PERSONAL MASTERY, CONTEMPLATION AND ADULT DEVELOPMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

by

Cresswell John Walker

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
Department of Adult Education, Community Development and Counseling Psychology
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
University of Toronto

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ABSTRACT

Title: PERSONAL MASTERY, CONTEMPLATION AND ADULT DEVELOPMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

Degree: Master in Arts
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Name: Cresswell John Walker
Department: Department of Adult Education, Community Development and Counseling Psychology
University: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

The relationship of personal mastery to contemplation, adult development and the workplace is examined in this study. The study defines the attributes of personal mastery from the experiential perspective of a group of eleven contemplative practitioners and from the theoretical perspective of contemplative, adult developmental and workplace research and literature. In the first part, transcripts of semi-structured, personal interviews and a focus group meeting were analyzed using grounded theory qualitative research methodology to define the attributes of personal mastery. In the second part, the attributes of personal mastery defined by the study participants and by the theories of two leading workplace theorists, Peter Senge and Stephen Covey, are associated with a specific stage of adult development defined by traditional adult lifespan and transpersonal psychological theory. The research finds personal mastery is the result of life long learning and growth and that contemplation contributes to personal mastery by facilitating the adult developmental process.
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Chapter I: Introduction

A. Overview

Peter Senge (1990) coined the term "personal mastery" for the notion of individual learning as one of five "disciplines" of the workplace "learning organization". For its ability to manage complexity and to help us to learn, Senge says implicit in the practice of personal mastery is a "higher level of rapport between normal awareness and [the] subconscious" (p. 162). He suggests that to "work more productively with the subconscious mind... people committed to continually developing personal mastery practice some form of 'meditation'" (p. 164).

Is Senge (1990) correct? Does meditation contribute to personal mastery? If so, how? Does meditation contribute only through establishing rapport with the subconscious or are there other important processes and outcomes related to meditation? Is meditation the only form of contemplation that contributes to personal mastery, or do other forms, such as prayer or journalling, have a role to play?

And, what is personal mastery? Is it just a process of life long learning, or are there specific developmental capacities or attributes that distinguish personal mastery?

Finally, if personal mastery involves a life long process of learning, what is the nature of the relationship between learning, personal mastery and adult development? If personal mastery comes 'naturally' in the course of life long learning, what role does contemplation play in growing up? How does one surrender in meditation or prayer, yet learn, grow, achieve and mature in a way suggested by the nature of personal mastery? "It's another one of those 'odd pair of ducks'", jested one study participant about one of the many paradoxes that surround this topic.

The nature of the relationship of personal mastery to contemplation, adult development and the workplace is the subject of this study. The study identifies the common attributes that characterize personal mastery from the experiential perspective of a small group of contemplative practitioners and from the theoretical perspective of contemplative, adult developmental and workplace research and literature. The study then links the attributes of personal mastery to the later stages of
adult development. It demonstrates how contemplation, and meditation in particular, can facilitate adult growth and the emergence of the attributes of personal mastery. Finally, it argues for the recognition of personal mastery as essential to fully realizing the generative capacity of people in the workplace.

B. Study approach

The study begins with an exploration of the subjective experience of eleven contemplative practitioners. Semi-structured personal interviews were conducted with each participant and a small focus group met to discuss early findings. Each participant was asked, “In your experience, what is the effect of contemplation, meditation or prayer in developing ‘Personal Mastery’?” The interviews were recorded, transcribed and then analyzed using the “grounded theory” qualitative research methodology detailed in Chapter II. The first hand experience of the study participants with contemplation and personal mastery is presented in the form of a “storyline” and “grounded theory” in Chapter III. As a life long meditator, the researcher and author’s views are included amongst those of the other practitioners. (Throughout this research, the eleven study participants, including the researcher, are referred collectively to as the “practitioners”.)

To make sense of the practitioners’ vision of personal mastery, literature research was conducted into the fields of contemplation, personal mastery in the workplace and traditional and transpersonal adult developmental psychology. The practitioners experiential views of personal mastery are reviewed in the context of two workplace views on personal mastery – Peter Senge’s (1990) views on personal mastery in the “learning organization” and Stephen Covey’s (1989) “seven habits of highly effective people”. A sample of some of the more prominent adult developmental and transpersonal psychological theories related to personal mastery are also presented in Chapter IV.

In Chapter V, the research on contemplation, adult developmental psychology (or “traditional lifespan psychology”) and transpersonal psychology is used to explain the differences between the practitioners’ and Senge (1990) and Covey’s (1989) views about personal mastery. Figure 1 illustrates the structural relationship that the
study assumes exists between personal mastery and the theories of contemplation, adult development, and the workplace.

**Figure 1: Personal mastery in context**

Finally, the study explores the implications for the workplace of personal mastery and contemplation. Personal mastery is confirmed as a significant and timely concept for the workplace, even though the theories of adult developmental psychology would suggest it is not easily achieved.
C. Research question and definitions

This study combines qualitative field research with literature research aimed at exploring the primary question: What is the relationship of personal mastery to contemplation and adult development and what are the implications of this relationship for the workplace?

As noted, the study begins with a qualitative look at the relationship of personal mastery to contemplation. Senge’s definition of personal mastery was used as a working definition for the interviews: “Personal mastery is the discipline of personal growth and learning wherein a person continually expands their ability or capacity to create the results in life they truly seek” (1990, p. 141).

Both Senge (1990) and Covey (1989) write at length on the meaning of personal mastery. In a whole chapter devoted to the concepts of personal mastery, Senge defines some very specific characteristics that go beyond this simple proposition. Further, Covey’s (1989) book, “The seven habits of highly effective people”, is dedicated to defining personal mastery, though not specifically under this name. The study contrasts these two views of personal mastery with those of the study practitioners as a starting point for developing a more comprehensive vision or definition of personal mastery.

Contemplation -- meditation, prayer and its many other forms -- are subjective and individualistic, and as such were left deliberately undefined for the study practitioners. Pre-interview inquiries into the nature of each participant’s practice were sufficient to determine that each had a practice they self defined as “contemplative”. The details of how they felt their practice was contemplative were captured during the interview.

D. Limitations of research

This study makes some important, but speculative conclusions about the relationship of personal mastery to contemplation and adult development. The collective view of eleven practitioners is insufficient to extend conclusions about contemplation and personal mastery outside the study group. Though useful in the context of the study, there is insufficient depth and breath in the data to propose a formal theory of general application.
The study's conclusion about the relationship of contemplation in facilitating adult development is untested empirically. More research into the nature of contemplative experience in transcendental consciousness could corroborate the study's conclusions. Detail of suggested further research is found in Chapter VI.
Chapter II: Methodology

A. Approach: Grounded Theory Methodology

This research employs the grounded theory qualitative research methodology developed by Glaser & Strauss (1967) three decades ago. Since its inception, the technique has been refined under the hands of its creators (Glaser 1978, 1992, 1995, and Glaser & Strauss 1967), and by others (Crabtree & Miller, 1992) as the technique is used in other fields, most notably in medicine.

"Grounded Theory is based on the systematic generating of theory from data..." (Glaser 1978, p. 2). Though theories arising out of grounded theory research may be "proved" or tested by both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, it is used in this research as a tool to generate new theory.

Grounded theory is a constructivist method of qualitative research because, "human constructions are being studied and because it is constructions the researcher is creating" (Crabtree & Miller, 1972, p. 10).

B. Suitability of grounded theory to the topic

Grounded theory research is an appropriate research methodology for this topic. Though originally conceived as a tool for social research, grounded theory has been applied successfully to many different fields. Glaser (1978) has consulted on dissertations in political science, social welfare, education, sociology, public health, psychology, business administration, nursing, city and regional planning and anthropology.

As in the foregoing fields, the relationship of the contemplative practices to personal mastery is highly subjective and complex. The data gathering and analysis techniques of grounded theory research -- the collection of data from individuals (by interview in this case), the coding of data of individual responses using the constant comparison method (substantive coding), the development of concept categories (theoretical coding and "memoing"), and finally the formulation of theory -- are all suited to finding meaning in the subjective world of contemplative practices.
As the researcher is also a contemplative, the heuristic methodology, as another constructivist tool, would have been equally suited to this topic. Though a heuristic approach may have better incorporated the researcher's journey in his own discovery of contemplation and personal mastery, this technique is most effective when several years of ongoing research are available for the discovery process to unfold fully.

Finally, to conclude this discussion on the suitability of grounded theory methodology, an important observation about the nature of the topic under study is warranted. The same limitation exists in the study of contemplation that exists for contemplatives in their practice -- it is to know, yet not to know. The experience of the inner world is, in many ways, ineffable. Though contemplation lends insight into the nature of mind, the spiritual experience of contemplation remains outside the territory of thought. A contemplative is, at best, relating an interpretive recall of his or her impressions of the spiritual experience. It is not a first hand, rational experience occurring within the well known territory of mind and consciousness. If the contemplative is once removed from the experience of the inner world, the researcher is then twice removed.

Fortunately, the main thrust of this study is not to understand the nature of the contemplative experience itself or to discover the underlying nature of 'Truth', 'Spirit' or God; it is only to understand the relationship of a contemplative's practice to their lives. This study explores the practitioners' perception of how their practice helps them manage both their 'self', and how they manage their 'self' in the world. Though contemplation and our dance with life necessarily includes some experience of that part of ourselves that lies beyond our normal seat of consciousness, most of our lives are played out, and our perception of personal mastery is experienced, on the familiar territory of the mind and cognition.

As the objective of the study is just to understand how contemplation contributes or relates to an individual's personal mastery in the world, grounded theory technique is a viable research tool.
C. Researcher participation

In grounded theory research, inclusion of the researcher's views as 'data' are important and valid, provided their inclusion is explicit. In fact, unlike quantitative research, where great effort is made to avoid researcher influence, many quantitative research techniques, including grounded theory research, draw heavily on the researcher's views and experience. As noted, the researcher and author's views and experience as a meditator are directly incorporated in the research data and results of this study. The author was interviewed using the same questions presented to the other study participants. The interview was recorded, transcribed and coded as a peer transcript with the ten other participants.

The authors opinions, perceptions, knowledge and beliefs have also shaped the study's findings. The author's bias is subtly manifest in the structure of the study; how the questions where asked and received in interviews, how choices were made in the theoretical sampling process, and how the storyline is written and the theory interpreted. 'Surfacing' the bias of the researcher in qualitative research makes it another 'slice of the data' The following discussion introduces the author's interests and biases in the topic area and considers his views in the context of the study.

I am a white Anglo Saxon male, forty three years of age from an upper middle income family in Ontario comprised of two working professional parents and one brother four years junior. Education includes an undergraduate degree in resource management and six management training and personal development courses. Work history includes twenty years as a community planner in government, private and consulting roles. I am presently completing a Master of Arts degree in adult education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto.

I became a meditator at seventeen years of age, first using the techniques of transcendental meditation or "TM". With very few exceptions. I have meditated regularly since that time. Twenty-six years later. my practice has grown to include yoga, dance, body-work and breathing techniques. The core of my practice remains meditation. though it now includes a number of different forms of meditation, including insight meditation.
My motivation for contemplative practice is primarily to manage stress and to draw indirectly on energies from within to enrich life. Stress management is my greatest incentive for daily practice, but contact with this "energy" has significantly changed my view and approach to life. With time, my approach to life has expanded from simply coping with life, to one of meeting life with an attitude of abundance, optimism and hope. Within the limits of human frailty and incertitude, I seek with humility to embrace life as an opportunity for experience, learning and growth. I believe contemplation has had a large role in expanding my capacity to live fully.

In addition to stress management and rest, I believe my practice contributes significantly to good health. It also plays a role in having a clearer mind, a growing degree of body awareness, emotional connection and a deep conviction that we are more than just body and mind -- we are also spirit. With this backdrop, it is clear I have strong beliefs about contemplation and personal mastery. As a meditator, I believe strongly in the efficacy of contemplative techniques to living both happily and richly.

I believe the greatest benefits of contemplation flow from being in a state of 'one-pointedness-of-mind'. Prayer, to the extent it creates this condition is equally beneficial. I believe other, more active but introspective forms of contemplation, such as journaling, appreciation of nature or art, for example, are valuable for self-knowledge and rest, but less effective techniques for developing self.

I also bring to this study a bias toward confirming a connection between contemplation and self development. As is apparent in the transcript of my interview, I believe meditation facilitates integration of body, mind and spirit, and through this integration, heightened capacity for adult growth as reported in this study.

D. Theoretical sensitivity

In the context of grounded theory research methodology, "researcher bias" is recognized as an integral part of the research process and content. Simply described by the methodology as the background knowledge of the researcher, theoretical sensitivity in the researcher is a necessary prerequisite to application of grounded theory research technique. Glaser & Straus (1967) see theoretical sensitivity as a researcher's particular knowledge, skill or expertise (expertise in sociology, in the
original context of grounded theory). Theoretical sensitivity is the "armamentarium of categories and hypotheses on substantive and formative levels important to the researcher's ability to conceptualize and formulate a theory as it emerges from the data" (p. 46).

The concept of theoretical sensitivity, however, seems to be tempered in both Glaser & Straus (1967) and Glaser (1978) with cautions against "pre-conception". These works warn the researcher against the fitting of grounded theory data into preconceived categories or theories. When conducting a literature review, for example, Glaser warns the researcher "to not contaminate one's efforts to generate concepts from the data with preconceived concepts that may not really fit, work or be relevant..." (p. 31). However, this important caution against premature closure of data categories, concepts and ultimately, theory, should not be mistaken to suggest that the researcher need be impartial in the collection and coding of data or in finding and reporting theory.

As a qualitative research project employing the grounded theory research technique, the literature review that proceeded the field research had the objective, therefore, of developing the theoretical sensitivity of the researcher. Unlike empirical, quantitative research investigations, where the literature review frames precisely the hypothesis or thesis to be proven, this literature review was conducted to develop the researcher's "theoretical sensitivity" for the study. Subsequent to the field research, additional literature research was employed to assist in the analysis of the study results.

E. Data Gathering

1. Study participant selection criteria

   The study participants were selected with the objective of creating a broadly heterogeneous research resource group of contemplative practitioners. The rationale is that the broader and more heterogeneous the group of participants, the greater the significance of common outcomes emerging from the group. This is consistent with the principle and practice of the "constant comparison" technique of the grounded theory methodology of Glaser and Straus (1967). This technique generates categories.
concepts, and ultimately theory, by finding common categories and concepts from amongst contrasting sources of data.

Each participant practitioner was required to have presently, or have had in the past, some self-defined form of contemplative practice. In addition, participants were selected where it was seen that their participation would contribute to a mix of ages, philosophical and spiritual backgrounds (especially a mix of eastern and western disciplines), and a mix of forms of contemplative practice, levels of experience, and occupations and educational backgrounds.

2. Study participant profiles

Ten individuals plus the researcher were included in this study. Their profiles are summarized in the Table 1, followed by anecdotal information regarding each participant.
Practitioner "A" is a "pre-med" student at University of Toronto. In her mid '20s, her practice began three years ago with transcendental meditation. Her experience with TM has been especially useful in stress management and rest, and is also influential in shaping her emerging spiritual beliefs.
Practitioner “B” is a senior level executive with a large credit card firm in Toronto. In her mid 40s, she took up meditation three years ago, leaving behind a lifetime in the Catholic Church. She attributes her professional success, and her success in personal relationships, to her practice. She is an especially dedicated practitioner, who incorporates several hours of contemplation into every working day.

Practitioner “C” is a retired instructor. Although she has a history of instruction in psychosynthesis, her present practice is presently less active or focused. Presently, her contemplative practices include painting, journaling, time in nature, and seeking meaning through service to others. She is presently in search of new contemplative avenues.

Practitioner “D” is retired academic. He is presently an active meditator, a discipline which he has practiced for approximately 10 years. His practice includes participation in periodic retreats lasting from 3 to 10 days.

Practitioner “E” is a practicing therapist, specializing in Trager, polarity therapy, and other forms of bodywork. He is also a meditator and practitioner of Tai Chi and yoga.

Practitioner “F” is a therapist, counselor, personal development leader and body-work specialist. Though he has meditated in the past, he no longer believes meditation to be particularly useful to him.

Practitioner “G” is an instructor of a western relaxation method similar to meditation. He has experience with many contemplative practices: TM, arica, martial arts, breath work and yoga.

Practitioner “H” is a United Church Minister. Her contemplative practices have evolved over 30 years from listening to music, drumming, body movement and body prayer, focusing, chanting and yoga.

Practitioner “I” is a Catholic Sister. Her practice is based on meditative prayer incorporating visualization, breathing and music.

Practitioner “J” is an Anglican Priest. He meditates and prays with candles, music visualization and breath.

Practitioner “K” is the researcher/author. His practice is described above in the section, “Researcher participation”
Notwithstanding their diverse backgrounds, two notable characteristics emerge in the profiles of the practitioners. First, with one exception, they are 'mature' adults. All, except for one, are in their forties or older. Seven of the practitioners are in their fifties or older. Secondly, there is a high proportion of participants in primary helping professions. Five of the participants are working as counselors, therapists or clergy. As will be seen subsequently, the greater age of the participants may be suggestive of the association of personal mastery with advanced stages of adult development. The frequency of those in the helping professions may be related to the 'compassion effect' of contemplative practices.

3. Semi-structured personal interview

The highly introspective, subjective, individualistic and private nature of contemplation calls for an interactive data gathering methodology that respects participant privacy, yet is able to seek and record unique and unanticipated phenomena as they arise. The researcher needs an opportunity to fully attend to the each participant and explore unique individual perspectives as they are offered. Personal interviews, in particular, semi-structured personal interviews, are best able to meet these requirements.

The personal interview format offers an intimate setting where the participant has the best opportunity to become comfortable and relaxed, develop rapport and trust before discussing deeply felt, personal views and convictions like those of contemplation. Kirby and McKenna (1989) confirm that, "for quality interviewing, there must exist a sense of equality between the person gathering the information and the person whose knowledge is sought" (p. 67). Oakley (1981) goes further and addresses squarely the importance of a strong personal relationship to "ethical" and successful interviewing. Oakley writes:

[T]he mythology of 'hygienic' research with its accompanying mystification of the researcher and the researched as objective instruments of data [must] be replaced by the recognition that personal involvement is more than dangerous bias -- it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit each other into their lives. (p. 58)

"Semi-structured interviews are guided, concentrated, focused and open-ended communication events that are co-created by the investigator and participants and
occur outside the stream of every-day life" (Crabtree & Miller, 1992, p. 16). Unlike the "spoken questionnaire" character of structured interviews or the "every day conversational" nature of "unstructured interviews", the semi-structured interview provides sufficient structure to focus conversation into common broad topic areas, while permitting interviewer and participant alike the opportunity to explore unanticipated but rich areas of inquiry as they arise spontaneously in conversation (p.16).

4. Interview questions

"Some combination of a set format with preformed questions and more interactive, spontaneously developed questioning is optimal. This creates space so the input of the research participants can help guide and shape the research interaction" (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 67). To give the interviews some consistency and to insure key topic areas were addressed in each interview (i.e. "semi-structured"), the interview was a combination of predetermined questions or areas to be explored and spontaneous questions that arose during the interviews.

Three basic areas were explored with each participant:

- What form does your practice take?
- In your experience, what is the effect, if any, of contemplation, meditation or prayer in developing 'Personal Mastery'?
- What are the implications of your practice for your body, mind and spirit?

As noted, personal mastery was defined for the participants using Senge's definition: "Personal mastery is the discipline of personal growth and learning wherein a person continually expands their ability or capacity to create the results in life they truly seek." (1990, p. 141). This information was included in the pre-interview information package.

These questions were presented in the form of "grand tour" questions as recommended by Spradely (1980) in relation to ethnographic interviews. (The interview questions are attached as Appendix One.) These questions are designed to encourage expansive, richly descriptive responses. Participants were encouraged to respond personally by posing the questions in the context of: "How do YOU see
contemplation?' and "Tell me what contemplation contributes to YOUR experience of personal mastery".

