

THE CONTRIBUTION OF MEDITATIVE EXPERIENCES TO
PERSONAL GROWTH: A CASE STUDY.

By

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

Rhodes University

Grahamstown

1990

ABSTRACT

A three month meditation programme based on Joseph Goldstein's (1976) instructions and discourses given at a Vipassana meditation retreat was implemented among four 17 year old white English-speaking school girls at a private non-racial co-educational high school in South Africa. The meditation experiences of all four subjects were noted, but only one subject's meditative experiences were documented and used as a case study to explore their use as a tool for personal growth within the framework of ego-psychology and transpersonal psychology. It is concluded that the subject, who meditated on a daily basis, experienced personal growth primarily from the ego-psychology perspective and, it is interesting to note, less so from the transpersonal perspective. Three hypotheses have been put forward for this. Firstly, the actual length of the meditation programme may have been too short, and secondly, the daily meditation sessions too brief to facilitate a process of personal growth and development from within the transpersonal psychology framework. Thirdly, the subject was an adolescent school girl and thus may not have been developmentally ready in terms of reaching a level of cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual maturity necessary to experience identification to the transpersonal self.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To George, my supervisor.

Your advice and encouragement have been outstanding during this year and particularly during the production of this thesis. With warm-hearted gratitude, I want to say a very big sincere thank you.

To Becky, Keston, Belinda and Jenny,

Thank you for your participation and much needed commitment. It has been most valuable and great fun working with you all. I especially want to thank you for your trust and willingness to share so much of yourselves with me.

To Eureka,

I fully appreciated you typing out so quickly and efficiently this thesis despite all the demands for you to finish your own thesis. It was also a bonus to get much needed feedback from you as you typed it, of which I am grateful. Thank you very much.

To Dave.

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Growth is always a voyage into the unknown.
R. Walsh 1977.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a complex stage of human development involving a wide range of major life changes. This important period begins with the onset of puberty at around twelve years of age, and continues until early adulthood at about eighteen years.

The teenager undergoes dramatic physical changes which are matched by accompanying psychological developments, significant maturation of cognitive functions, and often "*radical alterations in all social relationships*" (Coleman cited in Marshland 1987:21). It is during this unstable stage of personal flux and concomitant emotional swings, that the major life task of adolescents is to create their self-identities and find their place in the world (Erikson 1968). For South African youth the difficulty of successfully mastering this task is exacerbated by a rapidly changing socio-political situation. For many the demands of adolescence become intolerable and this manifests itself in a high rate of adolescent suicide and alcohol and drug abuse (Pillay and Pillay 1987; Wood and Wassenaar 1989).

Guidance and counselling programmes in South African high schools aim to help adolescents negotiate these challenges. Guidance can be defined as those services (formal and informal) within the school curriculum which aim at

...helping an individual to know himself and to understand and accept ... facets of his personality and personal circumstances.

Cape Ed (1981:1)

According to Mortensen and Schmuller (1959:3), "*Guidance is a personal process, a process involved with human beings and human affairs*".

Nelson (1971) and Pietrofesa et al. (1980) believe that Guidance is a programme within the school that exists to *meet the needs of pupils*. Mortensen and Schmuller (1959:3) remark that Guidance can be defined as

...that part of the educational program that helps provide, as needed, the opportunities and specialised staff services so that all students can develop to the fullest of their particular abilities and capabilities.

Guidance may be seen as a strategy which focuses on meeting the pupils' needs in such a way that the pupils recognise and develop their potentials, and achieve a level of mature ego functioning and a healthy personality organisation which would, in their present and future situation, aid them to find their place in the world (Kowitz and Kowitz 1971).

Guidance focuses especially upon the individual as a *self* and as such Guidance is personalised. It involves helping pupils and therefore its structure must be orientated towards understanding the needs of the pupils and facilitating a process in which pupils have, to the fullest extent possible, those needs met (Romig and Cleland 1972; Shertzer and Stone 1981).

Guidance can thus be defined as an attempt by the school system to help the pupils to understand themselves and the world about them, an attempt to achieve maximum self-realization for the pupils. Nelson (1971:6) remarks that Guidance aims

...to assist the immature but growing pupil in a better understanding of himself, to think through with him the meaning of personal choices, to encourage him to optimal academic productivity, to give dignity to his individuality, this is the nature of Guidance.

Guidance is a process which encourages a school pupil to face the challenges of personal growth and change, and intelligent decision-making. It thus aims to expand the pupils' self understanding, that they might know their needs and seek to have those needs met in appropriate ways, and that they might establish and maintain healthy, intimate relationships with others and the world around them.

In the South African context, Guidance is structured in such a way that pupils attend weekly classes called *Guidance*, where the Guidance teacher gives lessons relevant to the needs of the pupils (information about careers, discussion on social topics such as relationship development or the assistance of personal growth by means of *self awareness* programmes). Within the Guidance system there is place for *individual counselling* of pupils, in which the Guidance teacher becomes a *counsellor*, and helps individual pupils with whatever problems they might have, meeting with them on a one - to - one basis. This is seen as a private consultation and the counsellor is expected to maintain confidentiality.

Guidance in the South African school system can be structurally divided into three sections. The *MANUAL AND SCHEME OF WORK FOR SCHOOL GUIDANCE* of the Department of Education of the Cape Province (1981) has labeled these sections as *educational, career and social/personality*. This manual has outlined the aim of the social/personality section of Guidance as being the development of pupils' personality and social adjustment, helping pupils "*in their search for self identity ... and the development and fostering of a realistic self image ...*" (Department of Education of the Cape Province 1981:6).

It is thus suggested that group Guidance and counselling be used to assist the personal growth and development of the pupils. In addition, this section of Guidance may be seen to aim at enhancing and maintaining a sense of belonging, meaning in life, healthy self-concept and helping pupils establish meaningful and vital relationships with others (Gunter 1980; Cilliers 1975; Vrey 1979; Stark and Traxler 1974; Rothman 1978; Garrison and Garrison 1975). This is done through group Guidance classes, individual counselling, and other *extra* programmes which the Guidance teacher may implement (eg, careers evenings, relaxation classes for pupils suffering from examination-anxiety, workshops, leadership courses, self-awareness exercises, relaxation techniques, desensitisation programmes etc.).

One way of promoting personal growth that has lacked attention in South Africa is that of *meditation*. Meditation is currently enjoying increasing attention in the West, and is claimed to be a valuable tool for personal growth, involving a movement towards self-actualization and spiritual consciousness (Walsh 1978, 1983; Welwood 1979, 1986; Emmons 1978; Wilber 1979a, 1982; Muktananda 1980; Russell 1980, 1986; Walsh and Vaughan 1980; Shapiro 1980; Shapiro and Walsh 1984; Engler 1984; Epstein 1986, 1988; Wilber, Engler and Brown 1986).

Although the concept of meditation will be dealt with in depth in Chapter Three, it may be appropriate to introduce it briefly here. The word *meditation* is used in a variety of ways and has many different associations. For some, the word may imply concentrating the mind on a mental image (Russell 1980) or on nothing (Shapiro 1980), while for others it may mean thinking about an idea (Welwood 1979). Meditation may be a form of devotion or prayer (Mann 1974; Muktananda 1980), the examination of one's internal thought processes (Walsh 1977, 1978), or simply the "*settling down of the mind into quietness*" (Russell 1980:6).

Approaches to meditation include Buddhist meditation, Transcendental meditation, Dynamic meditation, Christian meditation, Insight/Vipassana meditation, Devotional meditation and Siddha Yoga.

Despite voluminous writings on the value of meditation in the process of personal growth (see Chapter Three), little research on this has taken place in South Africa, and no work has been published on the role of meditation, or more specifically, on the actual meditative experiences, as a tool for personal growth amongst high school pupils.

The aim of this study was to explore the meditative experiences of four high school pupils for the specific purpose of focusing on the development of personal growth from the perspectives of ego-psychology and transpersonal psychology.

Within the province of the mind what I believe to be true is true or becomes true within experiential and experimental limits. These limits are further beliefs to be transcended. Within the mind there are no limits.

J. Lilly 1972.

CHAPTER TWO

PERSONAL GROWTH

2.1 INTRODUCTION.

2.1.1 Defining personal growth.

Much has been written about *personal growth* - what it is, how it occurs, and when and why it happens - and there are as many definitions about personal growth as there are orientations within psychology, theology, philosophy and sociology. The conceptualisation of the term and its meaning will be addressed from the perspective of both ego-psychology and transpersonal psychology.

Maslow has put forward the idea that personal growth is the movement of the total person (mind, body and emotions) towards *self-actualization*. In the space of this short thesis, there is not room to highlight fully this idea, suffice to refer briefly to Maslow himself (1968:54):

We have, all of us, an impulse toward actualizing more of our potentials, towards self-actualization, or full humanness or human fulfilment. [This is] a push towards the establishment of the fully evolved and authentic self... and increased stress on the role of integration (or unity or wholeness). Resolving a dichotomy into a higher, more inclusive unity amounts to healing a split in the person and making him more unified. [This is also an impulse] to be the best, the very best you are capable of becoming. If you deliberately plan to be less than you are capable of being, then I warn you that you'll be deeply unhappy for the rest of your life.

As can be noted, Maslow is of the opinion that this drive towards self - actualization is intimately related to *meaning in life*; not simply *egoic* meaning but something far deeper and beyond that.

According to Wilber (1979b, 1980) the most important result of the integration of mind, body and spirit, as described by Maslow (1970) and Goldstein (1976), is the subtle but pervasive change in awareness as one begins to unite the parts of the *self* and discover one's prior identity with it. Wilber (1979a) stresses that this potential is not just a summation of egoic potentials and body potentials, but is instead a wholeness which greatly exceeds the sum of its parts. Rollo May (1979) has added that neither the ego nor the body nor the unconscious can be autonomous, but can only exist as parts of the *totality*. And, according to May (1979), it is in this very totality that *will* and *freedom* have their base. The expanded potentials of this totality are commonly known as *autonomy* (Fromm 1963) and *meaning of life* (Rollo May 1961, 1977, 1981).

But what is this *wholeness* in growth, these so-called *potentials* and movements towards the fully or evolved *authentic self* (May 1979)? All these words appear as psychological jargon to the layman and need to be understood.

Growth fundamentally means an enlarging and expanding of one's horizons, a growth of one's boundaries, outwardly in perspective, inwardly in depth. Growth is re-appointment, re-zoning, re-mapping; an acknowledgement, and then enrichment, of ever deeper and more encompassing levels of one's own self.

Wilber (1979b:13)

Gestaltian psychology (Perls 1947, 1969) sees the meaning of growth as encompassing the *expansion of awareness*, the uniting of all aspects of the psyche, both the light and dark or *persona or shadow* (Jung 1961). However, this expansion of awareness is not centered primarily on the *ego level* but goes beyond the ego (Walsh and Vaughan 1980) to a place of deeper consciousness, not only of the self but the self in relation to the universe, or the experience of *supreme identity* (Wilber 1977, 1979a, 1979b; Welwood 1979; Muktananda 1980; Mann 1974; Engler 1984; Walsh 1981; Wilber *et al* 1986).

William James, (one of America's foremost psychologists), repeatedly expressed that our normal waking consciousness is but one special type of consciousness, while all about it, parted from it by the flimsiest of screens, lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. Wilber (1979b:2) remarks that

...it is as if our everyday awareness were but an insignificant island, surrounded by a vast ocean of unsuspected and uncharted consciousness, whose waves beat continuously upon the barrier reefs of our normal awareness, until quite spontaneously, they may break through, flooding our island awareness with knowledge of a vast, largely unexplored, but intensely real domain of new world consciousness.

Thus the ultimate or highest level of growth occurs when the individual comes to feel, beyond any shadow of doubt, that he is fundamentally one with the entire universe, with all worlds, high, low, sacred or profane (Wilber 1979a, 1979b, 1981; Walsh and Vaughan 1980; Epstein 1986; Walsh 1983; Welwood 1986). In this, his *sense of identity* expands far beyond the narrow confines of his body and mind and embraces the entire cosmos (Wilber 1979b).

It is appropriate now to examine the concept of personal growth in much greater detail from the two perspectives of ego-psychology and transpersonal psychology.

2.2 PERSONAL GROWTH WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF EGO-PSYCHOLOGY.

2.2.1 Introduction.

"Personal growth may be seen as the drive towards wholeness, integration and self-realization" wrote Jung (cited in Corsini and Marsella 1983:153). According to Rogers (1961) the actualizing tendency is the single most basic human motive. He believed that the human organism inherently tends to maintain itself and to strive for enhancement. Rogers indicated that personal growth means the fulfilment of the human being. He maintained that humans are basically active and forward moving, and if conditions are favourable, they tend to develop their potentialities to the maximum. This idea is supported by such authors as Perls (1969), Jung (1960), Maslow (1970), and Rollo May (1979, 1981).

Although actualization differs from person to person with regard to specifics, there are some generalizations that apply. Some common characteristics resulting from the actualization process are flexibility rather than rigidity, openness rather than defensiveness, and autonomy (increased freedom from external control) rather than heteronomy (Horney 1945; Rogers 1951; Perls 1969; Rollo May 1961, 1977).

The notion of the self and self growth is important in psychology. Within the framework of ego psychology, the self may be seen as an outgrowth of certain aspects of individual experiencing (Frankl 1959; Winnicott 1975; Jung 1960; Rogers 1951, 1969; Erikson 1968). There is, within ego psychology's understanding of personal growth, the idea that there is a tendency for the self to be a fluid and changing totality. However Jung (1960) and Yalom (1980) pointed out that a person, although involved in experiencing his world may not be fully aware at any given time of all his experiencing that constitutes or relates to the self, but they claim that such an awareness is a possibility.

Rogers (1969, 1980) believed that humans have the potential to be constructively aware of their total experiencing, but to be so requires openness and responsiveness to the experiencing. In his essays on the unconscious, Jung (1960) clearly indicated that growth involved the expansion of awareness of certain aspects of the self of which the person may not be aware. Freud (1904, 1931, 1933) and Horney (1945) similarly understood the role of the unconscious in human psyche development. In fact, the releasing of this unconscious material into consciousness was a major thrust of psychoanalysis and analytical psychology.

Personal growth may be understood as the movement towards a fully functioning person/self. According to Rogers (1969) the concept of the fully functioning person is an ideal. He stressed that this hypothetical person would represent the ultimate actualization of the human organism. Ego-psychologists believe that people in real life are fully functioning in relative terms, some more, some less (Horney 1945; Frankl 1975; Fromm 1963; Rogers 1969; Rollo May 1977) but they point out that it is best to conceive of full functioning as a process. A person who is functioning effectively and well is an adaptive organism, changing to meet new situations in the most satisfying ways and moving toward higher and higher levels of actualization. Thus personal growth is a process of adapting and changing and aiming for self-realization (Maslow 1968).

Ego-psychology is concerned with the process of actualization or becoming a person (Jung 1960; Maslow 1970; Frankl 1967). Personal growth is the movement towards self-knowledge and understanding (May 1977).

2.2.2 Openness to experience.

Perls (1947, 1969) believed that growth of the individual's psyche lay in the ability of a person to fully experience his/her being in the *here-and-now*. Personal growth occurs when an individual makes contact with his experiences with vividness and immediacy. Perls (1969) stressed that personal growth includes the contact of feelings which are part of the total experiences of an individual. However, Perls (1969) takes this concept further by saying that personal growth occurs when a person allows himself to *experience* the feeling, not merely locate it. For example, if the individual knows he is angry, personal growth also involves that person giving himself permission to shout, scream, punch pillows, throw things, and whatever other behaviour the body may need to do when angry. It also involves him disciplining himself not to do it if it is inappropriate.

Personal growth is understood to include the awareness of the individual of that which prevents him from feeling and experiencing. In other words, personal growth within ego-psychology includes the process of *unblocking blocks* to awareness.

Ellis (1962) believed that people are dominated by the principle that thinking and feeling or reason and emotion are intricately entwined in the psyche. They rarely feel without thinking, for feelings are usually excited by the perception of a specific situation. Ellis (1962:313) maintained "*when they emote they also think and act. When they act, they also think and emote*". Ellis became the developer of what is known as *rational-emotive-therapy* (R.E.T.). Within this school of thought is the idea that emotional disturbances and interferences in personal growth are not the result of external circumstances or events, but rather arise from the perceptions and attitudes towards these events. It is not the situations themselves that create anxiety or unpleasant negative responses, but rather the individual's *perceptions* of these situations that make them unpleasant.

