none of those things will ever happen, what would be your response?***

20 **R:** It's not their choice; they can't say that because it's not their decision to make.

21 ***T: But behaviorally, with regards to action, would it... affect you?***

22 **R:** It won't bother me at all. Are you saying that they will physically try to stop me from doing it?

23 ***T: No, no, no, if somebody comes and just challenges you?***

24 **R:** Oh, no I wouldn't listen to them (laugh)

25 ***T: What are the chances, or are there chances that you probably would go on and do it?***

26 **R:** Oh yeah definitely.

27 ***T: And whenever you experience some form of a problem, who sorts it out for you?***

28 **R:** I try to do it myself, that's how I grew up, you sort out your own problems. If I can't, I'll ask my
29 husband. He is very good at sorting out problems, he is an electrical engineer so he can fix almost
30 anything, but I'll try first.

31 ***T: Well that is actually most of it. Anything else you want to say?***

32 **R:** No.

1

2 ***T: Thank you for agreeing to do this again, so it is going to be more or less like the last time. I am***
3 ***going to ask you a few more questions about some of the things we spoke about last time and I***
4 ***just want to get a deeper understanding if that's fine with you. So feel free to just talk ok.***

5 ***The first thing I want to understand is what are your perceptions about yourself with regard to***
6 ***your ability to successfully overcome any future challenges that you think you might encounter,***
7 ***last time we spoke about your three hopes, for example with that, what are your perceptions***
8 ***about how you would be able to cope should there be challenges realizing those hopes and***
9 ***dreams.***

10 **R: It's a pleasure**

11 I think one of the positive things about being a Christian and believing that someone else is in
12 control of your life or. Not control because I don't think God controls us, we always have a choice,
13 but someone who directs you or something other than yourself directs you like values or religion or
14 belief or faith, makes it quit easy to accept if something is not working out. So if there is a challenge
15 in a sense of, I think one of my hopes, I can't remember actually, but I think one of my hopes was to
16 be the best mom that I could be and at the moment I have a bit of a challenge because my husband
17 and I are not seeing eye to eye on everything that concerns the children concerns. And I am worried
18 that he might be a bit distant from them because they are not reacting to him as they are reacting to
19 me. But I spend more time with them so am worried about their relationship and I feel as if I can't
20 help their relationship to grow, I am not going to be the best mom. So that's a challenge on that one
21 hope and I have started to talk to him about it and we have had discussions and it's a bit challenging
22 in a sense that it's not necessarily conflict but it's also not agreement, so there is underlying tension
23 a little bit. But what I want to say is that I think that if you believe that God is your rock then you
24 know that you can overcome any challenge, so you know that you are never going not to succeed. I
25 am reading a book about authority and the authority that you should be for your children, because
26 you are symbolizing God's authority. The only way that they are going to learn about God's authority
27 is if you have the proper authority towards them and in that He says that you are plan A. If God has
28 given you these children you are His plan A for them.

29 ***T: Nice***

30 **R: Yes I thought so too, and it helps me to believe if am God's plan A for my children then He will**
31 **help me to overcome any obstacle that I might face.**

32 ***T: Ok, I understand and I get the role that God plays in it, but I want to understand your role with***
33 ***regards to your ability, I understand that you may be saying that God would sort of, He gives you,***
34 ***He enables you so to speak, but how do you perceive your own abilities to successfully meet any***
35 ***challenges that you may encounter?***

36 **R: I am tenacious, (laughs) but not in a bad way. I am not like a pit bull that holds on. I just keep on**
37 **trying and keep on trying, but it's sometimes difficult because I am also a perfectionist. So if I don't**
38 **think I am going to be able to do it perfectly I don't even try, which is sometimes a bit of a pain**
39 **because, yah then I don't do a lot of things because I...for instance I love playing piano but I didn't**

1 like practicing, cause that was the boring part. I want to go and I want to be able to just do it all of a
2 sudden (laughs) so I stopped playing piano when I was in grade 11 and am so upset about that now,
3 because I would have loved to play piano to my two girls and help them to learn. So I am planning on
4 learning again. I'm planning on beginning to learn again luckily I won't have to learn my scales again
5 because those I can still remember but, if I really want something I will (brief pause)do it until I get it.

6 **T: But, if it is challenging?**

7 **R:** But, if it is challenging then I might accept it as a sign that it is not suppose to be.

8 **T: Would that happen with most things that if you perceive that something that you are aspiring**
9 **towards might be particularly challenging, are you most likely then not to do it?**

10 **R:** I don't know, I think the, what we talked about last time, the fact that I haven't had many
11 challenges in my life, except for you know not being able to buy the stuff that I want which is not
12 really a challenge. It's just, that's luxury. I think it's difficult hey.

13 **T: But, just small everyday things that maybe...**

14 **R:** I cope with something first, I am very-very problem solving oriented. OK so I think one of your
15 questions asked day to day small things and losing my keys or when someone doesn't show up or
16 something happens for instance; I... just to give you an example, last year there was a conference at
17 Moreleta church and I have, I talked to XO about it and I asked him if I can go and if he will be able to
18 look after the twins for me that day and he said yes that's fine. And that morning or that Friday night
19 he started getting ill and that morning he was very ill, so I knew that he wouldn't be able because
20 they were like three months old, so I took them with me (laugh). And looking back it was the most
21 ridiculous thing to do, I should have just stayed at home because you know it's such a schlep with
22 them and the mother's room is a flight of stairs up so I had to get someone. I had to get a man
23 (emphasis) to help me with the stroller and I had to, but it was much fun, I mean I can say that the
24 girls went to a woman's conference when they were three months old and we sort of parked in the
25 mothers room with the whole thing on the floor and they had their bottles and they were playing
26 and they were sleeping and they were..., it was a lot of fun but looking back it was definitely not the
27 (laugh) wisest thing to do but I think I am stubborn in that way especially, I think that morning I
28 perceived it as him not wanting me to go. And he gets ill a lot but he is not always, I mean when he
29 has to do something he does it if he's ill or not so if he really wanted to... I was feeling he could have
30 watched the children I mean for one day so I then get (pause, then loud laugh), obstinate and I do
31 my thing anyway.

32 **T: I want to get to something that we talked about on the last interview, you said you are an**
33 **optimist and I just want to get a better understanding about that. What does being an optimist**
34 **mean to you? What does being optimistic mean?**

35 **R:** I think optimistic means to see everything in the most positive light, or ya, the most positive light
36 you can. If there's a ..., I know it's a cliché, but the glass half-full half empty thing. But it's looking at
37 the situation and always seeing either the positive side of it or the good that can come out of it. Or
38 looking at people and even what people say or do, uh, being able to think OK... uh, let me give you
39 an example. My mother is not an optimistic, she's a pessimist a little bit, but she's had really a rough

1 life, so I understand where she's comes from. But she will for instance, someone will tell her that
2 they are not able to come to her party. She will see it as a personal affront, I'm using a silly example
3 now, and think that they don't like her anymore or she has done something to offend them, or you
4 know something really negative. I would think they can't come to the party.

5 ***T: So but what does it mean, you spoke about how seeing a glass as half full instead of half empty,***
6 ***but what does it mean with regards to the reality of the negative thing that may be happening?***

7 **R:** There's always something positive that could happen out of it.

8 ***T: But do you recognize the negative aspect of it, or just choose to focus on what is positive about***
9 ***it.***

10 **R:** I choose to focus on the positive.

11 ***T: And then what does it mean then when you say you are an optimistic. You have explained how***
12 ***you understand the concept of being optimistic, and with you being an optimist, what does that***
13 ***mean?***

14 **R:** That just means that I think I can be happy no matter what. Maybe joy is a better word, because
15 happy is a temporal word, happy is something that means you can be either happy or sad. I do get
16 sad, and I do sometimes feel negative about these things (sighs) but I think I have an inherent joy,
17 that is..., (pause)but it's also, it's also a choice hey...I also believe it's a choice hey.

18 ***T: OK I was going to ask that because you said it's inherent.***

19 **R:** I think its, its part personality and part choice.

20 ***T: OK, is it something you can learn?***

21 **R:** I think so.

22 ***T: And your experience has been? Is it something you had to learn or does it come naturally?***

23 **R:** No I think maybe I have had it. I think maybe with me its a little bit part genetic because my dad is
24 very optimistic as well. But as I've said my mom is not and my sister isn't, so they are always the sort
25 of "not doom prophets", but they always see the, not always, they most of the time, I shouldn't say
26 always, you see even then I'm an optimist(laugh). and I don't wanna be.. They seem to me to, to
27 most of the time to be so focused on what can go wrong and what's the bad in people or the,
28 negative stuff in people, and I choose not to do that. I think it was, it's partly my personality because
29 my mother says when I was the baby, I would smile before waking up. I would sleep and then as I'm
30 waking up, I would start to smile. So I think maybe it's genetics and maybe, maybe some of it (laugh),
31 is a coping mechanism with all the bad things, because I can also be like an ostrich. You know putting
32 my head in sand and just pretending that everything goes over my head. I mean I choose not to read
33 the news...

34 ***T: So does that sort of preserve your optimism?***

1 **R:** Ya, definitely.

2 **T:** *OK, so how does being optimistic help you to cope?*

3 **R:** Oh well obviously, if you see the positive in everything or you can see the positive in most things,
4 then it helps you, if something negative happens. Then it helps you see that it will become better, it
5 helps you, your belief in tomorrow, your belief in the fact that even if it gets worse, it will get better
6 again.

7 **T:** *So it's just an example?*

8 **R:** I can give you something that I fall back on quite a lot, in Canada, I am prone to depression, I have
9 to tell you. So I will probably be seen by some psychologists as borderline bipolar (laughs). I don't
10 think I am because I don't have flights of fantasy but, in that I'm normal in that sense. I think, you go,
11 go through certain depths of depression. In Canada I was quite depressed because of the weather. It
12 was extremely cold and it was white, the winter is so long and you know, I'm from South Africa so
13 we used to having the sun, and the sun's warmth even in winter even as cold as it is today if you
14 stand in the sun, there's a bit of warmth that you feel. There, there is nothing the sun just makes
15 light. And I was really depressed and my mom told me the story over the phone. She reminded me
16 that in winter time, certain trees let their leaves fall and they stop growing for a period of time but
17 their roots grows deeper and stronger, (pause) inside the earth it's still warm, it doesn't get that
18 cold. So they might look dead and ungrowing for a period of time but they are not, they are actually
19 strengthening their root system and that will help them overcome storms in the future. So their root
20 system will be stronger, the stem will be thicker because they grow out a little bit, because not all
21 their energy has gone to the leaves and flowers and fruit. And that made a huge impression on me. I
22 tend not to remember things, I'm very forgetful. That helps me being positive, because if you don't
23 forget, I mean if you don't remember all the bad things, it's much easier to remember the positive
24 stuff. But that made such an impression on me because it just helped me to remember that even
25 when you feeling like a dead tree, and I mean there is nothing more depressing in South Africa than
26 a dead tree, because we are so used to green and lots of trees, then you know that they are not
27 dead but they are just resting. So those periods of rest, is where your soul actually grows stronger. I
28 believe that's your root system. I think your soul and your spirit is your root system if you were a
29 tree, and then your soul gets stronger. When you get out of that deep winter depression then you
30 are stronger for going through that.

31 **T:** *Alright.*

32 **R:** Am I answering your question?

33 **T:** *Yes, yes you are.*

34 **R:** OK

35 **T:** *What do you do that shows you have an optimistic approach to life?*

36 **R:** I laugh (laughs), well I try to constantly laugh, I think everything is funny. I grew up in a family
37 that's really truly had a lovely sense of humor. My mom tells me that my grandmother was so

1 jealous of us because she would be in another room and she would constantly hear my mom, and
2 my sister and I laughing. I have, I just have these memories we just had, we were laughing and
3 everything was funny and we could see the funny in everything. Yah, I think that's one of the things
4 and another thing is that I don't like to speak negative. I think that's a, I think you are what you
5 speak and not you are what you eat, cause then I will be terrible. But you are what you speak and I
6 really try not to speak negatively.

7 ***T: OK. Is having control over circumstances something that is important to you?***

8 **R:** Yes and No.

9 ***T: OK***

10 **R:** Yes I am a bit of a control freak, but I have learned when to let go. When I know that now it's not
11 in my hands anymore.

12 ***T: When is it important for you to control?***

13 **R:** When there is something that I can do to change it.

14 **T: OK.**

15 **R:** So up until the fact, I know that there is someone who will, some people who will be totally
16 despondent and totally irritated when they can't change anything, I don't get like that. If I come to a
17 point where I have done my bit and I have done everything I can, from now on, it's up to the other
18 person or the, government or the church or God or.. Then I can totally let go. I am, I think it's one of,
19 it's also one of those things that can be a positive and negative aspect because I, and I think I'm
20 going to answer one of your questions now. But I am very much a person of now. I don't look back
21 and I tend to not to look forward, I look to what's happening today, so I try to control what is
22 happening today, because I know that I can't control anything that happened yesterday. And I will,
23 only when I get there, only be able to control the things of tomorrow. So, I think, I think that's why I
24 was struggling so much and why with your question about my goals, because my goal is to go
25 through today (laughs). That's my biggest goal.

26 ***T: I was going to ask about, but what about the implications of today for tomorrow?***

27 **R:** You see I struggle with those as well..., that's why one of my best (emphasis) assets is crisis
28 management (laughs), because I get to tomorrow and the things that were supposed to be done are
29 not done and then I flap around like a silly goose. Because yesterday I wasn't focused on what I
30 believed... So yes it's sometimes a bit... I tend to opt in that sense to let go of control because of my
31 own actions. Because I don't control, I control only myself, and in that sense I maybe I don't want to
32 control anything else, I know that I can only control myself.