5. Pre-interview information

Prior to the interview, all participants were presented with background information about the research, research question and their roles as participants. (The background sheet circulated to each participant several days before the interviews is attached as Appendix Two.) "It is essential that all participants involved in interviews participate from an informed position... cognizant of what the research is about and the destination of the information at the conclusion of the research project" (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 71). This background was also intended to give each an opportunity to think about the research topic and 'surface' any concerns about the interview.

6. Confidentiality

An undertaking to protect the confidentiality of each participant's identity was given when requesting the interview and again as the interview began. A signed confirmation of their permission to use the information for this study was also obtained from participants. The identity of each participant cannot be determined from the transcripts or from this report.

7. Interview setting

As noted, the researcher and the participants met during semi-structured personal interviews. Except for the two British Columbia resident participants, the interviews were conducted 'face to face' in the participants homes or at OISE/UT. The two British Columbia residents were interviewed by telephone from the OISE/UT tele-conference room. Interviews ranged in length from sixty to ninety minutes with each participant. All interviews were audio taped and subsequently typed into verbatim transcripts.
8. Focus group format

To complement the personal interviews a small focus group meeting was held with four of the participants, plus the researcher as moderator. The focus group offered an opportunity for the participants to compare, contrast and, in some areas, deepen their understanding and appreciation of various contemplative practices. Some new information was surfaced and a number of key points were clarified by discussion.

F. Grounded theory data analysis

Grounded theory's "theoretical sampling" of the interview transcripts is the process of generating theory from data. This entails the "constant comparative analysis" of the data as collected to generate codes. This process is defined by Glaser &Straus (1967) and Glaser (1978).

Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. (Glaser, 1978, p. 36)

According to Glaser (1978), theoretical sampling (data collection and analysis) continues until "saturation" of the code is achieved. The process is not linear: the researcher is directed to constantly revisit earlier work to reassess codes for "fit" to the evolving theory.

The way in which the grounded theory research methodology was used in this research is outlined below.

1. Interview and focus group schedule

The first four interviews were held in November 1997 with participants “A”, “F”, “H” and “J”. Preliminary coding and analysis was conducted at that time and an initial grounded theory was developed. These preliminary findings were used to guide interviews with the remaining six participants during the second round of interviews held in June 1998. This was followed by a focus group interview in late June 1998. The researcher was the last interview held in August 1998.
2. Open coding and substantive codes

The data analysis of both rounds of interviews began with the process of "open coding" as defined by Glaser (1978). Open coding process is "coding the data in every way possible...running the data open" (p. 56). The objective is to develop and apply codes to the data that are as "open" as possible to facilitate their grouping or categorization into "substantive codes" and, ultimately, to generate the theory. The researcher groups "concepts" around "phenomena" in the process of "categorizing" which helps to identify substantive codes.

In this research, the theoretical sampling involved the open coding of approximately 600,000 words of typed interview and focus group transcripts (two hundred and sixty pages, double-spaced). The first two or three 'passes' through the transcripts was to detect emerging codes. Key words or phrases in the transcript were underlined and emerging codes were pencilled into the adjacent margins. These codes were subsequently revised to create substantive codes depicting concepts or categories of codes to support theoretical coding of the next phase. The substantive codes contributing to the core categories were well saturated by the conclusion of the open and substantive coding.

3. Theoretical or axial coding and memoing

The second coding phase is the generation of theoretical codes that "conceptualize how the substantive codes may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into a theory" (Glaser, 1978, p.72). Theoretical memoing is Glaser's "bedrock" of theory generation. "The four basic goals of memoing are to theoretically develop ideas [codes] with complete freedom into a memo fund, that is highly "sortible" (p. 83). Memos are used to capture emerging ideas around concepts, categories and potential theories throughout the theoretical sampling process. Glaser identifies that there are at least eighteen possible different "families" of theoretical codes that may be applied as archetypes to give meaning to the substantive codes (pp. 74 - 81).

In this research, once discovery of potential open codes was exhausted, and as the substantive codes emerged, use was made of memos as a means to capture and articulate key concepts and relationships, to create "theoretical codes". in Glaser's
ternis. Significantly, it was at this phase that the core categories took form and the researcher identified some of the key relationships for the subsequent storyline and theory. Glaser (1978b) maintains that memos and theoretical sorting has "crucially important benefits" for theory writing. "It produces a generalized, integrated model...." (p. 117). The "memo fund" was sorted, refined and the theoretical codes are summarized in a storyline. The storyline contains the definitions, concepts and examples from the transcripts that framed each of the theoretical codes. Finally, the storyline is the basis for the substantive theory.

4. Personal mastery and grounded theory methodology

The researcher notes there is a suggestion of "personal mastery" in Glaser's (1978) discussion about the application of grounded theory research that parallels the findings in this study. Glaser asserts the theoretical pacing of grounded theory research must be approached as a temporal, interrupted and cyclical process in order to allow for the researcher's "potential creativity" to emerge. There is a degree of surrender, of letting go, to trust the outcome to emerge from somewhere outside the analyst's awareness.

Generating grounded theory takes time. It is above all a delayed action process. Significant theoretical realizations come with the growth and maturity in the data and much of this is outside the analyst's awareness until it happens. Thus an analyst must pace his patience, and not just be patient, accepting nothing until something happens. as it surely does..... (p. 18).

In the above, and in Glaser's subsequent discussion of pacing, cycling, creativity, and "energizing the research", he is calling on the researcher to engage in the personal mastery habits or practice of doing and non-doing. This concept is prominent in the findings of the study practitioners as described in the next chapter.

5. Limitations and bias

Limitations in understanding the technique

Despite considerable study of two full texts dedicated to the topic by Glaser & Straus (1967) and Glaser (1978), the researcher was challenged by the interchangeable use of certain terminology, the lack of clear examples of some of the
concepts and finally, some apparent inconsistencies between the two texts. To overcome the latter, where apparent inconsistencies or uncertainties arose, the research applied the techniques as described by Glaser (1978).

**Limitations from lack of iterative data gathering cycles**

The iterative nature of grounded theory techniques calls for serial cycles of data collection, separated by periods of coding and concept development. This project was limited to two rounds of interviews and a single focus group meeting. Though the theory that emerged is grounded in the data collected, and data saturation did occur around the core categories, the researcher believes this topic would benefit from more data. The research would have benefited from longitudinal contact with the participants. A third round of interviews to review a draft theory from the second round of interviews would undoubtedly deepen and extend the findings.

More time could also have been spent in the "theoretical sampling" process. It is clear from the literature that this process requires considerable time to truly 'cultivate' the theory from the data. Perhaps more of the application of one of the habits of personal mastery discovered in this paper -- "doing and non-doing" -- would have resulted in a richer, more complete theory. As ever, it is another example where additional time and resources to complete a task would improve the final product.

**Bias in participant selection**

Some of the interview participants were known personally to the researcher beforehand. The researcher believes each has a practice worthy of investigation. One is a relative (H), two are friends (A, F) and the forth is a friend of the family (J). Their inclusion, therefore, is related in part to the researcher’s bias toward these individuals arising from favourable impressions of them as living examples of people who exhibit what the researcher sees as 'personal mastery'. This bias is tempered by the data collected from the other participants.

**Bias in interview questions**

The interview format includes questions specific to "body", "mind" and "spirit". The inclusion of these questions from the beginning of the research biased
the responses of participants toward characterizing their experiences in this context. However, since these three categories are already commonly recognized in virtually every philosophical and religious context surrounding this topic, their use was rationalized on the basis of ensuring the practitioners addressed all three areas.

_Bias due to power differential_

Gender, age, position, cultural, economic circumstances and other differences can have an impact on interview responses. In this situation, these are considered minimal. The topic is relatively gender neutral, though sex differences in cognitive developmental style (e.g. work by Gilligan (1982) on Kohlberg's (1969) model of moral development) may point to sex differences in matters of faith. Except for participant "D", positional, cultural and economic differences are seen as not significant to the results, as researcher and participants have comparable profiles.

Participant "A" seemed to defer somewhat to the researcher during the interview. This may be due to her perception of the researcher being more "experienced" as a meditator in relation to her two years of practice. It may also have been due to the age and sex differential with the researcher.
Chapter III: Practitioner results

In the view of the study participants, contemplation, meditation, prayer and other forms of contemplation, as they practice it, contribute significantly to each practitioners' personal mastery. This chapter reports or "names" the theory that emerged from the practitioners' stories as they addressed the study's basic questions: What is contemplation to YOU; and what does contemplation contribute to YOUR personal mastery?

A. What is "contemplation" to the practitioners?

As noted in the Chapter II, the study participants were selected with the objective of creating a broadly heterogeneous resource group of contemplative practitioners. Consistent with this, "contemplation" was not defined by the researcher to prospective research participants. Each study participant was only required to have presently, or have had in the past, some self-defined form of contemplative practice. The exact form of their practice was subsequently defined during their interview. Consequently, the study participants represent a mix of ages, occupational and educational backgrounds, levels of experience, and a rich mix of eastern and western contemplative practices.

Not all of practices identified by the practitioners are normally recognized as forms of contemplation. In addition to the more traditional core contemplative practices of prayer and meditation, self proclaimed forms of contemplative practice amongst the practitioners include reading, journaling, study, discussion with peers, and enjoyment of beauty (especially natural beauty). However, except for two of the practitioners, these less traditional practices support core practices of meditation and prayer. (The two excepted practitioners have had core contemplative practices of meditation in the recent past.) The combination of prayer or meditation with supportive contemplative practices is an important ingredient in living a "contemplative lifestyle" for the practitioners. As will be evident below, the practitioners seek to make their contemplative practice continuous in their lives by intermixing periods of prayer and meditation with other forms of contemplation such as walking in nature, reading, journalling, etc.. This is an important means to carry
the inner strengths experienced during meditation and prayer into the daily activity of the practitioner's lives.

B. What does contemplation contribute to personal mastery?

As described in Chapter II, "Methodology", the research findings are ultimately reported in the form of a storyline and emergent grounded theory. The storyline serves as a vehicle to re-assemble and integrate the concepts that emerge from the research data. The storyline in this study is a description of the contemplative process based on the memos and theoretical codes created during coding of the transcripts of the study practitioners.

Based on the transcripts of the eleven interviews and the focus group meeting, the description is expansive, rather than restrained, as such detail is necessary to inclusively report their views. Though not every practitioner spoke directly to every outcome reported in the storyline, many of them did speak to most of subject areas in a way that at least suggested agreement with the 'spirit' of what is being reported. Had time and resources permitted, review and comment of the transcript by all of the practitioners would have yielded more data and confidence in the accuracy of the storyline as a summary of their views. To illustrate the concepts, the words of the practitioners are quoted throughout.

From within the storyline, it can be seen that to understand the contemplative process is, to a degree, to understand the outcome of contemplation. And, to understand the outcome of contemplation is to understand what contemplation contributes to personal mastery. Although the contemplative practice of each of the practitioners is a unique mix or blend of various contemplative activities, there are common outcomes.

The contemplative process of the storyline is described in three phases. The phases are presented as a linear sequence, but in practice, they constitute a continuous cycle that is the essence of an ongoing contemplative practice. The three phases in the cycle are "Going within", "Being within", and "Coming without". A description of each phase is followed by a description of the elements of personal mastery arising from the practitioners' practices.
1. Going Within

The first phase of the contemplative process for the practitioners is disengaging from the outside world and turning their attention inward. Though all people reflect from time to time on their inner being, what distinguishes contemplation from reflection, is the way in which the self is viewed in a contemplative practice. The practitioners use very simple, but distinct habits and skills with which to begin their inner journey.

Ritual

Most of the practitioners employ some ritual to begin the process of bringing their attention to their inner selves. Daily time and places to undertake their practice establish helpful routines that support disengagement from the world to set the stage for time in contemplation. Habit and ritual assist practitioners to begin the process of being less preoccupied with the concerns of the outside world. It helps them to disengage mind and body from the compelling activities of the day and to begin the physical relaxation process that supports the inner journey.

Becoming present and relaxing the body is facilitated by privacy, quiet, subdued lighting, and for some, soft music, incense and candlelight. Some of the practitioners visualize being in a special place or being in “God’s presence”. The practitioners adopt physical postures – usually sitting or reclining – that allow physical relaxation while discouraging sleep.

I like to start with a bath, light a candle, listen to soft music or none at all. Being alone is essential. I live in a small apartment, I have a roommate, it works better when there are no outside noises, TV or radio. It’s a process of letting go of real world concerns, and the process of just of delving into myself, and communing with the person I was when I was born and try to pull away layers of societal influences that Freud would call the super ego and try and come as close to the seed of my being and it has to come in the form of a ritual. If I attempt to go straight into my bedroom with no preparation its usually not as successful meditation as when I go through the bathing, it’s a cleansing when the water drains down the drain, life’s concerns go with it. There is very much a sense of release. I don’t like to have eaten a big meal, I feel light. Sometimes even a candle is a distraction. I usually just like to sit cross-legged on my bed, usually silent.
Letting Go

Once prepared and settled, the inward journey of each practitioner proceeds with a conscious intention of the practitioner to let go. “Letting go of holding on” in the words of one of the practitioners, is the attitude of releasing one’s engagement with the moment to moment preoccupation with our lives. The practice of “letting go” marks the juncture of stepping aside from being caught or carried in the flow of the outer world, both as it manifests itself in our physical presence in the world, and as it manifests itself in our thoughts. Letting go has body, mind and ego components for the practitioners.

Particularly in the early moments of the practitioners’ contemplation, physical relaxation is fundamental to the process of letting go. Breathing is the most common activity used to help the body let go, to relax. Practitioners focus their mind on breath as a way of calming their minds which, in tum, causes the body to release tension and to relax.

I usually use just deep breathing, that whole sense of breathing in, breathing out.....For the first ten minutes I will do the breathing part, focus on my breath and settle, and attain a peaceful state. So I imagine myself in this room with the door closed, when the walls fall away and I am still in nothingness. So I sit in nothingness. I am breathing something in nothingness. Very simple.

Sometimes, just being quiet, letting the silence, as much as I can down there, is like fresh air from the ocean. It is amazing how powerful it is, how useful it is, and I forget to do it. The need to go quiet and to let go is necessary as air.

As thinking is a principal way in which to engage the world, it is clear that releasing or stepping aside from thought is fundamental to the practitioners’ ability to let go. In different ways the practitioners let go of being in thought to listen and participate in their inner worlds. As they let go of thought, their minds gradually slow and the frequency and intensity of thought gradually eases. Awareness of the inner world opens. Releasing thought is usually accomplished either by focusing their minds on a single object (e.g. breath, a candle, a space four feet in front of them) or by ‘attending’, simply observing without acting on sensations within.

Shutting down the monkey mind...the intellectual chatter we have all the time. That is absolutely critical. Most people don’t even realize its there, just
the awareness of that chattering monkey, that incessant chattering of the mind.... I know in my own case, I suddenly began to hear myself. I was not aware that this was happening. It was like you do not realize you're swimming in a sea of oxygen.

The objective is to try to slow down. I seek to not be located in the thought by stepping aside and being in another focus of concentrations such as in a mantra.

A paradoxical intention necessary to 'let go' during contemplation is to be actively engaged in the contemplative process, on the one hand, while being able to let go of any desired outcome of the process, on the other hand. Though the practitioners enter into contemplation with some purpose, with the objective of resting for example, it is important that the practitioners, once within, let go of holding onto this outcome.

A degree of detachment or "dis-identification" is helpful to the practitioners to facilitate going within. One way this is accomplished is by the process of "mindfulness" in contemplation. "Mindfulness" is the act of reflecting and observing that we are constituted of mind, body, emotions, feelings, sensations, etc., and of noticing we are all and none of those things at the same time. The observed experience of self from the mind-set or attitude of mindfulness gives the practitioners a sense of dis-identification. From a place of mindfulness, they observe that their normal focus of being is mind and ego. From this dis-identified experience or perspective of their inner world, the practitioners become less identified with any one part of their whole being.

...[T]his is like what I was talking about. the fair witness, the dis-identified part.... My practice is more to go inside and let that part look at both sides that are wrestling with the question. It is passive, yet it is very conscious. There has to be listening and waiting and making space and then there is the consciousness that comes in that is not caught up in the smaller element. [I see] all my fears that did not really represent the bigger me. Once I stepped back and got clear out that, everything fell into place. I had to step back, maker conscious effort to get out of the muddle.
2. Being Within

The process of being within flows naturally from the process of going within. The same processes that bring the practitioners within are often the same processes that carry the practitioners through their contemplation once they are within. The experience of being within is qualitatively different from the experience of the normal self in the outside world. As the practitioners are for a time attending to their inner worlds, the urgency and turmoil that characterizes their normal waking sense of themselves can give way to a sense of unity, peace and equanimity.

Mindfulness -- being present with mind and sensation

To the practitioners, mindfulness is an active part of ‘being’ while within. While within, the practitioners hold this attitude or mind set as a place from which to simply observe, without becoming engaged in, thoughts and sensations.

...starting at the top of my head, I become aware of sensation in my body. And so I will go through my body and experience what happens, what comes up.

Equanimity is for me a process of watching myself and my reactions without really reacting to them, without making an initial reaction, without trying to lay a guilt trip on myself. .... That's basically the process, simply observing myself..

Unity

From time to time, the practitioners experience in their contemplative state a sense of oneness or unity with the cosmos. In this, there is a spiritual component; an encounter with the spirit that is both within and outside of themselves.

...yes, once there is no longer the sense of separateness, then one really gets at the feeling at the experiential level. It is as real as drinking a glass of water. That one is not separate. It would be just as real as the feel of my hand on the cushion. It is not about having a higher level illusion, it is about dispelling the illusions altogether and finding out what is really real.

Peace

Being present with mind and sensation in contemplation brings a sense of peace to the practitioners. This peace flows from letting go.
The more I did it, the more I experienced a sense of inner peace, an inner calm, greater than I had ever experienced before in my whole life.

...when I am particularly confused or distraught or struggling with stuff, it is like those moments of prayer, they are like, maybe it is something to hold onto, it is like, for me at least, a place I can calm the waters.

3. Coming Without

The third contemplative phase is bringing the experiences and heightened awareness of the inner self to the outside world. Flowing from the inner contemplative experience, the practitioners’ contemplative sense of mind, body and spirit is linked to their lives in the outer world. In this inner-outer world connection, the effect of contemplation on the personal mastery of the practitioners is seen. In the words of one of the practitioners, “What we do in contemplation, we become more of in life.”

**Body: Building the body/mind platform**

Contemplative practice, by its introspective nature, contributes to the practitioners’ awareness of their bodies; it helps them to be more in touch with their physical and emotional selves. From their practice, they believe they are more sensitive to the body’s signals for care and they are more prepared to act in ways that respect those signals. By coming to see their body as an “anchor” or “temple”, they have an appreciation of the role their body plays in their personal mastery.

I don’t know how for the first 30 years of my life I did not get in touch with that, but for whatever reason I was not aware of tightness in stomach or headaches... none of that... yes my practice has now given me the skills to listen to my body.

Being in my body anchors me. it's a way I can be more grounded. It helps explore what the feeling is all about. My practice helps my need to stay present in the experience. ...if I get really angry, or get really sad, I explore the sensations in my body first. I want to use my body as an anchor.

Following naturally from heightened body awareness, the practitioners’ practices contribute to their understanding and experience of the “interconnectedness” of mind and body. In contemplation, they observe and experience how state of mind and emotional well being are manifest in their bodies. They also experience the
impact of their body on their mind. In a contemplative state of mindfulness, they observe the influence of movement, breath, and other physical sensation on their minds and emotional state.

I am starting to see the ‘connectedness’ of mind and body. Through meditation, there is a sense of the ‘seamlessness’ of mind and body.

Mind: Finding peace in being present

‘Letting go’, and the experience of unity, peace and dis-identification in the practitioners’ contemplative state brings a sense of peace to their outside lives. They believe they are more calm and at peace with themselves and the world; they achieve a degree of “equanimity” in their normal lives. The practitioners believe this part of their practice helps them be less disturbed by life’s ups and downs. It helps them to retain an evenness of mind and emotion under the stress.

The meditation gives me an opportunity to understand why I am reacting the way I am. The meditation also gives me equanimity or a peaceful place so that I can be a better listener.