Dealing with negative emotions and thoughts implies a confrontation with them (Freud 1903; Jung 1961; Ellis 1962; Beck 1976). Thus personal growth is the process whereby an individual decides to deal, in a constructive way, with his negative emotions and thoughts. To deal with them means to accept their existence, and to confront them in a positive and meaningful way.

Perls (1947, 1973) believed that personal growth occurs when awareness of self is enhanced. This is accomplished by focusing on the *here-and-now* by calling attention to gestures, postures, tone of voices, facial grimaces, body movements, etc. Personal growth is the integration of dissociated aspects of experience through awareness. Thus for Perls (1973) emphasis is placed on becoming alert to the totality of one's experience at any given moment. Personal growth is a continuous encounter with the self.

2.2.3 Unacceptable aspects of the psyche.

Jung (1960, 1967) equated the personal unconscious with the Freudian (1933) *repressed unconscious*, although Jung did not limit his idea to the Freudian concept of the unconscious. Jung's theory locates painful experiences, anxiety-laden fantasies, feelings and thoughts unacceptable to the ego and superego in the personal unconscious. Here, according to Jung, they remain repressed, suppressed, isolated, forgotten, split off and unrecognised. Jung called this area of the mind the *shadow*. It must be noted that the concept of the shadow need not be restricted to unacceptable elements of the ego, it can refer to the archetype of primary evil or *badness*, but also to the natural potentials that are undeveloped and relatively undifferentiated in the psyche. In this sense the shadow has great value (Jung cited in Corsini and Marsella 1983). Personal growth would involve the encounter of the person with these denied aspects of the self and the assimilation of these aspects into conscious awareness. In other words, personal growth implies that these unacceptable elements of the ego are recognized, worked through and integrated (via such methods or ways as psychotherapy or meditation) so that large portions of this material may be assimilated and made conscious through confrontation and synthesis.

2.2.4 Change as growth.

Ego-psychology views individuals as having vast untapped resources for actualizing their potentials (Maslow 1970) and as being capable of changing their social and personal destinies. *Change* is a key word in the definition of personal growth. Change is growth, growth is change. Individuals in the continued life-long process of change and personal growth are viewed as unique and as having the power to understand their limitations and to change basic views, notions, thoughts, and values. Thus personal growth means change of the *inner man* in such a way that one holds new views and insights of oneself and the world (Yalom 1980).

2.2.5 Creativity, possibilities and limitations.

Adler (1969) sees the individual as being an actor in the world, always moving, from birth to death. He believes that man actively interprets and uses all events and situations in which to develop and grow as a unique person. In this sense everyone is creative. The criterion is the capacity to formulate, consciously or most often unconsciously, a goal of success for one's endeavours and to develop planned procedures for attaining the goals.

Adler (1969) sees personal growth of the person as the ability to form goals or objectives and to create the means by which they can be attained. He goes further to indicate that personal growth is the process of developing the capacity for influencing and creating events.

The important thing is not what one is born with, but what one makes of the equipment ... As to the influence of the environment, who would claim that the same influences are ... responded to by any two individuals in the same way? Thus we find it necessary to assume the existence of still another force: the creative power of the individual.

Adler (1969:86/87)

Rollo May (1961) supports this concept but adds that personal growth includes the development of the ability of the person to learn his limitations as well, such that the freedom in exploring creativity is within known boundaries of capabilities and abilities.

2.2.6 Inner psyche reality.

Jung (1960) and Klein (1957) demonstrated an astute awareness of interpersonal processes and external influences on the development of the personality.

Jung indicated that personal growth means the exploration of the inner world and the realisation that *inner experiences* are as real to him as *outward events*. Thus the fantasies of a person are as real and authentic as the milkman arriving in the morning at the doorstep. He stressed that growth occurs only in the light of inner happenings. Jung saw personal development as the realisation that the perception of external reality could be altered and reintrojected. This is linked with Ellis's (1962) R.E.T. conceptualisations. For Jung (1960) fantasies are not merely an escape or defence against internal and external reality, they are also natural mental expressions of the instinct. To understand this is a step towards wholeness within the psyche. Jung emphasised the importance of allowing fantasies to enter consciousness, as this is the early beginnings of the release of creative unconscious content (Jung 1921). The psyche creates reality every day and the fantasies of an individual are the clearest expression of the specific activity of the psyche (Jung 1921). In other words, development and maturation of the individual takes place through natural spontaneous fantasy as the psyche *reaches out* for what it needs in order to grow and to further integrate inner and outer experiences (Corsini and Marsella 1983). Jung (1961) claimed that we must never forget that the world is, in the first place, a subjective phenomenon, and thus we must be able to let things happen in the psyche. He also remarked (1961) that our consciousness does not create itself - it wells up from unknown depths.

2.2.7 Growth as a process.

Much of ego-psychology stresses that growth of the psyche is a process, not a destination at which one arrives. Maslow (1968) postulated the concept of a hierarchy of needs whereby the individual moves up the hierarchy once lower levels or needs are met. The highest level is self-actualization.

Maslow (1968, 1970) believed that self-actualizing human beings are characterised by seventeen attributes: they

1. perceive reality accurately
2. accept themselves and others
3. act spontaneously and naturally
4. focus on problems
5. prefer privacy and have an air of detachment
6. are independent and autonomous
7. appreciate and enjoy new experiences in life
8. are mystical and transcendent, and have peak experiences
9. possess strong social identity
10. have social interests
11. have strong relationships with a few friends
12. have a strong sense of moral values
13. have a philosophical sense of humour
14. are creative and inventive, having a fresh perspective on ideas
15. resist conformity and acculturation
16. are well integrated, total, whole, coherent
17. transcend dichotomies, bringing opposites into harmony.

Maslow (1968) maintains that growth is the development of these attributes and qualities, a process which takes a life-time. This is supported by many other theorists (Freud 1904, 1930; Jung 1921, 1958, 1960, 1961; Horney 1945; Rollo May 1953, 1961; Klein 1957; Frankl 1959; Rogers 1951, 1961, 1969, 1980; Erikson 1968; Fromm 1956, 1963; Adler 1969; Perls 1969; Segal 1973; Winnicott 1975; Yalom 1980).

2.2.8 Summary.

In summary, personal growth can be defined as the expansion of awareness of self, others and the world. Personal growth is seen by ego-psychologists as the drive towards wholeness, integration

and self-actualization. It has been shown that personal growth may be seen as the fulfilment of the human being and the development of the self which may be understood as an outgrowth of certain aspects of individual experiencing. Personal growth involves a process of self-discovery of both inner experiencing and outer reality. Within this idea is the acceptance and assimilation of the shadow into conscious material. Growth is the process of becoming a person, of becoming a fully functioning individual who can effectively change and adapt to meet new situations in the most satisfying ways. Personal growth is the process of individuation. This includes the process of adequately and meaningfully dealing with negative thoughts and emotions, and the power to change inner and outer reality in such a way that limitations are discovered and accepted, goals are actively set and plans are made for achieving them. Personal growth includes the recognition and development of creativity. Thus the concept of personal growth encompasses the idea of the exploration of the inner world, the continued encounter with self, in order to bring about both external and internal change and movement towards self-acceptance and self-love. When this occurs, personal growth is seen to involve the acquisition of the attributes listed on the previous page.

2.3 PERSONAL GROWTH WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY.

2.3.1 Introduction.

Transpersonal psychology accepts the definition of personal growth given by ego-psychologists, but takes this definition a step further.

Transpersonal means that some sort of process is occurring in the individual that, in a sense, goes beyond the individual (Maslow 1970; Wilber 1977, 1979b). The simplest instance of this is extra sensory perception or E.S.P. or telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, retrogression and Maslow's (1970) *peak experiences* or Muktananda's (1980) experiences of a transpersonal self or witness. All these experiences are a result of the expansion of awareness and of the *self* and *not-self* boundary.

According to Wilber (1979b) and Walsh and Vaughan (1980) Western man creates a *boundary*

within himself, a self and not-self boundary. There is also a boundary line between the mind and the body. The person identifies with just a facet of his total organism, and this facet, according to Wilber *et al* (1986) is known variously as the mind, the psyche, the ego or the personality. Biologically there is a radical split between mind and body, ego and flesh. Dualism is a fundamental perspective of Western civilization (Welwood 1979).

Wilber (1979b) put forward the idea that as a person grows up and becomes an adult, the boundary lines between self and not-self become more stable and fortified, and as a result this same person may look upon his body with mixed feelings. Where does it lie within the boundaries of self and not-self? Wilber (1979b) stated, and this is supported by Gestaltian psychology and other *awareness psychologies*, that most people see their bodies as foreign, i.e. not-self, and the boundary between mind and body is strengthened as the persona identifies more with the mind boundary. He may even come to feel that he lives in his head, as if he were a miniature man in his skull giving directions and commands to his body (Wilber 1979a). Perls (1973) and Walsh (1983) have stated that the individual then identifies with only a facet of his self and not the whole, and as this identity is based only on a section of his psyche, his awareness is not whole or complete.

Personal growth from this perspective involves the identity and then dis-identification with the self. In other words, there are levels of identity which are not merely theoretical postulates (Wilber 1979b; Epstein 1986; Engler 1984), and at each of these levels is a different consciousness (Walsh 1978; Wilber 1979b; Walsh and Vaughan 1980; Walsh 1983). (These levels have been arranged in a spectrum-like fashion which Wilber 1979a, 1979b has conceptualised).

According to Wilber (1979b:9) "*each successive level of the spectrum represents a type of narrowing or restricting of what the individual feels to be his 'self' or true identity*". At the base of the spectrum, the person identifies with all creation. At the next level his unity with creation is not complete but rather filtered, and as he moves along the spectrum his identity changes and consciousness transforms, and he narrows his identity to only parts of his mind, alienating and repressing his shadow. At this level, the individual's environment, body and aspects of his psyche appear external, foreign, not-self (Wilber 1979b).

From a transpersonal perspective, personal growth is the transformation of consciousness, from

one that is identified purely with ego, to one identified with a wider level, one related to the cosmos and universe, one in which identity is based on *unity consciousness* (Welwood 1979; Walsh and Vaughan 1980). Personal growth is the process of healing the radical split between the conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche, so that the person is in contact with all of his mind. (Welwood 1979, 1983; Walsh 1978; Wilber 1979b; Epstein 1986, 1988). In this sense, his *authentic self* may be recognised and identified because the persona and shadow are united and the ego and body have integrated (Perls 1969; Jung 1960; Maslow 1970). Wilber (1979b:35) stated that

in extending the person's identity from just his mind or ego (one level of the spectrum) to his entire organism as a whole, the vast potentials of the total organism are liberated and put at the individual's disposal.

2.3.2 The transpersonal self.

Whenever there is attachment, association with it brings endless misery.

Ram Dass (1976)

Whenever we are still attached, we are still possessed: when one is possessed, it means the existence of something stronger than oneself.

Jung (1960:114)

A transpersonal view of human development holds that as human beings mature, their sense of self expands. The self-sense originally identified exclusively with the body expands to include identification with the verbal-ego-mind. The integration of these two major levels leads to so-called *ego maturity*. But there is another level, a transpersonal level, which needs to be recognised and integrated with the other levels, and out of this movement arises *the transpersonal self*. It has always been postulated by ego-psychologists (Freud 1930; Klein 1957; Winnicott 1975) that psychological health is built upon a strong and integrated ego. Transpersonal psychologists (Wilber, Walsh, Switch, Vaughan, Emmons) maintain that psychological health and maturation requires growth beyond the ego.

Walsh and Vaughan (1980) and Vaughan (1985a) have remarked that it makes no sense to remain identified to the ego when the human being has the capacities, in terms of altered states of consciousness, of transcending these ego limitations. When the work of the ego is completed, there comes a time when it needs to allow the higher level of identity (transpersonal) to emerge fully.

Vaughan (1985a:24) stated "*the transpersonal self is conceived as the self-sense that transcends egoic and existential identifications*". This implies that the ego is not left behind totally, but is taken up and carried forward and used to develop a new framework of identity, a transpersonal identity/self. Awareness of the transpersonal self can be cultivated in such activities as meditation, prayer, contemplation, dreaming, Kundalini release, primary therapy, centering, body healing energies, imagery, bio-feedback and peak experiences.

Emmons (1978), Wilber (1981) and Wilber *et al* (1986) believed that only when we have succeeded from dis-identifying from thoughts, emotions and sensations, can we begin to discover this transpersonal self. "*Transpersonal development is not a process of ego development, it is a process of becoming what the ego is not*" (Vaughan 1985a:31).

Nobody understands what the self is because the self is just what you are not, it is not the ego. The ego discovers itself as a mere appendix of the self in a sort of loose connection.

Jung (1967:31)

Once the transpersonal self is acknowledged, once the spirituality of man is no longer repressed, the transpersonal self can be seen to avoid making judgements, setting standards, becoming intrusive, defensive and fearful. It does not attempt to control events, behaviours or processes. According to Boorstein (1980) it can be described as holistic and ecologic, recognising and participating in the inter-relatedness and inter-dependence of all phenomena. It does not depend on boundaries and sees no separate parts. In Christian teachings we are *all of one body*. In this light, the transpersonal self partakes of infinite wisdom and compassion, understanding and forgiving all things without exception and without reservation (Vaughan 1985a).

Vaughan (1985a:28) is of the opinion that "*the transpersonal self remains in the background*

of awareness until we choose to pay attention to it". The transpersonal self is characteristically experienced as wise and compassionate, alert and sensitive, perceptually clear and non-attached (Boorstein 1980). From the researcher's personal experience of the transpersonal self, there is an easy flow of energy, clear vision, easily focused attention, a definite sense of being connected to everyone and everything as an integral part of a larger whole. This awareness can be described as being nothing particularly special, just a quiet letting go. Vaughan (1985a:28) remarks that *"we know we are in touch with the transpersonal self when we feel at peace".* Jung (1967) and Grof (1988) both agreed. Diekman (1982) added that we know when we are listening to the voice of the *self* when it is loving and non-judgmental, when it is harmful to no-one and beneficial to everyone. Shapiro and Walsh (1984) concluded that the transpersonal self is the embodiment of higher values.

Vaughan (1985b) believed that increasing attention to the transpersonal dimension enables one to view reality in terms of relationships. She wrote that seeing ourselves reflected in relationships, we come to know the self.

Walsh and Vaughan (1980) pointed out that as we learn to transcend our separateness and relinquish our specialness, we become more accepting of reality as it is. It is in this light that Vaughan (1985a:30) stated:

When ego goals are no longer felt to be meaningful and striving ceases, the experience of equanimity is available. In this state one may have a taste of inner liberation that implies freedom from conditioning, freedom from fear and freedom from unconscious conflicts.

In summary, personal growth from the perspective of transpersonal psychology can be defined as the transformation of consciousness and the expansion of awareness to all levels within the psyche as well as the integration and unity of these levels and identities.

We are what we think, all that we are arises with our thoughts, with our thoughts we create the world.

The Buddha.

CHAPTER THREE

MEDITATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION.

3.1.1 Defining meditation.

The potential for living one's life to the fullest and in an open and *wakeful state* is not simply a philosophical or religious belief, but may be experienced directly (Walsh 1977, 1978, 1981; Welwood 1979; Muktananda 1980; Engler 1984; Epstein 1988). The *wakeful state* is defined by Eastern traditions as "*enlightenment, awakening, liberation, nirvana, objective consciousness, egolessness*" (Welwood 1979:117). Moreover, this wider potential for living and being-in-the-world is not for the mystic only but can be available to everyone regardless of religious affiliation, race, culture, gender or age.

However, "*to expand one's attention beyond its ordinary distracted and self-centered concerns is not easy, particularly amid the demands and constraints of most people's daily activities*" (Welwood 1979:117). The Eastern traditions have clearly demonstrated that to *realise* or *attain* this wakeful state or, as Wilber (1979a) calls it, *altered state of consciousness*, an individual needs to have a form of practice or self-knowledge discipline which can be integrated into the daily life (Walsh 1978 and Walsh and Vaughan 1980). There is wide acknowledgment that the most common form of self-knowledge discipline in Eastern traditions is the practice of meditation (Goldstein 1976; Wilber 1979a; Welwood 1979; Shapiro 1980; Wilber *et al.* 1986).

According to Welwood (1979:117)

meditation is the procedure that allows one to investigate the process of one's own consciousness and experiencing, and to discover more basic, underlying qualities of one's existence as an intimate reality.