33 ***T: But whenever you are faced with a situation where you are controlling it, when you are***
34 ***exercising control, do you ever have the future consequences of what you are doing now in mind?***

35 **R:** Yes

1 ***T: So would you, for example, plan or control something based on what the consequences you***
2 ***think it will have in the future or is it very much about the consequences it will have now? Do you***
3 ***take that into consideration?***

4 **R:** I think I take it, I never thought about this, but I think I take it into consideration when it affects
5 someone else as well. When it only affects only me, it doesn't really bother me that much...because I
6 know I will cope with it. But for instance, a very, very good example is my credit card (laughs). If my
7 credit card was only effecting me or affecting me rather, then I would swipe it whenever and I will
8 use up all the credit and at the end of the month I will just pay it back and will use it up again, and I
9 will get into trouble because I will not have any more money, and I will get it back. I will not have a
10 problem with that. But because it's also affecting my family, I tend to think twice before I use it, or I
11 really try to use it responsibly. And also I know that it's something really important to my husband,
12 he doesn't like me or us to be in debt, so I know that I will get into trouble with him if I don't, if I'm
13 not responsible with it. So then I like to control myself.

14 ***T: So you say control is important when, particularly important when it affects other people***
15 ***around you?***

16 **R:** When it just affects me I really, I mean I was alone in a sense that I lived alone for about three
17 years, three to four years. And I never really worried about food in the house or cleaning the house,
18 I'm just, it wasn't really important to me but (emphasis) I am an extremely good employee, because
19 then it work for someone else. I do my best and I give my all (emphasis) for the work that I am doing.
20 I would, yah, I tend to work more for someone else than for myself.

21 ***T: Why do you think that is?***

22 **R:** I have no idea. I have been wondering about that for a while now, because my business, the
23 business that I have that's network marketing, is something that really helps other people and in
24 helping other people you also help yourself. So I really do, I do well with helping other people. I work
25 for them, I put time and effort into that, you know to help them to get successful, to be successful,
26 but I don't do the same effort for myself. So the business is not really growing as it can be because I
27 don't focus on what I can do for myself in that business. I feel selfish. And it's silly because it's not.

28 ***T: Are hope and optimism the same thing for you?***

29 **R:** No.

30 ***T: OK?***

31 **R:** But now I don't know why it's not. Let me think a bit. The.... the definition that I have of hope is to
32 believe in what you cannot see. I think the definition of optimism for me is to believe the only good
33 in what you can see. So hope always for me leads to God, because hope just means it's another way
34 of saying that you have faith in something. So hope for me is in God, whereas optimism for me is my
35 choice.

36 ***T: So is there a relationship or is there any way that the two....***

1 **R:** Probably because I mean, I think it's Romans that said, Romans 8 that God will do everything or
2 God will work out everything to the best, for those He has chosen. So that just sort of cements my
3 belief that everything will work out right because He said so in the Bible, and I believe that. And I
4 also believe that what you believe comes to fruition. So if, it doesn't matter in which religion you
5 live in. That is what's, what everyone believes, if you believe in karma, or what we talked about
6 Kismet, what you sow you will reap. That's one of those things. If you sow positiveness and positivity
7 you will get it back.

8 **T: *How do those concepts now, what barring do they have on your view about fairness in life, in***
9 ***things being fair or not fair?***

10 **R:** Well you see fairness is not always optimism (laughs), because like I said last time, I don't think it's
11 fair that some people have to work so hard, and or some people don't have jobs, or some people
12 have to stand out in the streets on a cold day like today. I mean I was driving around, I was driving
13 here, and this morning at 8 o'clock and it was two degrees Celsius and I saw this young boy with
14 shorts and tekkies, and it's really quite terrible to see and I don't think that's fair. (Pause)But, I can't
15 also say that...it's just I don't know which choices he made. I mean he could probably choose to go to
16 a shelter in the city, I do know of a lot of shelters that would help someone keep warm. So I don't
17 know what his choices are. I can't say about the justness of his particular situation but in comparison
18 to my situation it is not fair. But to relate that to optimism, (pause) I don't think that one should...
19 *sho!* these are very difficult questions for this late in the day (laughs). I don't think one should be,
20 how can I say, one should distinguish between being optimistic and being unrealistic. I think if you
21 are unrealistic, it means you are not thinking about the negative things that can happen. You negate,
22 you are ignoring it, you just believe, that's unrealistic, but optimism is knowing what can go wrong
23 and what can go right and choosing to believe that it's going to go right.

24 **T: *OK. So in that situation, how would you apply optimism or hope, like in the situation that you***
25 ***just gave me when you saw ...***

26 **R:** The little boy?

27 **T: *Yes.***

28 **R:** Or the young boy?

29 **T: *Ya.***

30 **R:** My optimism will probably say that I really, really hope that someone gives him pants (laughs). I
31 don't have pants with me today in the car, but I really hope someone goes past, although he's there
32 everyday, I see him quite regularly. And I hope that he gets what he wants or I hope that the money
33 that people give him will be, or he would use it buy something that will keep him warm or to eat.

34 **T: *You are speaking about hope?***

35 **R:** I'm speaking about the hope. I don't know how optimistic I can be, because I also know the reality
36 of people on the street. I have worked with them for a while; I have gotten to know them. I do know
37 that certain habits are really, really hard to break. So if he is in a habit of buying drugs with the
38 money instead of buying food, then the reality is that he's probably not going to get pants. I don't
39 know if I'm making sense.



1 **T: I want to understand, you saying that the reality is he will not get pants ...**

2 **R:** No the reality is probably ... probably.

3 **T: So where does being optimism come into a picture where**

4 **R:** You see optimism is, to me, I can't necessarily really be optimistic towards his situation, because I
5 don't have control over his situation. I can just be optimistic about things happening to me.

6 **T: OK. So optimism is just personal?**

7 **R:** I think so, I think so. It's the things that affect you. My husband is not an optimist; he's a realist, so
8 he chooses to see the things that will probably go wrong. He's not always negative but sometimes he
9 is. And I just choose not believe that. I don't think I'm answering your questions.

10 **T: You are raising more questions. I want to clearly understand.**

11 **R:** Me too.

12 **T: Do you want us to pause a bit?**

13 **R:** No, just ask the question again.

14 **T: Do you want me to phrase it the same way again?**

15 **R:** Yes.

16 **T: Ok, you gave me a situation where you have the boy ...**

17 **R:** Yes

18 **T: ... and he is wearing shorts ...**

19 **R:** Yes

20 **T: and it is unfair?**

21 **R:** Yah, to me it is unfair because I would like him to have a warm home and a heater to sit next to. I
22 mean I would like him to be warm and cared for.

23 **T: Let me put it this way...what would a pessimistic person feel or see when they see him and what**
24 **will an optimistic person see, feel or think when they look at him?**

25 **R:** A pessimistic person will probably see the choice or will probably choose to see the choices that
26 boy made to be there. So they will probably choose to see he probably chose to be there because
27 this is a very, a very lucrative corner. People give money here because they feel very sorry for him or,
28 you know they will be like, why doesn't he just get a job or, I don't know what pessimistic people say
29 cause I don't think that way. But I am assuming that they will see whatever you know, here he is
30 again. Whereas I, I don't know about other optimistic people, but I just feel sad that his situation is

1 so dire that it is two degrees and he has to stand outside, never mind why he has to stand outside. I
2 personally don't feel the need to help him or to help him get off that corner. I am assuming he had
3 grown to be, I think he is about 14 ,15, by great strength of character, so I am assuming that he can
4 take care of himself quite well. Or he might have someone who takes care of him and he just does
5 the, I mean begging can be a job. So I don't, I'm not that (emphasis) empathetic that I have to
6 change the world. I just choose to see the world in a positive light.

7 ***T: So in that sense is his situation or would you think that his situation is likely to change for the***
8 ***better or the worse?***

9 **R:** I really hope it does.

10 ***T: Ok, what are the most unfair things you can think of? What in life or your life in general are the***
11 ***most unfair things?***

12 **R:** I don't know (laughs). It's difficult because I believe that most people have control over things
13 that they do. Ok, no that's not, that does not have anything to do with it.

14 I think when someone gets accused of something they haven't done and no one wants to listen to
15 them, no one believes in their innocence. That's unfair. I think that children not being taken care of
16 like they should be, that's unfair.

17 **T: Are there some things in your life that have been unfair?**

18 **R:** I had a, I think I told you about it. I had a written warning.

19 **T: Oh yes, I remember.**

20 **R:** That was very (emphasis) unfair.

21 ***T: Ok. So how does an optimistic like yourself go about dealing with unfair situations like that?***

22 **R:** I was well, I was very angry and very offended, but later on looking back at it, I was wrong. So I
23 accepted the responsibility and, although I told my boss that I really hope next time he will get all his
24 facts straight. It really doesn't make a lasting impression on me because in the greater scheme of
25 things, unfairness is something that passes.

26 ***T: Ok, So you would you just sort of console yourself in that?***

27 **R:** Yes, it was unfair, but nobody died, nobody got hurt so, and we just go on.

28 As an optimist, this doesn't make sense to most people, I am grateful for what happened because it
29 helped me to deal and to help others to deal with the same things that happened to them. It gave
30 me empathy for people and I think I also learned to look for the deeper reason behind actions. I can
31 always and it drives my mother and my husband to absolute insanity, but I can always think of why
32 someone is doing something. I don't just say well, that was just such a stupid thing to do, I say you
33 know what, he probably, he is probably having a bad day or he's, she's probably, she hasn't had a
34 good relationship with this person or ..I always try to see their side and that's probably also an

1 optimistic thing to do, is to give reasons or some might say excuses for behavior.

2 ***T: But what I'm hearing you saying is that the optimist in you tries to be empathetic?***

3 **R:** Yes

4 ***T: Ok, alright. So that is how you will deal with things that are unfair....?***

5 **R:** Yah, that are unfair? I don't think, but if it happens to me, (pause) I don't know, you just cope with
6 it. You decide if it's going to make a lasting impact on your life, and then if you realize that it's going
7 to make you bitter or resentful; you try to handle it in a matter that will not make you bitter or
8 resentful. But I believe it's a choice you make. I think you can choose how you feel about things.

9 ***T: Do you think that your idea of unfairness is different because you are an optimist? Do you think***
10 ***you think differently about concepts like unfairness, because you are an optimist?***

11 **R:** I don't know, my first, gut feeling was to say "yes", because I can probably see unfairness where
12 other people would just see reality. So for a pessimist, it would probably just be reality that they are
13 boys walking on the streets, or it's reality, it's been the, I mean it's in the Bible; Jesus said that the
14 poor among you will always be there. So, but it's still not fair to me, because I can put myself in that
15 person's shoes. I think that's what empathy means. So, I can feel that person's sadness and I can feel
16 its unfair as if it's towards me.

17 ***T: So does that you are more likely to see or perceive unfairness?***

18 **R:** I think so yes.

19 ***T: OK.***

20 **R:** That's just my perception, I might not be, I mean someone who is objective, will probably see
21 unfairness more objectively.

22 ***T: OK***

23 **R:** I might see unfairness were it isn't because of the choices that have made by people. So, but yes,
24 it's very difficult questions these hey. Higher grade questions you giving me.

25 ***T: You answered this a bit but I will ask you again. What would you say is more important, what's***
26 ***going to now, or what will happen tomorrow?***

27 **R:** Definitely (emphasis) what's going on now.

28 **T: Why is that?**

29 **R:** Because you don't know what's gonna happen tomorrow. It might be the second coming
30 tomorrow at 6, but you were looking forward so much about what will happen at 12 that you missed
31 the whole thing. So I don't, I think its part of my personality as well, I'm very much for the moment. I
32 do plan, it's not that I don't plan or I wake up every morning not knowing what is going to happen. I
33 do plan; it's just that I don't put too much faith in what I plan, I think you...the Lord says we plan and

1 He decides (laughs). So in that sense, it's not really, wise is to put much faith about tomorrow,
2 because you don't know what's gonna happen.

3 ***T: If you are faced with having to decide between having to enjoy something now or delaying***
4 ***gratification so that you reap some positive consequence in the future. What are you most likely to***
5 ***choose?***

6 **R:** Most likely, I am to choose the instant gratification of now (sigh) but (laughs), but I want to say
7 here...because I also understand that part of being mature and grown up means that you can't always
8 have that, because there's other people that are in your sphere of living and this is what I was saying
9 earlier. A couple of years early ago I would have purely said always just the now and worry about
10 tomorrow. But when you are bound to a person you in marriage and when you have children that
11 drastically (emphasis) changes because you now have to take into consideration how your choices
12 are going to affect them. And in that sense it's easier for me now to delay gratification because it's
13 for someone else, it's not for me. One of the very good examples is that when I was pregnant.
14 Before I was pregnant, I still socially smoked and I did try to stop every now and then because my
15 husband didn't like it at all but I still did that. I love wine so I drank; I drank, you know, when we
16 were socially active. So I had a glass of wine, every now and again, and I sometimes had one too
17 many, but the moment that I knew that we were going to try to have babies, I totally stopped
18 everything. I was very; very responsible while I was pregnant because I knew it affected someone
19 other than myself as well.

20 ***T: So I hear you saying you are able to delay gratification but typically you choose to enjoy the***
21 ***benefits of now.***

22 **R:** Yes

23 ***T: And that maybe is linked to what you said that you think the present is more important.***

24 **R:** Yes

25 ***T: OK. Why is it?***

26 **R:** Because you can only do what you do now (laughs). It's just, I can't say, I mean I can probably
27 think what's going to happen 3 hours time, but I mean anything can happen. So, I have
28 obviously...one thinks about what's going to happen or how would you handle it if this happens. You
29 go through scenarios in your head. But yes, I don't think one should make too big of a deal of it.

30 ***T: Of the future that is?***

31 **R:** Yes

32 ***T: And, how have past experiences contributed to who you are today?***

33 **R:** Oh, everything, I think everything that happens to you and the way you handle or the way you
34 choose to handle it, it is a building block of your character. And your character decides who you are or
35 your character is the essence of who you are. So everything that happens to you or did not happen
36 to you was almost the formation of who you are.

1 ***T: And how does that influence your outlook on life? How have your past experiences influenced***
2 ***your current outlook in life?***

3 **R:** I think it helped me a lot with my optimism, because of the fact that I could have gone through
4 quite traumatic events and come out Ok, helps me to know that OK, you know almost anything can
5 happen to me and I'll be alright. Whereas I think people who have not gone through things like that
6 and who are constantly worried about going through things like that can't be as optimistic because
7 they don't know how they are going to handle it. They just see the fear and the unfairness or
8 whatever, and that's why I don't believe in fear. I think also because now there is nothing now that
9 can hurt me, so I don't believe in fear.