Flowing from a sense of peace and equanimity is a capacity for, and interest in, staying ‘present’ or to be more ‘mindful’ moment to moment. To be ‘mindful’ for the practitioners is to be more deliberate and conscious of themselves day to day, in a way that parallels the way they remain watchful and aware of themselves in contemplation. This implies an intention by the practitioners to not be so caught up in their thoughts and preoccupations during the day so as to lose awareness of themselves in the world moment to moment.

The other piece of meditation for me is that it doesn’t stop at the end of the meditation hour. Throughout the day I will attempt to come back to the awareness of being in the moment. I use my breath to get back there. I experience being in the moment with my breath. I also offer the merits of the ability of being in the present for the well-being of all. I will attempt in my work for day-to-day activity to come back to being aware of the moment. My goal is to be in the present and be aware more and more of the time.
**Spirit: Drawing strength from God within**

For the practitioners, the experience of God is ineffable. God seems to be an experience more felt than understood; an experience that is somehow not experienced in a customary way by the mind. It therefore eludes description.

...the God experience, it is not something you experience with your mind, it is something that you experience in another part of your being. Or perhaps, it is an experience you approach with your body and your mind but one is never able to enter it entirely from the physical place.

Through their practice, the practitioners believe they experience God or “spirit” within themselves.

For me God is the energy I try to get in touch with. It’s the energy that you feel when you slow yourself down, when you are not thinking details and problems all around you, it’s like your pulse, that is the energy that is the cause of all of us. It’s the energy that you can feel between us. When you are in touch with that... I don’t see God as something at the end of a yellow brick road. It’s the spirituality that is in the core of all of us. That’s the path of meditation.

I think that deep down in the Center in all of is an energy. The closer you get to it, there is a kind of heat and ‘connectedness’ in the sense of God that I can feel in my prayer or mediation, there are no ‘shoulds’ or ‘should-nots’, just a sense of relative peace... the closer I get to that energy the better I function.

For some of the practitioners, their belief in a God outside themselves has been changed or was being changed by their practice. The practitioners draw strength and are enriched from this new contact.

I have changed my whole concept of God [it] has changed radically. I used to think that God was high patriarch God, and hold that understanding of God. Now I think more of God as energy and power.

...the journey feels spiritual, it feels full of gratitude, full of compassion and connection, enjoyment; in the presence of God, it feels spiritual. It’s feels much bigger than me... That does not diminish me, that makes me feel bigger.

Contemplation is both a tool in the exploration, and a reinforcing force, in the discovery of our inner spirit. The practitioners recognize the challenges encountered
in the search for our spiritual ‘self’ arises from first exploring, then ‘owning’ our inner ‘selves’, as imperfect as ‘they’ are.

I am a very determined person. When I set my mind to do something, I really want to go through with it. For me my life is about my spiritual path. Everything else is secondary. And if that means facing my demons, facing my really dark places, then that's okay. It isn't easy. It is a Warrior's path. I think that the practice itself takes you to the darkest places. And the most hostile parts of your soul. You go very deeply into those places. It takes a lot of courage to go there voluntarily, and to stay and experience the experience. It is a sobering experience. It is life changing.

Being in contact with an inner God or spirit influences the practitioners’ beliefs and values. For some of the practitioners, contact with God within reminds them of the values of love of self and love of other and, of the relative unimportance of material pursuits.

Then out of that integration will flow values that are universal. Love, unity of the universe, if those two are distinguishable, and infinity. All of the other values I think of flow out of love.

It makes me question the society in which we live, the materialism. sure, it makes me realize that ultimately our needs for a job, a certain amount of material comfort. is ultimately meaningless

4. Personal mastery

How do the three phases of the contemplative cycle contribute to the personal mastery of the practitioners? The practitioners find that there is a direct and significant link between their practice and how they live their lives. Their practice affects how they meet life through body, mind and spirit.

Personal mastery was defined by this study for the practitioners as “as the continuing capacity to achieve the results in life we want”. However, the practitioners were uncomfortable with the implied meaning of “mastery” in this definition. To them, personal mastery meant anything but “superiority, ascendancy, authority, or domination” implied by the common meaning given “mastery”. On the contrary, the practitioners believed an important element of real personal mastery in the world required wholly embracing a self and a world that is never to be “mastered”.

Therefore, concerning the relationship of contemplation to personal mastery, the practitioners are primarily concerned with how their practice helps them manage
themselves in the world. They believe their contemplative practice contributes to their personal mastery to the extent that it contributes to their understanding and functioning of themselves as a whole beings. In turn, the more whole and well integrated they become, the more efficacious they are with others.

**Body: Physical and emotional health**

The practitioners believe their practice has a significant positive effect on their physical and emotional health. Their practice brings them heightened body awareness and a means to manage emotional stress in their lives. They believe, and experience through their practice, the significance of the mind – body connection to their overall wellness. They believe their practice acts on the link between their physical, emotional and spiritual state. Beyond health, their practice brings them deep rest and energy.

Physical health

Stress management is the perhaps the greatest health effect of contemplation for the practitioners. Flowing from awareness of body, and of the significance of the body/mind connection, the practitioners have developed a proactive and holistic view toward managing their health that is based largely on the management of stress in their lives. The contemplative practice helps the practitioners manage stress by helping them to let go, “stay in balance” and to “listen to their body’s messages”. Managing stress through their practice has a positive impact on their physical and emotional health, from managing simple day to day ailments and moods, to overcoming life threatening disease.

I believe prayer is very much being in touch with your body. If you pray, on a regular basis. I think it reduces anxiety and increases the health of your body.

I am convinced ... that the physical and spiritual stress have a major impact on us physically. I am absolutely convinced about that. And I convinced that there is a strong relationship between stress and cancer.

Being able to let go physically, mentally, emotionally, is one of the key abilities of living in the world like ours. To be able to release like that is key to emotional well-being,.... letting go of the stress. It is also letting go of self, the ego, is how you get into the practice.
The practitioners develop a holistic approach to caring for their health. Through their heightened sense of the link between their state of mind and their overall health, they embrace the mind body connection in their practice as a key to health and wellness. This awareness extends to awareness of emotions and the role stress plays in wellness.

Beyond stress management and good health, the practitioners find that their contemplative practice contributes to being rested and energized. The practitioners find that they experience deep rest and are often refreshed and energized by their practice.

...happiness. yes definitely. what I found was that I have more energy....it is like connecting into a reservoir of energy that is there.

...meditation energizes me....[it yields] rested energy, not nervous energy...it charges me. ....my experience was that I was overwhelmed with energy. ....the amount of energy that I experienced led me to extreme bliss

The calming effect of their practice also means less energy is lost through hyper activity from nervousness or tension.

I think that I have an easier relationship with my family, I am able to be in a room and just relax and be with them, before I couldn't sit down for ten minutes. I would come home from work I would have to be doing something. I couldn't sit on a beach. I must have driven my wife and kids crazy.

In their practice, the practitioners use their mind to influence their body. With visualization and intention, they achieve better physical health.

I remember hearing myself saying, "every time my kids get a cold, I get a cold" . As soon as I heard myself saying that, I decided I do not want that program any more and decided to change it. From that moment on, I never got a cold when my kids did.

Emotional health

As the practitioners become more aware of their bodies through contemplation, they are able to "listen", or in a different way, become aware of the nature of feelings. Experiencing themselves from an attitude of 'dis-identified observer'. the practitioners often have a different perception of their emotions, seeing them as "...just particular configurations of sensation". Listening from a dis-identified place is what one practitioner sees as the "doing" part of his practice.
‘Being present’ and letting go in contemplation contributes to the resolution of feelings in the practitioners.

The practice forces you to be with something long enough to start to notice things that you wouldn’t notice otherwise. It forces you to be in a space of observation. When you are observing you notice things.

I find now that if I stay with the grief, I really notice where I feel in my body. It is very fulfilling in a way, to take ownership of grief, I know how it’s working, I know what it’s doing, and that knowing gives me a lot of peace.

As the practitioners observe their feelings from this contemplative space, they both see and “feel” their feelings “shift and change of their own volition;

“….awareness changes everything.”

I asked myself, why did my body not want to be there? I felt it in my chest. I started to focus on it as if I wanted to describe it to you. So I feel this sense of sadness and depression, right here in my chest. While it feels like it’s about this big, and it feels like it goes from front to back, it seems sort of blackish. it is like a hard piece of iron. As I focus on that I am aware my feelings are beginning to change. As I described it to myself it does not seem so black. It was shrinking in size. So I described all of that to myself and it changed a little more. Each time I acknowledged to myself what was happening, it dissolved into smaller and smaller pieces. In the end, I was left with a sense of peace. I felt joyful and happy…. what I found out, it happened spontaneously, the name of the game is to allow myself to be truly with disappointment and experiencing it fully. [Feelings] can be de-constructed if you allow them to be there. This automatically dissolves them.

One practitioner sees emotions as sensations that are out of balance and stuck because he has held onto them, he is unable to let go. When he can let go, his feelings again begin to flow and become again just sensation.

...there is feeling moving all the time in me, sensation moving in me all the time that I become aware of. I think feeling only becomes very strong only usually when I am holding onto something, somewhere. when I get backed up, so most feeling and emotion is a resistance on my part to something, I don’t know how to say that differently, when I am really in balance, then I have feeling, and its subtle and fluid and flowing, when I am out of balance I have feeling and its less subtle, more blatant. the further out of balance I get the more intense it becomes. ...when I am out of balance it is because ….I am holding on and it’s the holding that creates the sense of pleasure or pain.
**Mind: Drawing on inner wisdom**

The practitioners make use of the unique access contemplation yields to the inner world of the mind.

**Insight and intuition**

The practitioners use their contemplative practice to draw on an inner wisdom, insight or intuition that seems to flow from within. Simply by attending to, or by observing their inner world from a place of dis-identification, the practitioners receive new understanding and direction on issues of concern that is in their hearts or minds. They need only pose the question to their inner selves, or evoke their inner spirit through scripture or prayer and simply wait with patience and openness for their inner being to respond. Attributed to the “universe”, “God”, spirit or just the heart or body-mind connection, the practitioners believe they access a store of knowledge that is beyond what they ‘know’.

I think there is a great stirring that goes on. a great mixing around of life and ideas and experience and so forth within me but also within the universe, and that the universe and I are inseparable in that place and that out of that stirring around, my mind, my heart, my body, whatever, may be active as a kind of filter or conduit I guess it’s a kind of channel idea I suppose. that stuff comes out though. There is only so much that can come through that any given moment because it has to coalesce within me and take form within me and then once that takes form in me I guess more has to come out. And that depends a lot on how much I get in the way, so that if I am too tight down or too controlled….. or too insecure or too rigid or whatever, then that gets in the way of the universe moving though me.

**Fair witness**

Often, the insight flows to the practitioners through a “fair witness” or wise person. The Inner critic becomes more the fair witness, the wise person.

The fair witness term we used as sort of the "I" in connecting and guiding the personality, but it is not the personality, the parts of ourselves that are out working. It is a reflection of the higher self, of the deeper spiritual connector to all. The "I" is closer to the personality that we usually experience. but it's all one… It is the non-judgmental, non-critical part of myself. that I have this sort of the guide for me rather than saying "you dummy you shouldn't be doing this" but it just helps me in knowing what I might be in for the day. It is an accepting part that…sometimes I hear my critic but I can also hear another voice that is supporting me.
Visualization

Visualization and imagery is an important contemplative 'tool of the mind' for the practitioners. Visualization and imagery are used as an aid in entering and maintaining their contemplative practice, for preparing the practitioners for activity (especially difficult or challenging activity), as a springboard toward seeking inner wisdom and, most importantly, for healing self and others. Visualization is used by the practitioners to strengthen their contemplative practices.

I like to start my imaging with an evergreen tree within myself. It is right in the trunk of my being and it slowly grows, it is solid and strong, it is a detailed visual picture of this tree. I begin to feel as if I am this tree with all the rings and little micro organisms dwelling within me, ...the picture slowly grows and expands and takes me out into the room, into the entire apartment, across the country across the universe.

I sit and go inside and contemplate what's happening for the day and what I want to have happen for the day ... this sort of helps me set the framework for what I really want in the day.... and maybe this is how one side of me can command and then direct it. This is something that is more or less constant in my daily life.

...contemplation moves you into a particular scene so that, the washing of the feet for example, I might be there and I might be washing Jesus' feet or he might be washing mine, for example, and a conversation might come about that comes totally away from that. I have just used the scene as a springboard to connect... so the story goes its own way. That is something that is more or less constant in my daily life.

... it is a type of prayer in which I concentrate on a person. For example, my sister in Vancouver has been sick, so I have been using my prayer to visualize and I use. tried to visualize color and tried to visualize her, it is like I'm sending positive energy to her. I have been visualizing her in her home, with a green blue aura around her. I am sending her energy of healing and energy of hope, so to be very focused, it takes me a while to quiet myself down to totally focusing on her, visualizing her, and that kind of visualizing her with the color of her aura, it is energy. I believe I send energy to her, Gods presence in other terms.

Embracing paradox

So much of significance in life, the practitioners discovered, is bound up in opposites. Fundamental to personal mastery, the practitioners find contemplation contributes to understanding and managing the paradoxes of life. The practitioners
find their contemplative practices useful vehicles for 'staying in' or balancing the
polarity tensions of paradox. The practitioners find personal mastery through
contemplation in managing the paradoxes of being intentional -- yet non-intentional,
in letting go -- yet still being engaged, in provoking thought -- while still listening for
answers from within, and by being in the tension of life's struggle -- while being dis-
identified, in release of the outcome.

Contemplation is useful for "stepping back" to a dis-identified place. In
stepping back, the practitioners are able to see and manage or 'hold' both poles of an
opposite. continuously and simultaneously. From the dis-identified place in
contemplation, they can, for example, be engaged, yet still be partly aside; be
intentional in action while letting go of outcomes; or to function purposefully in the
face of ambiguity. By staying in the tension of paradox, the practitioners are able,
through their practices, to draw on the power of their inner selves "to create the
results in life they want".

One thing that I do in my practice, if I have an issue I'm working on, or a
paradox. I will often in the beginning of my meditation just stay in that
conflict I have. I do not intend to think about it during my meditation but I am
opened to insight and resolution. And then I let go of any expectation of
results. Sometimes I can go on for months before I have an insight.

[My spiritual leader]... is trained in the spiritual life and can ask questions
that force me to go to that deeper level and force me to articulate. It helps me
step back. Then I come to a deeper level. Going to the director that poses
questions keeps me in the ambiguity. It opens up other possibilities that
maybe I had not thought of or reflects back to me what I had just said.

Being and Doing

An important polarity theme or paradox running throughout the contemplative
practices of the practitioners is the art of 'being and doing'. Being and doing is seen
by the practitioners to be both a part of their contemplative practice and of life
outside their practice. Some cycles of being and doing occur just within their practice.
Other cycles of being and doing occur both within and without their practice.
Sometimes it seems life calls on the practitioners to be 'being' and 'doing' at the
same time! Even the contemplative practices themselves can be seen as periods of
'being' in a context of life as 'doing'.
I tell people about the great American philosopher, Sinatra. He probably the most succinctly expressed one of the strategies for well-being, first to be active, and then to rest, you have to be active, and then you have to rest. You need periods of doing and periods of rest. How did he put it? “Do-be-dobe-do...” you have to ‘be’ and you have to ‘do’. Our culture has not taught the being part. When people do that they discover the part that has been missing and their lives. Just to have some being in their time. Traditional cultures have usually built time for people to step out of the daily morass of living.... Our culture has not given people the know-how or the permission just to be. They always need to be doing, people do not feel valuable unless they are doing, talking of their accomplishments. We become human doings instead of human beings.

I don’t think I can be in mastery without being in balance and one of the primary balances is the doing, not doing balance. Or another way of saying not doing, doing is being and doing, if you would rather use those words. If one gets stuck on either side of that you cannot possibly have mastery.

Outside of their active practice, the most frequent and significant form of doing is in the process of creation, whether in was making decisions, finding solutions, or seeking insights. Though the being and doing cycle goes on in life for everyone, in the view of the practitioners, contemplation accelerates and deepens the process.

I move into a rather structured form of prayer which comes out of the Benedictine order, "lectio de vina" or divine reading. There are four things to do: Lecto – read; meditatio – reflect; oratio – speak; contemplatio - hear the wisdom of the passage. This takes as long as you want, probably ... the rest of the day, that's why it is important to be silent. So I will read over all the scriptures she has suggested, one will probably speak to me or I think I can hear what is going on, I will choose that one. I name my intention, I say I am looking for guidance in, "Will I retire or not?", for instance. I read that over silently, then I read it again out loud. I stop at words that might grab me and feel my body and how I am reacting to that thought and then I will either have a dialogue with myself or write in my journal. I will put big capitals S for self and M for me and I usually start with me and day I can't do that what why would I even think about it and then self writes, whatever. I have an argument with myself and using probably some for the words that are in the scripture that come into focus. I put that out of the way, I read it again, and just keep the dialogue reflection going on. Usually I will get up and leave the whole thing. Come back to the contemplation. I just sit and hear, or whatever, like you know. "When the lord spoke and said to me."

I think it tightens the circle. Without the meditation I would be spiraling way out here or something, I think having the meditation spirals me inward.
Intention: Vision and letting go of outcome

Along with the ‘being and doing’, the practitioners recognize one of the greatest and most elusive skills of personal mastery is managing the paradox underlying ‘intentionality’ in life. In this paradox, they recognize that the need to set goals and be passionately engaged in action toward those goals, is opposed by the need to let go of outcome, to “go with the flow”. To muster the best of their creative energies while simultaneously relinquishing any ambition of outcome is a paradox of intentionality that challenges the practitioners deeply and constantly.

In life and through their contemplative practices, some of the practitioners have goals that are of such significance that they are a vision or purpose for their very lives. Some of the practitioners find their vision in following God, other find it in simply helping others. Some of the practitioners regret that they have not found their vision.

Yet, even as they are fully engaged in realizing their vision (for some, their dreams), the practitioners seek to let go of the ambition of accomplishment as having any value in its own right.

Patience used to mean I had to resign myself to waiting. Patience is to truly be content with the moment, trusting that it is going to work out. That is what both Tia Chi and my practice taught me. I am letting go of wanting a result. I am letting go of any expectations or goals or visions. There is a paradox involved. We want things, we have goals. There is a paradox between letting go and achieving goals. I can articulate that from the head place but not yet from the heart place.

Flowing is the way I prefer to move in the world rather than in an organized way. I guess different personality types like to plan. I come with an intention, but I go with the flow. I feel more comfortable in that kind of way.

**Spirit: Loving self and others**

Self compassion

The practitioners believe their practice brings and reinforces self-compassion. Attributed variously to being in the presence of God’s love, experiencing the singularity of the universe or being more intimate with their own body and sense of God within. the practitioners feel their contemplative practice helps them accept love of self as a natural extension of the ‘love consciousness’.
I totally felt this tremendous love for anybody or anything. Part of it was acceptance of myself. It just changed my life. I do not go around in this state but, it is like being given a vaccine. It helped me understand that whole sense called self love, not from ego, but from an outer point of you and how it all fits together...

...I believe I am accepted. I accept myself the way I am. It has a lot to do with not dieting, dying my hair, I like... appreciate I don't want to look slovenly, I mean I care for how I look, but it is not important for me to have the latest fad, the slimmest, etc.

Self-love for the practitioners is the basis for new levels of self concern and self-care. Following from new self confidence for the practitioners is lessened self-consciousness and new freedom to act with creativity and spontaneity in their own interest.

I think what has changed is my commitment to certain values, for example, just taking care of myself. It always struck me as selfish to give too much attention for myself... It gave me permission to start to take care of myself, in a way that I didn't feel was appropriate before.

And with self love, and self care, the practitioners find themselves better able to be self-'response-able'. To be self-response-able, or self-responsible, in this context, means to recognize one's own capacity to choose how one reacts to life, and then to un-apologetically act in accord with one's own needs. Capacity for self-responsibility for the practitioners is an element of personal mastery that flows from self acceptance and self love through contemplation.