3.1.2 Types and practices.

According to Russell (1980) there are many different styles or types of meditation. Bloomfield (1980) has pointed out that many different practices have been called meditation, ranging from concentration exercises, contemplation of spiritual ideas, the use of mantra's, visualization, and so on. The word *meditation* is used in a variety of ways and has many different associations. For some the word may imply concentrating the mind on some mental image (Russell 1980) or on nothing in particular (Shapiro 1980), while for others it may mean thinking about an idea (Welwood 1979). Meditation may be a form of devotion or prayer (Mann 1974; Muktananda 1980), the examination of one's internal thought processes (Walsh 1977, 1978, 1983; Wilber *et al* 1986) or simply the "*settling down of the mind into quietness*" (Russell 1980:6).

The type that has been characterised as *receptive, formless, or opening up* appears to be one of the major types of meditation (Bloomfield 1980; Shapiro and Giber 1978; Kornfield 1979; Brown and Engler 1980; Boorstein 1980; Engler 1984) and will be the focus of this thesis. In defining this type of meditation, it must be noted that there are many styles that this particular type of meditation has taken, and according to Welwood (1979) is known by such terms as *mindfulness* and *insight, vipassana, zazen, choiceless awareness* and *self-remembering*. This type of meditation may be defined as

...the practice of open, non-reactive attention. Experience is witnessed non-selectively and without interference or interpretation. Continuous alertness is also required ... The meditator ... must maintain attention in order to avoid becoming fascinated by, caught up in, or carried away by whatever may arise in his experience.

Welwood (1979:118)

Other types or approaches to meditation include Transcendental meditation, Dynamic meditation, Buddhist meditation, Devotional meditation, Siddha Yoga, and Christian meditation. Although there are still more types, they appear to be off-shoots of these major branches (Boorstein 1980).

Insight/Vipassana or mindfulness meditation involves sitting quietly and attending to one's breathing, while neither indulging in one's thoughts as they appear nor suppressing them, but simply letting them arise and pass away with no identification, condemning or judging. According to Walsh (1977) and Welwood (1979), the beginner may encounter the restless quality of his mind. Goldstein (1976) has supported this statement, commenting that the thoughts themselves seem to have their own minds, their own curriculum of continuous activity, movement and motivation. Walsh (1977) stressed that this non-stop internal chatter may be experienced as painful, frustrating and annoying when an individual begins to meditate for the first time.

3.1.3 Purposes.

The *non-stop thinking* processes are familiar to Western psychologies and philosophies. However, it is more recognised and acknowledged by Eastern psychologies and its patterns have been studied in great depth within certain traditions (Welwood 1979; Wilber 1979a, 1980; Shapiro 1980; Shapiro and Walsh 1984; Boorstein 1980). Unfortunately, Western psychologies have tended to stay at this level of emotions, thoughts, and fantasies, and have not ventured *beyond the ego* (Vaughan 1985a; Walsh and Vaughan 1980) to a higher level. It has been of great importance to Eastern psychologies and traditions to understand this *higher level* and the interrelationship between these two levels (Welwood 1979).

The initial inspiration or intrinsic motivation for the practice of meditation was the unsatisfactoriness of this normally restless, confused state of mind in which attention seems to be uncontrolled as the many preoccupations of the individual's world crop up and then vanish only to be replaced quickly by others (Kornfield 1979; Welwood 1979; Wilber 1979a; Shapiro 1980; Brown and Engler 1980; Walsh 1983; Wilber *et al* 1986). According to Welwood (1979) the more one meditates, the more unsatisfactory are these ordinary, preoccupied, fixated states of mind. Through meditation one can glimpse the existence of another world, a world of different experience and state of mind, a world of *awareness*. It has been accepted by writers of esoteric

psychologies and investigators of meditation that meditation can be one of the paths to developing greater awareness (Goldstein 1976; Shapiro 1980; Brown and Engler 1980; Epstein 1988; Wilber *et al* 1986).

The question as to why one should meditate can be addressed by understanding that meditation cultivates *awareness of and attention to the moment-to-moment flow of experience*. It uses these experiences, (thoughts, feelings, smells, breathe, tastes, sounds), as the meditation objects, as a way to begin to see *who* we are. In meditation, or while in a *meditative state* to be more precise (Walsh 1977, 1978; Kornfield 1979; Wilber 1981; Russell 1980; Muktananda 1980) the individual starts to understand himself. He learns, for example, how his thoughts seek to capture him in a certain framework of reference, being and existence. "*We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts, with our thoughts we make the world*" (The Buddha, in Bryrome 1976:43).

Thus, to meditate means to explore the inner world of subjective experience (Walsh 1978; Wilbur 1980; Vaughan 1979) and to decide to do this is to decide to become aware of self and hopefully to realise the full potentials of self. (This is similar to Maslow's self-actualization, although Maslow did not emphasise meditation as a route to self-knowledge and self-awareness). In the light of this, according to Welwood (1979), it is important to meditate as this cultivates a state of mind which allows one to be fully receptive, open and capable of observing and experiencing the complete range of physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual reality, without suppressing it or acting it out. Through the procedure of paying attention and greater awareness, it is possible that in meditation a process of new understanding of self can be gradually developed and sustained (Walsh 1981; Wilber *et al* 1986).

3.1.4 The meditative state.

All techniques, types and forms of meditation involve a shift of consciousness or attention, and may then lead to an awareness of aspects of mental processes of which the meditator was previously unaware or only semi-aware (Wilber *et al* 1986). If one views the development of *heightened awareness of self and self in the world* as an integral part of personal growth, meditation can be viewed as a tool for personal psychological maturation (Wilber 1979a).

However, according to Engler (1984), much more important than the healthy reconstruction of the ego structure is the attainment of a state beyond the ego or *egolessness* (Epstein 1986) in which spiritual consciousness is recognised and integrated into the personality structure in a wholesome manner. Emmons (1978) associated this level of development with the connection to the *inner source* within us all. Mann (1974) agrees and puts forward the concept that this state of mind is desirable as it brings the person into direct contact with the *divine* within the deepest parts of the psyche, and thus brings about another growth spurt which leads to a deeper level of psychological maturation. This level is not the same as Maslow's (1970) self-actualization level, for it goes beyond the ego (Shapiro 1980; Walsh and Vaughan 1980). It has been termed the meditative state by various writers (Walsh 1978; Wilber 1980; Shapiro 1980, Muktananda 1980), and some writers have proposed that only when one is in this state can the *true self* be known (Muktananda 1980). In this state, the thoughts, images, and experiences with which the mind normally identifies, fades away, and the meditator ceases to think *I am this* or *I am that*, but begins to feel that simply *I am*. Mann (1974) has added that eventually even this state of awareness of self drops away, and the person is said to be in a state of *pure being* in which there is a unity with the whole universe, the whole of humanity and life as we know it.

Depending on cultural background and experience, this state may have many names, such as *state of pure unmanifest consciousness* (Muktananda 1980), or the *Buddha nature* (Engler 1984), the *experience of the godhead* or as *Brahmin* (R.R.Maharaj 1977). However, most authors agree that the actual name is not the issue so much as the influence of this state on an individual's life and interpretation of experience (Welwood 1979; Brown and Engler 1980). This presence or mode of being transforms whatever it touches. According to Naranjo (cited in Welwood 1979:133)

...if its medium is movement it will turn into dance, if stillness, into living sculpture, if thinking, into higher reaches of intuition, if sensing, into the merging with the miracle of being, if feeling, into love, if singing into sacred utterances, if speaking, into prayer or poetry.

The meditative state may also be seen as the *inner posture* or *attitude* (Welwood 1979; Walsh 1981, 1983). In the meditative state, this inner posture is revealed to us when we have put aside everything, suspended all but *us*, our presence, our attitude, beyond any activity or lack of it (Walsh 1981).

"Whatever the outer silhouette, the inner task is simplified, so that nothing remains to do but gaze at a candle, listen to the hum in our ears, or do nothing"

(Naranjo 1971:60)

Goldstein (1976) agreed and put forward the idea that in this meditative state, we may discover many ways of watching, listening or doing nothing, or conversely, ways of not just watching, not just listening, not just sitting doing nothing.

Through this meditative state of simply *being*, dis-identifying with all internal chatter, we may become aware of ourselves and all that we bring to the situation, and we may begin to grasp *experientially* the question of who we are or what makes us, us.

3.2 AIMS OF VIPASSANA/INSIGHT MEDITATION.

Although the field of meditation research began only about thirty years ago, the current research literature on meditation (and particularly the aims of meditation) is voluminous and rapidly expanding.

The aim of Vipassana or *insight* meditation is to gain insight into the nature of psychic functioning rather than the induction of an altered state of consciousness. Other approaches and types of meditation may have similar or different aims, but as the focus of this study is Vipassana/Insight meditation only the aims relevant to this form will be addressed.

Vipassana meditation expands attention of mental and physical events as they occur, and leads to a process of *"observation of sensory input in progressive states of knowledge of the impermanent, unsatisfactory and non-substantial nature of all phenomena"* (Engler 1984:27). Both Goldstein (1976) and Engler (1984) are of the opinion that the practice of Vipassana meditation is the one form which clearly seeks to liberate *suffering* by bringing about enduring intrapsychic structural change.

3.2.1 Bare attention.

Vipassana meditation deals with the choiceless awareness or *bare attention* to objects. There are two technical paradigms (Engler 1984): a particular form of attention deployment and a particular way of managing affect. Cognitively, attention is restricted to the arising of the images, bodily sensations, feelings and thought patterns as they occur in the *here-and-now*. The meditator notes or becomes aware without judgement of these internal processes as they occur, although no attention is focussed on the actual content (Bloomfield 1980). Boorstein (1980) points out that affectively all stimuli are paid attention to but in a non-selective manner and without condemnation. There is an acceptance and a *letting go*. Engler (1984) supports this aim by stating that attention is kept bare of any reaction to what is perceived. Engler (1984:28) comments that "*the meditator attempts to attend to any and all stimuli without preference, comment, judgement, reflection or interpretation*". Anything that comes into awareness is immediately made the object of bare attention (Goldstein 1976; Engler 1984). Thus the aim is threefold; to come to an understanding and acceptance of one's own internal mental world and its processes, and in this way begin to realise that one has the power to change or adjust them, and to gain freedom from believing that one's own psychic processes and manifestations are unknown and uncontrollable (Shapiro 1980; Shapiro and Walsh 1984; Walsh and Vaughan 1980; Wilber 1981; Engler 1984; Walsh 1983).

3.2.2 Heightened levels of concentration.

An aim of Vipassana meditation is to cultivate a degree of concentration, characterized by non-interference, non-interpretation and one-pointed attention, and in this manner one can begin to observe the mind-body processes (Goldstein 1976; Boals 1978; Boorstein 1980).

3.2.3 Non-analytical attitudes towards content.

According to Walsh (1977, 1978) and Wilber (1979a) there may be a tendency to become involved or caught up in the content of awareness rather than continuing to attend to its processes. It is an aim of Vipassana meditation not to get involved or identify with the thoughts, feelings,

sensations, visualizations that arise (Walsh 1978, Walsh and Vaughan 1980) but to keep attention focused on the essential characteristics of all psychophysical events (Wilber 1979a, 1980; Walsh 1983), whatever their content.

3.2.4 Insight into the process nature of reality.

Epstein (1988) remarks that once the meditator is capable of bare attention, non-selective awareness, non-judgmental self observation and interpretation, and has an ability to hold attention for a period of time, undistracted and steadily, only then may the seed of insight into several phenomena begin to sprout and become productive in the service of the ego. There is insight into, among other things, *the process nature of reality* (Mann 1974 and Epstein 1988), into *the nature of moment-to-moment events* (Walsh 1983), and into *the radical impermanence of all phenomena* (Wilber 1979a, 1980; Muktananda 1980; Walsh 1983; Engler 1984).

Once attention is established and maintained, a deeper level of perception is noted (Engler 1984; Russell 1986). There is observation of how the self is made or designed in each moment, and how this self appears together with other objects of observation, not simply in isolation, but always relative to the state of observation of the meditator (Engler 1984). There is an awareness that previous experiences appear to condition each moment of self-object representation (Walsh 1983) and how each moment conditions the next (Russell 1986).

As observations continue, the mental and physical events appear to have "*an absolute beginning, a brief duration, and an absolute end*" (Engler 1984:46). All rises and all falls away (Goldstein 1976). The nature of reality, in the light of this observation, is discovered to be a discontinuous process.

The meditator experiences the temporal nature of perception prior to pattern recognition, before stimuli are built up into recognised percepts of ordinary experience (Wilber *et al* 1986). Engler (1984) and Epstein (1986, 1988) add that a time may arrive when the meditator no longer perceives one event occurring after another, but rather that all these events stop having a beginning and an end, but simply *just are*. In the light of this observation, it has been accepted that one aim of the meditation practice is to reverse the key stages in the representational process

individual self and object representations only as the end products of a very long and complex re-working of stimulus information (Engler 1984).

Goldstein (1976) and Walsh (1983) have noted that with the experience of moment-to-moment living and being, there is also a profound understanding of the radical impermanence of all phenomena, including events, experiences, thoughts, feelings and perceptions. Epstein (1988) has added to this by remarking that in this experience of impermanence, the idea of a solid body, a stable identity, a durable perceptual object, no longer appears possible, and there is a deeper conviction that nothing anywhere, including the self, is durable and ever-lasting. Goldstein (1976) has put forward the notion that everything changes and continues to do so, not only events, but mental and physical processes - thinking, sensing, emotions, imaging - all these come and pass away. The only unchanging phenomenon is that of change itself.

From the meditative perspective, the strivings and desires for sense-gratification and selfhood are seen as the sources of pain and suffering. The aim of meditation is to realise this and to deal effectively with it. In the meditative state, one discovers that these desires or strivings are not innate, but there is a tendency to condition oneself to respond or act/behave in a certain manner which seeks to have these desires met, but which may bring about pain and suffering either consciously now or unconsciously later on in life (Goldstein 1976; Wilber 1979a; Welwood 1979; Wilber *et al* 1986). There is thus an element of conditioning, to which we react in a prescribed way. Meditation training may return a previously conditioned response to voluntary control (Walsh 1978; Engler 1984).

3.2.5 Misconceptions of aims.

3.2.5.1 The issue of the ego.

There is an incorrect idea that an aim of meditation is to *transcend the ego*, to leave it completely behind (Engler 1984, Walsh 1983). The ego is a collective term designating the regulatory and integrative functions of the psyche. To transcend the ego would mean to surrender the very faculties which make us human, the psychological structures which make it possible to think, to plan, to remember, to anticipate, to organize, to self reflect, to distinguish reality from

fantasy, to exercise voluntary control over impulses and desires, to love, to share our selves with one another, to act and to decide. From this point of view it takes a mature level of ego organisation to meditate, especially for forms of meditation observing the moment-to-moment mind-body process (Engler 1984). Goldstein (1976) is of the opinion that meditation *strengthens* the ego rather than transcends it. However, it must be noted that although ego-psychologists may criticise the so-called aim of non-attachment and dis-identification in meditation, they themselves do acknowledge that an integral part of personal growth comes about by letting go or renouncing outworn, infantile ties to objects and changing the idea of self which has become maladaptive or outgrown (Welwood 1985).

Boals (1978) and Boorstein (1980) put forward the concept of the meditator becoming a *witness* to his own experience. Russell (1986) agrees and adds that this implies that the meditator is capable of stepping back and observing, without judging, what is experienced while experiencing it. Walsh (1983) has further defined this goal as the ability of the meditator to use his ego as both subject and object of its experience at the same time. Sterba 1934 (in Shapiro and Walsh 1984) was one of the first writers to point out this aim, although he believed that it is not unique to Vipassana type meditation.

As mentioned, in order to meditate it is imperative that the ego has a strong and mature organisation and is functioning at optimal level. Engler (1984:40) points out that "*persons with poorly differentiated and weakly integrated representations of themselves and others cannot tolerate uncovering techniques*". This is because the weak ego may not have the ability to distance itself in order to observe experience (Walsh and Vaughan 1980; Epstein 1988).

Reliance on primitive defenses like projection identification with its cycle of projection and introjection of its bad self and object images, also make it difficult to distinguish between fantasy and reality and this leads to severely diminished capacity for detached observation.

Kernberg 1972 (cited in Engler 1984:40)

Engler (1984:41) states that persons with these deficits cannot tolerate the painful effects which

may emerge in meditation:

Abstinence and delay also become intolerable since contradictory affects and impulses lie close to consciousness and tend to be expressed and acted on. Since love and hate, desire and fear, remain dissociated and neither polar ego state has a mitigating influence on the raw force of the other, the ego is often overwhelmed by imperious impulses and effects with which it cannot cope.