10 ***T: There's nothing now that can hurt you?***

11 **R:** Yes

12 ***T: When you are in a situation where there's a possibility of threat?***

13 **R:** Then you get yourself out of that situation very quickly (laughs). No I mean obviously you choose
14 where you put yourself. It's not always, it's not always realistic, because when I was 6, I chose to be
15 with someone that I trusted and that person misused that trust, so that was not realistic to say that I
16 chose my situation. But I, in my experience, you can choose where you want to be and you should be
17 in places where you are safe and that is with God so that can technically be anywhere (laughs).

18 ***T: OK***

19 **R:** I have a very childlike personality something's very like this or not like this.

20 ***T: When you think about the things that you would like to achieve, I know you said you don't put a***
21 ***lot of emphasis on the future but you do say you have some degree of planning about the future.***
22 ***When you think about those things that you would like to have yourself achieve, would you, you***
23 ***know the imagined sort of hope for future you have contrasted in your mind, and you look at your***
24 ***present realities. What sort of thoughts do you have when you look at what you would like to have***
25 ***or hope for in the future and you see where you are now and what you are doing now. What kind***
26 ***of thoughts of emotions come up?***

27 **R:** I'm a little bit apprehensive about it because I know that, and this is maybe now going to be, to
28 sound totally in paradox with what I have been saying (laughs) because in some sense I believe that I
29 can be my own worst enemy. Because I so much believe in the now and because I tend to not feel
30 things are really as important as everybody else think they are, I tend to procrastinate what am
31 supposed to do. So I tend to procrastinate with, I remember saying I was tenacious, am tenacious in
32 procrastination as well (laughs), and it's silly things like my business, days go by and then I haven't
33 worked at my business and if you don't work at it, nothing is going to happen, I mean it's not going
34 to come to you in your sleep.

35 ***T: So when you seeing yourself not working on your business yet...***

36 **R:** Then I see, ok, so it's going to take longer for me to get where am supposed to be, because I have

1 now delayed it for another day, because I, yah and I mean the apprehensiveness is there because,
2 because you, I know that I affect what I do. I'm not a person with an external locus of control and I
3 know that I have, but this sounds really corny, but I have the power to become anything I want to
4 be. I know that I'm also the one who's standing in my way, because there is no one else I can blame
5 for any of my choices. So I'm apprehensive in the sense that am hoping that I will get it, but I tend to
6 hope I don't have to put much effort in getting it (laughs), I don't know if that's just lazy. I don't
7 know, I just, I think that, I think and my mom we were talking about this because I told her about our
8 last interview, we talk about everything. And she was very-very I think interested about the way or
9 when I said that I have not had to work really for anything ever. I mean I have not had to work
10 towards something, everything came very easily to them and she said that it's so because she had to
11 truly work to get out of, they were very poor when she was young and her mother had to work really
12 hard to get her to university. She had to work really hard to get me to university and in doing that
13 we were quiet happy and blessed when I was growing up, I never, I can't say I never got any, I didn't
14 get anything I didn't want or that I wanted. You know, there were something's that there weren't
15 not any money for, but I started working quite early, so there was always something, if I wanted to
16 go out for a movie, I had the money to do that. And its, she was very interested because she says it's
17 a generation thing. We were, I was part of the generation where everything went fairly well for us. It
18 was fairly easy to get things done, because our parents worked so hard and the middle class that
19 was in South Africa at that point and South Africa itself is a very easy, it's for most people, the living
20 conditions are quite easy to handle. I mean we don't have, everything is not totally out of your
21 reach, I mean you can work hard, get enough of money, own a small home or rent a small place. I
22 forgot, I've been talking so much I forgot the question.

23 ***T: I was asking you about looking at your present circumstances and then, let me give you an***
24 ***example with your hopes and your dreams. You said one of the things you want to do is have a***
25 ***closer relationship with God and hear the voice of the spirit more clearly. When you think about***
26 ***that kind of relationship you want to have with God and you think of the relationship you***
27 ***presently have with God, what goes through your mind?***

28 **R:** Oh no just, I'm very, very relaxed about that because I know that's a journey. I know that yes I
29 have to work at it and maybe I'm not spending, the past couple of weeks have been quite hectic, so I
30 haven't been every night having my bible study time. But I still make a point to everyday talk to God
31 and pray and try to listen to what He is saying to me in certain situations. And I know(emphasis) that
32 this is a journey, I know that it's not something that all of the sudden one morning you wake up and
33 your Bruce, from Bruce All Mighty and that God stands in front of you and says Ok now, everything is
34 OK. I give one step and He is there and then I give another step. SO with that, I have no
35 apprehension at all. I think but it's easy with that because you, I know that my relationship with Him
36 now is enough. I want it more and He doesn't want it more, if that makes sense. He knows that I
37 believe that Jesus has died for my sins, so I am saved, my salvation is certainty. What happens now is
38 my life in abundance. So that's me wanting more. I don't think that He necessarily want more from
39 me.

40 ***T: Now, your past experiences, have they changed the way that you imagined the future, and if so***
41 ***is it in the positive way or a good way?***

42 **R:** I think definitely. I have to say that in one sense it's difficult because I don't always remember.

1 Something very interesting happened. Just get me back on track if I lose it again (laughs), but my
2 mom gave me a letter that my dad sent to me when I was in Canada 12 years ago. No it wasn't that
3 long, but anyway long ago. Where they were worried about my direction in life and that I didn't get,
4 you know I wasn't having any grip, you know I was just floating along (laughs). And I sent him back a
5 letter, saying that I don't think he shouldn't be worried and I was very conscience and I was very
6 clear and I was very, you know, and when I read I thought, oh yah ok, I, I at least sound as if I know
7 what I'm doing. But I don't remember any of this, I don't remember the letter, I don't remember
8 reading it, I don't remember sending it, I don't remember anything. But at looking back I can see
9 that I'm still the same person as then, inherently. I've grown with regards to choices I made. And
10 thank heavens for that because in that letter I'm still in very much love with a total...um other
11 person, I am not going to be negative about, (laughs) shame. But anyway so, I was this happy, but I
12 am happy go-lucky. So I think that even though something..and it comes back to the optimism, the
13 fact that they have happened to me, gave me a better understanding when something like that
14 happens to other people, and it helps towards my compassion for other people. But it doesn't take
15 away from the choice that I have to be positive about things in general, about life in general. I think
16 life in general is a gift and it's wonderful, and it's just fabulous to be alive and God is so good to us.

17 ***T: Do you think maybe your past experiences possibly may have made you sort of appreciate?***

18 **R:** Oh definitely. Yes, because I think I could have, I could have chosen so easily to go the different
19 route and I see people going the different route. Especially children, and there I have to give credit
20 to my mom, because I think she was a very stable person in my life, and she wasn't rigid in a sense
21 that she told me exactly what to do, but she directed me quite clearly into, mostly to the right
22 direction.

23 ***T: So she has been an influence?***

24 **R:** Yes definitely.

25 ***T: Now what would you say are potential obstacles for you realizing your future? I know you***
26 ***haven't said you invest a lot in it, but I will hinge on the three goals that you gave last time. You***
27 ***spoke about a good wife, you know being the best mom you can and you spoke about your***
28 ***relationship with God. What would you say are possible obstacles for you to realizing one of those***
29 ***things? You can choose one or all three.***

30 **R:** Well the obstacle to being a good wife, well an obstacles to all that can be me. If I choose to do
31 the wrong things, I'm not going to get where I want to be, or if I keep on procrastinating in things
32 that I shouldn't. For instance, this challenge that my husband and I are going through, has to do with
33 the things that we expect of each other, expectations we have of each other. I expect him to be
34 more, I can't think of the English word, but to be more there (emphasis) with the children and with
35 us. He is, the past couple of weeks I have seen him as very distant. And he expects a cleaner house
36 than we have at the moment (laughs). Now I can choose to ignore that and just go my merry way
37 and not think about tomorrow and not think about what I must do now to clean the house or and I
38 can just you know, ignore what he wants, but that won't make me a better wife. So I truly think that
39 in life mostly you are your own obstacle because the choices you make, decide what going to
40 happen.



1 **T: Any other obstacle apart yourself?**

2 **R:** Another obstacle is that he decides that I'm not making him happy anymore and he leaves, then I
3 can't be a wife never mind a good one.

4 **T: Do you see it as a potential obstacle?**

5 **R:** No I don't, not really. But no, I don't believe that he would do that but I mean it can be if we are
6 talking about potential obstacles. Another one can be a death in the family, God can decide to take
7 me...which will be lovely, I would miss the children, and my husband but you know, I would be in
8 heaven which wouldn't be a bad thing. I don't know, I don't think about potential dangers.

9 **T: Ok, but now, what you have said is that you would probably be a biggest obstacle ...**

10 **R:** Yah and I think that is true for all of us.

11 **T: Now what does you being a potential obstacle for your future outcomes, What implications**
12 **does it have?**

13 **R:** It means that it put a lot of responsibility on you, and that I might probably have to stop being so
14 very much (emphasis) optimistic and be a little bit realistic as well. Because you can be optimistic
15 and hope that the house will clean it, but that is not necessarily going to happen (laughs), and I
16 would probably say that I need to stop procrastinating. Because that's a really bad thing with my
17 husband as well, he doesn't understand that, he's a person of action.

18 **T: So would you say that procrastination then is one of your potential obstacles?**

19 **R:**For sure because I can, I can go on like this forever, I can continue to train and continue with the
20 house like that. I mean, I still have boxes unpacked from two houses ago (laughs), and I don't see
21 anything wrong with that. So that's the, you know when they talk about the optimum of
22 procrastination that's probably one of them. *Do you think we could quickly take a break?*

23 **T: Yes we can...**

24 *Just to grab something.....*

25 **T: Tell me what kind of thoughts would you say are characteristic of your thoughts about the**
26 **future? When you think about your future what kind of thoughts do you generally typically have?**

27 **R:**Oh definitely positive, Like I said I don't tend to plan something but, (brief pause) I tend to think
28 that if I plan something it will probably turn out right, So (sigh), I am in the process of deciding if I am
29 taking the twins to another school or if I start here with them teaching the toddler class. But I am
30 still deciding on that depending on what happens because it has a financial as well as an emotional
31 implication for me, teaching all day. Even though they are with me, might have a bad effect on our
32 relationship in the afternoon, so, I want to, I'm exploring that. But mostly I believe that what is going
33 to happen will happen. I know that it sounds in contrast with what I said that you have control over
34 what is going to happen...it is. But I do believe that you decide up until a certain point and then God
35 takes over. I read somewhere that you give 100% and God gives 100%, and then you meet each

1 other half way. And that is what I truly believe, so, It will happen and because I am an optimist it will
2 probably be positive.

3 ***T: And that is what you would say is characteristic?***

4 **R:** Yes definitely.

5 ***T: You have sort of answered the next one but I will ask it anyway, what kind of thoughts stand***
6 ***out about your future?***

7 **R:** Ya, the fact that God wants the best for me, so If I don't make the wrong choices it is going to be a
8 life of abundance because that is what he wants to give us.

9 ***T: How do you feel about your future?***

10 **R:** Hopeful and positive and also a bit scared that I will screw it up (laughs)

11 ***T: Why?***

12 **R:** No, no, that's not, I just wanted to say something different (laughs). No but there is a bit of a truth
13 into it, many a truth said in jest because if...if, I don't make the right choices, if I don't work hard
14 enough, if I don't...it's very much how love is, a life is. If you don't what you are supposed to do it's
15 not going to turn out the way that you think it should. And I know myself now good enough to know
16 that, I tend to, my optimism tends to take over where realism should actually be. Then I think things
17 are going to be better than it is really going to be.

18 ***T: What would happen if things don't turn out the way you want?***

19 **R:** Nothing really.

20 ***T: Because you say that your concern would be not making the right decisions***

21 **R:** Yes

22 ***T: ... but if you didn't make the right decisions***

23 **R:** I think if I didn't make the right decisions I would probably just stay where I am now and that
24 wouldn't necessarily be a life in abundance because then you are not growing. You are not
25 experiencing new things, then you just shlop away at the same things over and over. It's like those
26 donkeys turning the mill. You know they walk and walk all day but they, they haven't moved from
27 the first spot that they were at.

28 ***T: And what would then that mean to you? How would it affect you?***

29 **R:** I think then you won't affect people

30 ***T: So then you feel you wouldn't be...***

31 **R:** You won't be purposeful. There won't be a purpose to what you are..., I believe that you are put

1 here for a reason; I am here to have an effect on people. I am here to show people God's love; I am
2 here to be the best me I can be in God's glory. Or to...like the moon, reflect God's glory. Like the
3 moon reflects the sun. If you make the wrong choices then that doesn't happen.

4 ***T: So making the wrong choices has consequences for fulfilling purpose?***

5 **R:** Yes definitely. Making the wrong choices always has consequences. For me it's just to do with
6 purpose and it also has to do with those goals that I have, because then it will also affect then those
7 goals. Because then I won't be able to be the best mother or the best wife, or the... best Christian
8 that I can be. I'll just be a Christian who makes wrong choices (laughs)

9 ***T: And if you weren't to get there, how would that make you feel?***

10 **R:** Probably a bit defeated.

11 ***T: Ya?***

12 **R:** Useless, probably.

13 ***T: So it is important***

14 ***T: in uncertain times, when you don't know what is going to happen, how do you generally feel?***

15 **R :**(clears throat) I tend to then run through the scenarios that can happen. And then I make a
16 choice that it will be OK whatever happens...(Pause) Once again this is tied in really closely with my
17 faith because I believe that whatever happens God will get me through it. Or my relationship will get
18 me through it, or however you want to put it. For instance if...an uncertain time like.., when my
19 husband, I don't know if my husband is coming home safely. Or I don't know where he is. It has
20 happened before that he doesn't have his phone with him and he's just run to the shops and then he
21 stays out..... longer. And then even an optimistic person in South Africa will get all the scenarios,
22 what will happen if something happens to him, if he was in an accident, even I go through that. And
23 then I deliberately go through, if this happens, then this will be Ok, I'll go and stay with my mom.
24 And if something happens to him the girls and I will be fine. If something happens to the both of us, I
25 do think of those possibilities.