I think it's impossible to be in mastery if one is not responsible, the more fully responsible one is the more mastery one has. Responsibility is the recognition of my involvement in life.

Courage

The practitioners believe contemplation lends new courage to their lives. practitioners feel themselves more prepared to let go of outcomes and to be more willing and capable of weathering unforeseen consequences of choices as a result of their practice. Through self-awareness, self-acceptance and confidence, and in some cases, belief in spirit or God, contemplative practice imbues the practitioners with higher levels of capacity and willingness to risk.
What my practice is about, is I am able to experience disappointment and learn that I have a strategy for neutralizing the uncomfortable feelings of disappointment. I find out that I do not have to fear disappointment as much. That means I can take more risks. It also means that I can be more content on a moment to moment basis with myself. If I am fearing disappointment, I go into planning how I can avoid that, maybe that means changing the other person, it means I do not have to plan as much. I can just be because I have a way of being with disappointment.

Engaging life

The practitioners experience a number of attitudinal and perceptual shifts from their practices that enriches their lives and makes old experiences new; “seeing the world anew through child-like eyes”. They believe themselves more inquisitive and interested in the world. This contributes to a more optimistic and engaging attitude toward life.

Everything becomes interesting, a child-like interest in things is reawakened....I find when I have meditated. I am more in touch with the inner strength. I am more in touch with my body. So I feel freer, physically freer. I would say an optimism. I don't know how much of it is a philosophical perspective. My meditation opened me to an exploration... maybe I'm a slow learner... but I have to keep focused on higher wisdom.

Relationship with others

For the practitioners, a large part of personal mastery in the world is about how they conduct their relationships with other people. The practitioners make no mention of how their practice contributes to mastery with things, such as how it contributes to gaining technical expertise, mastery in sport or physical activity, or even the capacity to conceptualize or analyze.

The practitioners do not differentiate between mastery in personal and professional relationships. The contributions of their practice to personal mastery in relationship are as applicable professionally as personally. Some practitioners believe their practice heightens interest and focus on people over things in their lives.

I work a lot harder at seeing myself as being in relationship with people. The institution has become less significant to me, that the people have become more significant and so my life is much more about relationship than it was which is the way I preach without question. it changes the way I work, it changes how I understand the faith....
Being in oneself to be with others

The practitioners find their practice contributes to developing effective relationships with others, both in a personal and professional context. Especially in helping relationships, the practitioners find self-knowledge and self awareness from contemplation contribute to understanding and compassion for others. This is manifest in improved communication skills, perception of the underlying needs of others and in their capacity to draw in their inner wisdom to responding appropriately. For one practitioner, the more he is in touch with himself, the less distinguishable he finds himself from others.

...my practice is a very immediate hands-on way about dealing with issues for myself so that I can be more immediately available with a person. When I am with the person tuning in, to the extent that I can be with myself and my own issues, I can be totally there as a resource.

The more deeply I can be with people, the more deeply I can come up with suggestions that will be helpful because they go to the core of the issues because I'm not afraid to go to the core of my issues, to be with myself. Because it's not threatening for me to be with myself, I don't need to ignore me when I am with another person.

Acceptance of others

Acceptance of others is easier with acceptance of self, which the practitioners find is facilitated by their practice. Sitting with themselves in contemplation breeds a compassion for self and others that is reflected in acceptance. This includes compassion for humanity and embracing its imperfect nature.

...if I learn to be aware that the discomfort is because the person stirs uncomfortable things in me that I would rather avoid, if I can learn to be with those sensations then they dissolve, then I no longer have an issue with that person. I don't need to change them, or even change my attitude towards them. My attitude changes automatically. The attitude change is a result of my experience change. It goes directly to the core experience of everything.

I operate under the principle as a human being, we will fail fairly regularly anyway. I am pretty good at accepting my failures. There is a book "I'm okay, you're okay". That is a really silly principle. [For me]...it is that "I'm not okay, you're not okay, and that's okay and we'll just kind of work through that".
Letting go of the outcome

When helping or being in relationship with others, the practitioners find their practice contributes to their capacity or willingness to let go of any particular outcome. This "surrender" seems particularly potent in a helping context with others as it allows the person to feel un-judged, supported and compassionately heard.

When I am working in a workshop setting...or when I am doing some individual work with somebody, I will often just kind of go still, maybe be quiet, just let it happen, and then move with whatever I am moved to move with....

I know when I am working with people in that way there is a real surrender, involved in just kind of giving up, not trying to control or understand or make it happen although I can say that with an awful lot of experience behind it so I am able to surrender in some ways because of a huge amount of experience and knowledge that sits with me.

Being 'present' with others and listening

The practitioners find good listening flows naturally from their practice of being present and mindful with others.

The meditation gives me an opportunity to understand why I am reacting the way I am. The meditation also gives me equanimity of peaceful place so that I can be a better listener.

Let's talk about my work. I'm a manager .... where I manage 350 people... I was treating people very differently than I do today. We were there to do a task. Now what I do throughout meetings. I will come back to be aware of what's happening, and now when I notice myself getting possibly triggered by things that are being said. perhaps things are getting a little too aggressive, I can more often not come back to that place where I become balanced again. Based on the feedback that I get, I get told that I am more of an active listener then I ever have been, in fact. some individuals use me as a mentor, as a model.

"Let go, let God"

There is a spiritual element that contributes to the practitioners' relationship to self and others that flows from the contemplative habits of letting go, being present and compassionate. The practitioners believe that they are able to draw on their inner wisdom of spirit, on the energy of God within to help themselves and to help others.

I do believe that is the spirit working through me. Or even when I am counseling and I do not know where, but an insight comes in the moment. I
have just started doing this work with abused women and abusive men, when I started I was scared silly, and in the middle of that all of a sudden things would come to me. I would be in the middle and interview, and be overwhelmed by what I am hearing, what this person is in, what the hell do I say next, and where do I begin, I would feel this sensation of panic. I would, settled down, do some self talk. Invariably, whatever I had said, people say afterwards, thank you very much. If they ever knew how overwhelmed I was. I would say things, wherever it came from I do not know, but part of it is I'm trying to use my own resources, but also I know the spirit is with me. I do not know where the insight came at a particular time.

C. Substantive Theory

The essence of the relationship of contemplation to personal mastery is summarized below (in italics) in a "substantive theory". (As defined in the research "Methodology", Chapter II, the ultimate finding of grounded theory methodology is an emergent substantive or formal theory.) Emerging from the transcripts and from the storyline above, the substantive theory links the process of contemplation with the outcomes of contemplation which, in turn, are linked to specific attributes of personal mastery of the practitioners.

Substantive Theory

In "going within" (in beginning a contemplative session), the rituals of practice help the practitioners to shift their attention from the outside world of their five senses to their internal world of thoughts and feelings. They begin their practice by letting go of the outside world and by relinquishing any purposeful intention for the contemplative process. They move further into their inner world by letting go of their body: they relax. They let go of their mind by setting their minds to observe their thoughts, feelings and sensation. As their self moves from being in their thoughts to observing their thoughts, their minds and their bodies let go more, and they relax more. As their bodies relax, their minds become more still; they become peaceful and experience equanimity. They come to rest in this place. After a while, they are simply "being within".

In "being within", in the experience of equanimity, they become aware of their bodies and of the subtle levels of inner consciousness. In their inner stillness, they experience the unity of their body with their minds. In deeper consciousness still,
they experience unity with their inner spirit. In the experience of inner spirit, they experience their unity with the universe.

In "coming without"(after a contemplative session), the practitioners are more 'in touch' with their bodies and their whole being's relationship to their body. They recall the reserve of peace and equanimity enjoyed in contemplation. They are less in their thoughts still, and are more 'present' in their moment to moment awareness. Lingering from their experience of contact with spirit, the sense of unity lends compassion and love for themselves and for those in the world.

Over time, contemplation changes the practitioners' relationship to themselves. For the practitioners, the process of contemplation is the process of looking inward and experiencing their true nature; they experience the energy, health and wisdom that flows from the interplay of body, mind, and spirit. They become increasingly more able to access their inner world and make use of greater portions of it. In the capacity to draw the strengths of their inner world out into their outer world, the practitioners find personal mastery.

For the practitioners, the practices of contemplation, meditation and prayer are techniques to live within the flow that exists in the unity of body, mind and spirit. Living more in the flow of this unity, in this energy, the practitioners' experience less stress and better health: improved intelligence and insight; enlarged capacity for creativity and intuition; and a greater sense of being closer to 'self', others and to God. By being in the unity flow of body, mind and spirit, the practitioners are better able to embrace polarities and paradox in their lives. Skills of staying in the tension of paradox -- doing and non doing, letting go while still being engaged, maintaining vision while holding reality -- enable the practitioners to draw on the power of their inner selves "to create the results in life they want".

Specifically for the practitioners, the contemplative process contributes the following positive attributes of personal mastery:

Body: Health
   Managed stress
   Energy and vitality

Mind: Use of intellect and intuition
Mindfulness, presence
Visualisation, imagination and creativity

Spirit: Tolerance for ambiguity
Capacity for duality/paradox
Self love, self-acceptance and self-responsibility
Courage, commitment and surrender
Optimism, compassion and love

This concludes the report of the findings. In Chapter V, the experience of the practitioners is contrasted with personal mastery as it is conceived in the workplace and personal mastery as it is achieved in the processes of adult development.
Chapter IV : Literature Research

For half a century now, a new consciousness has been entering the human world, a new awareness that can only be called transcendent, spiritual.... We know that life is really about a spiritual unfolding that is personal and enchanting and magical – an unfolding that no philosophy or religion has yet fully clarified... We know, [too,] that once we do understand what is happening, how to turn on this growth and keep it on, the human world will take a quantum leap into a new way of life, one that all of history has been struggling to achieve. (Authors Notes, “The Celestine Prophecy” by James Redford cited in Woodhouse, 1996)

Poised on the brink of the new millenium, there is hope in the world that knowledge and culture from across history and around the globe will be joined, and mankind will, indeed. “take a quantum leap into a new way of life”. In this context, it is portentous that our empirical, western workplace is awakening to the value of soul, spirit and personal development.

This study of contemplation and personal mastery brings together several broad fields that are seldom considered together. Contemplation is usually associated more with spiritual journeys than with personal mastery. Personal mastery, as conceived in the organizational literature, is associated more with competence in the workplace, than with personal development. To make sense of the relationship between personal mastery and contemplation, this study draws on two additional fields, the field of adult developmental (“lifespan”) psychology and transpersonal psychology. In adult developmental psychology, the attributes of personal mastery are found in the context of personal, adult maturation and growth. In transpersonal psychology, still more attributes of personal mastery appear where traditional adult development leaves off and spiritual development begins the “higher” transpersonal stages of adult development.

With such a broad field to cover, this literature research is necessarily a sample only of some of the prominent works in the areas of contemplation, personal mastery in the workplace and traditional and transpersonal adult development theory. It serves this study as a basis to evaluate and amplify the experiences of the study participants. it is not an exhaustive survey of each area. The attributes of personal mastery, and contemplation’s role in achieving personal mastery, is developed from
the participants’ experiences and from this survey of contemplative, workplace and adult developmental psychology.

A. Contemplation

If, as suggested by Wilber (1980), we are first preoccupied in life with looking outward to find ourselves in relation to our own bodies and in relation to others (the “outward arc”), the second preoccupation in life is looking inward to discover ourselves in relation to our minds and to our spirit (the “inward arc”). Contemplation, in all its varied forms, is associated with looking inward and seeking spiritual union with God, or a higher, transcendental ‘self’. Depending upon one’s tradition, it is our spirit, a God within, or a greater ‘self’ that is often the ultimate quest of the contemplative journey. In the Christian Catholic perspective of Trappist monk Thomas Merton:

Contemplation is the highest expression of man’s intellectual and spiritual life.... It is spiritual wonder.... It is a vivid realization of the fact that life and being in us proceed from an invisible, transcendent and infinitely abundant Source. Contemplation is, above all, awareness of the reality of that Source. It knows the Source, obscurely, inexplicably, but with a certitude that goes beyond reason and beyond simple faith. (Merton, 1961, p. 1)

In many religious traditions, we see contemplation as a quest for spiritual union with God or with Merton’s “Source”. Allah in Islam, the Tao in Taoism, Brahman in Hinduism, and the Buddha in Buddhism, are just some examples. Similarly, a spiritual presence or “Source” is also paralleled by Carl Jung’s “collective unconscious”, David Bohm’s “implicate order” and David Steindl-Rast’s “home” (Miller, 1994).

This integrative perspective may be contested by some traditions, such as by the Christian Fundamentalist for example. This research has assumed, however, that the spiritual experience, as a subjective, non-cognitive, or post-rational, experience, it is interpreted in the contextual landscape of each individual’s unique paradigm. There can be no certainty that one perspective is more ‘true’ than any other. In Goleman’s (1977) words: “The mediator’s beliefs determine how he interprets and labels his meditation experiences” (p. 112). Regardless, as this research is more concerned with the outcomes of contemplation as it relates to personal mastery than to spirituality per
sei, it is not necessary to enter the debate of the validity claims of the different traditions. Rather than debate the differences, this research seeks commonalities.

There are practical benefits of meditation and prayer that are far more mundane than 'spiritual union with God'. The transformative power of meditation and prayer can bring "new depths of being, awareness and delight" (Leonard & Murphy, 1995, p.107). William James wrote about the effect of contemplation on human nature.

...When we commune with ...the mystical region, or the supernatural region... work is actually done upon our finite personality, for we are turned into new men, and consequences in the way of conduct follow in the natural world upon our regenerative change. (William James cited in Leonard & Murphy, 1995, p.107)

Contemplation's transformative effect is thought by some to be due to the way in which it triggers an "all at once" response in the body. By acting on the parasympathetic nervous system, contemplation slows heart rate and respiration, relaxes muscles and creates an overall experience of peace and relaxation. Simply by repeated exposure to this relaxed state, significant changes occur in the body and mind. (Leonard & Murphy, 1995).

Considerable empirical evidence attesting to the positive effects of meditation on physiology and on the states of consciousness has been collected in the last 30 years. Murphy (1992) provides an excellent resource list of empirical studies reporting on the positive effects of meditation. Positive physiological effects reported by Murphy include: visual sensitivity, auditory acuity and discrimination of musical tones; reaction time and motor skill response; field independence; concentration and attention: increased empathy; anxiety reduction; addiction relief; and significantly, improved memory and intelligence. Considerable meditation research by interview, questionnaires, diary entries and other means to elicit subject reports are also suggestive of positive effects of meditation. Murphy references studies suggesting that meditation: improved perception of internal and external events; equanimity; detachment: pleasure, bliss and ecstasy; altered body image and ego boundaries; increased energy and excitement: hallucinations and illusions and unusual dreams and increased dream recall.
If there are arguably common ends amongst differing spiritual and contemplative traditions – both spiritual and mundane -- there are also common practices and techniques apparent in the associated forms of prayer and meditation. The apparent differences between “prayer” of the western Judeo/Christian traditions and “meditation” of the eastern traditions arise more from different conceptualizations associated with each religious tradition than from significant differences in contemplative processes. For example, Thomas Merton declares today’s “prayer” in Christian churches is but one of a range of more intensive contemplative practices of the Desert Fathers of fourth century AD Egypt (Merton cited in Goleman, 1977). The meditation practices of these early Christian monks are similar to many eastern traditions. These forms of prayer call forth a “nowhereness” and no-mindedness – a condition known by the name quies, literally ‘rest’ – “the monk having lost all preoccupation with his limited ‘self’” (p. 58). Often prayer is the silent repetition of a single phrase in the scriptures: the Christian equivalent of a mantra. For example, Goleman (1977) writes of the Kyrie eleison,, a short form of the phrase meaning “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner”. This phrase is repeated silently throughout the day “until it is as spontaneous and instinctive as breathing” (p. 55). A parallel is understood in the Tibetan practice of chanting the mantra of compassion, “Om Mani Padme Hum” (Rinpoche, 1993).

As will be more fully described below, the effect of chanting or inwardly focusing mind on a repetitive sound or phrase is the essence of one school of meditation. Viewed from the perspective of meditation, the effect of this form of prayer is to calm the mind and permit the emergence of awareness of more subtle levels of conscious. Though some contemplatives repeat eastern mantras and western prayers with literal intent, the focus of this study is the common effects of prayer and meditation on the consciousness.

What, then, is the process of meditation and prayer that effects changes in consciousness? Goleman (1977) provides a useful description of the common practices and outcomes of prayer and meditation. He investigates a mix of ten western and eastern practices (Hindu Bhakti, Jewish Kabbalah, Christian Hesychasm, Sufism, Transcendental Meditation, Patanjali’ Ashtanga Yoga, Indian Tantra and Kundalini
Yoga, Tibetan Buddhism, Zen, Gurdjieff's Fourth Way and Krishnamurti's Choiceless Awareness). From amongst this sample, Goleman concludes all of the practices fall into either one or both of only two paths to higher consciousness; the path of concentration and the path of insight meditation. Wilber makes a similar observation, that all forms of meditation are either "concentrative focal" or "receptive defocal" (1980, p. 95).

In concentrative practices, the contemplative takes an object of concentration, a mantra for example, which is simply a sustaining single point of focus, and develops his or her capacity for ever more subtle levels of concentration. The path of insight (or "receptive defocal") meditation employs a meditation technique known as mindfulness. In mindfulness, the meditator restricts his or her attention to the "bare notice of his [or her] senses and thoughts" (Goleman, 1977, p. 21). Over time with either technique, (often a life time of practice), the meditator may transcend through progressive levels consciousness to an ultimate "unity" with God.

Regardless of the path, Goleman (1977) finds the meditational experience is the same: loss of sense awareness, one-pointed attention to one object to the general exclusion of all other thoughts, and sublimely rapturous feelings. There are other attributes unique to the particular practices, but the ultimate endpoint of all approaches is the same: the appearance of a new state of consciousness that coexists with normal waking, sleeping, and dreaming states (Goleman, 1977; Wilber, 1980; Alexander et al., 1994; Tart, 1971 cited in Goleman, 1977).

On the journey to the ultimate state of consciousness, the contemplative encounters or 'achieves' a significant number of interim states of consciousness. The numbers of steps depend upon the tradition being considered. The literature concerning eastern contemplative traditions map in detail the successive stages of altered states of consciousness (Brown, 1977: Brown, Engler & Wilber, 1986; Alexander et al., 1990).

In summary, contemplation, in its broadest. and perhaps grandest meaning, is the inward pursuit of spiritual union. However, for purposes of this study, the discernable effects of meditation and prayer on the human experience of the unconsciousness and the implications for basic process of adult developmental
process is the focus of this study. More consideration is given to contemplation, the stages of consciousness and their relationship to personal mastery in Chapter V.

B. Two views of personal mastery in the workplace

Two authors are considered in this sample of literature on personal mastery in the workplace; Peter Senge and Stephen Covey. Personal mastery finds a natural home as one of five disciplines in Senge's (1990) "The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization". Senge's 'self adaptive' characterization of the learning organization as "an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future", parallels the journey of the individual in personal mastery: Both assume mastery rests in continual learning and development (p. 14). Stephen Covey's (1989), "The seven habits of highly effective people: Powerful lessons in personal change", is also about the journey of personal learning and development. Covey believes self mastery leads to interpersonal independence. Independence and self-mastery leads, in turn, to interdependence -- mastery in relationship with others. Below, these two authors paint a broad picture of the individual in personal mastery in the workplace.

1. Personal Mastery in the learning organization

Though many authors write about personal mastery, few have given it as broad and inclusive a flavour as Senge (1990). As one of Senge's five "disciplines", an entire chapter is dedicated to developing the principles and characteristics of "personal mastery". As summarized below, Senge's concept of personal mastery falls into five areas.