It is emphasized that Vipassana meditation may prove dangerous to someone with an immature ego or with poor personality organisation (Kornfield 1979; Russell 1986; Welwood 1986; Epstein 1988). Such people may run the risk of further *fragmentation* to their already fragile and vulnerable sense of self (Engler 1984). Vipassana meditation seeks not to disintegrate the ego in a *pathological sense* but to strengthen it (Goldstein 1976).

Engler (1984:43) is of the opinion that

in order to practice an uncovering technique like Vipassana and to achieve the structural changes the practice aims at, it is developmentally necessary to acquire a cohesive and integrated self first, one that is differentiated from others and has a degree of autonomy. If such a self is not established there is a clear sequence of pathological consequences.

3.2.5.2 The issue of emotional problems.

Ram Dass (1976) began meditation with the aim of hoping that his personal problems would fall away. However, after ten years of meditation, all the *stuff* he did not understand about himself still irked.

My theory was that ... if I meditated hard enough, if I opened my heart in devotional practices wide enough, all that unknowledgable stuff would go away. But it didn't.

Ram Dass (1976:173)

It has since been accepted that while meditation helps one to reach higher states of consciousness (Wilber 1979a, 1980, 1986) it does not seek or aim to resolve any major emotional problems (Goleman 1971; Welwood 1979; Walsh 1980; Russell 1980, 1986; Epstein 1986). In fact, it has been suggested that meditation can even exaggerate some mental pathology (Engler 1984; Epstein 1988). However, if personal problems are defined in terms of the goals of meditation systems, such as eliminating the ego or self (Welwood 1979,1983), then meditation may be effective (Wilber 1979a). But Epstein (1986) is of the opinion that it does not appear to be a cure for ordinary emotional conflicts.

There are further aims of the Vipassana meditation but they need not be dealt with here.

3.3 MEDITATION AND THE UNCONSCIOUS.

*We are unconscious of our minds.
Our minds are not unconscious.*

R. D. Laing

The unconscious is perhaps the most powerful concept in all human psychology. In this section the unconscious and its relation to meditation will be discussed.

The unconscious has been traditionally understood as an aspect of the psyche *inside* the individual, inherently separate from the total world process. Thus, depth-psychologists spoke of *unconscious content* such as instincts, wishes, drives, repressed feelings, as if they were contained inside the mind. Underlying this view is the outmoded Cartesian dualistic assumption that the mind is something separate and distinct, having a life of its own. In the light of this, the unconscious material is normally unavailable, although its content may be the driving force behind our behaviors, thoughts, feelings and attitudes.

However, there is a move towards a new model of the unconscious process (Welwood 1983,1985; Wilber 1986). The unconscious and conscious may be understood as two different ways in which the organism organises interactions with the world, rather than as two separate parts of a psyche.

According to Welwood (1979:157):

What is unconscious are holistic ways of patterning experience, models of relationship which work with multiple connections as a whole, without having to distinguish their separate parts. The basis for this new concept is that psychological events must be understood as forms of interaction, rather than separate mental phenomena.

In referring to Buddhist meditation (which has Vipassana meditation as one of its meditative forms of practice), Jung (1960) states that meditation is a direct root to the unconscious.

Meditation does not center upon anything. Not being centered, it would be rather like a dissolution of consciousness and hence a direct approach to the unconscious condition. Meditation ... may be a sort of Royal Road to the unconscious.

Jung (1960:501)

It must be noted, however, that Jung's model of the unconscious had its limitations, and his apparent lack of direct experience of the practice of meditation hampered his investigations.

As has been mentioned, Vipassana-type meditation can be described as an *uncovering* method or technique (Engler 1984). That is, in using Vipassana type meditation, one observes whatever comes into awareness without attempting to eliminate it or hold on to it. The result is that unconscious material begins to arise (Walsh 1977, 1978; Welwood 1979; Brown and Engler 1980; Shapiro 1980; Engler 1984).

A meditator, using Vipassana meditation techniques, will see the arising of the unconscious material not as a distraction (Goleman 1971; Epstein 1988), but simply as an object of awareness (Welwood 1979). The unconscious material that comes into awareness is allowed to dissipate and is not analysed or interpreted. In Vipassana meditation the emerging unconscious is simply observed (Goldstein 1976; Shapiro 1980; Russell 1986) and it eventually passes away (Goleman 1971).

Russell (1986:63) remarks that

...this lack of specific attention appears to allow some release of strong unconscious material, but it may fail to bring out other material. Even the material that does arise can dissipate without being examined.

However, it must also be noted that although meditation may allow the uncovering of unconscious material, it has been shown that meditation, especially within the Eastern paradigms, may also be a *covering technique* in which meditation does not *pay attention* to the unconscious psychodynamics, i.e. there is the attitude that the unconscious material is viewed as a distraction and obstacle to progress in meditation (Walsh 1978; Russell 1986). Russell (1986:64) believes that

...this kind of selective attention, when focused on the unconscious in a kind of reverse over-emphasis, creates another kind of limitation, that which prevented the Western psychologies from learning much about altered or higher states of consciousness - until recently.

In summary, it has been accepted that unconscious material may be brought into consciousness by meditation. In fact, deep meditation appears to increase the openness that one has to the emergence of such material. If nothing else the meditation practice may sensitise the person to his or her inner world (Wilber 1979a, 1979b; Walsh 1977, 1978, 1983; Welwood 1979; Epstein 1986, 1988; Engler 1984; Russell 1986). Russell (1986:69) is of the opinion that

...the person who has solved more of his personal problems (has more awareness of his unconscious material) will be able to meditate more effectively and more deeply in the long run.

It is agreed that meditation may also increase a person's sensitivity to deep unconscious material (Epstein 1984; Russell 1986; Engler 1984).

3.4 RESPONSES TO MEDITATION.

3.4.1 Introduction.

Psychological, physiological and chemical responses to meditation have been observed and researched and documented (Walsh 1979; Shapiro 1980). Initial research began in the early sixties with sporadic investigations of claims by some *yogi's* that they could demonstrate abnormal degrees of physiological control, such as slowing of the heart rate (Arnand, Chinna and Singh 1961). However, it was only in the late sixties that serious research began (Tart 1969).

Many psychologists have wanted to create a link between "*the practice of the Eastern consciousness disciplines and Western empirical research*" (Walsh 1983:161). Research has been hampered by the current research tools of Western science, which primarily aims at measuring objective, physiological, chemical and behavioural variables (Walsh 1977 and Shapiro 1980). The meditation variables that were measured in the early seventies were commonly physiological, i.e. heart rate, and not the subtle *experiential shifts* which are the goals of meditation (Russell 1980; Muktananda 1980; Shapiro 1980; Walsh and Shapiro 1980; Wilber *et al* 1986).

3.4.2 Psychological responses.

The literature in this area is extensive and many studies have been undertaken, implemented and evaluated. The general picture emerging suggests that meditation may enhance psychological well-being and perceptual sensitivity (Shapiro and Giber 1978; Shapiro 1980; Shapiro and Walsh 1984). Many studies also indicate that drug and alcohol dependency may be reduced (Benson 1969; Shaffii *et al.* 1975; Shapiro and Zifferblatt 1976). A number of studies have also demonstrated that meditation can enhance confidence, self-esteem, sense of control, empathy and self-actualization (Lesh 1970; Nidich *et al.* 1973; Hjelle 1974). There have also been extensive studies on the role of meditation on induced relaxation (Benson 1969; Girodo 1974; Shapiro 1980) and desensitisation to formally stressful stimuli (Boudreau 1972; Girodo 1974). There is also evidence of increased insight into the moment-to-moment events and the process nature of reality (Goldstein 1976), acceptance of unconscious material (Welwood 1979; Engler 1984; Russell 1986)

or altered states of consciousness (Mann 1974; Welwood 1979; Wilber 1979a, 1982; Wilber et al. 1986), heightened awareness (Welwood 1979), increased attention (Walsh 1983), deautomatisation and counter-conditioning (Epstein 1986), dis-identification from mental content (Walsh 1977, 1978, 1980; Russell 1986), regression in the service of the ego (Walsh 1984; Epstein 1986, 1988) and behavioural self-control skills (Maupin 1965; Deikman 1982; Goleman 1971; Walsh 1977, 1978). In summary, meditation may have considerable therapeutic potential (Walsh 1981).

It should also be noted that some studies suggest that meditation is not necessarily more effective for certain disorders (eg, phobias) than other self-regulatory strategies such as relaxation-training and self-hypnosis (Walsh 1979). However, some meditators report that *"their subjective experiences are deeper, more meaningful and/or more enjoyable than those of subjects using other self-regulatory strategies"* (Walsh 1979:163).

3.4.3 Physiological and chemical responses to meditation.

As mentioned, the initial investigations into meditation were focused on claims by some yogi's that they could alter their heart beat. When some of these claims proved valid, systematic investigations were begun in the early sixties. However, it was discovered later that some physiological and chemical responses are not unique to meditation but can be induced by other self-control strategies such as self-hypnosis.

Studies show that there can be reductions in metabolic rate (Wallace 1970; Fenwick *et al* 1977), a reduction in the galvanic skin response following a meditation session (Goleman and Schwartz 1976 in Shapiro and Walsh 1984), a shift in the quieting components of the automatic nervous system and altered brain blood flow which could be unique to meditation (Wallace *et al* 1971; Davidson 1976; Pagano and Frumkin 1977; Bennette and Trinder 1977; Glueck and Strobel 1975). According to Walsh (1980:169)

...few chemical mechanisms seem to have been advanced, although a number of relevant responses have been identified, eg. reduced blood levels of lactate and of the hormones cortisone and epinephrine, which are involved in the response to stress.

In summary, both metabolic and neural responses have been clearly demonstrated to occur in meditation. Certain features of the EEG patterns appear unique to meditation but whether the metabolic responses are also unique remains unclear.

It is as if our everyday awareness were but an insignificant island, surrounded by a vast ocean of unsuspected and uncharted consciousness, whose waves beat continuously upon the barrier reefs of our normal awareness, until quite spontaneously, they break through, flooding our island awareness with knowledge of a vast, largely unexplored, but intensely real domain of new world consciousness.

K. Wilber 1979.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1 CHOICE OF METHODOLOGY.

The aim of this study is to focus on the development of personal growth arising from the meditative experiences of high school pupils. Personal growth has been described essentially in qualitative terms that relate to subjective experience. The methodological tool to be used in investigating personal growth must be in harmony with the nature of such a phenomenon, and must be able to capture and describe the subtle nuances and meanings experienced by the subjects. While there are a number of qualitative methodological approaches that could be used, the limitations inherent in this study make the case study method an attractive option. It offers intensive qualitative exploration in a most economically rigorous manner. It allows the researcher to faithfully describe the experience of a single person, to develop interpretations of those experiences, to present meanings, lines of reasoning, perceptions of the situation, hypothesis and theory development.

In order to ensure the validity of conclusions in such an approach, Eckstein (1975), Giorgi (1985a,1986), Kazdin (1981) Mitchell (1983), Yin (1984) and Bromley (1986), all stress that careful procedures need to be established for collecting and evaluating the quality of evidence. Kruger (1986), Kiesler (1981), and Taylor and Bogdan (1984) are of the opinion that experimental methodology often sacrifices external validity for internal validity. The case study method may offer a solution to this dilemma.

It preserves external validity by investigating persons or events in or as close as to their natural contexts and it employs logical inferences to enhance internal validity.

Yin (1984:25)

4.2 THE CASE STUDY RESEARCH METHOD.

4.2.1 Defining a case study.

Bromley (1986) proposes that a case study is essentially a reconstruction, interpretation and presentation of a major episode in a person's life. It is an account of how and why a person behaved as he or she did in a given situation. Edwards (1989a) points out that the case study method deals with the systematic presentation of information about a single unit. According to Yin (1984), compared to experimental studies the case study is not as effective in delineating a causality or generalizations, but is excellent for the purpose of providing an understanding of the experience of a single subject and it is, in this regard, a very effective method of enquiry. Edwards (1989a, 1989b) agrees and states that in contrast to most experimental methods where large samples are examined, the case study method is ideographic, examining an individual case in depth. Edwards (1989a) remarks that the first stage of this is to develop an accurate description of the individual case, which in due course can be expected to lead to the development of theory and statement of general principles. Bromley (1986:2) is of the opinion that the object of a case study is *"any singular case or example or incident, the description and analysis of which is brought to contribute to our understanding of an area of enquiry"*.

In his definition of a case study Mitchell (1983:192) focuses on the importance of the development of theory. He defines a case study as

...a detailed examination of an event (or series of related events) which the analyst believes exhibits the operation of some identified general theoretical principle ... A case study is essentially heuristic, it reflects in the events portrayed features which may be construed as a manifestation of some general abstract theoretical principle.

4.2.2 Types of case studies.

Edwards (1989a, 1989b) has identified four types or stages of case study method. He stresses that case study research is a complex process with many stages, and the investigation of an individual case may serve one of the many different purposes within the overall process of defining an area

of study, articulating key processes and developing theory. Below are his four types of study which are intended to represent points on a continuum, rather than exclusive categories:

- a) Exploratory-descriptive case studies
- b) Descriptive-dialogic case studies
- c) Theoretical-heuristic case studies
- d) Crucial-or-test case studies

This thesis is located within the exploratory-descriptive, descriptive-dialogic and theoretical-heuristic case study arena.

Edwards (1989a:7,12) states that exploratory-descriptive case studies aim

...to achieve a richly articulated description of an individual case that furnishes an in-depth understanding. The goal is not to generalise to other cases or to develop theory but to achieve an organised and coherent presentation of the phenomena....essentially this type of case study is exploratory and it serves the function of opening up an in-depth understanding of something as yet only superficially known.

The present study attempts to achieve an organised description and coherent presentation of an individual case without urgency to generalise to other cases, and its function in so doing, is to limit interpretation and yet provide a clear understanding of the phenomenon.

According to Edwards (1989a:7) the descriptive-dialogic case study presents an early phase in the process of theory:

It is a search for a framework to make sense of the description and to articulate it adequately. In addition hypotheses may be formulated for testing in later studies. Data may be situated within existing theory ... The content and adequacy of conceptualizations in existing theory can be informally tested.

The emphasis with the descriptive-dialogic case study is on faithful description and portrayal of a phenomenon as an early phase in the process of theory construction. This thesis is part of such a type of case study for the conclusions form part of the early phase of theory construction. It also sets out to describe in much detail, the phenomenon, which lies in existing theory. This research also tests existing conceptions which are not adequately differentiated (see Chapter Five), and three hypotheses were later formulated for testing in further studies (see Chapter Six).

Edwards (1989a:7) states that the dialogic-heuristic case study is concerned with

...rigorously developing or testing existing theory...since cases selected must furnish a means of testing specific principles, generalizations or hypotheses.

Eckstein (1975:04) pointed out that increasing rigour is required as the move is made from less formal descriptive-dialogic to more formal heuristic type:

... each step beyond the first can be considered a kind of disciplined configuration study, but is better regarded as a heuristic case study preceeding with increasingly refined questions and toward increasingly more specific ends.

Thus the focus is on testing the adequacy of specific aspects of existing theory. This thesis includes this type of case study too because it does just this (see Chapter Five).

4.3 PROCEDURE AND SUBJECT SELECTION.

The opportunity for this study presented itself spontaneously. Four adolescent girls, knowing of the researcher's interest and orientation in meditation, voluntarily requested an introduction to meditation. They were white, English-speaking 17-year old school girls at a private, non-racial, co-educational high school. The girls were judged to be psychologically healthy showing average adolescent emotional, physical, social and intellectual levels of maturity. An appropriate three-month Vipassana meditation programme for these subjects was developed (see Appendix).

The programme was based on instructions and discourses given during a Vipassana meditation retreat developed by Joseph Goldstein (1976).

During the first three weeks of the programme, meditation was guided and closely supervised by the researcher who met the subjects each day for 20-25 minutes. After this period, the subjects were encouraged to meditate alone each day for 25-30 minutes for a period of nine weeks. During this period the subjects met with the researcher four times a week to meditate together. These sessions were guided and music specially suitable for meditation used.

During the programme many interviews, both focused and unstructured (Yin 1984), were conducted, tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. The majority of these interviews occurred immediately after the meditative sessions. The subjects also recorded their daily meditative experiences in personal diaries.