26 ***T: But generally?***

27 **R:** But generally, I never think about it being the end of the world

28 ***T:OK....***

29 **R:** So ya, I don't want to be...I don't want to be one of those...I, I remember staying in Canada
30 (Laughing), I went to an Opera or a show and I was smoking then as I said before and we went
31 outside to smoke and there were these old women, wrinkly, you know, looking like they're typical
32 hag. All wrinkles and their little wrinkles here around their mouth because they were taking (Sucking
33 sound) sucking in that cigarette I thought, ahh please let me not come one of those! And their
34 mouth, they *somaar* look unhappy, I just, I don't wanna be ...I think maybe that's what, that what
35 make me choose because I think one should be happy, and I don't want to be unhappy.

1 **T: So it's what make you choose?**

2 **R:** It's what makes me choose to believe in the positive things.

3 **T: OK, ARE THERE ANY BINDING DECISIONS YOU HAVE MADE CONCERNING YOUR FUTURE?**

4 **R:** Ya, probably getting married (Laughing), that's a binding thing, and having children. I mean that
5 drastically changes the way you make decisions further on, because you have to just take into
6 consideration so much more. I have to plan ahead much more because I have to make sure that I
7 know who takes care of the children, who take care of my husband (Laughing). So there is definitely
8 getting married and ...but other than that no. My dad has taught me a very great wisdom and that is
9 to always take the potential, the road that will potentially fork again in the future. Never take a road
10 that's gonna end, in a T-junction of whatever, but take the option that will have other options down
11 the road, that is basically what it comes down to, but with marriage that's not (Laughing). Marriage
12 is not an option with another option (Laughing).

13 **T: SO, I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU ARE GOING TO ANSWER THIS ONE (LAUGHING, OK) THAT, WHAT**
14 **YOUR ANTICIPATIONS CONCERNING THESE DECISIONS, THESE BINDING DECISIONS?**

15 **R:** Anticipations...?

16 **T: Ya, what do you anticipate concerning them?**

17 **R:** Oh, just that they will always be there (Laughing). I mean, I will always have children and maybe,
18 the children part will part will become less of an obstacleno they are not an obstacle, but less of a
19 concern when they are out of the house, and then it will only be me and my husband and I again.
20 But he is there to stay (Laughing), Not planning on letting him go.

21 **T: Ok, do we still have...?**

22 **R:** We still have time.

23 **T: OK, IF IT APPEARS THAT SOMETHING THAT YOU HAVE PLANNED TO DO MAY GO WRONG, LET**
24 **ME GIVE AN EXAMPLE WITH YOUR CHILDREN, LET'S SAY YOU PLAN A BIRTHDAY PARTY, AND YOU**
25 **WANT A BIG JUMPING CASTLE AND IT LOOKS LIKE THEY NEVER GONNA SHOW UP OR THEY'RE NOT**
26 **GOING TO DELIVER, HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO THAT AND IT IS A BIG THING, LET'S SAY IT WAS**
27 **THE CENTRE OF THE BIRTHDAY PARTY AND IT MIGHT NOT JUST HAPPEN?**

28 **R:** I make a plan. (Laughing), I either call someone else or I call everyone I know or like, know
29 someone else, I try to make a plan to fix it.

30 **T: And how does that affect future situations?**

31 **R:** In sense that I believe that I will always be able to make a solution and if it's not then I will just say
32 you know what? This was the plan but it didn't work out. I don't think that anything should be so
33 important to you, anything like a plan or an expectation should be so important for you that you
34 world collapses if it does not go right. I just think that's shallow.

1 ***T: If it doesn't go right, you ...?***

2 We cope and we make another plan, we get a movie or we play ring around the rosy or we plan
3 olden games ...

4 ***T: So, it's after that this thing has gone wrong that you will make a plan to...?***

5 **R:** Yes, if I can't fix it, then we make another plan.

6 ***T: AND, WHAT DO YOU TEND TO WHEN YOU FIND THE THINGS ARE GETTING DIFFICULT?***

7 **R:** (Starts by Laughing) I put my head in the sand (Laughing); when things are getting difficult, define
8 your level of difficulty?

9 ***T: Well its relative isn't it? Mine and yours are different, but when something is personally***
10 ***perceived as, this is going to get hard.***

11 **R:** Ok let me tell you about my past few months because my past few months were very hard. With
12 the birth of the twins last year April, there was this huge..., I had very much difficulties with the
13 labor, I started bleeding and I didn't stop, so they were very worried about me, I lost a lot of blood
14 and I had infections and I had to stay long in the hospital and I came back I was alright and I was fine
15 and I was enjoying the girls a lot and for eight months everything was hunky dory, then all of a
16 sudden I collapsed. I got extremely depressed, I couldn't make decisions, I didn't have any
17 perspective, I was crying constantly, I thought it was post-natal depression, but someone
18 professional, said it might be bit of burnout as well because I was stretching really very thin, I was
19 trying to do my business and trying to let XP work and taking care of the children and, you know
20 trying to do everything myself because I am a control freak. I just think I can be everything better
21 than everybody else, so I try to do both. And my body couldn't cope anymore and I had a bit of a
22 shut down and then I decided that I can't be the best mom and wife if I don't get help. So then, I get
23 help if things happen. So I went to see a psychiatrist and she did put me on some anti-depressants, a
24 very light one and I feel like my old self again. So it is going to be a year and a half and we will see. I
25 don't want to be on it the rest of my life because don't think that it's natural. But I feel like myself,
26 my own self again. So, if things go wrong, I tend to get help, I don't just sit and wait for tomorrow.

27 ***T: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WHAT YOU DO NOW AND THE***
28 ***GOALS THAT YOU HAVE FOR YOUR FUTURE?***

29 **R:** (Silence) I think I am doing baby steps (Laughing) of what I need to do for what I am going to do.
30 sho! I don't know, I think I believe that I am on the right track; I am constantly reevaluating what I
31 am doing. I am see myself as quite aware person, I know my limits, I know my responsibilities, I know
32 what might go wrong, I know my weaknesses. I joke too much about them, and I should probably
33 work on them a little bit more, but I also know my potential and I do believe that I am doing the best
34 that I can at the moment. So in relation to what I will be, I don't actually know, but I do believe that I
35 am on the right track

36 ***T: You are progressively working...?***

1 **R:** Yes, I have to say that the task that you gave me about writing my biography is much more
2 daunting than I thought it will be.

3 **T: Really?**

4 **R:** Yes, it is very difficult for me, but then after today, it might be a bit more easy because when you
5 asked that question and my answer came up as being Proverbs 31, it will be easier because now I
6 have a model to work against. I was actually finding myself quite reluctant to start it because I didn't
7 know how it will finish. Which was interesting for me to find out by myself. Maybe that's another
8 thing that I like to learn about myself, I like to see how I react to things and how I, why I react to
9 thing like that.

10 **T: Maybe it links to what you said earlier that if you feel like you might not succeed or you don't**
11 **know how it is gonna end up, you just leave it?**

12 **R:** Ya, I just wait for it to, be it the right time for me to handle, that's interesting.

13 **T: OK, WHAT INTERNAL RESOURCES AND EVEN EXTERNAL RESOURCES DO YOU THINK THAT YOU**
14 **HAVE TO REALIZE AND ACCOMPLISH YOUR GOALS?**

15 **R:** Faith, faith is the big one internally. Externally coffee (Laughing), no, I am joking. Externally I have
16 a very emotional support system. XP and my mother and my father and my sister are all very
17 supportive but my faith is what will get me through everything because, and it might also not
18 because if I don't believe it's not gonna happen. if I don't truly believe, I might hope it, but if I don't
19 truly believe it will probably not happen, but my faith is, my faith in what's supposed to happen and
20 what can happen I think is the biggest internal motivation.

21 **T: So, you are saying internally is your faith and externally...anything else internally?**

22 **R:** Ya maybe my tenacity, my will to try and try again or just continue to do what is expected of me,
23 not giving up.

24 **T: And externally?**

25 **R:** The pressures of what a household might need (Laughing)

26 **T: So, that's a resource for you?**

27 **R:** Yes because I need pressure, I wouldn't on my own.

28 **T: So that motivates you?**

29 **R:** The fact that children might need extra clothes is what motivates me to actually work (Laughing),
30 or the fact that we need food motivates me to, so ya, externally looking after other people is a great
31 motivation for me.

32 **T: I was going to ask following that, how and when do you use these resources, for example like,**
33 **faith is your resource and your family and when do you find yourself tending to pull on to those**

1 **resources?**

2 **R:** I think it's human to pull on to them when it's going difficult, I think when it's easy when everything
3 is going easily you tend to just go along with it. Although I have to say that thankfulness is the part
4 that I use when things are going right. Thankfulness is the part of faith. Because I am always
5 thankful, I make a point of it not to forget where everything comes from, I believe. Obviously I talk to
6 my husband every day, I talk to my mother at least once a day, partly because we do business
7 together but partly because of the emotional connection we have. When I was younger I used to talk
8 things a lot though with my grandmother because I was very close to her as well, although she
9 passed away now. I miss her a lot that was something that was quite traumatic for me to let go of
10 because for a long time afterwards I will, oh, I should call Ouma! And then she is not there anymore.
11 The most times when I rely on them the most must probably be when things are going worst or the
12 worst they can or when they're going best because then you want to share it. You want to share,
13 listen to my good news! And when it is going bad you want to, oh, please help or what can I do or
14 just listen or just say shame or...don't try to fix it, I will fix it, just say shame.

15 **T: IF YOU ARE IN A SITUATION WHERE SOME ADVERSE OUTCOME IS VERY LIKELY TO HAPPEN,**
16 **HOW WOULD YOU REACT?**

17 **R:** I'll accept it.

18 **T: So would you try to prevent it from happening ...?**

19 **R:** If it was important enough to me yes... I will probably... For instance, when we were dating my
20 husband at one point said he is having doubts and I said well that's fine but then we shouldn't be
21 together because then you should have time to work through your doubts. He said ok that's fine and
22 we broke up for a few days and then at one point I realized but I don't want us to break up. I sent
23 him a letter, a quite detailed one saying a lot of things but one of the things that I told him was that I
24 don't believe that doubt is a bad thing because doubt is what makes your decision so much more
25 meaningful. I think everyone has doubts, but the strength of character shows when you go against
26 your doubts and choose to make a decision in faith..., that's what faith is. So when he read the letter,
27 we made up again and we got engaged a couple of months after that. So I could probably have sit
28 and waited for him to make up his mind and then he could have thought well I am not worth fighting
29 for so, or he could have met someone else or I could have met someone else or I could have given
30 up, but I didn't.

31 **T: Typically, how would you respond?**

32 **R:** Typically to something that is not important I would just let it go. I think it depends on how
33 important it is to me in the greater scheme of things

34 **T: Which would mean then it's not so many things that you encounter that you would feel the**
35 **need to prevent?**

36 **R:** No.

37 **T: So normally you would just....?**

1 **R:** I'll just let it go, it was not meant to be. There will another situation were maybe I can do this.

2 **T: *Ok, and then how do you, you touched on it but I will ask again, how do you deal with everyday***
3 ***challenges, when XK (helper) says she cannot come and you desperately need to be somewhere or***
4 ***you have lost your keys?***

5 **R:** Oh, I tend to do that quite often. I... (Clears throat), oh, it's very difficult. It depends on how much
6 sleep I got (Laughing), If I am strong, if I got enough sleep and I watched my diet and I am strong, I
7 cope with it quite well, I think. I call the place where I am supposed to be... It actually happened
8 yesterday. XK and I, we had a misunderstanding on Monday I told her long ago that she could only
9 come in at eight but I forgot that I told her. So when seven came and it passed and I called her
10 saying, am I suppose to worry and she said "no I am on my way" but she did not say that remember
11 we said its gonna be eight. So I thought she will be there any minute, any minute and then she only,
12 she was only there at eight o'clock. So I called and I had to be here (work) by nine but I didn't have
13 the time to get ready or whatever, so I called here and I had a bit of flat span, and said I don't know
14 what to do, but I will be, I will be late. I tried to handle the situation and I tried to get someone to
15 help me handle the situation, until it's solved. I am very solution driven; I don't just go and say "well
16 there you go, I can't do anything for the rest of the day because I am not putting my foot out of my
17 house because this day would just get worse", I can never do that. I know people who can actually
18 do that but I don't understand it at al. So, I find the solution and even I if am a half an hour late. I
19 always try to put things in perspective. Something going wrong like my granny dying is totally
20 different, that pulled the rag up from under my feet totally. It was terrible, I missed her a lot, I knew
21 it was coming, we knew that she was going to pass way but also I took a day off, and I was morning
22 her for quite a while, but then at one stage you have decide that I will miss her forever. I went
23 through all the processes of being angry at her for dying and resentment. And then eventually you
24 just go like; I really just miss her, that's actually what it is.

25 **T: *During that period when knew, when the doctors told you that she will go soon what did you do,***
26 ***did you do anything to prepare yourself for it or you just waited for the time to come?***

27 **R:** No, I just knew it was going to be difficult and I tried to be there for her every minute, she was
28 first here in Voolheurst, I visited her almost every day and then for the last two weeks or three
29 weeks she was send back to Nelstrom where she stayed in the frail care centre there at Kokane.
30 Then I just really tried to see her as much as I can, by that point she was so far away that I knew that
31 death for her will be great relief. She was really struggling, she was in pain and she was a very, very
32 independent woman and she couldn't do anything for herself. Someone had to feed her it was the
33 best thing for her (emphasis) to die, but I still missed her. So I knew I (emphasis) was going to be
34 heartbroken for a while, but also I mean you never, I don't think you can ever say you get over
35 someone's death, but you make peace with it. You just make peace with the fact she is in a better
36 place now.

37 **T: *Well, is there anything else that you want us to, maybe something you want to answer again?***

38 **R:** No I don't think, I can't even remember the questions (Laughing) they were hard but I answered...

1

2 ***T: Thank you again for agreeing to see me, ok. I am going to ask you a few more questions again***
3 ***and it will be more or less for clarity on all the other questions we have been dealing with so far.***
4 ***First of all I would like to know a little bit more about you as a person. That is, take me through***
5 ***your childhood. Just a little bit about where you were born, your educational background, how you***
6 ***did in school, your interests and your hobbies.***

7 **R:** It's a pleasure again.