Personal mastery is a process: A way of living, not a state of being

To Senge (1990), "personal mastery is not something you possess. It is a process. It is a lifelong discipline" (p. 142). It is "...a series of practices and principles that must be applied to be useful" (p. 147). Personal mastery is a belief in one's self worth, "in our capacity to achieve what we want" -- "an attitude of success versus failure" (p.156). It is an open "deeply inquisitive" attitude to life and learning that combines confidence and humility. "The journey is the reward" (p. 142).
**Personal vision: Living in the creative tension between current reality and vision**

Personal vision lies at the heart of Senge’s (1990) personal mastery: “The ability to focus on ultimate intrinsic desires, not only on secondary goals, is a cornerstone of personal mastery” (p. 148). Senge contrasts vision with purpose. Purpose is similar to direction, a general heading. Vision is a specific destination, a picture of a desired future. “Purpose is abstract. Vision is concrete. Vision is intrinsic and not relative” (p. 149). Vision is multifaceted – personal – health – freedom. It is about being true to one’s ‘self’. For people with a high level of personal mastery “...a vision is a calling rather than simply a good idea.” (italics in original, p. 142).

Personal vision is balanced by a commitment to current reality: “An accurate, insightful view of current reality is important as a clear vision” (italics in original, p. 152). Commitment to the truth, when in balance with personal vision becomes a generative force.

The juxtaposition of vision (what we want) and a clear picture of current reality (where we are relative to what we want) generates what we call ‘creative tension’: a force to bring them together, caused by the natural tendency of tension to seek resolution. The essence of personal mastery is learning how to generate and sustain creative tension in our lives. (p. 142)

Senge (1990) proposes that a commitment to current reality is a commitment to the truth. Commitment to the truth,

...means a relentless willingness to root out the ways we limit or deceive ourselves from seeing what is, and to continually challenge our theories of why things are the way they are. It means continually broadening our awareness ...it means continually deepening our understanding of the structures underlying current events. Specifically, people with high levels of personal mastery see more of the structural conflicts underlying their own behaviour. (p. 159)

**Using the subconscious or automatic mind**

Senge (1990) believes people with high levels of personal mastery “have developed a higher level of rapport between their normal awareness and their subconscious” (p. 162). By using the “automatic” nature of the trained subconscious, Senge notes that people are able to perform difficult tasks with apparent ease. The
capacity for action based on subconscious learning facilitates managing complexity, a capacity especially important in modern organizations.

More significantly, however, Senge (1990) notes that good rapport with the subconscious mind enables people with high levels of personal mastery to harness effectively the power of the subconscious mind and achieve results almost without effort. Senge believes that people’s actions flow from their subconscious, “intrinsic” intentions:

The subconscious seems especially receptive to goals in line with our deeper aspirations and values. According to some spiritualism disciplines, this is because the these deeper aspirations input directly to, or are part of, the subconscious mind.” ...[For this reason, people with high levels of personal mastery] ... focus on the desired result itself, not the “process” or the means they assume necessary to achieve that result. (pp. 164-166)

This brings us to Senge’s (1990) direct link to the power of contemplation in developing personal mastery.

This is why, for instance, people committed to continually developing PM practice some form of “meditation”. Whether it is through contemplative prayer or other methods of simply “quieting” the conscious mind, regular meditative practice can be extremely helpful in working more productively with the subconscious mind. (p. 164)

More rapport with the subconscious mind builds on the power of Senge’s (1990) “personal vision”. “When we are unclear between interim goals and more intrinsic goals, the subconscious has no way of prioritizing and focusing” and some of the power of the automatic mind is lost (p. 165). For Senge, personal mastery is using personal vision to set the subconscious or automatic mind to work on achieving our desires.

**Integrating reason and intuition**

After many decades of being ignored, intuition is gaining credibility in the workplace, according to Senge (1990). Modern managers and leaders rely heavily on intuition. they do not figure out complex problems entirely rationally. Senge believes “they rely on hunches, recognize patterns, and draw intuitive analogies and parallels to other seemingly disparate situations” (p. 168). This process occurs spontaneously in personal mastery.
People with high levels of personal mastery do not set out to integrate reason and intuition. Rather, they achieve it naturally -- as a by-product of their commitment to use all resources at their disposal. They cannot afford to choose between reason and intuition, or head and heart, any more than they would choose to walk with one leg or see with one eye. (p. 168)

Citing the natural principle of bilateralsim, Senge argues the marriage of intuition and reason is natural and important to success in the modern workplace. Citing the example of how the use of two eyes gives us depth perception, Senge wonders "Is it not possible that...reason and intuition are designed to work in harmony for us to achieve our potential intelligence?" (p. 168).

**Compassion and commitment to the whole**

Senge (1990) sees overcoming our deluded belief in our separateness, and developing a sense of connectedness with others as one of the more subtle aspects of personal mastery. He shares Einstein’s conviction that one task in achieving mastery is learning to increase our ‘connectedness’ through compassion. Seen as both awareness of, and concern for, others, developing a felt and known sense of our connectedness is important to be fully in touch with how much people are influenced by one another.

Flowing from a greater sense of connectedness, suggests Senge (1990), is a commitment to the whole and a broader, more inclusive vision. By connection and inclusion, individuals tap into the energy or synergy of the collective.

The sense of 'connectedness' and compassion characteristic of individuals with high levels of personal mastery naturally leads to a broader vision. Without it, all the subconscious visualizing in the world is deeply self-centered -- simply a way to get what I want. Individuals committed to vision beyond their self-interest find they have energy not available when pursuing narrower goals... (p. 171)

In this compassionate commitment to the whole, is found the connection between organizational learning and personal learning that is the essence of personal mastery. Within the reciprocal commitment of individual and organization, the opportunity for personal and professional fulfillment and the basis for the organizational success and the greatness of civilization are found.
In sum, Senge (1990) conceives personal mastery as a "life long process of learning" that parallels and complements the learning organization. Individuals seek "the results in life they want" by drawing on the creative energy between personal vision and current reality. Facilitated by some form of meditative practice, people achieve personal mastery through a heightened "rapport" with the subconscious; they "naturally" integrate intuition with reason. Through compassion, a sense of connectedness with others elevates personal vision above self-interest to embrace others. New energy flows from working in common. In the following section, we find the elements of Senge's personal mastery re-constituted in Stephen Covey's seven habits.

2. The seven habits of highly effective people

Personal mastery is the essence of Covey's (1989) "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People". Covey describes the "habits" as "internalized principles and patterns of behavior" that lie at "the intersection of knowledge, skill and desire (p. 47)." In the seven habits, we see Covey's vision of personal mastery.

The Seven Habits are habits of effectiveness.... They become the basis of a person's character, creating an empowering center of correct maps from which an individual can effectively solve problems, maximize opportunities, and continually learn and integrate other principles in an upward spiral of growth. (p. 52)

Covey (1989) places six of the seven habits along a "maturity continuum". "In harmony with the natural laws of growth, [the seven habits] provide an incremental, sequential, highly integrated approach to the development of personal and interpersonal effectiveness" (p. 49). From infancy, as people grow, mature and progress along the maturity continuum, Covey believes people move from being dependent, to independent and finally, to a state of interdependence.

Private Victory - "self mastery"

Through habits one through three, --"be proactive", "begin with end in mind", and "put first things first" -- Covey (1989) believes the "private victory" of "self mastery" and "independence" is achieved. The premise of the first habit is "the fundamental principle about the nature of man: Between stimulus and response, man
As people understand, accept, and then assume, self ‘response-ability’, people move from dependence to independence, and hence, attain the capacity for proactivity.

In parallel with Senge’s (1990) personal vision, habits two and three are “centered on principles of personal vision, leadership, and management...” (p. 297). Covey’s (1989) basis for the habit “begin with the end in mind” is literal: “to begin today with the image, picture or paradigm of the end of your life as your frame of reference or the criterion by which everything is examined” (p. 98). The basis for “put first things first” is the capacity for “independent will” – “the power to do something when you don’t want to do it, ...the power to act with integrity to your proactive first creation” (p. 149).

Consistent with the maturity continuum, Covey (1989) believes the “private victory” of the first three habits precedes “public victory” of the next three habits (p. 185). “Self mastery and self-discipline are the foundation of good relationships with others” (p. 186).

Public Victory – mastery in relationship with others

Habits four through six, relating to the social/emotional dimension, are “centered on principles of interpersonal leadership, empathic communication, and creative cooperation” (p. 297). These relate closely to Senge’s (1990) attributes of compassion, connectedness and commitment to the whole. Habit four, “think win/win” and “win/win or no deal” is proposed as the “only real alternative in interdependent realities” (p. 212). As a “habit of interpersonal leadership”, Covey believes win/win requires courage, integrity, maturity and an “abundance mentality” (“there is plenty out there for everybody”) (pp. 216-219). “Seek first to understand... then to be understood”. Covey’s fifth habit of interpersonal communication, is based on empathic listening. In empathic listening, “you listen with your eyes and with your heart. You listen for feeling, for meaning. You listen for behaviour. You use your right brain as well as your left. You sense, you intuit, you feel” (p. 241). Synergize, habit six, is based on the “principle of creative cooperation” and on the premise that the “whole is greater than the sum of its parts” (p. 263). Synergy between people is the crowning habit, for it entails an interdependent approach that brings to an
interpersonal exploration a spirit of cooperation, trust, and a willingness to relinquish control of the outcome.

**Self care and renewal**

Supporting the first six habits, the seventh habit, "sharpen the saw", is Covey's (1990) habit of self care and renewal; it is the habit preoccupied with keeping up the "production capability" of the individual. It has four dimensions: physical -- exercise, nutrition and stress management; social/emotional -- service, empathy, synergy, and intrinsic security; mental -- reading, visualizing, planning, writing; and, spiritual -- value clarification, commitment, study and meditation (p. 288).

Covey's (1989) seven habits parallel Senge's (1990) personal mastery of the learning organization. Both Senge and Covey believe that personal mastery is a lifelong process and not an endpoint or ultimate goal; it is an attitude of eagerness for continual learning. Personal mastery involves the progressive achievement of skills and self-knowledge and the growing capacity for self 'response-ability'. This is the basis for Covey's private victories of proactivity, and Covey and Senge's personal vision, personal discipline and commitment to the truth. Covey's public victories -- empathic listening and commitment to others in win/win and synergistic relationships -- parallel Senge's compassion and commitment to others. For both Senge and Covey, the attributes of personal mastery fall into two categories: mastery of the 'self' in relation to 'self', and mastery of 'self' in relation to others.

Underlying both paradigms of personal mastery, we also see hints of one of the paradoxical relationships of personal mastery to contemplation; as a person in mastery becomes more efficacious in the world, they become more compassionate and in 'surrender'. To be in mastery is to be more in command of one's 'self' and the world, and yet, it is also to be prepared to relinquish control to trust intuitive processes. Senge's (1990) access to the intuitive and subconscious mind flow from surrendering the control and supremacy of adhering to the strictly rational. Covey's (1989) habits of public victory flow from deep commitment and relationship to
others. In all, it seems personal mastery for Senge and Covey is to be able to 'hold on' and 'let go' at the same time.

However, despite these similarities, personal mastery in the learning organization is cast differently from self-mastery in the seven habits of highly effective people. The former is somewhat 'outside in' and tends toward a description of the skills and practices of personal mastery. Senge pays less attention to the underlying principles and requisite attributes of personal development: "We want it, because we want it", is an example of Senge's (1990) sometimes 'top level' approach (1990, p. 145). Covey's (1989) approach, on the other hand, is more 'inside out'. Implicit in the maturity continuum is the recognition that the basis for self-mastery is personal development: incrementally, the seven habits lead to the development of personal and interpersonal effectiveness. That an individual's orientation changes from being dependent to independent, then interdependent suggests that personal mastery to Covey means personal growth.

Further, Covey (1989) bases his seven habits on "fundamental principles" he believes are based on "natural laws in the human dimension that are just as real, just as unchanging and un-arguably 'there' as laws such as gravity.... Principles are deep, fundamental truths that have universal application" (pp. 32-34). He suggests these principles are common amongst every enduring religion, social philosophy and ethical system. Some of Covey's principles include fairness, human dignity, integrity and honesty, quality and excellence, potential and growth, and patience, nurturance and encouragement. The closer one's paradigms or "maps" align with these principles, the more accurate and functional Covey believes will be a person's actions. In Covey's principles, we see a validity claim for his habits based on an absolute truth or universal perspective.

Does personal mastery, indeed, reflect the personal attainment of universal qualities? Do people in personal mastery access truth and action from a higher plane than the gritty, temporal workplace or the haunts of our personal day to day lives? These questions are considered later in Chapter V.
**C. Life span psychology**

Unlike the workplace literature, adult life span developmental theories do not define adult growth as personal mastery. Nevertheless, the attributes of personal mastery are apparent in the outcomes of adult development, particularly in the "stage" theories.

Developed largely over the last three decades, adult maturation or developmental theories are categorized into two main classes -- the "phase" and "stage" theories (Fisher Briggerer, 1989). The phase theories provide an age related, largely socio-cultural description of predictable life cycle changes through which an adult can expect to pass. Their work is generally preoccupied with basic early and midlife processes of growth. Erikson (1963), Levinson (1978) and Gould (1978) are prominent amongst the phase theorists.

The stage theories suggest adults develop through progressive cycles of integration, transition and re-integration. Unlike the phase theories, the stage theories suggest adult development occurs relatively independent of age and, therefore, not all adults progress through the developmental stages at the same pace. Some adults never progress beyond preliminary or early stages and few adults progress to the later stages.

In this part, the work of three stage theorists are sampled from the literature on life span psychology or adult development literature: Lawrence Kohlberg, Robert Kegan and James Fowler. Together, their stage theories model adult development from a moral, cognitive and faith perspective.

1. **Moral development**

Kohlberg (1977) developed a six-stage cognitive-moral developmental model based on Piaget's earlier work around "formal operational thought". Formal operational thought -- the capacity to conceive reciprocal relationships, identify and relate variables and to develop and test hypotheses -- is the cognitive starting point for Kohlberg's theory of adult development. With each successive stage of Kohlberg's cognitive-moral developmental model, the cognitive capacity of adults broadens (becomes more inclusive and eventually non normative) and embraces some non relative values like life and liberty. Kohlberg believes his stages to be "sequential", ...
"invariant" and "hierarchically integrated"; that is, starting in infancy, a person must resolve each stage before transitioning to the next stage in the sequence. No stage can be skipped or resolved in different order. Each stage's developmental work is the basis for subsequent stages (p. 188).

The essence of Kohlberg's (1977) model is the distinction between "conventional" thinking in level II (stages 3 and 4) and "post conventional" thinking in level III (stages 5 and 6). In the conventional stages of level II, an adult's view of the world is grounded in a context of 'the rules are the rules'. "Maintaining the expectations of the individual's family, group or nation is perceived as valuable in its own right, regardless of immediate and obvious consequences" (Kohlberg, 1977, p. 189). The conventional adult is "loyal" to the established order in stage 3, and respectful and committed to upholding the "law and order" in stage 4.

In the first of Kohlberg's (1977) "post conventional" stages, stage 5, "social system and conscience", an adult has the capacity to integrate different perspectives, be objectively impartial and manage conflicting perspectives by recognizing the validity of different views. Though through 'social contract' an individual has a sense of obligation to law, the stage 5 adult holds some non-relative values and rights, such as the right to life and liberty (Lickona, 1976, cited in Levine, 1989). In stage 6, "universal ethical principles", the adult believes in the validity of universal moral principles and a sense of personal commitment to them. These self-chosen ethical principles are based on universal principles of justice: the equity of human rights and respect for the dignity of human beings (Lickona, 1976, cited in Levine, 1989).

Kohlberg (1990) subsequently postulated the existence of a seventh stage. Posing less a moral than an ontological question, Kohlberg's stage seven asks, "Why be moral?" (p. 192). He concludes this stage is achieved when the 'self' gives up its existential anxiety and comes to exist in "a level at which self and the universe seem unified" (p. 206).

2. Cognitive development

"interpersonal" stage, the stage 3 adult is characterized as having their sense of 'self' "embedded" in their interpersonal relationships. In this stage, a person's 'self' is defined by their relationships -- they are their relationships. This means stage 3 adults rely on 'niceness', compliance, and doing what they should for approval's sake to keep themselves balanced.

Kegan’s (1994) fourth stage, "modernism", parallels Kohlberg’s (1977) moral stage 4. Originally referred to by Kegan (1982) as the "institutional" stage, the sense of 'self' in stage 4 moves over from "I am my relationships", to "I have relationships". An adult's interpersonal relationships are now "objects" managed by the 'self' as an "institution". At this stage, the 'self' is now "embedded" or identified with the administration of their relationships. In this stage, dependence in relationships gives way to independence.

Kegan’s (1994) fifth and final stage, "post-modernism", parallels Kohlberg’s (1977) stage 5. Previously called the "interindividual" stage, individualism and the capacity for interdependence emerge in Kegan’s stage 5 (Kegan, 1982). The 'self' has moved out of an identity with managing relationships to its own identity where others are seen as "self systems". This final transition, results in a new 'self' capable of a high degree of self mediation. Now twice removed from embeddedness in relationships, and perceiving one's 'self' as one peer amongst many, the interindividual 'self' is capable of interdependent relationships.

3. Faith development

Fowler (1981) builds on the stage life cycle research of Piaget, Kohlberg, Kegan and others. His work elaborates a six level, stage theory of faith development. Upon moving to each new stage, an individual develops a new "structural whole of integrated operations of thought and valuing..." (Fowler, 1981, p. 36). As a preoccupation of us all, he maintains faith is relevant to understanding both the force behind, and the nature of, the search of all people.

Faith is a person or group's way of moving into the force field of life. It is our way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up our lives. Faith is a person's way of seeing him or her 'self' in relation to others against a background of shared meaning an purpose. (1981, p. 4)
Transition to stage 5 is stimulated by a growing awareness of “anarchic and disturbing inner voices” that hint life may be “more complex than Stage 4’s, ['individuative reflective'] logic of clear distinctions and abstract concepts can comprehend…” (p.183). Whereas in stage 4, an adult is inclined to hold a more exclusively rational world view, in stage five, “conjunctive faith”, Fowler (1978) suggests the 'self' reconciles that which was suppressed and unrecognized in stage four: the individual develops a new appreciation of the 'self's social unconsciousness – “the myths, ideal images and prejudice built deeply into the system” (p. 198). Fowler’s (1978) stage of conjunctive faith complements Kegan’s (1984) cognitive institutional stage. In conjunctive faith, the individual is able to see and sense the inter-relatedness or unity of nature; “in a dialogical knowing, the multiplex structure of the world is invited to disclose itself” (P.185).

Alive to paradox and the truth in apparent contradictions, this stage strives to unify opposites in mind and experience, it generates and maintains vulnerability to the strange truths of those who are ‘other’. The new strength of this stage comes in the rise of the ironic imagination – a capacity to see and be in one’s group most powerful meaning, while simultaneously recognizing that they are relative, partial and inevitably distorting apprehensions of transcendent reality. It also sees the divisions of the human family vividly because [the ‘self’] has been apprehended by the possibility (and imperative) of an inclusive community of being. (p. 198)

Stage 5 embraces and maintains the apparent contradictions or tension that arise when truth is viewed from diverse perspectives. Though this often requires living with paradox. Stage 5 faith sees it as required by “the character of truth” (Fowler and Keen, 1978, p. 80). According to Fowler (1978), the attributes of the exceedingly rare stage 6, “universalizing faith”, emerge by transcending the dialectical and paradoxical features of stage 5. As a stage 6 adult,

...in a personal judgement informed by the experiences and truths of previous stages, [the person] is purified of egoic striving, and linked by disciplined intuition to the principle of being: they experience the “unitive actuality” of the “one beyond the many”(Fowler, 1978, p. 245).