The researcher then selected one subject (Becky) out of the small group of four, to focus on and complete a detailed analysis of the meditative experiences and to explore these experiences and their contributions to personal growth. This subject was selected because

- she did not miss a single day of meditation during the three-month period;
- her daily recorded meditation experiences were kept up to date and she expressed herself in a more logical and clear fashion than the other subjects;
- her meditative experiences were representative of the other subjects' experiences during the meditation;
- she was the most articulate subject;
- she was the most accessible and available subject for interviews.

The diary of the selected subject was collected and used in order to avoid the subject's feelings and experiences being reduced to the researcher's own preconceptions and notions. Interviews

were also conducted two, four and six weeks after the completion of the programme in order to explore any alterations that the selected subject may have wanted to make with regards to her meditative experiences.

4.4 DATA ANALYSIS.

The development of themes or categories of experience which emerged from the meditation sessions were explored and their contribution to personal growth investigated using two perspectives, namely ego-psychology and transpersonal psychology. Only the data gained from this one subject (chosen for reasons mentioned above) was documented.

However, reference has been made to these other three subjects (whose experiences are not explicated and documented owing to limitations of space and time) where these experiences, if not referred to, may have distorted and invalidated the discussion and conclusions made.

Data was analysed using methods developed and tested by Giorgi (1975b, 1985a, 1986) and Fischer and Wertz (in Giorgi 1986) whereby a single subject's experiences are accurately recorded and explicated. Themes that became evident were identified, organised, explicated and evaluated in terms of the contribution that the meditative experiences may or may not have played in the subject's personal growth and development.

Growth fundamentally means an enlarging and expanding of one's horizons, a growth of one's boundaries, outwardly in perspective, inwardly in depth. Growth is re-appointment, re-zoning, re-mapping, an acknowledgement, and then enrichment of ever deeper and more encompassing levels of one's own self.

K. Wilber 1979.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION.

There is clear evidence that personal growth did occur in the subject during the three month meditation programme. However, it is not possible to claim that changes in the personality structure of the subject were entirely due to the meditative experiences, for it is possible that other activities, events, circumstances and people may have simultaneously aided growth or enhanced awareness. Yet there were some indications of a relationship between the meditative experiences and the subject's personal growth.

The major themes of the meditative experiences that emerged during the meditation programme are documented, and personal growth is discussed from an ego-psychology perspective and that of transpersonal psychology. Some themes that arose but which do not appear to be directly related to personal growth, are discussed at the end of the chapter.

It needs to be repeated that discussion is focused on the results obtained from a three-month meditation programme undertaken by one white English-speaking school girl from a private high school in South Africa. It is not the aim of this exploratory case study, nor is it possible, to draw generalisations from the results.

It is interesting to note that the personal growth that occurred during the programme was primarily located within the ego-psychology framework. The researcher, from her own experiences with and practice of meditation, as well as her own exploration of and orientation in transpersonal psychology, had expected that the subject would experience personal growth much more in the transpersonal psychology framework than was revealed to have occurred. However, the subject

showed no identification to the so-called *transpersonal self* and thus the results show that personal growth within the framework of transpersonal psychology was a minor or secondary issue. There are at least three main hypotheses for this result, although there are possibly other explanations. The first relates to the length of the meditation programme, i.e. three months was too short to allow the emergence of the transpersonal self. Secondly, the actual daily meditation sessions were also too short and did not facilitate a process of identification to the transpersonal self. While transpersonal literature indicates that the systematic practice of meditation leads to an identification with the transpersonal self (Grof 1988), it is not clear, however, on how long a person is to meditate before this experience of identification to the transpersonal self occurs. Thirdly, the subject was an adolescent school girl and thus may not have been *developmentally ready* in terms of having reached a level of cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual maturity to experience a receptivity or openness to the emergence of a transpersonal self or identification to the higher self.

5.2 THEMES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF EGO-PSYCHOLOGY.

5.2.1 Awareness of parts of the self previously unconscious.

It was evident that certain aspects of the self of which the subject was previously unaware, became conscious. Becky remarked "*I never knew I was quite selfish ...that I could do things simply for my own gain. It was uncomfortable to realise this.*"

She also conveyed that "*I also never knew how manipulative I was until I began to meditate. I found this horrible.*"

Jung (1960) indicated that growth involved the expansion of awareness of certain aspects of the self of which the person may not be aware. The meditative experiences of the subject may be seen to play a role in the development of this part of personal growth. The subject indicated that she became aware of parts of her personality during her meditation, of which she had not been conscious before. This is closely connected to the idea that elements unacceptable to the ego are located in the unconscious. Literature on meditation reveals that meditation leads the person to a position whereby she is made more aware of unconscious mental content. The meditative

experiences allowed the subject to encounter these denied or repressed elements of her personality. Personal growth is seen as the process whereby a person confronts the denied aspects of the self and then assimilates these into conscious awareness (Jung 1958). Yet the subject did not demonstrate that she had progressed as far as assimilating unconscious aspects of her personality. The meditative experiences of the subject can be seen as playing a part in the emergent awareness of these unacceptable elements of the ego, such as her manipulateness and selfishness. However, other events, activities, circumstances and people may also have contributed to this development of the subject, and it cannot be concluded that it was *only* these meditative experiences which brought about this aspect of personal growth. However, the subject's statement indicates that meditation did play a role in this development.

5.2.2 Increased contact with and expression of feelings.

Becky expressed that

...I am more in contact now with my feelings ... After meditating yesterday I realised I was speaking about how I felt, usually I don't even know how I am feeling ... I think meditation had a part in this.

In the early part of the programme (initial three weeks) the subjects showed difficulty verbalizing how they felt in the *here-and-now*. It is evident that this changed. As the weeks passed, each subject slowly acquired the skill of focusing on her feelings and the expression of these feelings.

Perls (1951) stressed that personal growth includes the contact of feelings which are part of the total experiences of an individual. During the programme the researcher observed that the subject slowly acquired the ability to know what she was feeling and to talk about this feeling.

Evidence indicated swings of mood in a single meditation session, and towards the end of the three month programme, these swings of mood were still evident but there was a quicker centering

on a single emotion:

"During meditating today (11 weeks of meditation) I found I felt angry, sad, scared, hopeless but also happy, but then, sooner than before, I was feeling mainly one feeling ... tense and worried".

To talk or intellectualise about a feeling may result in an emergence of *a distance* between the emotion as felt and the rationalisation of the emotion as thought. Personal growth may be seen as the expression of feelings not simply verbally but non-verbally too. During the course of the meditation programme, it became evident that the subject allowed herself to experience feelings in a bodily non-verbal way. For example, after one meditation session in which the subject felt feelings of anger, she expressed the anger by shouting and punching a pillow continuously and vigorously. In retrospect, the subject believed that it was the meditative experiences which brought her to the point of allowing herself to express the feeling in a non-verbal way.

However, it must also be noted that the meditative experiences, which included the subject feeling such emotions as anger, sadness and unworthiness, may have allowed the non-verbal expression of feelings to occur earlier in the programme but did not because the subject was *wary* of the researcher and may have been inhibited in her full expression of the feelings experienced. Although the researcher explored this idea with the subject who herself said this was not the case, the researcher still has reservations that it may not have been so.

5.2.3 Unblocking avenues to awareness.

Personal growth includes the growing awareness of how one prevents oneself from feeling and experiencing. The results showed that the subject became conscious of how she blocks herself from fully experiencing an emotion:

I found out that when meditating, the sitting still did not allow me to get busy and to ignore my feelings. I know now that when I am hurting because of something that happened, I stop myself from feeling hurt by getting very busy doing school work or playing a hard game of hockey. To sit down still in meditation I couldn't escape to a busy activity, then I found myself feeling all the hurt inside.

Data from all subjects showed that the suppression of emotions during meditation was unsuccessful. Becky confessed that

...I ignored my angry feelings towards my friend all day long. I just had no time to indulge in it ... I was too busy at school. Then suddenly, as I settled into the meditation, the anger was there. I found no escape, I could not ignore it any longer, so I sat and got angry. I tried to deal with it by simply observing it, but that was not successful ... I got more angry ...

This theme emerged after the subject was able to contact her feelings. It must be noted that the more the subject learnt about her feelings and how to express them, the more the subject learnt how she actually blocked herself from the experience of feeling. During the meditative experiences, she began to realise that it is herself, and no one else, that creates the inner blocks to the experience of her subjective world. Becky related that *"it is me that makes me stop feeling, no one else, no one else says, don't feel hurt or angry, I decide to stop the feeling"*.

Perls (1951, 1969) believed that when a person becomes aware of how he prevents himself from experiencing, when he makes contact with all his experiencing with vividness and immediacy, then personal growth occurs. Jung (1960) remarked that personal growth is the process of unblocking blocks to awareness.

5.2.4 Dealing with negative emotions and thoughts.

Results clearly showed that the meditative experiences of the subject included experiences of feeling anxious, angry, sad and unworthy.

During the meditation programme, it was evident that all subjects were confronted with mental content of an anxiety-provoking nature. Becky articulated that she *"felt quite anxious about my exams"*.

Seven weeks later, during a meditation session, Becky vocalised the following:

I found myself getting anxious while meditating. The sitting still seemed to make me more aware of how anxious I really am, especially when I know I have a test soon. After meditating for some weeks, I realised later the best way to deal with this anxious feeling was to confront it, to try to understand it, to see if I was making a mountain out of a mole-hill ... to put my anxiety in perspective. Somehow doing this made me feel less anxious.

The meditation sessions and experiences did not cause Becky to have less fears. After three months of meditation, Becky's primary fears focused on the safety of her family. Becky indicated that she used to "*often have horrible nightmares about my mom or dad or sister dying or being killed. I think that's my greatest fear*".

Another fear experienced by Becky was that of dying and the uncertainty of life after death. "*I'm not sure I'll get to heaven or hell when I die. That subject confuses me a lot because how do I really know if there is a God up there*".

Becky also had stated that she experienced "*a terrible phobia about being raped or just someone coming into the house when I'm there by myself and harming me*".

However, it is apparent that meditation was a facilitator in the acceptance of these fears: "*During the times that I mentioned ... I found it was OK to be scared of dying ... my dad dying ... being raped ... That my fears weren't silly*".

Becky had expressed the knowledge that she had felt angry during the sessions. She said

...I think what often makes me angry is myself, I sometimes feel I push myself too hard or expect too much from myself and when I don't live up to these standards, I become totally irritated with myself.

Anger during the meditation sessions were also a result of circumstances at school. Becky wrote that "*school really pisses me off, the teachers just pile on the work, leaving no time*

for fun or play". Becky also mentioned that *"I'm not sure if meditating helped me to understand my anger. It certainly helped me to accept it when I was feeling angry".* The other subjects, however, indicated clearly that meditation helped them to understand their anger when they experienced it, although not always immediately.

Becky felt sadness during the meditation sessions:

When I sat down I was not sad, but then I suddenly was aware of my feelings and that they were of sadness ... When some days I meditate, I feel sad, but during the other part of the day I don't feel sad.

Becky did not see herself as a *"depressive-type"* of person. She believed meditation got her in touch with her feelings. Becky is of the opinion that she is generally cheerful. When feeling close to tears and experiencing a sense of loss, Becky allowed herself to express, quite openly, her sadness. Her sadness was primarily focused on her relationship with her mother. She longed for a warmer and more honest communication system with her mother, and not having this left her feeling sad. The meditative experiences brought her in touch with these feelings.

Experiences of what she perceives as *depression* or a sense of loss and sadness occurs mainly after a short contact with her mother, a contact which was unsatisfactory to Becky in terms of the conversation being too shallow or superficial, or the actions together being a waste of time.

Becky indicated that she had sometimes felt forgotten and insignificant, leaving her feeling very uncared for and generally unworthy. Immediately after one session Becky related that

...sometimes I feel unworthy when I hear that my mom has come into town without letting me know or coming to visit me. I feel that she doesn't care about me, I feel bad, and worst of all, I feel it is because of me, she doesn't like me or I am not worth her time and effort to come to see me.

It was during the meditative experiences that the subject realised that to deal with these negative thoughts and emotions was not to deny them but to confront them in a constructive, positive and meaningful way. Freud (1903), Jung (1961), and Ellis (1962) believed that this dealing with

negative thoughts and emotions implies a confrontation with them, and is part of the process of personal growth. It must be noted that it is uncertain whether the subject actually went into the process of accepting and integrating these emotions and thoughts, or whether it was just the intellectual realisation that confrontation is the best way to deal with them. In other words, although the subject showed that during the meditative experiences she understood that to deal with negative emotions and thoughts was to confront them in a constructive way, it is not known for certain whether the subject *actually* did confront and then accept these emotions and thoughts. However, it may be claimed that the meditative experiences seemed to facilitate the understanding that negative thoughts and emotions are best dealt with by confronting them *and working through* them without repressing or denying them.

5.2.5 Recognition of goals and plans to achieve goals, and of limitations.

Adler (1969) sees personal growth of the person as the ability to form goals or objectives and to create the means by which they can be attained. Rollo May (1961) supports this concept but adds that personal growth includes the development of the ability to learn limitations as well, and as such there is a freedom in exploring creativity within known boundaries of capabilities.

Before the start of the programme, Becky was aware of her goals and objectives, and she had ideas about how to attain them. What the meditative experiences exposed her to was new ideas of how to attain the goals and a realisation of her limitations:

When I sat down to meditate I soon found myself thinking about my future, what I want to do and how I could do it. While meditating I found that I was re-thinking how I could better achieve my hopes and goals. I also realise now that I can't do everything. I must say no, I do have limits.

5.2.6 Increased awareness of and perceptual sensitivity to formerly recognised and unrecognised internal and external phenomena.

I am much much more aware of things around me, their shapes, their sounds, their feel, their smell. I notice things about my friends, how they stand, how they smile, how they

get angry ... I also notice myself more ... I am much more aware of my body ... what it does when I get tense, when I feel sad or happy. I am more aware of my thoughts ... Things that I was not aware of ... I now see ... I look at the different shades of green that a single tree may have on its leaves. I seem to be more aware of how I am feeling now. Before I began to meditate, this was not so easy.

Jung (1961) and Epstein (1988) both claimed that personal growth involved the increased awareness of and sensitivity to the inner processes of a person. In the light of these experiences it can be concluded that the subject became more aware not only of herself but others and of the outer world. Maslow (1970) said change is the key word in the definition of personal growth. Change is growth and growth is change, and people have the power to understand their limitations, and to change basic views, notions, thoughts and values. Change involves increased awareness of the inner subjective world (Wilber 1979b). Perls (1969) believed that personal change means increased awareness. Personal growth means change of the *inner man* (Yalom 1980). The meditative experiences may be seen to play a part in this change, because they brought an awareness of and perceptual sensitivity to formerly recognised and unrecognised internal and external phenomena. Personal growth is the integration of dissociated aspects of experience through awareness. For Perls (1969), emphasis is placed on becoming alert to the totality of one's experience at any given moment.

5.2.7 Exploration of the inner world.

Jung (1960) indicated that personal growth means the exploration of the inner world and the realisation that inner experiences are as real as outer events. This realisation occurred during the meditative experiences in two ways. Firstly, there was a lack of control over thoughts, and secondly, a realisation that thoughts create reality.

The lack of control over thoughts was a common theme for all the subjects. Becky wrote that

...I hadn't realised this before but my thoughts had a mind of their own. They came and went and I just sat and realised I could not control them. When I found myself returning to the breathing I suddenly was aware of my thoughts taking my attention away from the breathing, without me giving them permission to do so. It was quite funny actually.

It was evident that this lack of control over all thoughts persisted throughout the meditation programme. On the last day of the meditation Becky remarked that *"...when I meditated today (60th day) I realised that I never once had a time when I was not thinking ... if I thought I was no longer thinking, that itself was a thought... I realised I was always thinking"*.

Becky had realised very soon after beginning meditation that her thoughts were always there, and they continuously exist. She contended that one day

...when I meditated, I felt sad, but then I realised it had begun as a thought, then I was responding to the thought. It was something like this: I had the thought: I am sad, then I had the feeling .. I am feeling sad and want to cry. It was a strange discovery for me ... My thoughts are powerful in a sense that they are always existing... I hadn't realised this before.

Both Klein (1957) and Jung (1960) demonstrated that the development of personality included an astute awareness of internal processes. Perls (1947, 1969) believed that personal growth occurred when awareness of the self is enhanced. This awareness of self can be achieved through meditation, even for a 17 year old school girl, as these results seem to indicate. Maslow (1971) supported Jung's (1960) idea that personal growth involved the exploration of the inner world. Jung (1913) claimed that we must never forget that the world is, in the first place, a subjective phenomenon, and thus we must be able to let things happen in the psyche, in the inner world. He also remarked that our consciousness does not create itself - it wells up from unknown depths.