8 OK. I was born in Potchefstroom and we moved to Pretoria when I was five years old. I loved
9 gymnastics, I was absolutely...I adored gymnastics. But gymnastics in Pretoria was much more
10 expensive than it was in Potch. So when we got here, my mom told me that they don't have
11 gymnastics in Pretoria because they couldn't afford it. My day was a Minister, so they had a
12 minister's salary and she worked as well but for the department of (says the word in Afrikaans)
13 traffic department and so there wasn't a lot of money. We stayed in Erasmia which is just next to
14 Laudium, but just for a year or two, then my dad got another call to come work at Brooklyn
15 Reformed Church, which was a big step up. Then we moved to Menlo Park, and I went to Lynwood
16 Primary and later on to Menlo Park High School. I am fairly intelligent but very lazy (laughs) so
17 everything came fairly easy to me, you know high, good marks came mostly easy to me until matric
18 because then you can't just continue on intelligence, you have to study. So I didn't do as well as I
19 hoped in matric. I wanted to become a teacher first of all; I applied for a bursary for the teaching.
20 For the...Tukkies, where you are now. But I didn't get in so I thought that was a sign so I went to just
21 register for a BA in Potch.

22 ***T: So did you only apply at tukkies?***

23 **R:** They were the only ones coming around to schools so I really didn't think of it much. I really didn't
24 think of the future, I think I told you that one of my dreams in matric was to be retired, so it didn't
25 really matter what happened in between. I wasn't very focused on what I was going to be or...

26 ***T: So when you didn't get it you took it as a sign that you are not supposed to do it?***

27 **R:** Yes.

28 ***T: Were you not sure whether or not you were "supposed" to do it?***

29 **R:** I can't really remember, but I thought I would like teaching. But then I obviously thought, well it
30 wasn't supposed to be so I will just check out BA and see how it goes. But then I got a chance to go
31 overseas for a year first. My mom...I was registered and everything in Potch but then I was saying
32 goodbye to a friend of mine who was going overseas the next day and my mom asked me "do you
33 wanna go overseas"? I went, mom we can't do that now I've already registered and I have got my
34 room at the hostel and everything and she said well there is always time to change, you can always
35 go next year, you can go for a year. And so I did go to Belgium for a year and it was fabulous...the
36 whole thing of being independent and being able to do things by yourself.

37 ***T: That's when you were au pairing?***

38 **R:** Yes that's when I was au pairing.

1 **T: So your parents helped you with the money to go there?**

2 **R:** Yes you have to have a certain amount of money in your bank and then they sponsor and you go
3 and work there for a year. You have to study French and things like that. It's a lovely place to have
4 been. I think that Belgium is fabulous to be. It's a very nice country. I was with a very, very lovely
5 family. They were Flemish and French so I got both sides of the culture which was lovely. The only
6 down side was that they were speaking English to me because they were in the Us for three years
7 before going back to Belgium and they wanted the children to learn English so I didn't really get a
8 chance to learn French, which I think was very sad and I still want to learn French one day.

9 **T: It's not too late**

10 **R:** No, no, I've taught French for the

11 Foundation phase, you know like bonjour, just the basic stuff. That stuff I can do. I can remember
12 and maybe understand a little bit. But you know it's not the... I can't really speak.

13 But yes, so that was in Belgium that was also when the, when, when (stutter), when that guy raped
14 me but I tend not to think of him when I think of Belgium, but just to put you in the picture. Then I
15 came back, I have to say that it empowered me a lot. The fact that... I felt that I could do things on
16 my own. The fact that I got on the airplane and you know flew all the way overseas and came there
17 on my own.

18 **T: How old were you at that time?**

19 **R:** I was eighteen. I had just turned eighteen. And then going on trips on my own that was quite
20 lovely.

21 **T: Did you have any fears?**

22 **R:** No it was purely excitement, never fear. I think the only time I felt fear.

23 (Pause) I was mugged in Belgium. It's always a bit of a funny thing for me, but funny as in peculiar or
24 ironic that everything bad that happened to me happened to me overseas not in South Africa (
25 laugh)

26 **T: Well it's still amazing that you can still have a positive outlook on it**

27 **R:** So ya, I was mugged by three Moroccan youths and that was very (emphasis) scary. I was more
28 scared than I was when I was raped. Which is why I think he probably gave me a drug or
29 something in my drink .Because I didn't have any feelings when, when that happened, fear or
30 anything like that.

31 But when they... that is when you feel absolute terror, and I remember, this is now, I haven't
32 thought about that in a long time but I remember thinking, while it happened. In the movies when
33 they put their hand over someone's mouth and they don't scream, it absolute nonsense because you
34 can get something out. I got something out from my thought that sounded (pause then laugh),
35 primal. And they thought that it was a huge joke. But I saw the goodness of humanity that day. Once
36 again I was totally silly. I was fed-up with my friend who wanted to hook up with this one guy which I

1 knew was not into her and I wanted to go home because I was working the next day and it was like
2 five o'clock in the morning and I walked home by myself which was totally stupid. That was a really
3 stupid thing to do. I also missed the tram because of this mugging.

4 And they thought that it was a huge joke. But I saw the goodness of humanity that day. Once again I
5 was totally silly. I was fed-up with my friend who wanted to hook up with this one guy which I knew
6 was not into her and I wanted to go home because I was working the next day and it was like five
7 o'clock in the morning and I walked home by myself,- which was totally stupid. That was a really
8 stupid thing to do. I also

9 **T: You missed the?**

10 **R:** The tram, the public transport and I was sitting at the tram, crying and feeling very sorry for
11 myself. And someone stopped and asked me what was wrong and I told them what happened. And
12 they stopped by a bakery to give me, to buy me a croissant and they took me home, they were very
13 nice. So it was lovely to sort of get the balance of the bad of humanity and the good helping me.

14 **T: After that experience you weren't scared to go with a stranger immediately after that?**

15 **R:** No actually not. But obviously felt quite safe because they showed genuine concern. I don't think
16 it was a person by himself. I can't remember, I am terrible with remembering, I think it was a couple

17 **T: "Oh OK alright I see"**

18 **R:** But I wasn't scared; I was just really feeling angry at myself for putting myself in that situation.
19 You know it's a ridiculous situation to put yourself in

20 **T: I just want to clarify; now you are talking about stuff we spoke about earlier. The whole thing**
21 **about justice and fairness, in that situation what do you think about the justness of that situation?**

22 **R:** Well I think I came off pretty (brief pause) easily because it could have gone much worse for me.
23 So I think that in that scenario, I was protected by like a legion of angels. But I think that it is fair to
24 say that if you walk on your own in any city in the world at six o'clock, five-thirty, six o'clock in the
25 morning after partying all night and someone, three people walk past you, I think it's fair to say that
26 you are looking for trouble.

27 **T: So you still see an element of responsibility?**

28 **R:** Oh yes definitely! (emphasis) Obviously in an ideal world anybody should be safe whenever they
29 are walking anywhere. But it's also ridiculous to think that in a place where they have normal crime
30 and things like that. If one woman, it's an opportunistic thing for anybody and these three Moroccan
31 dudes were probably, they were probably just having fun. Because it is probably funny for teenagers
32 to see somebody terrified of them (laugh) I don't know, not me. But I do think that it was a silly thing
33 to do.

34 **T: On your part?**

35 **R:** Yes.

36 **T: Did you ever report it?**

1 R: No

2 **T: Why?**

3 R: I don't know. I probably thought it wasn't...I wouldn't have remembered them, because they
4 were behind me. It's probably because I knew that it was my fault in a sense because I knew that I
5 wasn't supposed to be there

6 **T: Ok now, I want to ask some questions about resilience.**

7 R: OK...we didn't finish hey, we didn't really finish, I was still in Belgium, do you want the rest of the
8 story as well?

9 **T: Well if you want to give me the rest of the story.**

10 R: I just remembered that we are sort of now only when I am 18 and there is 12, 13, 14, 15 oh my
11 goodness, 15years.

12 Well after I came back from Belgium I went to university. And I started BA Psychology, but because
13 what happened in the meantime is was that they found out that my sister had a brain injury from
14 when she was younger. So she has a very mild form of brain damage, damaging, damagements to
15 the brain, brain damage, hello. So she can't integrate impulses, her brain stem got inflamed when
16 she had a mid-ear infection when she was three years old and we didn't realize it and it stopped
17 developing. So throughout her school she got to the point where she can take anything in, but when
18 she has to reproduce or when she is put in a stress situation, her brain shuts down. So when that
19 happened, I got this very, very powerful feeling that I am going to do psychology and I am going to
20 help children. So I am going to go do child psychology. And then I started child psychology, in a BA in
21 psychology with English as a major at the University of Potch. And my first year was a... I was, I didn't
22 do too badly. I didn't study very much. I was one of those who at 07:55 in the morning my
23 roommate would say "listen I am going to class, are you going to get up"? (With a stern voice) and I
24 am going (groaning sound) (laughs out loud).

25 The thing with my dad is that he said that the first year he would pay and the rest I would have to
26 pay. So I had to make study... debt. He is very, very serious about taking responsibility for your own
27 life. But I wasn't very responsible at that age. I don't' think that I am truly responsible at now
28 (laughs). So yes I did a lot of things and because I was in Belgium and got used to drinking Belgian
29 beer. My first year friends really liked the party trick that I could drink the second year boys under
30 the table because I was used to beer. So you know, they drink beer with every meal there in
31 Belgium. They don't drink it to get drunk; they drink it as a cold drink. So you get used to it and I will
32 be at my tenth and they'll go (drunk like groan) and I will still be fine. So that was a really cool party
33 trick from their side. I didn't think that it was that funny. But yes OK. But yes I went a bit overboard
34 at university; the whole independent thing and feeling empowered went a bit over my head. So I did
35 pass, but only barely just. And then for some bizarre reason in my second year, I changed... no, that's
36 not the bizarre reason, I changed roommates and I roomed with another lady or another young
37 woman, Ss, I can't remember her name Sandra, it doesn't matter, and I...That's terrible that I can't
38 remember her name. And she smoked, so I started smoking (lowers voice) which was really silly
39 because it was terrible, it's a terrible disgusting habit. (raises voice again) But anyway, so I started
40 smoking, yah the parties and then for some bizarre reason I changed to Psych, BPsych, so the science

1 part of psychology which is was definitely the wrong thing to do because I am not a scientific person.
2 You know it was physics and chemistry, (oh) it was just ridiculous. And I flunked totally, totally
3 flunked. But what also happened with was a big thing in that year and this was 1996, was that my
4 grandmother had a stroke and that really shook me a bit. I had my first depression then. In the sense
5 that I didn't want to get out of bed, I didn't eat; I just lay there weeks on end. I missed tests, missed
6 class; I just couldn't cope with it.

7 **T: Did you ever see someone?**

8 **R:** Yes, I went to see someone but it wasn't very successful. What was successful was that my gran
9 got better. Because I flunked y first semester, I .., my mom decided...ya, they knew someone in
10 Canada so they said would I rather go to Canada and au pair instead of wasting six months staying
11 at home because I couldn't year without the first six months so I would have done the whole year
12 again. So we made the plan that I would go to Canada to go au pair but then I would finish my BA
13 degree through UNISA. So I'd do the whole studying over, distance thing. So I went to Canada and
14 had my first romantic disappointment. I had a boyfriend in Potch, and I was consistently adamant
15 that a long term, long distance relationship won't work. But he kept telling me, no it will and he will
16 wait for me and wara, warawara. And as I was going through the gates to go to Canada, he gave me
17 this book, and it was 'The Horse Whisperer'. I don't know if you know the movie but it was a book
18 before and he wrote in front, "your knight on a white horse is waiting for you, please come back"
19 blablabla so I am going overseas going oooooohh you know. And three months later he sends me this
20 fax or email or something about missing me so much that he got involved with another lady and he
21 slept with her and it was a mistake but it's obviously not going to work and wawawawawa. Totally
22 disappointed because this was the first person that I thought I would be able to marry. You know
23 had the whole marriage dream, walking down the aisle dream and everything. So I hooked up there
24 with a loser in Canada. Thought I was totally absolutely in love. I just read a letter from my dad that
25 was during that time, and I told him "I'm so in love with this person and I've never felt this way" and
26 oh my goodness...It's very funny (laughs) when I think about it now. But yes also totally silly because
27 I (pause)felt so disappointed and violated and because I actually got into a sexual relationship with
28 this person which was very disappointing for me later on, because obviously I did not want to do it, I
29 wasn't brought up that way. I hadn't done it before, it was my first time and it was really not as nice
30 as I thought it was supposed to be and that is probably because it wasn't supposed to be. Then in
31 Canada, I got pregnant, totally hysterical, called my mom and she said the most shocking thing to me
32 that she's ever said and it took me years to forgive her for this. She said that I have to have an
33 abortion, because the family won't cope with my having a baby. My gran would have a stroke again
34 and that was the worst of it. And (pause) the people that I stay with know the family so we won't be
35 able to keep it a secret. It was just...But I think what hit me later the most was that she was more
36 worried about what people would say than she was about the baby or me. That was a big eye-
37 opener for me I think, for later on. One of those things that I think is very important for a mother
38 daughter relationship because you get to a point where you also have to realize that she's also
39 human. She is not this wonder woman who can fix everything but it was shocking do it that way, to
40 find it out that way. So I made the appointment for the abortion, and I went for the counseling for it
41 and didn't right about any of it, didn't want to do it, didn't think it was right. And then if this doesn't
42 sound like any...If this doesn't sound, this still doesn't sound normal to me but praise the Lord, I then
43 had a miscarriage. And I say "praise the Lord" because I think it was his plan to wake me up, but He
44 knew that I probably wouldn't have been able to cope with the fact of killing my own baby. I would