4. Summary of lifespan theories

Table 2 shows the theories of Kohlberg’s (1977), Kegan (1982, 1994) and Fowler (1981) in relation to Piaget’s three basic stages of cognitive development.
Amongst this sample of three stage models, adult development is "sequential", "invariant" and "hierarchically integrated". Gilligan (1990) challenges Kohlberg's moral hierarchy on the basis that moral development begins to fail (to reverse itself) when care or concerns of affect become the basis for a moral decision (rather than a strictly rational-logical moral reasoning). However, even Gilligan's model, when affect is considered with moral reasoning, the sequential nature of development begins to reassert itself. Stage theory, therefore, generally upholds the sequential and hierarchical nature of adult change. The 'ratcheting ahead' through ever expanding but subsuming levels or stages, is the basis for seeing phases of change as growth, not just change without advancement.
Table 2: Comparison of lifespan psychology theories

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<th>Stage</th>
<th>Piaget</th>
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<th>Kegan$^2$ - cognitive</th>
<th>Fowler$^3$ - faith</th>
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Although each of the three theories follows a different stream of adult development – moral, cognitive and faith – there is a strong correlation between the horizontal stages. For example, Shulik finds a .75 correlation between Fowler's (1981) stages of faith and Kohlberg's (1977) stages of moral reasoning (Shulik cited in Kohlberg, 1990). Wilber (1997) agrees that no one stream of development can "race ahead" of the other because of their "necessary but not sufficient” relationship (1997, p. 246). By stage 4, all three streams reach Piaget's ultimate developmental level, where logic and rationality rules in the individual and in his or her relationship

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$^1$ Kohlberg, 1990, p. 194
$^2$ Kegan, 1994, p. 226
$^3$ Fowler, 1981, p. 244
to others. An individual’s moral system and sense of ‘self’ is still largely defined by social and interpersonal in relationships. Dependence gives over to independence, but relationship to others is still codified and controlled.

By stage 5, a new ‘post-rational’ influence intrudes on the more perfectly ordered world of the stage 4 adult. Certainty in rational objectivity is blended with new respect for subjective relativism, with the growing consciousness that there is more to life than ‘meets the eye’. Life takes on a dialectical or paradoxical nature; individuals struggle to manage many seeming contradictions and opposites in their lives. Myth and symbols take on new meaning as the individual sees deeper into ‘self’ and humanity’s heritage. Some non-relative values and rights appear.

By stage 6, however, the adult has embraced fully a universal aspect based on absolute values for humanity. There is an orientation to spirit that transcends personal concerns and a felt presence of the unitive nature of the cosmos.

Chapter V links the attributes of personal mastery to the stages of traditional adult growth.

**D. Transpersonal psychology**

The ambit of transpersonal psychology is broadly and variously defined. The “Journal of Transpersonal Psychology” provides a somewhat circular but useful summary of the many sub interests and fields that are subsumed in this broad discipline. According to the Journal, “transpersonal psychology” includes:

- Meta-needs, transpersonal process, values and states, unitive consciousness.
- Peak experiences, ecstasy, mystical experience, being, essence, bliss, awe, wonder, transcendence of ‘self’, spirit, sacralization of everyday life, oneness, cosmic awareness, cosmic play, individual and species wide synergy, the theories and practices of meditation, spiritual paths, compassion, transpersonal cooperation transpersonal realization, and actualization; and related concepts, experiences and activities (Journal of Transpersonal Psychology as cited in Boorstein, 1996, p. 3)

In this part, a sample of the work of psychologists and other authors who have made significant contributions to the field of transpersonal psychology from both a western and eastern perspective from the literature is considered. This part concludes with a discussion of the relationship between life span psychology and transpersonal psychology.
1. Western approaches

**Carl Jung**

Jung’s “Self” based conceptualization of the human psyche is a commonly referenced model in transpersonal theories. The “Self” or soul lies at the centre of the overall psyche and is the “inventor, organizer and source of dream images” (Jung cited in Miller, 1988, p. 36). The Self is the connection between the individual and the greater “collective unconscious”. Surrounding the Self is the person’s ego or consciousness wherein resides a person’s awareness of images that come from both within and without the psyche (Miller, 1988). Jung’s “collective unconscious” is composed of “archetypes” which are “hereditary”, and “have never been in the consciousness... [It exists as] a second psychic system of a collective, universal and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals” (Campbell, 1971, p. 60).

Jung’s theory of the collective unconscious and humanity’s archetypal heritage made his work amongst the earliest to extend the personal into the realm now commonly known as the transpersonal.

Jung counseled that the path to the Self is the path of self-knowledge, by making conscious that which is unconscious. To this end, Jung was amongst the first in the west to recognize that the eastern traditions of meditation were important to personal and spiritual development. Jung was criticized for his interest in scientifically suspect subjects such as the occult, alchemy, divination, telepathy, clairvoyance, and religious symbolism, to name just a few. However, it was what these subjects said to him, as a psychologist about the mind that led him to many important findings that support much of what is being studied in transpersonal psychology today (Hall & Nordby, 1973).

Though most of Jung’s work is preoccupied with understanding and overcoming the pathologies that interrupt this process, his linking of the “self” of the ego to the world of spirit through the “Self” of the collective unconscious suggests that contemplation, by it’s introspective nature, contributes to inner knowledge, personal growth and hence, personal mastery.
Abraham Maslow

Abraham Maslow was amongst the first of the western psychologists to begin expanding psychology beyond the bounds of the ego and the id of Freud's work in the early years of the twentieth century. Maslow's (1971) leading contribution to the field of transpersonal psychology are his concepts of "self-actualization" and "self transcendence". Built on a foundation of his "hierarchy of needs", and beyond his highest stage of personal (non-transcendental) growth, "self esteem", Maslow (1971) identified two higher stages of transpersonal development; self-actualization and self-transcendence. Within these two stages, his work recognizes three groups of people. The first group, "self-actualizers", have well integrated personalities, strong effective identities, and minimal experiences of transcendence. The second group, "transcenders", have strong contact with the spiritual dimensions, frequent transcendent experiences, but personalities that are often underdeveloped. The third group, "transcending self actualizers", not only have strong and effective personalities but are also capable of transcending the limitations of personal identity and thus have a deep sense of eternity and "the sacred" (Maslow, 1971).

Self actualizing people, in Maslow's (1971) view, dedicate their lives to the search for what he called intrinsic "being values", or "B-values", "which cannot be reduced to anything more ultimate" (p. 44). Maslow's (1977, p. 134) fourteen B-values are summarized below:

1. Truth: honesty, reality,
3. Beauty: perfection, completion,
5. Dichotomy-transcendence: transformation of polarities, contradictions, oppositeness into unities,
6. Uniqueness: idiosyncrasy, individuality, novelty,
7. Perfection and Necessity;
8. Completion: ending fulfillment, finis and telos.
9. Justice: fairness, non partiality,
10. Simplicity: honestly, nakedness, essentiality,
11. *Richness*; complexity, intricacy, totality,
12. *Effortlessness*; ease, perfect and beautiful functioning,
13. *Playfulness*; gaiety, humour,

Love in self-actualized people differs from that in others as defined by Maslow (1971). In this description, we see the genesis of unconditional love and compassion.

The point at which a corner is turned is when the love becomes so great and so pure (unambiguous) for the object itself that its good is what we want, not what it can do for us... Real love then is non-interfering and non-demanding, ...it can gaze at an object without guile, designs, or calculation, [it is] what-it-is-rather-than-something-else. (pp. 142 - 143)

Maslow's (1971) highest stage, the stage of self-transcendence, is broadly and inclusively described. This stage not only transcends one's self awareness, self-consciousness or ego, it transcends time, culture, death, pain, dichotomies (polarity and paradox) present and past, will, God, etc.. It means transcending the mind and self to exist in the "suchness" of things, to live in "Being Cognition" (p. 251).

In Maslow's two higher stages of conscious, self-actualization and self transcendence, are found many of the elements underlying the attributes of personal mastery. Also significant in these two stages is the implication that individuals have the potential to attain "higher" states of being. As will be seen below, Maslow's higher stages parallel those of other transpersonal theories.

**Roberto Assagioli**

Roberto Assagioli is the founder of psychosynthesis, a strategy for human development through personal and spiritual development. Based on a model of the human psyche that closely resembles Jung's model, the heart of psychosynthesis is a collection of developmental techniques designed to accelerate normal processes of human growth.

Assagioli's (1965) conception of consciousness is composed of a lower and middle consciousness representing the person's psychological past and a person's present state of mind, respectively. A person's potential future is represented in a
super-consciousness. These three levels of consciousness can be viewed in a developmental or evolutionary sense. The lower unconscious is seen as an early stage of development and the super super-consciousness as a more evolved form of awareness (Miller, 1988). Assagioli’s concept includes Jung’s connection to the spiritual realm through the collective unconscious in which the individual’s psyche ‘swims’. Amidst this configuration of unconscious realms, the conscious ‘self’ or ‘I’ resides within a field of consciousness.

This conception, Assagioli argues, suggests the “seeming duality” of existence is only an illusion of the self’s unawareness of the unconscious realms of the self and the collective (1965, p. 20). This apparent duality, and the accompanying existential or ontological angst, can be overcome by a “thorough knowledge of one’s personality; control of its various elements; realization of one’s true Self – [by] the discovery or creation of a unifying center; and by formation or reconstruction of the personality around this new centre by psychosynthesis techniques” (p. 21).

Significant amongst Assagioli’s (1965) techniques of psychosynthesis are bio-psychosynthesis (physical movement practices), writing, relaxation, introspection, inner silence, and meditation exercises. For example, Assagioli proposes meditation-based exercises to help the subject contact the collective unconscious. Ferrucci (1982) builds on Assagioli’s work with additional techniques that employ introspection, drawing, visualization, and movement to create body awareness.

Psychosynthesis is a ‘tool chest’ of practices and techniques that often employ contemplative practices to draw on the higher states of consciousness. To Assagioli, these practices are meant to free us from “enslavement in a life” of “feverish activity, constant excitement, tempestuous emotion and reckless adventure” and achieve a harmonious inner integration, true Self-realization and right relationship with others” (p. 21). The implication, of course, is that many of the tools of psychosynthesis are contemplative techniques that can be used to achieve personal mastery.

*Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi*

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) proposes a prescription for living that accesses meaning and happiness in life through the “optimal experience” of “flow”.

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[Flow is] …the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it… [O]ptimal experience adds up to a sense of mastery – or perhaps better, a sense of participation in determining the content of life – that comes as close to what is usually meant by happiness as anything else we can conceivably imagine” (p. 4).

To Csikszentmihalyi (1990), a condition precedent to the experience of flow is the development of the “autotelic self”, literally “a 'self' that has self-contained goals” (p. 209).

Mastery, the capacity for flow and hence, the capacity to find meaning and happiness in life depends on the development of an autotelic ‘self’ that is able to overcome “psychic entropy” (a “disorganization of the self that impairs its effectiveness”) and command control of the conscious. (p. 37)

By controlling consciousness, Csikszentmihalyi suggests the autotelic 'self' has the capacity to experience flow from the application of four essential skills:

1. Setting goals that range from defining outcomes for one’s life that have personal and perhaps spiritual meaning – personal vision – and mundane goals related to moment to moment concerns;
2. Becoming immersed in activity by balancing the opportunities for action with the skills of the person. (Csikszentmihalyi’s research suggests the flow experience occurs only when the degree of skill required by a task is sufficient to command the person’s skill, yet not exceed their present level of competence);
3. Paying attention to what is happening or sustained involvement to the extent that the person becomes largely unaware of themselves in the experience: and,
4. Learning to enjoy the immediate experience in spite of highly objectionable circumstances.

Setting goals is central to Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) concept of mastery. To approach optimal experience “as closely as humanly possible”, it is necessary “to turn all of life into a unified flow experience” by setting out on a personal goal that is “compelling enough to order a lifetime’s worth of psychic energy (pp. 214-215)”. The separate parts of one’s life then become integrated and whole as all of one’s actions
align in seeking its realization. It does not matter what the goal is, or even if it is accomplished. From the setting of this life goal, comes “purpose”; from the accomplishments along the way, comes “resolution”; and from the personal integration that occurs from the journey, comes “harmony” (p 217).

In Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990) autotelic ‘self’ we see Senge’s (1990) personal vision, “a vision is a calling” (p. 142).

2. Eastern approaches

Michael Murphy

As an evolutionist and a developmentalist, Murphy’s (1992) work is soma or body based. Murphy envisions personal mastery as the onset of both normal and meta-normal human capacities that are increasingly manifest in the world today. Through a process of “evolutionary transcendence”, Murphy argues humanity is now at the threshold of a third evolutionary epoch. Facilitated by transformative processes, especially meditation and other contemplative practices, Murphy defines 12 human attributes that characterize this emergent level of development and emphasizes their interdependent nature:

1. Extraordinary perceptions of things outside the organism, including apprehensions of a numinous beauty in familiar objects;
2. Extraordinary somatic awareness and self regulation;
3. Extraordinary communication abilities, including the transmission of thoughts, volition, and ecstatic states through extra-somatic modalities;
4. Super abundant vitality that is difficult to account for in terms of ordinary bodily processes;
5. Extraordinary movement abilities;
6. Extraordinary capacities to alter the environment, including exceptional hand-eye skills and abilities to influence things at a distance without reliance upon physical action, as for example in spiritual healing;
7. Self existing delight, which does not depend upon the satisfaction of needs or desires in the manner of ordinary pleasure, and which persists through sickness and other adversity;
8. The supreme intellectual capacities evident in some works of genius, by which artistic or other productions are apprehended *tout ensemble*, all at once: the intuitive knowledge inherent in mystical experience;

9. Volition exceeding ordinary will, which unifies separate impulses to produce extraordinary actions;

10. Personhood that simultaneously transcends and fulfills one's ordinary sense of 'self' while revealing one's fundamental unity with others;

11. Love that transcends ordinary needs and reveals a fundamental unity with others; and

12. Alterations in body structures, states, and processes that support experiences and capacities just noted.

In the outcome of Murphy's (1992) transformative practices, are seen elements underlying the attributes of personal mastery. Murphy's transformative practices result in "perceptual, kinesthetic, communication, and movement abilities; vitality; cognition; volition; command of pain and pleasure; love; and bodily structures" (p. 562).

**Charles Alexander**

Within the theory of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Vedic psychology a sequence of higher stages of consciousness extends beyond the commonly understood endpoint of human development anticipated by contemporary life-span psychology. Three stages of higher consciousness -- "pure consciousness" or "cosmic consciousness", "refined cosmic consciousness" and "unity consciousness" -- have four characteristics that suggest them to be major qualitative advances in development. The characteristics are: **momentous** -- they involve fundamental transformations in experience of 'self', other, time, space and causality; **directional** -- emerge in an invariant sequence: **uniform** -- appear in other cultures and belief systems; and **irreversible**, (and largely inevitable) in appropriate environmental conditions (Alexander et al., 1990).

Vedic psychology postulates that the psyche is composed of a hierarchically structured mind -- from gross to subtle, from concrete to abstract -- that is underlain by a Self: the Self is "an abstract. silent. completely unified field of consciousness."
identified as the self-sufficient source of all mental process” (Alexander et al., 1990, p. 291). Natural processes of adult psychological development lead to higher stages of consciousness and the experience of ‘being’. Such development is achieved through the same mechanism of change that occurs in the lower levels of adult development; namely, by shifting the “locus of awareness to progressively deeper levels of mind” (p. 297).

In these ways, Vedic psychology suggests that meditation contributes to adult development. The basis for personal mastery is found in “Self” knowledge:

The deep motive of development may be seen as the progressive rediscovery of the Self of its own inner nature as the basis for increasing perspective on and mastery over the subjective and objective world. The true status of the knower can be consciously appreciated only when awareness has finally transcended all the levels of mind to experience its source in pure consciousness... (Alexander et al., 1990, p. 295)

**E. An integral approach -- Lifespan/Transpersonal, East/West**

Traditional life span psychology provides insight into the nature, structure and stages of adult cognitive, moral and emotional development. In aggregate, stages of adult development can be predictors of state of self awareness, capacity for objectivity, state of individuation, orientation to autonomy and interdependence, capacity for abstract, moral and dialectical reasoning and many other developmental characteristics.

However, traditional research in adult life span psychology has stopped short of venturing into higher levels of adult development – the transpersonal realm. Perhaps anchored by its bid for legitimacy as another valid empirical science, traditional life span psychology has been reluctant to explore much beyond the mind – body process into the spiritual world (though we see hints of a world beyond the strictly rational in the later stages of Kohlberg and Fowler’s moral and faith developmental streams). Exploration of the spiritual realm has thus fallen to the field of transpersonal psychology.

The field of transpersonal psychology evolved out of the need to explore and integrate the ineffable, but nevertheless compelling felt sense that there is more to existence than the dreary conclusion of the existentialists – that in the end, we are no
more than 'just food for worms'. The paradox of humanity is that we are self conscious; we are aware that we are both in nature and out of it at the same time. Mankind is aware that "he resides in a heart pumping, breath grasping body that once belonged to a fish [and yet he is also] a symbolic identity that brings him sharply out of nature. ...He is a creator with a mind that soars out to speculate about atoms and infinity..." (Becker, 1973, p. 26).

It is at the juncture between man as ‘body-mind’ and man as ‘mind-spirit’ that traditional personal and transpersonal stages of development meet. The transpersonal stages of development continue where traditional life span or "personal" stages leave off.

Ken Wilber's work is an excellent example of an integral approach to human evolution and development. Wilber's model (1977, 1980, 1981, 1986, 1996, 1998) blends eastern and western visions of human development and spirituality and creates a comprehensive, integrative vision of the universe and man's role in it. Especially relevant to personal mastery is the marriage of the stages of adult, lifespan developmental psychology with the "higher" stages of development associated with eastern traditions. Drawing from "conventional" western disciplines of psychology and psychiatry and the eastern systems of "contemplative" practice, Wilber creates a "full spectrum model of human development" that is "structured, hierarchical and systems oriented" (1986, p. 66). This model joins the psycho-dynamic, object-relational and cognitive lines studied by conventional life-span psychology, with the 'higher' or "subtler" lines and stages of development embodied in the world's contemplative and meditative disciplines.

Wilber argues that the stages of development as understood by conventional psychology and psychiatry are similar to the philosopher-sage Sri Aurobindo's first six major stages of the human life cycle. Likewise, Wilber notes that the stages of development described in contemplative disciplines are "demonstrably similar" to Aurobindo's stages 7 through 10 (Wilber, 1986, p. 7). In ascending order, the nine stages of Wilber's model are "sensoriphysical", "phantasmic-emotional", "rep-mind" ("representational mind"), "rule/role" ("conop" or "concrete operational"), "formal
Wilber’s (1982, 1986) spectrum of consciousness model proposes three levels of transpersonal development – psychic, subtle and casual, stages 7, 8 and 9, respectively. In the same way that consciousness has “dis-embedded” itself from each stage of consciousness to make what was ‘self’ an object, through the process of dis-identification of Self from mind, the first transpersonal transition occurs to the psychic level (Wilber 1986). The ‘self’ becomes the spiritual in the transpersonal stages and the mind and body becomes the objects.

So from matter to body to Spirit. In each case consciousness or the observing Self sheds an exclusive identity with a lesser and shallower dimension, and opens up to deeper and higher and wider occasions, until it opens up to its own ultimate abode, which is pure spirit itself. And the stages of transpersonal growth and development are basically the stages of following this observing Self to its ultimate abode, which is pure Spirit or pure Emptiness, the ground, path, and fruition and the entire display. (Wilber, 1986, p. 199)

Table 2 is a summary of four examples of transpersonal stages of development. The spectrum of conscious models of Sri Aurobindo, Ken Wilber and Charles Alexander all subsume, as early stages, the traditional life span developmental models. These authors believe that the personal stages are prerequisite to the transpersonal stages.
Table 3: Stages of transpersonal adult development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Piaget</th>
<th>Maslow⁴</th>
<th>Wilber⁵</th>
<th>Aurobindo⁶</th>
<th>Alexander⁷</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Causal</td>
<td>Overmind</td>
<td>Unity</td>
<td>Consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Subtle</td>
<td>Intuitive Mind</td>
<td>Refined</td>
<td>Cosmic Consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Self Transcendence</td>
<td>Psychic</td>
<td>Illuminated Mind</td>
<td>Cosmic</td>
<td>Consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Self Actualization</td>
<td>Centauric</td>
<td>Higher Mind</td>
<td>Advanced Development</td>
<td>Affect and Ego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Full Formal Operations</td>
<td>Esteem and Self Esteem</td>
<td>Formal Reasoning Mind</td>
<td>Abstract Reasoning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Early formal Operations</td>
<td>Love, affection Belongingness orientation</td>
<td>Rule/Role</td>
<td>Sense Mind</td>
<td>Abstract Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Concrete Operations</td>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Rep-Mind</td>
<td>Will Mind</td>
<td>Concrete Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pre-operations</td>
<td>Physiological satisfaction orientation</td>
<td>Phantasmic-Emotional</td>
<td>Vital-emotional-sexual</td>
<td>Early Representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sensori-physical</td>
<td>Sensori-motor</td>
<td>Sensori-motor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chapter samples the literature concerned with contemplation, personal mastery in the workplace and lifespan and transpersonal psychology. Its purpose is to develop a backdrop to amplify the results of the study’s field research and to provide a theoretical basis for explaining the nature of contemplation’s role in personal mastery. This backdrop shows that personal mastery lies at the intersection of three seemingly unrelated areas; contemplation, the workplace and lifespan and transpersonal psychology. An in depth discussion of personal mastery in relation to these models of human development and evolution is reserved for Chapter V, “Interpretation and analysis”.