5.2.8 Experiences of increased fantasy.

It is apparent from the results that there was an increase in time spent in fantasy. It is not certain why this is so, but it may be that meditation increases the activity of the imagination and thus meditation may increase or *bring out* potential creativity in a person.

In terms of personal growth, Jung (1960) stated that fantasies are not merely an escape and defence against internal and external reality, but are also natural mental expressions of the

instinct. Jung emphasized the importance of allowing fantasies to enter in. These are creative and healthy for the individual as they are the early beginnings of the release of creative unconscious material. There is evidence that some unconscious content did emerge into the conscious mind of the subject. For example, she realised how manipulative and selfish she is. However, the increased time spent in fantasy could be seen as the external manifestation of a deep unconscious change. This appeared to be occurring within the subject during her meditative experiences.

The experience of increased fantasy was a common theme for all the subjects. It was evident that in the early part of the meditation programme (initial three weeks) not much time (30%) was spent in fantasy during meditation. However there is a marked increase in time spent in fantasy after three to three-and-a-half weeks. The average time then spent in fantasy was 60-65%. Becky related that *"it was incredible that my imagination became so much more active. I spend more time dreaming and fantasizing ... this was wonderful"*.

It must be emphasized that personal growth is a process, it is not a destination which one arrives at. Personal growth may be seen as the drive towards wholeness, integration and self-realization (Jung, cited in Corsini and Marsella 1983). Any experience, event, activity circumstance or person(s) that may aid the development of personal growth of an individual is worth exploring. So far, the meditative experiences and the themes therein that have been discussed, are shown to indicate that these experiences, and the activity of meditation as a whole, are seen to play a part in the growth process of the subject.

5.2.9 Perceiving and labeling.

Becky revealed that she first labeled all the experiences she was exposed to during the meditation sessions. She declared that

...when I heard a car's sound passing ... I thought: car, then I heard the familiar sound. I could not simply "hear" a sound. I could not stop labeling everything, sounds, feelings, smells etc I never realised I was doing this.

At the end of the two month period, it was apparent that Becky was

...sometimes, very briefly, able to hear the sound ... as if it were for the first time ... this was quite scary ... the unfamiliar yet familiar. I knew the sound without trying to work out what it was ... a very strange and frightening experience ... but I actually found it amazing to stop, for a short while, labeling everything ... putting name tags on all.

It may be concluded that the subject's meditative experiences gave her the insight into the idea that it seemed that what made something familiar and hence secure was not simply its recognition, but the actual cognitive process of matching, categorizing and labeling it, and that once this was done, then more attention and reactivity was focused on the labeling process, rather than on the stimulus itself. Walsh (1977:158) has written that "*presumably this labeling process must modify our perception in many ways, including reducing our ability to experience each stimulus fully, richly and newly, by reducing its multidimensional nature into a lesser dimensional cognitive labeling framework*".

5.3 THEMES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY.

Transpersonal psychology accepts the definition of personal growth by ego psychology, but takes this definition a step further. According to Wilber (1979b) transpersonal means that some sort of process occurs within the individual, whereby he comes to feel that he is fundamentally one with the entire universe. His sense of identity expands beyond the ego (Walsh and Vaughan 1980) and he identifies with the transpersonal self.

Results revealed that the identification to the transpersonal self may have occurred in subtle ways.

5.3.1 Experiences of peace.

All the subjects experienced brief periods of peace, although it was evident that these periods only

occurred after 8-10 weeks of daily meditation sessions. Becky stated that

...I had been meditating for a little over two months when I experienced a deep peace. It was very soothing and I felt light all over ... I felt rested and very relaxed, as if I'd been in a sleep. But it was a long time, about another two weeks before I vaguely had this experience again.

"We know we are in touch with the transpersonal self when we feel at peace" writes Vaughan (1985a:28). Despite the experience of peace felt by the subject, this does not necessarily mean that she was in touch with the transpersonal self. Many people feel a sense of peace, but to claim that this is an indication of identity to the transpersonal self is not altogether accurate.

She needs to expand upon her definition of this *peace*. Perhaps just the simple sitting down to meditate quietly and in stillness is itself conducive to a sense of peace.

5.3.2 Being and doing.

Becky remarked that at first, to simply sit and do *nothing* was strange. She felt that she needed to be doing something and experienced guilt that she was only sitting and attempting to concentrate on her breathing. Eventually, this caused her to actively plan future events and anticipate present situations. However, after sixty sessions of meditation, Becky announced "*I found myself enjoying doing nothing in particular*".

Personal growth from the transpersonal psychology perspective may be seen to be the acceptance of the *self* to be still, for in that stillness is also much needed rest, resolution, reparation and construction.

For the subject her sense of *doing* seemed to represent a form of paranoia, a readiness to correct the ongoing automatic process of being, for fear that it will be inadequate or suboptimal. This is linked to the subject's difficulty in passively observing her breath. Becky found that at the start of the meditation programme it was very difficult to focus on her breathing for more

than ten seconds. She asserted that

... so many thoughts just kept coming ... It was not easy to remain with the breathing. During the guided meditation we were always reminded to return to the breathing, which to begin with, was a good thing, or else I wouldn't have returned my attention to it.

After six weeks of daily meditation Becky stated that *"It was a little more easier to focus on the breathing ... when I did, it was definitely for a longer period, ... about 20 - 30 seconds"*. Towards the end of the three month period of meditation, Becky still found it difficult to focus on her breathing. *"Although I did remember to return my attention to the breathing ... again and again ... it was still hard to actually remain with it for more than 30 seconds, at best, one minute"*.

However, later in the meditation programme, the subject showed evidence of increased willingness to let things just be, to watch, to surrender and to recognise that she did not have to do anything with the content of awareness.

The gradual allowing of things *to be* was not, however, a common theme for all the subjects, and it must be noted that this theme only materialised for Becky towards the end of the three month meditation programme:

...gradually, with greater understanding of the process of meditation, I began to allow myself to let things just "to be". If at one stage I was angry, I did not feel I must ignore it, it was OK to feel the anger. I just let all my feelings happen, I felt better for it ... I didn't have to do anything, just watch ... So often in the past weeks I tried to change the feelings or thoughts, but today ... I let them come. This allowing my thoughts and feelings just to be here, has taken me a while to accept. There are times I can't just allow things "to be" but I'm glad there were moments when I let things be as they are.

In the light of this there appeared within the subject a sense of letting go, of surrender, of less need to react and to work to change or transmute experiences, and a greater sense of just allowing them to be whatever they were. For example, it was acceptable to be angry without having to try to change it.

5.3.3 Consciousness of the changing nature of experience.

All subjects mentioned that they were aware of the changing nature of experience, and that they hadn't been aware of this before starting meditation. Becky had the opinion that *"it seemed that everything that happened always changed ... everything I experienced had a beginning and an end ... I was not aware of this before. From this I began to think that I am also changing"*.

In terms of transpersonal psychology, personal growth involves the understanding of the radical impermanence of all events. Goldstein (1976) adds that nothing anywhere, including the self, is durable and ever-lasting. This statement, however, may be inaccurate in terms of the eternity of God. As one meditates, the mental and physical events appear to have *"an absolute beginning, a brief duration and absolute end"* (Engler 1984:46). This is connected to the realisation by the subject that reality itself is a discontinuous process.

Becky remarked that *"I then learnt that what I see, think, feel, imagine, everything that is my world, in my reality, is itself changing all the time"*.

Engler (1984) and Epstein (1986, 1988) are of the opinion that a time may arrive when the meditator may no longer perceive one event occurring after another, that all these events stop having a beginning and an end, but simply just are. Goldstein (1976) and Walsh (1983) have noted that with the experience of moment-to-moment living and being, there is a profound understanding of the radical impermanence of all phenomena, including events, experiences, thoughts, feelings and perceptions. Epstein (1988) has added that personal growth may be seen as the movement toward the notion that a stable identity, a durable perceptual object, no longer appears possible, and for the meditator there is a deeper conviction that nothing anywhere, including the self, is durable and everlasting.

5.3.4 Detachment from self.

At the start of the meditation programme, Becky found it difficult to observe all mental content (thoughts, feelings, images, sensations) without at the same time attempting to analyse, identify

or change them. Becky said "*when I felt sad, it was a struggle not to identify with the feeling. I just could not simply observe ...But it made me more aware of my thoughts*".

However, after approximately eight to nine weeks, Becky related that "*towards the end of my meditation sessions, after about 25 minutes ... there were brief times I could simply observe these feelings and thoughts ... as if I were some sort of witness*".

The main point of this issue is that at one stage she experienced herself as "*some sort of witness*". Boals (1978) and Boorstein (1980) put forward the concept of the meditator becoming a *witness* to his own experience. Russell (1986) agrees and adds that when the meditator is capable of stepping back and observing, without judging, what is experienced while experiencing it, this implies a step up the ladder of psychological development. This may indicate a brief shift or altered state of consciousness (Wilber 1980) in which the subject dis-identified from her ego, or detached herself from *the self*, and was able to stand aside in such a way as to be the observer or witness to the internal process. Transpersonal literature documents this detachment from self as part of the growth process. It is the expanding of consciousness beyond the narrow confines of body and mind and the embracement of the entire cosmos as part of *supreme identity* (Wilber 1979b). Although this experience was very brief for the subject, it did occur and hence is valid. In the light of this meditative experience, there may be evidence to show that the subject actually experienced identity with something greater than her ego and that she may have dis-identified from the self and became part of a wider consciousness. However, this experience occurred once and then only very briefly, and it is not possible to conclude that the meditative experience definitely brought it about. But it may indicate that with longer duration and frequency of meditation practice, personal growth, in terms of identification to the transpersonal self, may very likely occur.

It is not possible to say that the meditator was able to use her ego as both subject and object of its experience at the same time. Walsh (1983) defines personal growth, among other issues, as involving this very process of the therapeutic split of the ego.

5.3.5 Apparent lack of spiritual consciousness.

Meditation involves a shift of consciousness or attention, and may then lead to an awareness of aspects of mental processes of which the meditator was previously unconscious (Wilber 1986). It must be re-stated that transpersonal psychology sees that personal growth not only means the healthy re-construction of the ego structure but the attainment of a state beyond the ego, or *egolessness* (Epstein 1988), in which spiritual consciousness is recognised and integrated into the personality structure in a wholesome manner. During the meditation programme, there was never a meditative state experienced by the subject which can indicate this shift in consciousness towards spiritual awareness. Even during follow up interviews, the issues of *God, spirit, transcendence, higher power/force* never emerged. There was never any time during the meditative experiences that the subject connected to the *inner source* within us all (Emmons 1978). Mann (1974) believes that this connection brings about a deeper psychological maturation.

5.3.6 General inability to dis-identify from all internal chatter.

After three months of daily meditation, results showed the subject was a *beginner* in the sense that time spent in meditation was not long enough to experience a state of dis-identification from internal chatter. It may also be because the adolescent subject was not developmentally ready (cognitively and emotionally) to be receptive at this level. However, this inability to dis-identify from all internal chatter resulted in personal growth (within the framework of transpersonal perspective) not fully occurring. The transpersonal self is revealed only when we have put aside everything, suspended all (Walsh 1978). The state of dis-identification from all internal chatter is desirable if one is to grasp *experientially* the question of what and who we are (Goldstein 1976). Both Goldstein (1976) and Engler (1984) are of the opinion that an integral part of personal growth comes about by *letting go* of all internal chatter. However, it usually requires a mature level of ego organisation to achieve this. In this case perhaps the subject did not dis-identify from all internal chatter because her ego development was not sufficiently organised.

5.4 OTHER THEMES.

5.4.1 Influence of music.

There is evidence that when music was played during the meditative sessions, it had generally a positive influence on the subject.

Becky announced that *"when the music is played I seem to spend more time dreaming and fantasizing. I spend a lot less time remembering recent events or planning what I'm going to do tomorrow"*.

She continued to say that *"when the music played and I found myself fantasizing about so many things, a lot of my images had more colours, colours became important. When music was not played, my fantasies did not seem to have such colours"*.

Jung (1960) believed that fantasy was an integral part of the person's inner subjective world, and music seemed to contribute to an increase in fantasy during meditation.

For all the subjects, music seemed to influence their emotions in the meditative sessions. Becky declared that

...at one time I was feeling very happy ... when I sat down to meditate, the music changed my feelings ... The music was sad, sounded like people crying instead of chanting. I soon did not feel happy ... I then had feelings of sadness.

She continued to remark that *"at one time the music was very lively ... I felt much happier, even though at first I was feeling quite tense"*.

It may be stated that music as well as meditation allowed the emergence of these emotions. Music may also have merely switched the focus from one emotion (happiness) to another (sadness). It was not known whether the music re-inforced emotions already consciously experienced.

5.4.2 Increased relaxation.

A sense of relaxation did not always occur immediately after the meditation session. However, it was apparent for Becky that the

...over-all effect of the meditation was one of increased relaxation. I have a busy timetable at school. I am expected to do a lot and I have to be responsible. This sometimes makes me feel very tense, but when I meditate I can begin to calm down and feel more at ease and more relaxed.

Relaxation may be seen as a by-product of meditation.

5.4.3 Initial lack of motivation to meditate.

It was apparent that all the subjects at one stage or another felt a lack of motivation to meditate. Becky asserted that "*I felt at times, why bother, why am I doing this anyway. I just wanted to give up*".

Walsh (1977) reminds us that meditation seems to be, especially at first, a slow but cumulative process, a fact which may be useful for beginners to know.

It was found that the main reasons for this initial lack of motivation was the experience of a painfully stiff back and sore knees from sitting in the same position for 25-30 minutes. It was only the initial encouragement of the researcher that eventually brought the subjects to realize that sore knees and stiff backs was quite normal, and with more practice, the soreness would lessen as the body adapted to the meditative position of sitting cross-legged and straight-backed.

5.4.4 Subject's expectations.

During the course of the meditation programme, the subject had expected certain things to happen while in the meditative state, such as floating sensations, out of body experiences, the sounds of

ringing bells, all of which she had heard from other people. However, none of these experiences occurred for her. Instead, she found most of her meditative sessions were a continuation of her everyday life and routine. For example, she felt various emotions, had thoughts, experienced fantasies, images, and sensations during her meditations that were mirrored in her daily life style and patterns.

5.4.5 Meditation as an escape from reality.

The subject felt at one stage that meditation was an escape from reality:

It was like hiding away from life, to just sit down, close my eyes and forget my worries. I felt kind of sheltered during meditation ... here in this room, listening to music, eyes closed, breathing and feeling secure. It was an escape from my busy timetable.

The meditative sessions experienced by the subject sometimes meant that to close her eyes meant losing contact almost immediately with ordinary reality. Meditating provoked a sense of safety and escape from her hectic lifestyle at school and home.

5.4.6 Physical sensations.

The subject experienced various physical sensations but the primary sensation was that of changes in body temperature, from warm to icy cold. At the end of the meditation, the subject was usually experiencing very cold feelings all over her body despite being covered up in a jersey and duvet and there being a heater in the room. Although it was the start of winter, it is the researcher's belief that it was not cold enough to elicit such a response. The researcher herself certainly did not experience the same reaction during meditation. Two other subjects had the same experience. There is no immediate explanation for this phenomenon.

5.5 SUMMARY.

There was clear evidence that personal growth occurred in the subject during the three month meditation programme. The results indicated that personal growth occurred primarily within the framework of ego psychology and less than expected within the transpersonal framework. Themes that arose were discussed and the use of the meditative experiences as a tool for personal growth were explored. As the subject was involved in a number of life experiences at this time it is not possible, however, to claim that changes in the subject's personality were due solely to the meditative experiences.

Themes related to personal growth that occurred from the meditative experiences and which were discussed from the perspective of ego psychology were as follows:

1. Awareness of parts of the self previously unconscious.
2. Increased contact with and expression of feelings.
3. Unblocking avenues to awareness.
4. Dealing with negative emotions and thoughts.
5. Recognition of goals and plans to achieve goals, and of limitations.
6. Increased awareness of and perceptual sensitivity to formerly recognised and unrecognised internal and external phenomena.
7. Exploration of the inner world.
8. Experiences of increased fantasy.
9. Perceiving and labeling.

Those themes which were discussed from the perspective of transpersonal psychology were as follows:

1. Experience of peace.
2. Being and doing.
3. Consciousness of the changing nature of experience.
4. Detachment from self.
5. Apparent lack of spiritual consciousness.
6. General inability to dis-identify from all internal chatter.