1 definitely not have recuperated from that and then I would have been useless for anybody. If I think
2 about it now, even later on when I was going through the psychotherapy, it took me years to forgive
3 myself for wanting to do it, or to be willing to do it. And I still have dreams about him sometimes, I
4 think it was a 'him', I don't know whether it was but I think it was a him. And I think that is what
5 made it so special when we got twins because it felt to me that the Lord gave me back the one baby
6 and an extra one, which is lovely. So then I felt, I can really forgive myself now because He has
7 shown that He has forgiven me (laughs), which is silly because He has forgiven me lots of times. It
8 was quite a traumatic thing for me and it also made me come back earlier from Canada than I
9 wanted to. Because the miscarriage in its self was also a bit traumatic because no one was supposed
10 to know now that I was pregnant. So I started bleeding when I was with the children on my own. And
11 they were three kids, 9, 6 and 3, all adopted, so we had lots of trouble with them in the sense that I
12 didn't understand children at that point. Although I loved them to bits, we constantly had this
13 problem and the mom was not there, I was the mom. But then the mom was not there for two
14 weeks and only then once in two weeks did she come. And then this week, they went away for the
15 weekend and I had the kids on my own, and then I started bleeding. And I had to actually drop them
16 off with a friend of mine to go to the emergency room and they didn't help me for three hours and
17 all the while, I'm bleeding. I'm saying I am having a miscarriage and yah don't worry about it we will
18 get to you soon we just have other things to worry about. And so after three hours I had to go back
19 because I had to go look after the kids, I sort of had to... (laughs) and then the next morning I
20 phoned them, I said that, the people that I was working for, that I have to go to the hospital, I'm
21 leaving the children with a friend of mine till they get back. I lied to them, I said that I have a cyst,
22 they found a cyst. But I'm sure that they know, they know that I lied about the abortion
23 appointment as well, so I just sort of linked it to that. I said that I started bleeding and it's probably
24 complications from the cyst and they are going to... But I remember being in the hospital alone,
25 nobody to visit me and thinking that, this is probably the lowest point in my life. And I can also
26 remember going to the bathroom and this is a bit horrific, I hope you don't mind. But seeing a bit of
27 tissue and thinking, that's the baby. I don't think that I'll ever get over that. So that was probably my
28 lowest, I don't think that you ever get over that, but it made a huge impression on me. And the fact
29 that I can have so much empathy with someone miscarrying and with someone having to make that
30 decision of going for an abortion. I mean I don't condone it at all, I think that it's absolutely wrong,
31 but I understand why people think that they need to do it. So in that way I can sort of be of help to
32 some people or of consolation, consoling that the work I'm looking...you know what I mean,
33 anyway. So I came back and then I...floated around because then I was really depressed. If I thought I
34 was depressed before going to Canada...Canada in its self was much fun, I really enjoyed it. It was
35 also a big thing for me being with people that I really like. Although (emphasis) the man and I didn't
36 get along quite well, but we are both passive aggressive, so there would be this silence in the house
37 in the house for weeks on end, which totally drove me crazy. But that also made me realize that I
38 had to be extremely certain before I get married because to just *sommer* live with someone that you
39 not sure of is absolute hell. We just, we didn't get along, but anyway.

40 **T: *Ok I think that's quite a bit***

41 **R: Is that enough for you?**

42 **T: *Yes***

1 R: I came back and I'm better and that's it (bursts out laughing)

2 ***T: Well actually what I am going to ask, links on to that, you have just told me a lot of things that***
3 ***happened and you seem to have bounced back from all of it..?***

4 R: Well yes I do think that thing that they say 'what doesn't kill you makes you stronger, if you chose
5 it to be'. I think I could have probably stayed just hopeless and useless you know, kept beating
6 myself up for my decisions. Because it's all about decisions. I think everything that happened to me I
7 was...When I came back from Canada, it's actually something that's pertinent to this. People ask me
8 why I came back from Canada because it was just a couple of years after the elections and everyone
9 was still quite (brief pause) unsure of how it was going to turn out. Lots of people....I had six months
10 before I could have landed immigrancy in Canada, so I could have much easily have stayed there,
11 and am I not afraid to come back to South Africa. And I just said well I'm choosing not to be afraid, I
12 think being afraid is a choice. I think everything in life is a choice, I think that's what makes us
13 human, even not making a choice is choice (laughs).

14 ***T: So you chose to respond the way that you did?***

15 R: I chose to...well obviously through lots of psychotherapy and lots of help from my parents and
16 from my friends and from God. I still made wrong choices along the way. But everything came to a
17 point where I decided to ... OK this is now it I can't do anything without God anymore, I don't wanna
18 try, so I think I was about 25 or 26 when I became a born again Christian..ya twenty-sixish and then
19 my life changed totally around. I stopped doing the student thing, I stopped drinking, well, I didn't
20 stop drinking, I still like wine, but I stopped partying.

21 ***T: OK...***

22 R: So resilience for me is bouncing back.

23 ***T: What does it mean to you?***

24 R: Ya, Bouncing back, I don't know if you know that story, it's a fable, where the oak tree... or the
25 tall tree says to the big fat tree, I can't remember which it is, but its trees. And the one says I am
26 better than you are and they say well, I'm bigger and stronger than you are. And then a wind comes
27 along and the one which is thin and pliable, bends with the wind and then bends back when the
28 wind stops. But then the other one, the wind is so strong that it pulls its roots out. So I think that if
29 you are too rigid in your beliefs you are like that tree, that when then something adversely happens
30 to you, your roots get out of you and you are pulled over, but if you keep on being bend...full..No
31 that's not the right word...

32 ***T: Bendable?***

33 R: Ya, Flexible, I think flexible is the one, resilient is...If I think about resilience, I think about
34 elephants, you know they are very movable and they very much remember where the things are
35 that they must do. I don't know if you know a lot about elephants but they have what scientist have
36 called a collective memory. So the alpha female, who is the leader of the herd, will know where
37 generations past have gone for good pasture. They've seen this now when they opened the borders
38 of certain countries like Botswana and Namibia and all those kinds of things...where the African

1 elephants can now roam. And they follow the route that elephants from generations past have
2 followed. Without, you know they don't know how they know that. But they believe that they have a
3 collective memory. They didn't necessarily die out because there was for ages a fence that kept
4 them in, they did what they had to do to survive and then when the path opened they, just went
5 back to there.

6 ***T: So would you describe yourself as that bendable tree or that elephant?***

7 **R:** Yes, Ya.

8 ***T: And what do you think has played a key role in you being resilient and having those qualities?***

9 **R:** I think the fact that I probably forget so easily (bursts out in laughter), it really does play a key
10 role because I don't hold on to the past. So that pain and that disappointment and those feelings
11 that I had doesn't play in role in my feelings of how I am or who I am today, although it formed me
12 to be the person I am, because the route that I took because of that has made me what I am today.
13 But I don't hold on to that and that's a very big, big thing. Well its personality mostly...well it's my
14 memory, or bad memory, lack thereof, and then personality. The fact that I get things done
15 regardless. You do what you have to do

16 ***T: What do you think motivates you to do what you have to do?***

17 **R:** Probably survival (laughs) and yah, I think its...Like I said, I am very lazy, if someone were to take
18 care of me, I probably would just lie on the couch all day. It would be lovely. But the fact that I have
19 a certain sense of style that I like to uphold; I like my cappuccino, so I would like to have money to
20 buy a cappuccino every now and again. I like to have food that's made in restaurants, not that I have
21 a problem with making food, I love making food. But I like to treat myself and others. I like to give
22 and I can't do that if someone takes care of me because then I would just give away their money not
23 my own.

24 ***T: So your desires is motivated you?***

25 **R:** Yes

26 ***T: Do you think that your resilience has increased your commitment to certain goals in life?***

27 **R:** I want to say 'yes' but I don't necessarily think so. I now I am probably going to say something
28 that is not good for you to hear... Because I don't really fix on my goals...

29 ***T: You don't fix on your goals?***

30 **R:** Yes, I don't fixate on what I want to have.

31 ***T: How do you mean you don't fixate?***

32 **R:** It would be lovely if it happens, but if doesn't then I'll make a plan.

33 ***T: But you still set the goal?***

1 **R:** Yes, for instance I was looking through my diary this morning and I saw that I wrote down three
2 goals for the year, which is like really good for me to write down three goals. And the first was to be
3 credit card debt-free in May, that didn't happen (laughs). I think that actually my credit card looked
4 better in May than it does now. But ok that will (emphasis) happen this year because we did so our
5 budget. But the other two...to be totally debt free by September will probably be a bit of a stretch, it
6 will probably be end of the month, end of the year. So yes I do have but they short- term goals. I
7 don't know really about my long- term goals. If you talk about those three ones that I said; about
8 being a good wife, being that as a goal, then yes, probably my resilience has helped me to go for
9 that. Because to be a good wife, you have to be resilient because another person will inadvertently
10 disappoint you or hurt you and you have to be able to get past it otherwise your relationship is
11 going to suffer because it. So yes if you think of those as goals but I don't think...I don't know...

12 **T: *But it sounds to me like it sort of has...***

13 **R:** It probably. Just ask me the question again, I know I'm sounding blonde but just ask me the
14 question again.

15 **T: *You are not blonde.***

16 **R:** I just want to answer the question truthfully.

17 **T: *Well the question was basically if your resilience has increased your commitment to certain***
18 ***goals in life***

19 **R:** Yes I think it has. Because you...and I think you have asked me this as well. If there is something
20 that's a block between you and your goal, you just know that you will be able to overcome it since
21 you have overcome so much, or I have overcome so much that is really not that bad

22 **T: *OK I see...***

23 **T: *Tell me what are your views about your world, yourself and your future? I know that it's a very***
24 ***broad question, but generally want to get a feel of whether they are inclined towards being***
25 ***positive or negative. You can tell me what you views are about your world; it doesn't have to be***
26 ***something existential.***

27 **R:** I think my world is fabulous (laughs).I have these two wonderful children they are just...I was
28 laughing at myself so much last night because we went to see Toy Story three. Do you know the
29 movie?

30 **T: *I have watched the first one...***

31 **R:** The Andy in Toy Story three, I hope I am not going to spoil the movie for you now, but the Andy,
32 he grows up and he goes to college and this whole thing is how the toys come to grip with the fact
33 that he is going away and he is grown up. I was inconsolable after the movie because I thought the
34 girl are going to go out one day...(laughs) and they are only 14 months old for goodness sake. But
35 I've already had my whole... total world pulled up from under me because they are going to go leave
36 the house (laughs)... No...It was funny, I am funny sometimes. I think I'm as happy...I haven't been
37 happier, in my life. Although it's probably difficult to say because I don't remember so well. But I'm
38 very content with who I am at the moment. Obviously, I'd like to lose a couple of kilos but I 'm really

1 not going to shed hairs about it, it's more important for me to be there for the babies. I think I know
2 what I 'm doing with them, I'm probably doing something right because they are very happy and
3 they are very open and forward and...they are on par with their development, they are continuing to
4 grow. I have a very, very lovely husband. He is not easy to live with (laughs)...at all. But he really tries
5 his best and he loves us very much. Although our personalities are absolutely opposites on any, on
6 everything, I think we make a good team. So he keeps me grounded and I keep him positive. I've got
7 a lovely family who supports me, I've got a lovely church, I have a wonderful job. I don't have
8 enough money, but I don't think I will ever have enough money because I give it away or I spend it.
9 Ya, I don't think that there is anything that I really need that I won't be able to have or...I think the
10 Lord has just blessed me in so many ways.

11 **T: You touched a bit on it about your future as well...**

12 **R:** Oh yeah, I have no problems about the future, it will...I am not being irresponsible or unrealistic
13 when I say I'm sure that there will be difficulties, I'm sure that... I mean having twins in its self is a bit
14 of a challenge because everything is double. I was joking with my husband, I said, I'll probably have
15 to start saving for their matric dance dresses. And he says "oh don't worry we are probably going to
16 the farm that weekend" (laughs). So we will keep each other grounded (not clear). So ya, I don't
17 think there is anything...I mean we just did our budgets although I'm struggling to keep to mine. My
18 husband is very, very responsible with money so I have much hope and faith in the future. And with
19 our country as well, if I just might add that. I know a lot of people are very, very negative about our
20 country. But I think that it's absolutely fabulous the past couple of decades. I mean I have.., I talk to
21 people quite a lot, I tend to talk with everybody. And the whole soccer world cup and everybody is
22 so positive. Well not everybody... I think a lot of people are still negative and they roll their eyes and
23 everything. But I just think that South Africa is a lovely place to live first of all. I don't think anywhere
24 else in the world can you get the standard of living that we have and you know keep head above
25 water. I know that to have the same standard of living in Canada or Belgium, you have to have a
26 substantial increase in salary because they can't afford full-time nannies for instance.

27 **T: Really?**

28 **R:** No, an au pair for instance gets paid minimum wage. And they have to get people from outside
29 the country because the people in the country can't afford to do that job for that amount of
30 money....I am probably not the right person to ask because I'm too positive for my own good people
31 say (laughs)

32 **T: Imagine if your life was a story, you have just told me the story. What are some of the possible**
33 **endings to your story based on how it's unfolded thus far? So you have gone through everything**
34 **that you have spoken about and you are here today, what are the possible endings to your story?**

35 **R:** Well, I'll probably die (laughs), which is not a problem for me by the way because I know I'm
36 going to heaven. It's going to be sad for the people who stay behind although I hope they throw me
37 a lovely party at my. I really hope that they don't cry. But anyway I don't know...ideally you would
38 like to die of old age in your sleep hey....

39 **T: But just take me through alternative endings to your story, your life?**

40 **R:** OK...like alternative to dying? (Laughs)...

1 **T: *Ok maybe not alternative, give me three possible ways that it may pan out...***

2 **R:** Ok Well...the girls will probably go to college and I will start a school from home, to keep myself
3 busy. Because now I have more time because my family is sort of settled. And I will start a preschool,
4 a Montessori preschool and maybe take that further until the day I die or... I can go into teaching the
5 gospel and become Joyce Meyer and just go all over the world and teach and just glorify God. I'll
6 probably do the other one as well. And then the third one is probably that I will be so tired when
7 the girls leave home (bursts out laughing), I'll just sit in a chair and have tea and cookies and watch
8 TV all day (laughs), until I die of boredom. I haven't thought about it but if I had to chose those
9 would be the three options

10 **T: *Which one do you prefer out of the three?***

11 **R:** The first two, anyone of the first two. I don't know if I have the personality and the drive to do
12 the whole teaching thing on a global scale. I think you have to be single-minded in what you want to
13 do.