⁴ Maslow, 1971.
⁵ Wilber, 1996.
⁷ Alexander et al., 1990.
Chapter V : Interpretation and Analysis

A. Approach

Chapter III, "Practitioner results", reports in detail the ways in which the practitioners believe contemplation contributes to personal mastery. The practitioners do find that contemplation contributes, to paraphrase Senge (1990), ‘to achieving the results in life they seek’, though they envision personal mastery more in terms of personal capacity and as an approach to life, than in terms of achievement. The elements of personal mastery attributed to contemplation by the practitioners include improved health and energy, greater compassion for self and others, mindfulness and self-‘response-ability’, growing intuition and insight, and a heightened capacity for managing the polarities and paradoxes of life.

Chapter IV, “Literature research”, suggests there are parallels between the outcomes of the practitioners’ contemplative practices, and the attributes of personal mastery proposed by Senge (1990) and Covey (1989). Senge and Covey believe personal mastery is a life long process and not an endpoint or ultimate goal. Personal mastery involves the progressive achievement of skills and self-knowledge and the growing capacity for self ‘response-ability’. This is the basis for Covey’s private victories of proactivity, and Covey and Senge’s personal vision, personal discipline and commitment to the truth. In parallel with the practitioners, for Senge and Covey, the attributes of personal mastery fall into two categories; mastery of the ‘self’, and mastery of ‘self’ in relation to others.

Chapter IV also suggests a parallel exists between the above attributes of personal mastery and the processes and achievements of adult development defined by adult developmental and transpersonal research and theory. The theories of traditional adult developmental research sampled in this study suggest people do continue to grow and change over their entire adult lives and that change occurs simultaneously in a number of overlapping, complementary developmental streams. Adults progress simultaneously through stages of cognitive, affective, moral and spiritual development. These predictable stages of growth or development, as they
occur over an adult’s lifetime, profoundly affect the way adults see themselves, their world and their relationships.

The foregoing backdrop suggests a number questions to be considered in this chapter about the relationship of personal mastery to contemplation, adult development and the workplace.

- If personal mastery is the practice of life long learning as suggested by the practitioners and by Senge and Covey, what is the relationship between life long learning and the achievements of adult development? Is personal mastery achieved 'naturally' in the course of adult development?
- If personal mastery is achieved 'naturally' in the course of adult development, where, amongst the stages of adult development, do the attributes of personal mastery appear? Are the attributes scattered throughout the stages or do they appear in specific stages, for example, where the traditional models of development leave off and the early stages of transpersonal development begin?
- If personal mastery is indeed found at the juncture of traditional and transpersonal stages of adult development, does contemplation have a special role to play in the onset of the attributes of personal mastery?
- As a capability that comes late in the developmental process, is personal mastery within the grasp of most of us within our lifetime and is there a role for contemplation in hastening the onset of personal mastery?
- Finally, if there are common features of personal mastery amongst the practitioners’ experience, the workplace literature and the adult developmental theory, can a composite definition of the attributes of personal mastery be developed?

These questions are addressed in this chapter. In the first part of the chapter, the attributes of personal mastery as defined by the practitioners and by Senge (1990) and Covey (1989) are located amongst the developmental stages of lifespan and transpersonal psychological theory. It is shown that the attributes that characterize personal mastery are found at the juncture of the later stages of traditional adult developmental theory and the early stages of transpersonal development. In the
second part of the chapter, the mechanisms by which contemplative practices, primarily meditation, facilitate the inter-stage transformation process is described. This description explains why contemplation may be useful in hastening the onset of developmental capacities of personal mastery.

In the third part of the chapter, a composite definition of personal mastery from the practitioners’ experience and from the sampled workplace, adult development and transpersonal literature is described. The chapter concludes with a discussion of why contemplation and personal mastery is expected to have a role in tomorrow’s workplace.

**B. Personal mastery and adult development**

A dynamic view of adulthood – that life is an ongoing process of learning and development – is only just finding its way into the broader wisdom of contemporary culture and our understanding of workplace structures and values. In the last two or three decades, traditional adult development theory has advanced sufficiently to offer important insight into adult developmental needs for effective learning and working; yet few of the people who write, teach, and shape the discourse about management seem to read the adult development literature (Kegan 1994). However, as we shall see, it is in the later stages of traditional adult development, where the attributes of personal mastery begin to appear.

This part will locate the attributes of personal mastery within the stages of adult development defined in traditional lifespan and transpersonal psychology sampled in Chapter IV. This will be the basis for arguing that personal mastery is a part of the natural process of adult maturation or development. More significantly, this is the basis for arguing in the next part that contemplation has a special role in accelerating that development, particularly in the later stages of adult development where “personal” growth meets “transpersonal growth”.

The first step to locating the attributes of personal mastery in the stages of adult development continuum is to identify those attributes that most clearly represent the capabilities of an individual in, or with, personal mastery. These have been divided into groups, to reflect their sequential, developmental relationship. The first group of attributes is: good health and stress management; self-knowledge and self-
love; and, mindfulness and self-responsibility. As will be shown in detail, these are arguably basic or requisite capacities for the second group. Without the achievement of the foundational competencies of the first group, adult developmental theory suggests further advancement to higher stages is inhibited. From within the practitioners' comments and Senge (1990) and Covey's (1989) work, the second group of attributes are interdependence, intuition, paradox and compassion. Though these are only some of the competencies of personal mastery, they are important and common to both the practitioners and the sampled workplace literature and will serve, therefore, as key 'markers' or indicators of personal mastery.

For convenience, the two stages of adult development that are associated with the foregoing two groups of attributes are named: "early-mastery" and "mastery", respectively. In table 4, the two groups are shown as 'bands' across two developmental stages. The discussion begins with a look at the stages of adult development that precede the onset of early mastery.
Table 4: Early mastery and mastery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Higher Stages</th>
<th>Kohlberg</th>
<th>Kegan</th>
<th>Fowler</th>
<th>Maslow</th>
<th>Wilber</th>
<th>Aurobindo</th>
<th>Alexander</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mastery (Stage 5)</td>
<td>Universal Ethical Principles (loyalty to being)</td>
<td>Universalizing Faith</td>
<td>Self Transcendence</td>
<td>Psychic</td>
<td>Illuminated Mind</td>
<td>Supermind</td>
<td>Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prior Rights, Social Contract or Utility and Individual rights</td>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Individuational Reflective Faith</td>
<td>Esteem and Self Esteem</td>
<td>Formal Reflexive (Formop)</td>
<td>Reasoning Mind</td>
<td>Causal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social system and conscience maintenance (Social perspective)</td>
<td>Synthetic Conventional</td>
<td>Love, affection Belongingness orientation Safety</td>
<td>Rule/ Role</td>
<td>Sense Mind</td>
<td>Abstract Reasoning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Mastery</td>
<td>Mutual Interpersonal</td>
<td>Synthetic Conventional</td>
<td>Love, affection Belongingness orientation Safety</td>
<td>Rule/ Role</td>
<td>Sense Mind</td>
<td>Abstract Reasoning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instrumental Orientation</td>
<td>Imperial Mythic – Literal Faith</td>
<td>Physiological satisfaction orientation</td>
<td>Rep-Mind</td>
<td>Will Mind</td>
<td>Concrete Thinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Punishment and obedience orientation</td>
<td>Impulsive Intuitive – Projective Faith</td>
<td>Physiological satisfaction orientation</td>
<td>Rep-Mind</td>
<td>Will Mind</td>
<td>Concrete Thinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Building the foundation for mastery – “pre-mastery”

As suggested by Senge (1990) and Covey (1989), personal mastery is a life long process: from childhood through adulthood, personal mastery results from a lifetime of accumulated learning, transformation and resolution. Before the onset of personal mastery, adult developmental theory would suggest an individual must have matured to Piaget’s “early formal operations”, Maslow’s “love and belongingness orientation”, Kohlberg’s “interpersonal and punishment orientation”, Kegan’s “interpersonal” embeddedness, Fowler’s “synthetic/conventional faith”, Wilber's
“rule/role” orientation and Aurobindo’s “sense mind”. By the conclusion of this stage of development, adults have developed the cognitive capacity for abstract reasoning (Kegan 1994). They are capable of deductive hypothesis testing and have the capacity, to see and take the role of another person (Wilber, 1986). They define themselves largely as the sum of their relationship to others, and are heavily influenced by their feelings for others and others' feelings for them. Anger or conflict, which might put a relationship at risk, is avoided (Kegan 1994). When more than one person or more than one opinion are simultaneously present, dissonance and confusion can result. Morally, rules are intrinsically valued; ‘the rules are the rules’. The conventional adult’s ‘self’ concept is to be subject to, and within the context of, the established order (Kohlberg, 1977). Faith is characterized at this stage “as a time where the sense of ‘self’ is largely cognitively meditated, where symbols are ‘de-mythologized’ into concepts” and ‘self’ is “likely to attend minimally to unconscious factors influencing its judgements and behaviour” (Fowler, 1978, p. 182).

In summary, the perceived locus of ‘self’ in this stage is still largely external, working against self-responsibility, self-confidence and self-acceptance. Though the individual is capable of a genuine, feeling relationship, the individual tends toward dependency because of their interpersonal embeddedness. Normally, first encountered in adolescence, young adults have an emerging sense of themselves, self-consciousness, but their locus of authority rests in their relationships. In discomfort with the unknown or uncertainty, there is an inclination to dismiss subjective reality, or to render it in an objective form: this orientation is most comfortable in an empirical worldview.

2. Early-mastery stage

Early-mastery is associated with those stages of development when the requisite capacities of adulthood for full mastery become first manifest. Self-knowledge, self-love, and the capacity for self ‘response-ability’ are the key developmental features. Recall Covey’s personal victories of habits one through three, “proactivity”, “begin with the end in mind” and “first things first”. Response-ability is the developmental prerequisite for developing these habits and shifting the developmental stance from dependence to independence.
The capacity for self 'response-ability' rests on a number of factors. It requires a sufficient degree of self awareness to comprehend the opportunity for choice; the capacity to exercise one's will to act rather than react in the face of emotional stimulation; and, the foreknowledge to recognize which choice is in accord with best long and short term interests. Underlying the capacity to comprehend the opportunity for self-choice is the capacity for independent action. The capacity for independent action is gained as an individual's 'locus of 'self'" is internalized.

A look amongst the developmental stages of lifespan psychology finds this capacity has not appeared by stage 3. As noted above, individuals in stage 3 define themselves primarily in relation to others. However, as an adult moves into Maslow's stage of "self esteem", Kohlberg's late conventional stage "social system and conscience", and Kegan's "institutional" stage, the individual is building a sense of 'self', where one's locus of authority begins to reside 'inside' oneself. During this stage of cognitive development the 'self' ". ...acknowledges and cultures capacity for independence; self definition: assumption of authority; [and the] exercise of personal enhancement, ambition or achievement..." (Kegan, 1982, p. 119). The separation or objectification of 'self' in relationships is the basis for individual autonomy, standards and values, and for the tolerance of multiple perspectives. There is the emergence of an 'executive ego' which mediates the 'self' in relation to others: self formation, self regulation and autonomy are developed as the possibility of self-choice becomes seen, accepted and embraced (Fowler, 1981). In Kegan's (1982) terms, the identity or 'self' of a stage 4 adult resides in the institutional 'self' - 'self' exists as the 'manager of relations' with others.

An individual functioning at this level is conscientious, mature, competent and capable of leadership. However, is this individual in personal mastery in the workplace context? Drath's (1990) speculation on how an individual at this stage would function in the workplace provides some further insight into the early-mastery stage. Drath (1990) considers the strengths and weaknesses of Kegan's (1982) "institutional" (stage 4) adults in the role of management in the workplace.

By allowing a person to take interpersonal relationships as an object and thus create a distinct identity, the institutional stage engenders the capacity for autonomy.
Such autonomy is necessary for being responsible and accountable, for being guided by a personal vision and for being self-creating and correcting. However, Drath (1990) suggests "...the capacity to perceive interpersonal relations as an object,...imposes a concomitant limit on the manager's ability to be close to others. ...The institutional 'self'... must guard against intimacy, for unmediated feelings endanger...by threatening to influence and break down independent autonomous self regulation." (p. 492).

Drath (1990) also notes the institutional manager, invested or embedded in his role in the work place, has a penchant for dedication to work because he or she is his or her role. However, such embeddedness also means the institutional manager has difficulty empowering and delegating where his own competence might be impugned. When his or her position is under threat, he or she feels personally under siege. Drath's characteristics of the institutional manager do not suggest the objective, interdependent, and dialectical reasoning adult capacity of full personal mastery.

In stage 4, therefore, an adult's locus of 'self' is internalized. This affords the opportunity to begin the ongoing process of building a sense of self worth, confidence and self-acceptance. In turn, the capacity for self-responsibility and, hence, true independent action becomes manifest. True mastery develops upon this foundation.

At this stage, the individual catches his or her first glimpses of what lies beyond a singularly rational world. In Wilber's (1996) formal reflexive stage (also know by Wilber as "formop" after Piaget's formal operational stage), the individual, with a growing capacity to think about thinking, is launched into a voyage of discovery, not just of the outer world, but of their inner world. "Propositional" reasoning spawns the development of genuinely pluralistic, universal views (Wilber 1982).

...[T]hinking about thought means true introspection becomes possible. The interior world, for the first time, opens up before the mind's eye: psychological space becomes a new and exciting terrain.... You can start to judge the roles and rules.... you 'norm the norms'.... and your moral stance moves from conventional to post-conventional... You are no longer merely identified with them. ... to some degree you have transcended them. (Wilber, 1996, p. 186)
In contemplating thought, in ‘norming’ the norms, the individual is poised on a great personal voyage into the transpersonal world; a world that heretofore, was unknown, and in the old, purely cognitive context, a world that is unknowable and unfathomable. As will be seen, not many individuals leave the safe shores of the conventional world to make this voyage into the post-conventional world. For those who do, all the certainty of the rationally mediated, conventional world must be abandoned if a new landfall in personal mastery is to be made. The courage required to meet the challenge of this voyage is perhaps why we venerate this journey with the term “mastery”.

3. Mastery stage

The attributes locating the “mastery” stage are those capacities and competencies defined by the practitioners and by the workplace literature as fundamental to personal mastery. These are those higher attributes identified in the previous part, namely the capacity for intuitive insight and its reconciliation with reason, for managing dialectical tensions in life’s paradoxes, and for becoming interdependent and compassionate in relation with others. In the nature of these four phenomena -- interdependence, intuition, paradox and compassion -- there is the suggestion that they exist in a realm beyond our normal consciousness. They exist beyond the self-conscious ego, they are seen by looking inward, not in ‘self’ in relation to subconscious, but to ‘self’ in relation to super-conscious. And so it is in the descriptions of the stages of adult development of the lifespan and transpersonal psychology where these attributes appear, there is the presence of the ineffable -- the unitive consciousness, the collective unconsciousness, pure or cosmic consciousness, Brahman, God, the implicate order, etc..

These four attributes of mastery are found at the point where lifespan psychological theory ‘tops out’ and where the transcendent in transpersonal psychology begins: at the cusp of the personal and the transpersonal. This is stage 5 of the adult developmentalists, lifespan theory: Kohlberg’s (1977) “post-conventional, prior to society stage”; Kegan’s (1994) “post modern, interindividual adult”; and Fowler’s (1981) “conjunctive faith stage”. From amongst the transpersonal theorists, the key attributes are associated with Maslow’s (1977) stage
of “‘self’ actualization”, Wilber’s (1996) “centauric” or “stage of vision-logic” and Aurobindo’s (Aurobindo cited in Wilber, 1986) “higher mind” and Alexander et al. (1990) “advanced development affect and ego” stage. Though neither field seems well grounded in the other, they seemed co-joined at this point in a continuum of adult development/self actualization. Beginning with the individuation and the orientation of interdependence, the following discussion traces these attributes in the latter stages of lifespan theory and then amongst the early phases of transpersonal evolution.

Covey’s (1989) maturity continuum culminates in an interdependent adult. This is the basis for habits four through six, “think Win/Win”, “seek first to understand… then to be understood”, and “synergize”. The journey to true mastery is understood to be underway with attainment of a true capacity for interdependence. Interdependence requires individuation. Individuation requires the locus of ‘self’ to be strongly internalized and for the individual to be clearly differentiated from others. With individuation – a strong internalized sense of ‘self’ as separate from others – the capacity for interdependent action is manifest.

In Kegan’s (1982, 1994) model of cognitive development, we see the basis for increasing levels of individuation and interdependence. In transformation from “institutional”, stage four, to “interindividual”, stage 5, the ‘self’ separates from the institutional embeddedness and creates:

- the “individual”, that ‘self’ who can reflect upon, or take as object the regulations and purposes of a psychic administration which formerly was the subject of one’s attentions. ‘Moving over’ the institutional from subject to object frees the ‘self’ from that displacement of value whereby the maintenance of the institution has become the end in itself: there is now a ‘self’ who runs the organization, where before there was a ‘self’ who was the organization. (Kegan, 1982, p. 103).

The ‘self’ of the “interindividual” is now taken as prior to the institutional, in parallel with Kohlberg’s (1977) “prior to society” of stage 5. The ‘self’ is now defined as one individual in a community or universe of other individuals. With the ‘self’ no longer embedded in the institutional, but in the coordination of the institutional, a new freedom is found. In the ‘self’ being removed one step further from the world, the capacity for interdependence is enhanced. During this stage, Adults “…acknowledge
and culture capacity for interdependence, for self surrender and intimacy, [and] for interdependent self definition" (Kegan, 1982, p. 119).

The self-less attribute of compassion flows in part from an interdependent self’s ability to surrender its own interests to that of another.

Having a ‘self’, which is the hallmark of stage 5’s advance over stage 4, it now has a ‘self’ to share. This sharing of the ‘self’ at the level of intimacy permits the emotion and impulses to live the intersection of systems, to be “re-solved” between oneself-system and another. Rather than attempt to be both close and auto-regulative, “individuality” permits one to “give oneself up” to another... (Kegan, 1982, p. 106)

Based on interdependence alone, therefore, it is possible to associate “mastery” with Kohlberg’s (1977) stage of “prior to society”. Kegan’s (1982, 1994) “interindividual” stage, and Fowler’s (1981) “universalizing faith”. Below, however, it will be understood the characteristics of intuition and paradox are also in evidence in the description of adult character in the same latter stages of lifespan theory.

Capacities of both Kegan (1982, 1994) and Fowler’s (1981) stage 5 adults include the capacity to integrate different perspectives, be objectively impartial and at least manage conflicting perspectives by recognizing the validity of different views. Cognitive process of Kegan’s (1984) interindividual is “trans-ideological/post-ideological” wherein individuals have tolerance for testing formulation, paradox, contradiction and oppositeness. Fowler’s (1978) fifth stage, “conjunctive faith” complements Kegan’s cognitive interindividual stage. In conjunctive faith, the individual is able to see and sense the inter-relatedness or unity of nature; “in a dialogical knowing, the multiplex structure of the world is invited to disclose itself” (p.185).