Other themes that emerged during the meditative experiences.

1. Influence of music.
2. Increased relaxation.
3. Initial lack of motivation to meditate.
4. Subject's expectations.
5. Meditation as an escape from reality.
6. Physical sensations.

CHAPTER SIX

*CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR FURTHER RESEARCH*

6.1 CONCLUSION.

This study set out to explore the meditative experiences of a high school pupil and to discover whether these experiences contribute to personal growth. Research findings indicated that personal growth did occur, and while it cannot be concluded that this was due solely to the meditative experiences, there were indications that the experiences certainly aided the process of personal growth for the subject.

The subject, who meditated for three months on a daily basis, experienced personal growth primarily from the ego psychology perspective and, it is interesting to note, less so from the transpersonal psychology perspective. At least three hypotheses can be put forward for this. Firstly, the actual length of the meditation programme might have been too short. Secondly, the daily meditation sessions may also have been too short to facilitate a process of personal growth and development from within the transpersonal psychology framework. Thirdly, the subject was an adolescent school girl and thus may not have been *developmentally ready* in terms of having reached the level of cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual maturity necessary to experience identification with the transpersonal self.

Guidance within the school curriculum seeks to aid the process of helping pupils to know, understand and accept themselves. It is within this light that the meditative experiences of a high school pupil may be seen to be a tool to facilitate an awareness, understanding and acceptance of the self.

Results showed that the subject/pupil experienced:

- parts of the self previously unconscious;
- contact with and expression of feelings;
- that which blocked her awareness to self-knowledge;
- a way to deal with negative emotions and thoughts;
- increased awareness of and perceptual sensitivity to formerly recognised and unrecognised internal and external phenomenal;
- the inner world;
- insight into perceiving and labeling phenomena; and
- increased fantasy.

From an ego psychology perspective, these aspects of experiencing are all part of personal growth and development. Personal growth is defined as the expansion of awareness of self, others and the world. Personal growth is seen as a drive towards wholeness, integration, and self-actualization. Thus, it involves a process of self-discovery of both inner experiencing and outer reality. Within this idea is the acceptance and assimilation of the *shadow* and thus the movement towards individuation or becoming a person. Guidance has several ways of helping pupils to understand themselves, such as through group guidance classes, individual counselling and other *extra* programmes which the guidance teacher may implement (eg., careers evenings, relaxation classes for pupils suffering from examination-anxiety, etc.). This study suggests that such an extra programme may be the offering of Vipassana-type meditation to select high school pupils.

The literature on meditation states that meditation has benefits, but the literature does not indicate clearly as to whether meditation has these benefits for children, adolescents and/or adults. This study demonstrates that meditative experiences can benefit (in terms of personal growth) a single adolescent.

It is concluded that this research, in terms of also being a dialogic-heuristic case study, confirms the following assertions and studies:

1. Meditation may enhance psychological well-being and perceptual sensitivity (Shapiro and Giber 1978; Shapiro 1980; Shapiro and Walsh 1984).
2. Meditation can enhance self-actualization (Lesh 1970; Nidich et al. 1973; Hjelle 1974).
3. Meditation is a tool for increased insight (Goldstein 1976).
4. Meditation may enhance acceptance of unconscious material (Welwood 1979; Engler 1984; Russell 1986).
5. Meditation may heighten awareness (Welwood 1979).
6. Meditation does not solve emotional problems (Ram Dass 1976; Epstein 1986).
7. Relaxation is an integral part of the effects of meditation (Benson 1969; Girodo 1974; Shapiro 1976).

6.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.

As already mentioned, the duration of the programme may have been too short and the frequency of the meditation sessions too low to have facilitated a process of personal growth within the transpersonal psychology framework.

The researcher had been a meditator for only 18 months when the meditation programme began, and her expertise in both conducting the programme and researching the subject's experiences would obviously have been more limited than that of someone with greater experience in the field. However, the researcher believed that her experience was adequate to operate such a meditation programme with beginner meditators.

A question also needs to be raised as to whether the Vipassana approach is the most appropriate for adolescents. There are many types of meditation and another might have been just as suitable, if not more so. This particular approach was used because the researcher had been extensively involved in it, and hence was more experienced with it.

While the case study method has unique strengths, its very nature also imposes limitations. It is ineffective in delineating causality and in generalisations, for the case study is ideographic (i.e. individual cases are examined in depth). In the light of this, the study had no control groups with which to make comparisons, and perhaps clarify or substantiate previous research and literature, and in this regard the study's conclusions are limited.

The group dynamics may have had built-in complications in the sense that they could have inhibited the **meditative experiences**. However, the researcher was not aware that this was the case.

Finally, the actual time of day of meditation was not consistent. Sometimes meditation was in the afternoon, sometimes in the evening. If, for example, meditation took place regularly at a specific time of day, this may have been more conducive to openness to the meditative experience.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.

Guidance is part of most South African school curricula, and further research needs to be done to determine whether similar findings to those of this study would result from subjects of different nature and background. The sample here was highly specific and meditative experiences need to be explored with (amongst others):

- a larger group of pupils
- boys from a private high school
- pupils of other race and language groups
- pupils belonging to a government school
- younger pupils
- pupils of lower socio-economic status.

As personal growth is an integral part of much individual counselling, it would be interesting and valuable to find out the possible role that meditation could play in this important sphere. Investigations could be made into the relationship of meditative experiences to therapy/counselling when:

- the pupil meditates.
- the counsellor alone meditates.
- both pupil and counsellor meditate.

Adolescence is often a time of crises - divorce or death of parents, rape, exposure to detention/prison, sexual abuse, etc. Very little research has been done into meditation as a means of coming to terms with such traumatic events in one's life, although the results of this study suggest that such a practice might be of benefit. It would be valuable to know if meditation could be used as a tool in the healing process in these circumstances.

This study used only one approach to meditation, namely the Vipassana approach. It would be interesting to replicate this study using similar subjects but different meditation approaches, thereby learning which approaches may be most suitable for adolescents.

In this study, meditation was shown to promote relaxation. As many adolescents experience stress and anxiety when confronted with examinations, especially those at the end of their school-leaving year, it would be valuable to discover whether meditation could be used specifically as a means of examination stress reduction.

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APPENDIX

THE MEDITATION PROGRAMME.

The Beginning.

Vipassana means to see things clearly, not only our own mind-body process, although that is basic, but to see everything clearly, other people, other relationships, situations. According to Goldstein (1976:168), *"the "Way" is to live without greed, without hatred, without delusion, to live with awareness, with wakefulness, and love and equanimity."*

Part one.

We'll begin the practice of meditation with a very simple object of awareness; mindfulness of breathing. Assuming any posture that is comfortable to you, keep the back reasonably straight, without being stiff or strained. If you are in a cramped or bent-over position, you will become uncomfortable. You can sit in a chair if you like, the important thing is not to move very often. The eyes should be closed.

Awareness of breath can be practiced in one or two ways. When you breath in, the abdomen naturally rises or extends, and when you breath out, it falls. Keep your attention on the movement of the abdomen, not imaging or visualizing anything, just experiencing the sensation of the movement. Don't control or force the breathe in any way, merely stay attentive to the rising and falling movement of the abdomen.

The alternative is to be aware of the breath as it goes in and out the nostrils, keeping the attention in the area around the tips of the nose or upper lip. Maintain the attention on the breath much as a watchman standing at a gate observes people passing in and out; don't control or force the breathing, simply be aware of the in and out breath as it passes the nostrils. It is helpful in the beginning of practice to make mental notes of either the "rising, falling," or "in, out." This aids in keeping the mind on the object.

In the first few minutes see which object appears more clearly, either the rising, falling, or in, out. Then choose one place of attention and stay with it, do not go back and forth. If at times it becomes less distinct, don't switch to the other object thinking it's going to be easier. Once you have decided where you're going to cultivate your attention, keep it there and try to remain with it through all the changes (p.3). It is sometimes clear, sometimes not, sometimes deep, sometimes shallow, sometimes long and sometimes short. Remember it is not a breathing exercise; it is the beginning exercise in mindfulness.

Immediately after every sitting, the researcher calls the attention of the subjects, and a short feedback session is conducted in which each subject is invited to get in touch with what they are feeling in the immediate moment and to express it either verbally or non verbally.

1st Day: The journey inward.

We have all begun on a journey. A journey into our minds. A journey of discovery and exploration of who and what we are. Taking the first step is difficult, and in the first days of practice there is often restlessness, or sleepiness, some boredom, laziness, doubt and regret about getting involved. The first step is difficult for everyone. The spiritual quest we are embarking upon is a rare and precious understanding, so be gentle yet preserving through any beginning difficulties (p.8).

Our journey can be described as the ascension up a mountain. When we are there, on top, we can look down, look all around, look to where we were at the bottom. Up there we can see so much more, we can see clearly. Even if we should go back down again, that clarity is with us because we have seen and we know. So with our development of spiritual insight. We must journey inward, to where the truth lies. The truth is within us, not outside of ourselves, and ... we begin from where we are (p.9).

2nd Day: Right understanding.

The first step up the path of the mountain is right understanding. Right understanding deals with certain laws which govern our every day lives. The first important law is "*every action brings a certain result. Things are not happening to us by chance or accident*" (p.8). If we are motivated by greed, hatred, anger, then pain and suffering come back to us. When our actions are motivated by love, kindness, generosity and wisdom, the results are happiness and peace.

If we integrate this right understanding into our lives, we can begin more consciously to cultivate and develop wholesome states of mind.

Christ and the Buddha often stressed the power and importance of generosity. "*Giving is the expression of action of non greed in the mind*" (p.9). The whole spiritual path involves letting go, not grasping, not clinging, and generosity is the manifestation of that non attachment.

Right understanding involves a profound and subtle knowledge of our true nature. During your meditation you will notice that everything is impermanent. "*All things pass away*" (Christ). All the elements of the mind and body exist in a moment and pass away, arising and vanishing continuously. Just as a sun flower blossoms today, tomorrow it is gone. The breath comes in and goes out, thoughts arise and pass away, sensations come into being and vanish. "*Deep insight into the nature of all elements begins to offer a radically different perspective into our lives and the world*" (p.9). The mind stops grasping and clinging when the transience of everything is realized, and when we experience the process of the mind. This is the kind of right understanding that is developed in meditation through careful and penetrating observation.

3rd Day: Right thought.

Right thought means thoughts free of sense desire, ill will and cruelty. As long as your mind is attached to sense desire, it will seek after external objects, external fulfilments, which, because of their impermanent nature, cannot be finally satisfying. There is a momentary experience of pleasure and then cravings return for more. The endless cycle of desires for pleasures based on the senses will keep the mind in turbulence and confusion. It will be as a wind whipping the waters of your inner world, the waters will crave peace and stillness, but the winds of frantic sense desires and satisfactions will stir and stir the waters. Freeing thoughts from sense desires does not mean suppressing them and pretending they are not there. If a desire is pushed aside and not dealt with, it will continue to influence and manifest itself in some way. It is also

important not to identify with each desire as it arises and compulsively acting on it. Right thought means becoming aware of sense desires and letting them go. the more we let go, the lighter the mind becomes. "*Then there is no disturbance, no tension, and we begin to free ourselves from our store house of conditioning, from our bondage of sense desires*" (p.10).

Develop thoughts that are free of anger, hatred, lust ,impurity.

4th Day: Right relating.

The next steps up the mountain have to do with right relating in the world, how we relate to our environment, to other people. Goldstein (1976) continues to say that the first aspect in relating to the world in this way is right speech. Right speech means not speaking what is untrue, of using slanderous, abusive or harsh language, rather, speaking words which are honest and helpful, creating a vibration of peace and harmony. Be committed to truth and honesty when speaking. "*Honesty in speech, also reflects back to honesty in ourselves*" (p.20). There are many things we don't like to look at, things about which we are untruthful about ourselves. Truthfulness of speech becomes the basis for being honest in our own minds, and that is when things begin to open up. We then begin to see clearly, working through all the neuroses of our mind.

5th Day: Right action.

Another step up the mountain is right action. This means not killing, minimizing the amount of pain we inflict on other beings, not stealing, that is, taking what isn't given and not committing sexual misconduct, which in the context of our daily life can be basically understood as not causing suffering to others out of greed or desire for pleasant sensations. We must be aware of our actions and the long terms effects they can have on others.

6th Day: The practice of meditation.

Today's teaching has to do primarily with the practice of meditation. The first of these is in many respects the most important, right effort. Unless we make the effort , nothing happens. It is said that "*effort is the root of all achievement, the foundation of all attainment*" (p.20). If we want to get to the top of the mountain and just sit at the bottom thinking about it, it's not going to happen. It is through the effort, the actual climbing of the mountain, the taking of one step after another, that the summit is reached. "*A thousand mile journey begins with the first step*" (Walsh 1979:45). No one succeeds without effort. Mind control is not your birthright. Those who succeed owe their success to their perserverence. But effort has to be balanced. Being very tense and anxious is a great hindrance. Energy has to be balanced with tranquility. In the practice of meditation, we have to be persistent and persevering but with a relaxed and balanced mind, making the effort without forcing. There is so much to discover in ourselves, so many levels of mind to understand. "*By making the effort, the path unfolds*" (p.20). We must make the effort to walk the path, to follow, no one else is going to do it for us. Christ showed us the way, only we can make the effort to walk the way for ourselves.

7th Day: Mindfulness.

A very important aspect of walking up the mountain, of going into ourselves to discover our selves, of controlling our minds is mindfulness. Mindfulness is the basis of meditation practice. We do meditation to cultivate mindfulness.

Mindfulness simply means being aware of what is happening in the present moment. It means noticing the flow of things, when walking to be aware of the movement of the body, in observing the breath, to be aware of the sensations of the in, out, rising or falling, to notice thoughts or feelings as they arise

Goldstein 1976:13).

Goldstein (1976) stresses that what ever the object is, to be aware of it, without grasping, which is greed, without condemning, which is hatred, without forgetting which is delusion, just observing the flow, observing the process. Mindfulness brings a poise, equilibrium and balance to the mind, keeping it sharply focused, with the attitude of sitting back and watching the passing show.

8th Day: Concentration.

An important step is concentration of the mind. This means one-pointedness of the mind, the ability of the mind to stay steady on an object. These first few days of meditation may seem difficult because concentration has not yet developed. "To climb a mountain you need physical strength, if you are not yet very strong, in the beginning you will feel tired and uncomfortable" (p.8). But as the body gets stronger, climbing becomes easier. It is the same in meditation. As concentration develops, it becomes less difficult to stay in the moment. The hindrances that are faced in the beginning of the practice are easily overcome.

Taking this time to sit down to meditate is an opportunity to develop a high degree of concentration and mindfulness. By being continuous in the practice, each moment builds on the one before, and in a short time, the mind develops an acute strength and penetrating power. "The journey that we are on combines right relationship in the world with a deepening understanding and insight into our own nature" (p.14). Be grounded in the present, cultivating awareness of the moment.

Part two.

We are all sharing something very special in having the opportunity to be here, to look within ourselves in this quite and private setting.

Take this time to experience yourself deeply.

There is a great value in slowing down. There is no hurry, no place to go, nothing else to do. In all activities be mindful, notice carefully all your movements. Simply observe all sensations without condemning, judging or identifying with them. When sensations come, give full attention, full mindfulness to them. It is important to keep a relaxed mind in observing the sensations, especially when they are strong painful feelings in the body.

Whenever sensations in the body are predominant make them objects of meditation. When they are no longer predominant, return to the breath. The awareness should be rhythmic, not jumping

or clutching at objects, just watching "rising", "falling," "pain," "itching," "rising", "falling." When you find yourself tensing because of pain or fear, carefully examine the quality of unpleasantness, the quality of pain or fear.

9th Day: Bare attention.

The watch words of our time are "*be here now*," in the present moment. The problem is how to do it. Our minds are mostly dwelling on the past, fantasizing about the future, it is generally very difficult to stay grounded in the present moment. Bare attention is that quality of awareness that keeps us alive and awake in the "*here and now*." Settling back into the moment, experience fully what's happening (p.20).

As the quality of bare attention develops, noticing what's happening in and around us, we begin to experience and respond to the present with greater spontaneity and freedom. As bare attention is cultivated more and more, we learn to experience our thoughts, feelings, situations and people without the tension of attachment or aversion.

The awareness of attention is not limited to a certain time of sitting here. Mindfulness is applicable and appropriate in each moment, whether we are standing or sitting, lying down, talking or eating. We should cultivate the state of bare attention on all objects, on all states of mind, in all situations. Every moment should be lived completely and wholeheartedly (p.21).