14 God plants the seed and then we have to nurture it, It makes a lot of sense to me, but I don't know if
15 I am the perfect gardener for that specific seed (laughs). I don't think I have the patience. I have
16 resilience when something happens to me but I don't necessarily have resilience when I have to do
17 something until it works. That's why I stopped practicing piano and that's why I am not a very avid
18 sportsman. I try something and then if I see that after a couple of tries, Ok this is going to be too
19 much effort, I try something else that is not as much effort. So think that's where my personality of
20 being lazy comes in.

21 **T: *So you are saying...It sounds like you are choosing the first one***

22 **R:** So it would probably be the first one. They started a school because then you can do from home.
23 It's a lot of work, but I believe that I will also be with my business and everything; I'll be at a place
24 where it won't be for money. So I can choose how it works. It would be a hobby more than it would
25 be a job

26 **T: *So then how would you go about making sure that you get that ending?***

27 **R:** Well I'll probably continue doing what I am doing now and that is working part-time with my
28 business and making sure that that is on track and keeps on going. I'll probably continue with the
29 training which I am doing because that will make it easier for me to open up a school because I'd
30 know the... Ya I don't think that I'd ever save for a school. I have to tell you that I...don't see the
31 point in saving. My husband doesn't understand this. But it's probably a mixture between not
32 worrying too much about the future, believing that the future will take care of its self and not
33 having, you know specific goals. You know my husband is so organized. He showed me his budget,
34 for the next four years. He has a budget for the next four years. And a plan when he is going to pay
35 off that person or when he is going to pay off the house and in four years time he would have this
36 much amount of money, each time left over, and then we can start building...It's just, it's wow. And
37 obviously it doesn't help my sense of planning when I see something like that. I'm just going I 'm not
38 worthy, I can't do it (laughs)...

39 **T: *So you just leave it***

1 R: I just leave its fine I just try to get past this month.

2 **T: And for you that's fine?**

3 R: Ya it's fine. I don't have enough money to last me for this month but its OK we will cope.

4 **T: So what do you think when people around you adopt the whole stringent planning thing?**

5 R: I think it's great for them, But it doesn't work for me. It would probably work for me...but I
6 don't...you have to believe in something really, really hard or really...not hard, hard is not the right
7 word..You have to believe in something with all your heart. And I have only three things that I
8 believe in like that. And that is God and then Montessori education, what Montessori does for
9 children and then Sportron. And those are more philosophies than something that you have to do.

10 **T: But you are comfortable with the way that you do things?**

11 R: Oh yeah definitely.

12 **T: Tell me, what motivates you in life?**

13 (Long pause). You ask the same question again every now and again in a different way (laughs)...you
14 are trying to catch me out (bursts out laughing)

15 **T: No...**

16 R: That's a difficult one because I don't know really if I'm motivated...

17 **T: Why do you do the things you do?**

18 R: Because it has to be done. Or I like it. I mean I train because I have so much fun when I'm
19 training. When I'm transferring passion for something or when I'm transferring knowledge, I am in
20 my zone. I am terribly tiered afterwards, but during that time, I just feel right. So I probably...I am
21 motivated by training.

22 **T: But what motivates you to train?**

23 R: Just the fact that it's really much fun for me. And I believe that I am making a difference when I
24 am doing it

25 **T: So on a broader more general scale, what would you say motivates you to do things?**

26 R: Because I like to do them. I don't think that I would be motivated to do something that I really
27 don't like. If that were the case, then I would have organized my studies (laughs) a long time ago.
28 And I am constantly finding ways to not do it again. So in that sense I am probably not as grown up
29 as other people are because I really, really struggle to do something that I don't like

30

31 **T: So would it be correct to say that self...**

32 R: Self serving?

1 **T: No...Well if that's how you want to put it...**

2 **R:** No it's not really self-serving because I don't really think that I am ever self-serving. I am too
3 selfless to do that. I am motivated, when someone needs something to be done, I will do it for them.
4 I am motivated by other people. In that I am serving (emphasis) other people.

5 **T: But basically when something gives you joy. When it fulfils you, personal fulfillment?**

6 **R:** That is probably why I like to give something for someone. I like to do something for someone.
7 For instance...just to give you an example, Sportron is a network marketing system. You recruit
8 people to use the product and if they are happy with the product they tell, their friend, so it is word
9 of mouth advertising and then the whole thing goes rolling and rolling, and I really don't like the
10 recruiting because I really don't like the feeling of trying to turn your arm or trying to influence you
11 to make a decision. I like to train about the product and I like to train about the biochemical things
12 that happen in your body and wellness and what it can do for you, I like that. But I can't do the one
13 without the other, not yet. When my business is bigger and my passive income is bigger...But now I
14 have to work on the recruiting and to help other people to recruit. And I hate it (laughs)...So really if
15 it comes to me, almost by its self, when people call me, I go yes! Then I don't have to ...I then it
16 works. I have been doing this for almost eight years on and off. But always part-time. And after eight
17 years my mum was much more successful that I am now, she was already earning serious amounts
18 of money but it's because she was motivated. She had to, she didn't have anything else. She got
19 fired from her job, she was 50 years old and no one would take her in because she was a 50 year old
20 woman. So she had (emphasis) to do something and she really didn't like selling houses (laughs), she
21 tried but she couldn't do it. So this was something and this is also her passion. And now she is at a
22 point where she doesn't necessarily have to do the recruiting anymore, she's just empowering
23 young women to have this as a business. And I would love to be there! I always want to skip the
24 effort (laughs). So I am thinking that I am motivated by things that don't take a lot of effort and bring
25 me joy...if I have to pin-point it...

26 **T: What is your motto if you have one?**

27 **R:** Do as if for God. I think if anything that helps me to do the things that I don't like to do.
28 Whenever I switch on my cell phone... I really try to do it, everything you do you do as if you are
29 doing it for God

30 **T: Do you think that there is a relationship between that and what motivates you, or could that**
31 **also be a motivator?**

32 **R:** Probably, but it sounds a bit What is the word/ I doesn't sound consistent though because I
33 don't do things that I don't like as if I were doing them for God (bursts out in laughter)...

34 **T: So maybe it would be more of a case of do what you like as if you were doing it for God...**

35 **R:** That doesn't sound right I'm sorry (laughs), but probably...yes, if I have to think about it

36 **T: What is the most important thing for you to do before you die?**

37 **R:** (Long silence)...Give my children, enough memories of us for them to remember the love that I
38 felt for them or that I have for them. I think...especially if you are now in my situation and you think

1 of dying before you should. I mean, I should, if everything goes well and God spares me, should
2 probably die when I am about 80, 85. I am fairly healthy and I am looking after myself and everything
3 that is important. And if I look at my family history, my gran died when she was 85, so I'll probably...
4 But you have to think now when you have children, earlier you didn't because no one was affected
5 by your death. But now I have to think if something happens to me now, what will happen to them?
6 So before the children I wasn't worried about when I died because I knew I was going to heaven. I
7 feel sorry for the people staying...like I said it would be just joy. But then (emphasis) I said I would
8 really like to have children before I die. But now I can't say that anymore because I have the children
9 (laughs). And now I don't want to be particular as to say I want to see them grown up and I want to
10 see their children. And that is really not...it's important for me but I don't want to sound
11 presumptuous. The Lord decides when you get taken. And that's fine with me; I don't have problems
12 with that. What I would like them to do is to remember how much they were loved; because I think
13 that can take you very far. The feeling that something...even when someone dies. When my granny
14 died, what kept me going was the fact that I had such lovely memories with her.

15 **T: What are your long term goals?**

16 **R:** Long pause...then laugh.....I would like to.....Have my own school one day, I think. Just because I
17 would...I wish it would have been with my children now because then I can sort of affect what they
18 are learning. But I don't think that that would happen, I don't think that we have the resources to do
19 that. And that's fine, I don't mind, I don't mind it that much, but it would have been nice... And then I
20 do want to teach.

21 **T: The... gospel?**

22 **R:** The gospel primarily because I do believe that the spirit works through me in that regard. When I
23 talk about things... I do believe that I have the spirit of discernment. I can discern the truth when I
24 read it in the Bible and I can teach it again...well I hope so...I haven't, I haven't had much experience
25 with it. I think that it's happened two or three times when I had to give a talk. But it really makes
26 sense to me to do that. Everything..., the training with Montessori and the training with Sportron
27 and my whole walk with God, I believe have geared me toward that. And it would be lovely if it was
28 in my church because women in my church can't preach yet, so there I wouldn't mind being a bit of
29 a rebel.

30 **T: Breaking convention....**

31 **R:** Breaking tradition, yes it would be...My church...not my denomination obviously, but my church
32 has asked me once if I wouldn't mind becoming a lay preacher. But it was at a point when we
33 wanted to start a family and to then start working for the church is just not...because they take too
34 much time. So yes that would be one of my goals.

35 **T: And you're short-term goals?**

36 **R:** To be debt free, that's really basic and to learn responsibility with my money because it keeps me
37 up at night (makes snoring sound)

1 **T: How would you deal with a situation where you were faced with having to make a choice**
2 **between two competing goals? You just gave me goals (either the school or the preaching?), ok**
3 **how would you go about deciding which one maintain at the expense of the other?**

4 **R:** Well I would probably pray about it and see what's the answer. As is probably apparent now, I
5 believe that what should happen, will happen. So I don't think I'll be too disappointed if the one
6 doesn't come to fruition

7 **T: So you would just let it be?**

8 **R:** Ya I have this thing with...and we actually had to decide about this because we still have to decide
9 if we are going to have a play group at our house ,where I have the children and two or three other
10 kids. And I have an influence in what they are learning. Or if I am sending them to a school...which I
11 don't know about. But I told my husband, that I can always have a school when I am older and they
12 are out of the house I can have a school. I don't have to have it now. I can always train again when
13 they are in school themselves and they don't need me as much as they need me now. I can always
14 train. I can always do Sportron later...So I am very flexible in that. I would probably choose the one
15 that would give me another option for later on...

16 **T: You wouldn't choose that one?**

17 **R:** No, I will choose the one that will give me the option to the other one later on.

18 **T: So you would still try to strategically try to maintain both?**

19 **R:** Yes, I am very, very greedy in that regard, I try to do everything that I want to do (laughs).

20 **T: If it's not possible to do both?**

21 **R:** Then I would probably choose to the one that is easiest (bursts out laughing)...Ya I don't know, It's
22 difficult to say.

23 **T: Have you ever had to abandon a commitment that you made?**

24 **R:** Yes. I didn't go back to Belgium as I said I would because I didn't see myself going through that
25 again. So I didn't feel strong enough to go back. And it was terrible. I hate saying no to people.
26 Because I am such a positive person I like to say yes. And I had to learn to say "actually you know I
27 don't think that I will be able to do that" Otherwise I would just disappoint people and I hate
28 disappointing people. You can be angry with me, but please don't be disappointed in me. I think that
29 is from me. I think that's from my mom.

30 **T: Do you think about that when you make decisions?**

31 **R:** Ya, I definitely take other people in consideration as well when I choose to do something or not.
32 Sorry, I don't feel if I am answering the question, am I answering your question?

33 **T: Ya.**

34 **R:** OK.

1 ***T: What are your most important commitments?***

2 **R:** My husband and my children and my God. My God must be first obviously because He is first in
3 line; my commitment to him supersedes everything or should. Being human means that it doesn't
4 always, but it should. And then my husband and then my children.

5 ***T: How do you think you have coped with the events that have happened in your life?***

6 **R:** By forgetting about them (laughs), I don't know it's been grace all the way. Besides grace?

7 ***T: I was going to say besides the exact coping mechanisms...I was going to ask how you have***
8 ***evaluated your coping.***

9 **R:** Oh yeah, I have coped very well. Not necessarily because I believe so but because people enforce
10 with me, when I tell them about what happened. They can never believe. Because it has happened
11 that I have had to explain to someone or when I was trying to be empathic to someone or when I
12 was trying to explain something then I had to, you know. And then I also believe that its part of your
13 testimony, I don't think that you should be shameful of what happened. I have asked XP before if he
14 would have a problem when I told friends of ours because it also affects him obviously. But when I
15 don't feel that it's going to have a negative impact on my family and then I do share, and then
16 people tend to go WHAT?? We never would have thought. So think the fact that people
17 didn't...Obviously I don't look emotionally scarred (laughs). But that's just grace and it's really, it's
18 been my family and my faith and the fact that my mom was strong enough to send me to
19 psychotherapy and to go through the whole thing of what did she do wrong. I think all of that has
20 made a big difference in my life.

21 ***T: You just said that it's more a matter of people seeing that you have coped. How do you***
22 ***personally see your coping?***

23 **R:** No I personally believe so too but I don't think of it that much. I just think that they enforce the
24 fact. I think the fact that I am so happy with who and what I am now, makes it pretty clear that I'm
25 quite Ok with what happened in the past.

26 ***T: I would like you to take me through your coping process. From your initial thoughts, feelings and***
27 ***behavior to your current thoughts, feelings and behavior. I mean you just told me now that you***
28 ***think that you are very much ok and going on with life. But initially?***

29 **R:** I think initially I feel very sorry for myself. I tend to...When I am ill or something happens I tend to
30 feel very sorry for myself and then I have a pity-party and then I probably will cry about it long and
31 hard and then I will feel better, and then I start thinking rationally about it and try to see a way of
32 getting through it or around it or past it and then I'll cope. And then a month later, I probably won't
33 remember...No, I am joking about the month. I am trying to remember. I can just maybe say about
34 this depression that I have gone through just now. It gradually happened. So I didn't realize it until I
35 was very much....in it already. I don't think you ever go through ooh I am starting to feel depressed,
36 no. It's all of a sudden I can't get up this morning, I don't know what's wrong with me...And I
37 remember thinking it's Ok, I will cope with it and I will try get on with my life. I just have to go on and
38 go on and go on. And then one day I was catching myself that I was thinking. I was getting into my
39 car from the shops and I was driving home and I was thinking this thought, I thought 'I can

1 understand why some mothers run away'...and I stopped (emphasis) the car literally next to the road
2 and I thought, I have to get help, I don't want to run away I don't want to leave those precious little
3 ones. I don't want to just fall down and break, I don't want to not cope, I wanna cope. And then I
4 started sharing with people about how I was feeling and I started to go see someone and I saw
5 someone and someone else suggested that I go see a psychiatrist and I went to see a psychiatrist
6 and I explained to XP what was going on. So I think a great part of my process is that I actually talk
7 about what I am feeling. But what makes it easy for me is that I have gone through so many feelings
8 already, that I know them when I am feeling them. I think that what happens when this catch you
9 unawares is that you maybe don't know how you are feeling. But I could, I could literally recognize it
10 as being depression because I have been through it before. And I realized ok, I need help because I
11 can't be depressed now because I have the children. And I also realized that I can't...because I am
12 very much against drugs...being with Sportron means we try to go the natural route not through
13 chemical drugs. So am in principle actually against anti-depressants. I believe that psychotherapy
14 and the natural way is better. But I also realize that I need a quick fix because, it sounds silly but I
15 can't go through three years of psychotherapy and only in three years time feel so much better that I
16 can play with my children. Then I have missed everything where I can be an influence in their basic
17 building blocks of their character and their building block of their personality and everything. So, I
18 needed to feel better now.