There are two mental factors which are primarily responsible for the development of bare attention. The first is concentration, the ability of the mind to stay steady on an object. The other factor is mindfulness, which notices what's happening in the moment, not allowing the mind to become forgetful, it keeps the mind grounded and collected. When mindfulness and concentration are both developed, a balance of mind is achieved and reveals many aspects of who we are.

As the mind becomes silent and we become more fully aware, many things which are below our normal threshold of awareness become illuminated by mindfulness. We begin to observe what was formally subconscious conditioning, and through the awareness of it, begin to integrate it more fully in our lives (p.23).

Part three.

Try to be aware of thoughts as they arise, rather than some minutes afterwards. Thoughts should not be treated as obstacles. They are just another object of mindfulness, another object of meditation. Don't let the mind become lazy and drift along. Make the effort with a great deal of clarity with respect to what's happening in the present moment.

Do not try to stop your thinking. Let it stop by itself. If something should come into your mind, let it come in and go out. It will not stay long. When you try to stop your thinking, it means you are bothered by it. Do not be bothered by anything. It appears that the something comes from outside your mind, but actually it is only the waves of your mind, and if you are not bothered by the waves, gradually they will become calmer and calmer. Many sensations come, many thoughts or images arise but they are waves from your own mind. If you leave your mind as it is, it will become calm. Just let things happen as they do. Let all images and thoughts and sensations arise and pass away without being bothered, without reacting, without judging, without identifying with them. Don't let the mind get out of focus. Keep the mind sharply aware, moment-to-moment, of what is happening. In each instant be focused on the object with a balanced and relaxed mind.

When visual images arise in the practice, simply make a note of "seeing," without getting involved in judging or evaluating the content. Just observe the arising and passing away of the images. When sounds become predominant, make a note of "hearing," not analyzing or conceptualizing its causes. Same with smell, make a note of it and again go back to the breathing. The more closely you pay attention to the primary object, the more quickly will the mind pick up other objects (p.43).

10th Day: Awareness.

The way to develop a strong momentum of awareness is to increase the frequency of noticing. In the beginning of the practice, you notice at rather long intervals, first one object, and a bit later, another. The practice develops by increasing this frequency of noticing objects, so that it becomes instant to instant, picking up in each moment the different objects, the flow of the breath or the sensations of the body, or the thoughts. Being with the flow of the phenomenon is the kind of mindfulness that develops with practice. We should develop this awareness but with a relaxed alertness. The effort is to stay just in the present, in paying attention to what is happening in the moment.

There is a story of someone who had been practicing for some time. While going to visit a Zen master, it was raining, and as he went in the door, he left his shoes and umbrella outside. After he paid his respects, the master asked him on which side of his shoes he had left his umbrella? He couldn't remember. He had not learnt to be aware. The master sent him away.

It is important to develop a steady and penetrating awareness with regards to everything we do, from the time of waking up in the morning to the time of going to sleep. Be aware of waking, getting up, going to the bathroom, going to sit down, breathing, eating, until the last moment before sleeping. This kind of attention will be of great benefit in the meditation practice. If there is the idea that the practice is only sitting, and the rest of the time is not important, then in all those breaks we lose the momentum that has been building.

11th Day: Hindrances.

The first of these hindrances or enemies is sense desire: lusting after sense pleasure, grasping at sense objects. It keeps the mind looking outward, searching after this object of that, in an agitated and unbalanced way. It is in the very nature of sense desires that they can never be satisfied. There is no end to the seeking. We enjoy a pleasurable object, but it arises and disappears, as do all phenomenon, and we are left with the same unsatisfied desire for gratification. Until we deal with that kind of grasping in the mind, we remain always unfulfilled, always seeking a new pleasure, a new delight. It can be desires for new sights, beautiful sounds or tastes or smells, pleasant sensations in the body, or fascinating ideas. Attachments to the objects strengthens the greed factor, and it is precisely greed in the mind, this clinging and grasping which keeps us bound (p.52).

The second enemy is hatred, anger, ill will, aversion, annoyance, irritation. These are all expressions of a condemning mind. It is the mind that strikes against the object and wants to get rid of it. It is a very turbulent and violent state. The mind is literally burning up: a great deal of suffering (p.52).

The third enemy is sloth and laziness of mind. A mind that is filled with sloth wants to go to sleep. Unless we overcome this kind of drowsiness, nothing gets done, nothing is seen clearly, our mind remains heavy and dull.

The fourth hindrance is restlessness. A mind that is in a state of worry, regret and agitation is unable to stay concentrated. It is always jumping from one object to another, without any mindfulness. This unsettledness of mind prevents the arising of deep insight.

The fifth of the great enemies is doubt, and in some ways more difficult to deal with. Until we see through it, doubt incapacitates the mind, blocking our effort for clarity. Doubt arises about what one is doing and about one's ability to do it. *"Perhaps since you have been meditating, the thought has come "what am I doing here? why did I say I would do this, I can't do this, this is too hard. This is a doubting mind, a very big obstacle on the path" (p.53).* All these hindrances are mental factors.

12th Day: Dealing with the hindrances.

There are specific ways to deal with these hindrances as they confront us on the path. The first is to recognize them, to see them clearly in each moment. If sense desire arises, to know immediately that there is desire in the mind. So with the others. The very recognition is the most powerful, most effective way of overcoming them. Recognition leads to mindfulness.

All the hindrances are impermanent mental factors. They arise and they pass away, like clouds in the sky. If we are mindful of them, when they arise, and we don't react or identify with them, they pass through the mind, without creating any disturbance.

There are also specific antidotes to these hindrances when the mind becomes somewhat overpowered by them - mindfulness is still weak.

When sense desire overcomes the mind, it is good to reflect upon the true nature of this decaying body, the fact that we are all going to end as corpses. In what may seem just a moment's time, we will be 70, 80, 90 years old. This kind of reflection weakens lust as we realize the imminence of our own death. It is not that death is for some and not for others. We do not feel the uniqueness and power of the moment when we do not feel the urgency of our death (p.54).

The best way of dealing with anger, ill will, hatred and aversion is to be aware of them, to be mindful. If you are sitting and all of a sudden are filled with ill will towards a person or situation, sit back and notice "anger". Do not identify with it, do not condemn oneself for being angry. Simply watch. It arises and passes away. Anger is strong when it is fed by identification *"I'm angry and I should be angry because someone did something to me"* (p.55). As an alternative to the indulgence of expressing ill will, just closely observe it. You will find that it loses the power to disturb the mind. A specific way of dealing with ill will when it is too overpowering is to generate loving thoughts; wishing love and happiness to all human beings. Surrounding that person with loving thoughts even though at the time it may be difficult, you will find that slowly the anger will dissipate and the mind will become cool and balanced. A very practical way of dealing with ill will, is to give them a gift. It is hard to stay angry in the act of giving and, because you are being generous and open it helps to dissolve the tensions and irritations that were there.

As long as the hindrances remain strong in the mind, it is difficult to develop insight and wisdom. The understanding that they are impermanent gives a strong balance to the mind. Please sustain the effort and continuing of awareness (p.55).

The Tibetans use an image I have found helpful. They liken the mind to a great sky. All the phenomena of the mind and the body are happenings in this clear sky. They are not the sky itself. The sky is clear and unaffected by what is happening. The clouds come and go, the winds come

and go, the rain and sunlight all come and go, but the sky remains clear. Make the mind like a long clear sky and let everything arise and vanish on its own. Then the mind stays balanced, released, observing the flow.

13th Day: Warrior.

The image of being a warrior resonates deeply with the experience of meditation. A warrior takes everything in life to be a challenge, responding fully to what happens without complaint or regret. What usually matters to most people is affirmation or certainty in the eyes of others; what matters most to a warrior is impeccability in one's own eyes. Impeccability means living with precision and a totality of attention. What we are doing in coming to an understanding of ourselves is the noblest thing that can be done. It is the irradiation from the mind of greed, of hatred, of delusion, establishing in ourselves wisdom and loving compassion. It is difficult and rare and requires great impeccability. This does not necessarily entail going off to the Mexican desert or to a cave in the Himalayas. It means, rather, cultivating qualities of the mind which bring about totality and wakefulness in every moment (p. 63).

The courage of a warrior is developed in the practice of meditation. *"It takes courage to probe and by that probing discover the deepest elements of the mind and body"* (p.64). It can be quite unsettling at first because many of our comfortable habits get overturned. It takes a lot of courage to let go of everything that we have been holding on to for security, to let go, to experience the flow of impermanence.

14th Day: Waiting and Fasting.

Waiting means patience and silence. It means not being driven to action by our desires. If we don't have the ability to wait, every desire that comes into our minds compels us to action. Sometimes waiting is interpreted as inaction, not doing anything. It is not that at all. Waiting means stillness of mind in whatever the activity (p.65).

Try fasting. Fasting means giving up, renunciation, surrender. It means energy and effort and strength. Power and lightness of mind comes from renunciation. *"Often people think that giving up things, or fasting, is a burden and source of suffering, not realizing the joy and simplicity in being unencumbered by unnecessary possessions and incessant desires"* (p.65). There is no super-human effort needed to practice renunciation, the energy required is only to overcome our inertia and old habit patterns. *"When this effort is put forward we experience a spaciousness and ease of mind which comes from the letting go of attachments"* (p.65).

We can experiment with this letting go in our lives through generosity, through establishing ourselves in basic moral restraint, through the practice of giving up things which bind us. Renunciation happens on all levels, not only in our relationships to material objects or people.

Part four.

For every breath that you exhale, count one, the next two, up to ten, not missing a breath. For each out breath or falling, count one number. If you miss the count for one number because you forget what number you're on - back to one. If you miss a count because your mind wanders and goes off the breath - back to one. Ignore everything else (p.71).

There are four things that may begin to happen. The breath may become erratic, fast or slow, fine or deep. Stay with it. One to ten. Then begin one to ten again. It may be that after five minutes, the mind starts thinking "*This is stupid, I'm going to sit here and count to ten*". Keep counting. And if because of that you miss a breath, back to one again. It may be that all kinds of pains and tensions arise in the body. Ignore them. This is the way to specifically strengthen the one pointedness factor of the mind, training it to stay on a single object. If you find the game useful in your practice, continue to do it (p.71).

15th Day: Courage.

It is not an easy thing that we have set about to do, this training of the mind. It requires a great deal of patience and perseverance. It does not happen by itself. But with gentle persistence it is possible.

St. Francis de Salos wrote (cited in Goldstein 1976:84)

If the heart wanders or is distracted, bring it back to the point quite gently ... And even if you did nothing during the whole of the 20 minutes but bring your heart back, though it went away again every time you brought it back, your time will be very well employed. Do not be discouraged by wandering thoughts or daydreams. Each time there is awareness of wandering, gently bring it back to the breath or sensations. No matter how many times this happens, if each time the wandering mind is brought back, the 20 minutes will be well spent. Be gentle with yourself. Be preserving. Though it may not be apparent to you, there is a great transformation taking place. It is like fruit ripening on a tree. As the sun shines on it, the fruit ripens, although from one day to the next, the process may be imperceptible. In the same way the changes and ripening in our mind are also going on. It is in silence and work that this transformation is brought to completion.

16th Day: Letting go of attachments.

There is a kind of monkey trap used in Asia. A coconut is hollowed out and is attached by a rope to a tree or stake in the ground. At the bottom of the coconut a small slit is made and some sweet food is placed inside. The hole on the bottom is just big enough for the monkey to slide in his open hand, but does not allow for a closed fist to pass out. The monkey smells the sweets, reaches in with his hand to grasp the food and is then unable to withdraw it. The clenched fist won't pass through the opening. When the hunters come, the monkey becomes frantic, but cannot get away. There is no one keeping the monkey captive, except the force of his own attachment. All that he has to do is open his hand. But so strong is the force of greed in the mind that it is a rare monkey that can let go. It is the desires and clinging in our minds which keep us trapped. All we need to do is open our hands, let go of ourselves, our attachments, and be free" (p.90).

17th Day: Death and Loving Kindness.

"Develop a mind that clings to nought, to absolutely nothing whatever, just allowing it all to come and pass away" (p.123).

Non-attachment grows out of deep insight into impermanence. On one level this insight is recognizing inevitability and imminence of our death (p.124).

Often, in forgetfulness of our destiny, we become over-involved in collecting things, in attachments and possessions, in wanting to become someone special. We get involved in many of the activities of little mind, taking our ambitions, our desires, ourselves, very seriously. We lose the perspective of big mind, we lose the perspective of death.

When we keep death at our finger tips, we become less involved, less compulsive about the satisfaction and gratification of various desires in the moment. When not so clouded by desires and fantasies, we are less inclined to hold onto things and more open to love and generosity.

Goldstein continues to say that insight into impermanence on this level is the awareness of the transit, temporal nature of all phenomena from moment to moment. In every moment the mind-body process, our entire universe, is arising and passing away, dying and being reborn (p.124).

One of the qualities that develops is love. Love for oneself, in the sense of being non-judging, having a spaciousness and a lightness in the mind and a strong loving kindness towards others, not relating in terms of grasping, or need or attachment. It is not a conditional love - loving someone because of certain characteristics or attributes which they have, and if these change, then not feeling love for them anymore; it is not *"businessman's love"* - *"I'll love you if you'll love me back"* (p.125). The love that comes from wisdom is an unconditional, universal loving kindness - a feeling of friendliness and warmth for all beings everywhere, not just for those in a partnership to us, but a truly boundless feeling: not looking at others for completion, not relating out of need, but radiating this infinite quality of love.

Another quality which begins to manifest strongly is compassion. This isn't self-pity or pity for others. *"It's really feeling ones own pain and recognizing the pain of others"* (p.126). Seeing the web of suffering we are all entangled in, we become kind and compassionate to one another.

Clouds of greed, hatred, and delusion obscure the natural radiance of love and compassion in our mind. As we clear away these clouds through the unfolding of insight, the qualities of loving kindness begin to shine forth naturally.

18th Day: Forgiveness.

Sit in a comfortable position. As a way of freeing the mind from any tensions or grudges, begin by asking for and extending forgiveness. *"If I have hurt or offended anyone in thought, or word or deed, I ask forgiveness. And I freely forgive any one who has hurt or offended me"*. Repeating this silently once or twice is an effective way of clearing the mind of any residue of ill will or resentment. Then for a few moments, direct phrases of loving thoughts towards yourself. *"May I be happy, may I be peaceful, free of suffering"* (p.127), concentrating on the meaning of the words. It is difficult to have a genuine love for others until we can be accepting and loving of ourselves. The particular words we use do not matter. Choose some phrases which resonate within you (p.127).

Continue the practice, beginning to extend these thoughts and feelings towards others. *"As I want to be happy, so may all beings be happy. As I want to be free of suffering, so may all beings be free of suffering"*. Repeating this in the mind a few times.

You can also direct these thoughts onto particular people, either those you are very close to and for whom you already have a lot of love, or those towards whom you may be feeling anger or warmth, as a way of opening to them with gentleness. Visualize them in the mind as you repeat the words. At the end, again generate thoughts of loving kindness towards all beings everywhere.

Although at first it may seem a mechanic exercise, as you practice, trying to concentrate on the meaning of the words, on what it is that you are wishing for all others, slowly the feelings of love and compassion will grow and become strong.

19th - last day.

During these days you are to sit quietly and to notice anything that comes into your awareness, without analysing or judging or getting caught up in the content.

The question is how to integrate intensive meditation practice into one's everyday life. On one level the aims are very simple: Stay mindful. Even when there are distractions and a lot of input through the sense doors, if there is no clinging, no condemning, no expectations of how things should be, the mind will stay clear and balanced. There are some things that will maintain the balance and inner journey. The most important of these is a daily sitting practice. Sitting will strengthen the concentration and mindfulness that has been cultivated during this meditation period. Get in touch, communicate with God, who ever you perceive him/her to be. Give this time to God, search within. *"It is only by going within that we can be truly effective without"* (Walsh 1979:20). It is helpful if you arrange a set time to meditate each day, a time when you won't be disturbed (p.164). Today there is no specific teaching except to remind you to remember both your impending death, and the changing nature of all phenomena in every moment (p.165). Stay aware of the moment, of the fact that everything is in ceaseless change. You will find yourself less judging of yourself, and less judging of others, making fewer categories of people and situations. You will experience yourself responding spontaneously and creatively to each moment. Lastly, *"love one another as God has loved you. Love is the greatest thing you can give away, the more you give, the less you will feel depleted and empty"* (p.165).