19 ***T: You have spoken about that quite strongly, you wanting to have an influence over their life.***

20 **R:** Yes I think that is the biggest gift you can give them, because I don't think you can decide for them
21 ever, I mean my life shows that very clearly. My parents taught me to behave in a certain way and
22 gave me the principles; the basis to be a good person and to make the right choices, but I didn't.
23 They couldn't make my choices for me, they didn't even try but (emphasis), having their influence,
24 makes it easier to make the right choices when you grow older.

25 ***T: So you specifically want to be the person who has an influence, not the teachers?***

26 **R:** Yes, no definitely. I think the teachers will also have an influence, everybody... at one point the
27 media is going to have influence but I want to have primary influence.

28 ***T: Because....?***

29 **R:** Because I am the mother and I have to guide them. And except maybe for God, maybe it's better
30 to say that God should be their influence, but I'm His hands here on earth for them; so He is using
31 me to influence them so that they will choose Him one day. I think that's the biggest thing you can
32 do for your children because trying to control them is not gonna to work, they are going to rebel.

33 ***T: What do you think are your five biggest strengths?***

34 **R:** Well optimism is a big one, I love very easily, it's very easy for me to love and trust goes with that
35 as well, but that's not necessarily a strength, because I trust too easily so maybe I shouldn't say that
36 *(as a strength)*. I am energetic so I tend to energize people, we are at three now. I have a very strong
37 faith, but that goes with optimism but I think my faith basis is... because of what happened to me I
38 think my faith basis is very strong. And the fifth one... my fifth strength is that I am strong (laughs). I
39 think that I can...I know that I can do anything that I set my mind to, but I also think that it is very
40 clear that I am ok if I don't set it then I am not gonna do it.

1 **T: What role if any, do you think that these strengths play in how you cope with everyday life?**

2 **R:** Well it helps me to those things that I really don't want to do but that needs to be done.

3 **T: Ok which strength would help you?**

4 **R:** Thanks for putting me on the spot. I think the strong one; although I have to say I very glad you
5 didn't ask me...are you going to ask me about my weaknesses as well? (clears throat) Because one of
6 my weaknesses, although I am strong probably in character, I am very, very weak in self discipline. It
7 sounds contradictory but I think there is a difference between being strong in character and being
8 self disciplined, some people are very self-disciplined but they are not very strong; I am very strong
9 and not very necessarily self disciplined. I think the fact that I am strong and the fact that I love, will
10 make me do the things that I need to do that will help other people. For instance my husband, it's
11 really important for him that the house is neat, it's really not important for me. It gets important
12 when people come to visit or my mum comes to visit or something like that; but for me, I can cope.
13 But me picking up after myself, it sounds terrible, but me cleaning and me doing the...really yucky
14 jobs that's necessary to make him happy, I do because I love him, but it's also because I am strong,
15 because otherwise I am not his slave, not in any way shape or form(laughs), I just will not be.
16 Because I love him and because our relationship is important to me, I compromise and I am strong
17 enough to compromise. I think when you are strong enough to compromise that is the time when
18 you are really strong. People think that you are only strong when you can stand your ground, I don't
19 think so.

20 **T: Strong for you is strong in character?**

21 **R:** Yes, strong in yourself, not physically, maybe not even mentally but spiritually and your spirit
22 being that inner being of yourself, that which makes me who I am, not my DNA or my intelligence
23 but everything put together...you don't seem to understand.

24 **T: I am struggling a bit to understand**

25 **R:** Ok we teach in Montessori that at person has that a person is made up of five things. You've got
26 your physical, and that's how you develop as well. You develop physically or children develop
27 physically they develop mentally or intellectually. They develop socially; so their interaction with
28 others. They develop emotionally; so how they cope with disappointments and how they tend to be
29 on their own, things like that. And then they develop spiritually, and that spirit is the part of... it's
30 almost like your root system if you are a tree. You can't see it, it's underneath, it's... If it was in
31 psychological terms it would probably be your...ego. I'm thinking.., I'm trying to think back, now this
32 is a long time ago (laughs). What was the difference between your id and your ego again?

33 **T: Please don't ask me**

34 **R:** Ok but your id is.., your spirit is that thing that helps you to make your decision.

35 **T: OK...**

36 **R:** Alright, those inner things. That's when...your gut feeling is part of it; your intuition is part of it.
37 It's everything that is not tangible in yourself. I mean even your intellect is tangible because you can
38 quantify it.

1 ***T: Help me understand that now, how then it becomes a strength of character?***

2 **R:** Because your character is part of your spirit

3 ***T: Okay, so if you are strong in character you are someone who ...?***

4 **R:** Strong in spirit, I believe you are strong in spirit. But it's all together with those things that.... I
5 think your spirit is the one that your body leaves behind obviously that goes to heaven. Your spirit
6 (unclear). Everything that you think, everything that you believe, everything that you hope for. That's
7 also the most... For children we believe that's the part that breaks the easiest, because by just
8 looking at a child and they feel your rejection you can break their spirit.

9 ***T: How would somebody who is not strong at character be?***

10 **R:** They would probably not be resilient. They would be a victim instead of a person who is not in
11 charge of their own choices. So they will have an external locus of control, whereas I truly believe in
12 an internal locus of control. I'm not a victim; I'm no body's victim. I refuse to be
13 someone's.....anybody's victim.

14 ***T: You mentioned in our last interview that you were having burn-out earlier this year. How did***
15 ***you bounce back that from that?***

16 **R:** Well a lot of it is the anti-depressants. No, I think that it was probably a chemical imbalance
17 because of lack of sleep, that can happen so as soon as my chemical imbalance in my brain got
18 better (laughs) it sounds really funny but it is, it's what it is hey. I just think that you try your best and
19 you pray that it becomes better, I still go to bed at night and pray: please help, I still can't get this
20 right, please help. So I'm not, I don't think I've truly bounced back yet. I will. I just have to, because
21 now you see what happened is the choices that had been made while I was in that burn-out phase
22 sitting with the consequences of those choices which is, why one is my credit card, which I have to
23 organize, but yes. I think that someone who is strong in character and now is this going to sound
24 really corny, but you are strong enough to know that you need help then you can cope with
25 anything. I think that people who don't bounce back are too prideful to want help. They think they
26 are strong enough to cope and then they can't, but it takes a really strong person to say I can't cope

27 ***T: To humble themselves?***

28 **R:** Yes.

29 ***T: I hear you say it was a chemical imbalance, but who helped you, who do you think played a role***
30 ***in helping support you?***

31 **R:** My mom, very much. She insisted that I go to see a psychiatrist. I did realize by myself before I
32 told anybody that I probably have to go and see someone to talk about the things that I'm going
33 through. So I went to see someone that's a clinical psychologist, and I wanted to see her regularly
34 but she... I know her very well so I didn't.., She didn't feel comfortable in doing therapy with me
35 because we are friends so I decided that I was going to get help, but my mom helped a lot because
36 she sort of directed me the way of psycho-therapy. XP helped a lot, he was very gentle with me and
37 patient, and ya, those are the two people that are most important in my life actually. The children
38 helped just by being there.



- 1 **T: *Is there anything you would like to clarify from our last interviews?***
- 2 **R: I don't think so.**
- 3 **T: *Okay then we can stop here.***
- 4 **R: Alright.**

TREE OF LIFE DRAWING

1
2 **R:** Ok so this is my tree, it's a very strong, sturdy tree with very deep roots. It's next to a pond of water
3 and the water signifies for me God because he nourishes me and He is the well spring of life. He gives
4 me the water that nourishes the tree. But it's on the back of me, so it's part of my environment but it's
5 so much part of me that you can't always see it I think. I think XP will just come and sit longer. I would
6 like to be their shade, like you enjoy the surroundings under a tree for a picnic; also sometimes the sun
7 is too harsh, sometimes reality is too harsh. And then I'm the optimistic, shade if that makes any sense.
8 He(referring to husband) is leaning against the tree because I would like to help keep him up, so I would
9 like to support him. So I'm a supporting strong tree. With everything that is around me that is very
10 natural and disordered but beautiful.

11 The tree has lots of branches, Shrek said that an ogre has lots of layers; a tree should have lots of
12 branches. A tree grows towards the light and then sometimes something happens that disturbs the
13 growing or the growth and then that branch will actually turn and grow to another way and I think that's
14 sort of the resilience part. It's not a beautiful perfect tree, there are crooked branches, but all these
15 branches are the support system of thick shady leaves. It's not always an evergreen, there will be
16 winters then it looks bare, ugly and gnarly; but when it is the right environment or the right season, the
17 tree is helping anything anyone that is around it.

18 **T: What makes the tree green?**

19 **R:** The life, water or the season, the environment if the sun is warm enough, or there is enough water, but
20 in the dry months it has to let go of its leaves because it then has to then spare its self.

21 **T: Who or what would be the sun?**

22 **R:** The sun will probably be life, life that happens; it can either be good for you because it gives the tree
23 light and it needs light to reproduce, but it can also be too bright or too harsh and then the leaves get all
24 dried up if the tree doesn't take up enough water. So if I go away from my source of water, then I won't
25 have enough nurturing or nutrition to be green. So that sort of links with, when I walk away from God's
26 protection and I choose against something that I know that He would like, then I can't expect his
27 protection because I am away from Him

28 **T: You said that the tree grows towards the light, but if something happens then it must bend; does it
29 begin to bend away from the light?**

30 **R:** It bends away from the situation (towards the direction of light), plants always grow towards the
31 light.

32 **T: So you are always seeking that light?**

33 **R:** Yes, plants always bend towards the light.

34 **T: The flowers?**



1 **R:** Those are probably the twins, just because they two. I don't know why I only drew two flowers

WHEEL OF INFLUENCE

1

2 **R:** Ok so the **red circle** is me. The biggest part of me obviously outside of myself is God and that was the
3 first circle that I drew because He takes up seven eighths of my being. I did leave a part of my sinful self
4 open because unfortunately I'm human; I really struggle to give my all to him

5 **T: The Green Circle?**

6 XP¹ is the **green circle**; he is a very big part of my life. Obviously I haven't known him that he has taken
7 over my all of life; I am not that kind of person. He is the biggest Human circle in my sphere because I
8 have chosen him to be my husband. His family is part of him but they are not as big a part of me, that is
9 why they are there. The twins are a very big part of his sphere as well. But there is obviously a part of
10 him that is not there. as you can see. And this is something that is a bit personal but there is something
11 in our sphere that is not in God's sphere in our relationship, which I am struggling with, its part of my
12 circle

13 Then my family is the **orange part**, they are not as big a part of me as they were earlier on because they
14 shouldn't be. My mom and Dad is the bigger one and then my sister is purple because she is part of
15 theirs but she is also part of me. I don't see her very much that's why she is a small part. My family on
16 their side, I don't see them very often. I love them to bits I get along with them extremely well, but they
17 are not as a big an influence, if we talking about my influence, they do not take too much space. We see
18 XP's family much more because they close to us and they come and babysit the children, a very big part
19 of me at the moment- I really enjoy them. We get along very well. A very big part of my being that
20 encompasses everyone that I know is Sportron and that's a very huge part of who I am and that
21 influences them also. So God influences and then like those two, it is sort of three philosophies that
22 have.

23 **T: Can you just briefly just tell me on all of them what their influence is?**

24 **R:** God is basically whatever is in the Bible and to be God to other people on earth, is the centre, to be
25 His hands, I do not know if you know Casting Crowns, they are a local gospel band, they sing a song –if
26 we are the body why don't His hands heal, why don't his feet carry, why don't his arms... So I feel that
27 we are the body of Christ and we need to be Christ to other person, that makes me the person that I am.
28 On the whole God is the biggest part. But Sportron, is the philosophy of taking care of yourself- being
29 basically healthy, taking in the right nutrients, taking care of your body, taking care of others and your
30 financial well-being. It's a business that goes towards physical wellness; we also look at financial
31 wellness. Montessori is how to influence others because Montessori is basically about respecting others
32 as you respect yourself. God is: love others as you would love yourself and Montessori is: respect others
33 like you respect yourself.

34 **T: And the family members?**

¹ Refers to the participant's husband

1 **R:** The family members are XP, his parents, cousins, nieces, uncles and aunts. They are a very close
2 family. Do you want to know specifically about them?

3 **T: No, specifically how do they influence you?**

4 **R:** Just by that I have to take in another family into my life all of a sudden another group of people that
5 doesn't work necessarily like my family did. So they influence me in a sense that I learn a lot from my
6 parent's in-law; they love my children so I love them. But they loved me before so they have a definite
7 sphere. They are only bigger because we have more contact now than we did before; more than I do
8 with my family. My mom, dad and my sister are still very much a big part of me and I tend to call them
9 to discuss problems or to just talk to them. I talk to my mom at least once a day and my sister at least
10 three to four times a week so we are very close.

11 **T: And the twins?**

12 **R:** The twins are just almost all of me. They are just a little bit smaller than XP because they take up so
13 much of your time when they are at this age. All my decisions are influenced by them, whether they
14 know it or not. I am red, XP is green and his family is green as well. He is the bigger green circle.

15 **T: How did he influence you?**

16 **R:** The same as with the twins, because I am married and I believe in the biblical principles of marriage. I
17 don't make a decision without consulting him first. He is the spiritual head of my household. I should be
18 his...I don't want to use the word subservient because I am not his servant. But I must be submissive to
19 him because he is my husband. The lord asks that of me and I gladly do it because he is stronger than I
20 am in certain areas.