Alive to paradox and the truth in apparent contradictions, this stage strives to unify opposites in mind and experience, it generates and maintains vulnerability to the strange truths of those who are ‘other’. The new strength of this stage comes in the rise of the ironic imagination – a capacity to see and be in one’s group most powerful meaning, while simultaneously recognizing that they are relative, partial and inevitably distorting apprehensions of transcendent reality. It also sees the divisions of the human family vividly because [the ‘self’] has been apprehended by the possibility (and imperative) of an inclusive community of being. (p. 198)
The attributes of intuition and paradox are also found amongst the early stages of transpersonal theory that match Kohlberg (1977), Kegan (1982, 1994) and Fowler's (1981) post conventional stages of psychology discussed above. Wilber's (1980, 1986, 1990, 1996), “centauric” or “vision logic” stage is the last of the personal, pre-transpersonal, stages. This stage’s most salient achievement is the total and harmonious integration of “body-mind”. For this reason, Wilber has named this stage the “centaur” after the mythological being with an animal body and a human mind thought to exist in a perfect state of “at-one-ment” (Wilber, 1980, p. 45). As the body-mind integration is achieved, according to Wilber, the 'self' begins to transcend them. In early transcendence, the individual begins to access “immediate perceptual apprehension”, “vision-logic”, or in a word, intuition. In early transcendence, the individual has a foot in both worlds. Not yet fully transcendent, the individual still has a normal waking presence, a normal psychophysical consciousness, but they have also new emerging sensory awareness of “higher, subtle, even transpersonal energies”, a “super-sensory” awareness (Wilber 1980, p. 60). Perceiving the world from a this dual perspective, individuals in this stage are characterized by Wilber as dialectical, integrative, and “creative synthetic”.

In Maslow's "self-actualized" stage, again are seen the attributes of intuition, paradox and compassion. For Maslow (1971), as for Wilber, the theme of this stage is transcendence of 'self'. A natural summary description of an individual fully within this stage would be Maslow's (1971) "being-values" of the self actualized person (described more fully in Chapter IV): truth, goodness, beauty, wholeness, dichotomy transcendence, uniqueness, perfection/necessity, completion, justice, simplicity, richness, effortlessness, playfulness and self-sufficiency autonomy/independence (p. 134).

We have found the markers of personal mastery -- interdependence, compassion, intuition, and paradox -- prominent amongst the developmental characteristics of the later stages of adult development/lifespan psychology. They are also consistently in evidence as apprehensions available to individuals in the earlier stages of transpersonal development. It is concluded, therefore, that the attributes of personal mastery, both as articulated by the practitioners and as described by Senge
(1990) and Covey 1989), are significant developmental capacities of the natural process of adult development and that the essence of 'mastery' is the achievement of advanced stages of adult maturity.

4. Higher stages

Though the attributes of personal mastery are amply identified in the previous "mastery" stages of development, a view of the stages immediately following suggest mastery continues and deepens in these later stages.

As discussed in Chapter IV, the developmental models of Kohlberg (1977, 1990) and Fowler (1981) extend stages into a "universal" perspective. According to Fowler (1978), the attributes of stage six, "Universalizing Faith", emerge by transcending the dialectical and paradoxical features of stage five:

The transition to Stage 6 involves an overcoming of ... paradox through a moral and ascetic actualization of the universalizing apprehensions. Heedless of the threats to 'self', to primary groups, and the institutional arrangements of the present order that are involved, Stage 6 becomes activist incarnation - making real and tangible - of the imperatives of absolute love and justice of which Stage 5 has only apprehensions. (p. 200)


What other developmental attributes are associated with self-transcendence in these higher stages? In Maslow's transcendence, the individual transcends his or her ego, past, striving, sickness, evil, death, the I-We divide, and other polarities. In transcendence the individual achieves.

...the Taoistic feeling of letting things happen rather making them happen, and of being perfectly happy and accepting of the state of non-striving, non-wishing, non-interfering, non-controlling, non-willing. This is the transcendence of ambition, of efficiency. This is the state of having rather than not having. It is the state of cosmic consciousness [where the person] somehow perceives the whole cosmos or at least the unity and integration of it and of everything in it. including the 'self'. (p. 277)

In Maslow's rich description, we see how transcendence is dis-identification of 'self' from the processes of 'self' and how this facilitates 'letting go of holding on'.

Following the stage of the "centaur", is Wilber's (1986) "psychic" stage. At this stage, some of the powers cited by Wilber (1980) are the paranormal capabilities of the astral level, such as out-of-body experiences, ESP, precognition, clairvoyance, psychokinesis and astral travel.

Aurobindo explains that transcendence, as it occurs in this stage, brings new 'post' or 'trans' cognitive capacity.

The perceptual power of the inner [psychic] sight is greater and more direct than the perceptual power of thought. As the higher mind brings a greater consciousness into the being than the idea and its power of truth [formal operations], so the illuminated mind [psychic level] brings a still greater consciousness through a Truth sight and Truth Light and its seeing and seizing power: it illuminates the thought-mind with a direct inner vision and inspiration: it can embody a finer and bolder revealing outline and a larger comprehension and power of totality than through-conception can manage (Aurobindo cited Wilber, 1986, p.72)

From the foregoing, we understand further transcendence has resolved the apparent paradoxes of life. Intuitive insight out grows and illuminates reason. Extraordinary powers of mind emerge as transcendence proceeds. These attributes of transpersonal development seem plausible extensions of the earlier stages of development, but they are beyond the scope of personal mastery anticipated by the practitioners and by Senge (1990) and beyond Covey's (1989) seven habits.

5. Observations

The attributes of personal mastery are prominent, if not the definitive, characteristics of the stages of adult development. Three important observations are made about this conclusion. First, as Covey (1989) so properly recognized with the "maturity continuum" and the sequential nature of the first six habits, adult development is both progressive and cumulative. The capacities to practice the later habits (Win/Win and Synergize for example) depend on first developing the capacity necessary to for self-'response-ability' and independence. This link simply begs the question. can we estimate on the basis of tests of adult developmental levels in the general and workplace population how many individuals can be projected to achieve mastery? The answer is yes. This will be explored in a later section.
A second observation is that the attributes of mastery (as opposed to the attributes of "early-mastery") occur at the juncture of personal and transpersonal development. It is at this juncture, where so called "conventional" orientation gives way to the "post conventional" orientation, where rational processes give way, or at least ‘move over’ and incorporate, “irrational” or non-rational processes. At the point where logical and reasoned developmental processes culminate, it is ironic and paradoxical how we honor the very attributes that defy logical or rational explanation with the term “mastery”? Though not widely appreciated, perhaps this is a sign that we are beginning to recognize the truth of this conclusion at an ‘intuitive’ level.

Finally, the relationship of contemplation to the acquisition of the attributes of personal mastery at the juncture of personal and transpersonal development is not a coincidence. The mechanisms employed by contemplative techniques have specific effect on the subconscious. They generally hasten the translations and transformations that constitute the process of adult development, but in particular they accelerate the re-orientation of ‘self’ in mind to ‘self’ in spirit in the transpersonal stages, as will be considered in detail in the following section.

C. Contemplation and transformation in adult development

This research has found that the attributes of personal mastery are found in later stages of "personal" or lifespan theory and in the earlier stages of transpersonal development. It has also found, in the subjective experience of the eleven practitioners, that contemplation makes specific affective and cognitive contribution to personal mastery. The question explored in this part is. "How and why does contemplation contribute to the process of adult development and hence personal mastery?"

1. Transformation and transcendence

As a basis for understanding the mechanisms behind contemplation’s role in adult growth and personal mastery, a closer look at the anatomy of the process of adult development is necessary.

Common to lifespan and transpersonal psychology, is the view that the stages of adult development are sequential, invariant and hierarchical (Alexander et al.:
In the course of an adult's life span, these theories propose that an adult will pass sequentially from the lower stages, where basic corporeal and perceptual capacity is developed, to the higher stages, where cognitive and affective skills become more integrated and universal in perspective. An individual is largely resolved in each stage before the transformational process begins to move to the next stage. Each new stage subsumes the affective and cognitive capacity of the previous stages. The rate, and hence the age and ultimate stage achieved by each person, is unique. How 'far' and how 'fast' an individual progresses is partially a function of the environmental context. (This will be considered in the section following.)

Though the content or preoccupation of each transformational stage is unique, the form of each transformation stage is the same (Alexander and et al., 1990; Kegan, 1984; Wilber, 1997). A transformation to the next stage begins when a 'self' (that part of an individual that is experienced as "I") starts to become aware of the next higher stage existence. The self's awareness of the adjacent higher stage grows until, eventually, the 'self' moves over to 'become' that new structure. What was 'self' is now 'object'.

We have begun to see not only how the subject-object balance can be spoken of as the deep structure in the meaning-evolution itself. Growth always involves a process of differentiation, of emergence from embeddedness, thus creating out of the former subject a new object to be taken by the new subjectivity. This movement involves what Piaget calls 'decentration', the loss of an old center, and what we might call 'recentration', the recovery of a new center. (Kegan, 1984, p.31)

In a change morphology of subject-object transformation common with Kegan's (1982) model, Wilber (1982) proposes that the self becomes aware of both the mind and the body as experiences, then as object.

By the time of the centaur, consciousness is simply continuing this process and starting to dis-identify with the mind itself, which is precisely why it can witness the mind, see the mind, experience the mind. The mind is no longer merely a subject: it is starting to become an object. An object of...the observing 'Self', the Witness. (Wilber, 1996, p. 198)

The observing 'self', able at last to differentiate itself from both mind and body, is capable of seeing and experiencing mind and body as objects separate from
the ‘self’ – this is the experience of dis-identification, then transcendence. Experiencing one’s thoughts as objects and one’s feelings as sensation changes an individual’s relationship to the ‘self’ and the world. Thus, the nature of growth transformation between each stage of development is, in effect, a transcendent event. The new ‘self’ has transcended the place of its old ‘self’ to occupy a new higher order place; evolution is actually self-realization through self transcendence (Wilber 1997).

The process of adult growth translation through the early personal stages of development is essentiall identical to that of the transpersonal or transcendent stages. This common morphology of change is an important link between traditional lifespan development and transpersonal development.

As noted, earlier stages of adult development are preoccupied with increasing refinement of the ‘self’ in relation to the body, then the ‘self’ in relation to the body and mind. As children, we first develop a ‘self’ in relation to our corporeal sensori-physical plane and then in relation to our bodies and minds with concrete, then early formal, operations. As adults, we refine our ‘self’ in relation to our minds with cognition that advances from literal, through symbolic to mythic apprehension. With ever increasing depth and complexity, our ‘self’ comprehends and transforms into ever more subtle and broad perspectives, until, at a threshold of integration of affect and cognition, we begin to perceive the spirit. At this juncture, the juncture of the transpersonal, the ‘self’ in relationship to others is divined and the process of transformation - transcendence – of a self embedded in mind to a ‘self’ embedded in spirit begins. Growth along the continuum from mind to spirit is as natural as growth along the continuum from body to mind: The content of transformation is different, but the form of transformation is the same.

2. Contemplation facilitates transformation and transcendence

In one form or another, all of the contemplative practices of the practitioners were introspective. Even the practitioners’ contemplative enjoyment of beauty, journaling, reading and dialogue are all practices of internal enjoyment and self-discovery. The practices of prayer and meditation, though qualitatively similar insofar as they are introspective, however, employ a degree of focussed intentionality of process and outcome that the others do not. As detailed in Chapter IV, it is believed
that prayer and meditation result in altered and higher states of consciousness. Contemplative access to a new level of consciousness plays a specific and important role in speeding the resolution of the transformational process, of stepping between stages of adult development. Wilber (1980) proposes that meditation facilitates the developmental transition by exposing the individual temporarily to the transcendental state:

The temporal state of tasting the causal is transcendental consciousness, usually evoked in meditation. As the transcendental consciousness become constant and unbroken through the waking, dream and deep sleep state, call that...cosmic consciousness: it is the permanent realization of the ‘Self’, the Witness (subject permanence). Thus transcendental consciousness – the temporary taste of the ‘Self’ – is lost as such (it is negated: it is transitional); but the causal Self disclosed in cosmic consciousness is the enduring Atman (the causal realm). (Wilber, 1997, p. 243)

Alexander et al. (1990) reporting on research into Transcendental Meditation also suggests that TM promotes the adult developmental process. Vedic psychology suggests that, in the same way language facilitates development of the mind during the representational phases of development, a “post-language” technology, such as TM facilitates development of pure conscious awareness during post representational development. Vedic psychology suggests developmental transition in the transpersonal stages of development requires an individual’s conscious awareness to regularly transcend the mind, intellect, feeling and ego in order to experience “pure consciousness” at its source. However, because developmental transitions at all levels (e.g. late childhood, adolescence and early adulthood) are also preoccupied with mind, intellect, feeling and ego. Vedic psychology suggests meditation may also accelerate resolution of earlier stages of growth.

TM also contributes to adult development through the relief of stress. The accumulation of deep-rooted levels of stress produce a "chronically excited, disorderly, or 'high-noise' style of functioning of the nervous systems that impedes the natural ability to function through finer levels of mind" (Alexander et al., 1990, p. 299). Simply by maintaining an ongoing practice of Transcendental Meditation (or other contemplative practices), practitioners are believed to enjoy generally reduced
levels of stress. Reduced levels of stress facilitate the experience of higher levels of consciousness.

In short, the experience in contemplation of transcending one’s normal 'self' (the body, mind and ego), to permit the experience of higher stages of consciousness would appear to facilitate the developmental inter-stage transition process at all levels, but particularly at the early transpersonal levels.

D. The attributes of personal mastery

The nature of personal mastery attributed by the practitioners to their contemplative practices is summarized in the substantive theory of the previous chapter. In this part, a composite description or definition of the attributes of personal mastery is presented. The practitioners’ views of personal mastery are joined with the workplace views of personal mastery of Senge (1990) and Covey (1989). These views are in turn amplified using the concepts of contemporary adult development and transpersonal psychological research. In so doing, the following questions are addressed for each attribute:

What is its precise nature:

Why is it important to personal mastery: and,

What role does contemplation play in developing the attribute?

1. Good health -- managed stress and vitality

From their contemplative practice, the practitioners believe they are more sensitive to the body’s signals for care and are more prepared to act in ways that respect those signals. By coming to see the body as an “anchor” or “temple”, they have an enlarged appreciation of the role the body plays in their personal mastery.

Covey’s (1989) seventh habit, “sharpen the saw”, is the “habit of renewal”; it is the habit of keeping up the “production capability” of the individual. Without health and energy, the individual has limited capacity to pursue life through the other six habits. Covey recognizes the key to self-renewal is the synergy that flows from the balanced renewal of all four dimensions of our nature: physical, spiritual, mental and social/emotional. Included in Covey’s physical dimension is exercise, nutrition
and stress management. Covey’s spiritual element is value clarification, commitment and meditation (p. 288).

Physical health is an essential component of Covey’s (1989) integral approach to self-care. In recognizing the importance of health and stress management, Covey recognizes the role of contemplation in personal mastery. Covey himself practices daily “prayerful meditation” to “feel renewed, strengthened, centered and recommitted to serve” (p. 292).

The importance of good physical health, and the role of contemplation in wellness, is perhaps the most consistently identified and broadly understood attribute of personal mastery. The role of contemplation and meditation in particular, in maintaining health is under rigorous investigation in the West. Murphy (1992) has identified over 1000 reputable studies that have been reported since the early 1970s. Of all the forms of meditation finding a place in the West over the last 20 years, Transcendental Meditation (“TM”) has been the most researched. As described in Chapter IV, past research has demonstrated that TM makes an important contribution to the health and wellness of meditators, primarily by assisting them to manage stress. Studies of meditators have reported lowered resting heart rate, reduced blood pressure, changes in cortical activity, reduced metabolic and respiratory levels, reduced muscle tension and galvanic skin response and other physiological changes thought to indicate lowered stress and to good health (Murphy 1992).

2. Compassion -- Self knowledge, acceptance, and self love

Self-acceptance and self-love -- self-compassion -- are powerful determinants of self-image. A strong, positive self-image is, at the same time, both the result of mastery and the basis by which we achieve mastery. Self-compassion, insofar as it determines self-image, is a foundation of personal mastery. Our self-image, at both conscious and subconscious levels, determines how we are in both our personal and professional worlds. But what is the source of self-acceptance and self-love?

The practitioners believe that, by being in contact with their inner spirit during contemplation, they experience universal love through the ‘the unity experience’. The experience of universal love engenders self-love from which ‘self’ compassion flows. This is perhaps one of the most ineffable, but most significant contributing aspects of
contemplation to personal mastery for the practitioners. That self-love could come ‘effortlessly’ through the contemplative process, from contact with spirit or God, is not an implication anticipated by Senge, Covey or many others writing of personal mastery from the western perspective. Yet that “God is Love”, is axiomatic amongst most spiritual/religious paradigms.

For Senge (1990), self-responsibility and proactivity are often blocked by negative beliefs. Largely developed during childhood, Senge believes most negative beliefs are held subconsciously. “The most common belief is our powerlessness – our inability to bring into being all the things we really care about. The other belief centers on unworthiness – that we do not deserve to have what we truly desire” (p. 156). Senge adopts Robert Fritz’s landscape metaphor wherein subconscious beliefs are seen as our underlying structure that determine our behaviour and actions: “You are like a river. We go through life taking the path of least resistance” (Fritz. 1984, p. 4). Senge and Fritz adopt the view that the best way to change our underlying structure is through “telling the truth... a relentless willingness to root out the ways we limit or deceive ourselves from seeing what is, and to continually challenge our theories of why things are the way they are” (Senge. 1990. p.159).

McKeen and Wong (1998) do believe, however, that self-compassion is related to personal mastery, and that it can be developed or learned.

The first step is to become aware of [the] patterns of striving for [perfection, the cause of self-hate]. The next step is to acknowledge the patterns, to others as well as to oneself: this acknowledgement overcomes the rigid pattern of denial and frees up the fixation. In this revealing of the ‘self’ acceptance is demonstrated and furthered. This can be carried forward in action, further sustaining the self-compassion process.... Through this acceptance, individuals can develop a growing pattern of self-compassion, thus altering and transforming the repetitive patterns of self-denial and self-hatred....(p. 28)

Though contemplation may have something to contribute in self-knowledge and awareness, it seems to the practitioners that self love from contact with spirit is its most important contribution. This contribution of contemplation to personal mastery is broadly confirmed in the spiritual literature of the east and west. It is God’s love. Speaking from an eastern perspective, Wilber (1979) believes that, in meditation, the
“transcendent witness” experiences a transpersonal intuition of the universal compassion:

This is a different order of compassion or love than one finds on the persona, ego or centaur level. At the transpersonal level, we begin to love others not because they love us, affirm us, reflect us, or secure us in our illusions, but because they are us. Christ’s primary teaching does not mean “Love your neighbor as you love yourself”, but “Love your neighbor as your Self.” (p. 134)

A key element of personal mastery, therefore, is self love. The mastery attribute of self-responsibility flows out of self-knowledge, acceptance and self-love. When these are combined with a preparedness to exercise will in action, rather than in reaction -- the habit of proactivity-- personal mastery is experienced.

3. Mindfulness and self 'response-ability'

For the practitioners, to be ‘mindful’ is to be more conscious of one’s ‘self’ moment to moment, hour to hour, day to day. It is the capacity to be ‘present’ with others and with one’s ‘self’, almost as an observer or witness. It is not to be ‘lost in one’s thoughts, to be preoccupied with the past or future. For the practitioners, the capacity for, and interest in, being mindful flows from the sense of peace and equanimity that arises during contemplation. Mindfulness, is in fact, the basis of “insight” or “receptive defocal” forms of meditation, wherein one meditates by observing one’s sensations, feelings and thoughts (Wilber 1980).

To be mindful is to be attentive for those moments where choices need to be made with reflection, not reaction. “Between stimulus and response, man has the freedom to choose”: this is where lies the possibility for right choice (Covey, 1989, p. 70). This is the opportunity for intentionality: for an individual to exercise their will to make a choice about how they respond to stimulus, rather than simply reacting without intention.

In the opportunity for right choice --intentionality -- also rests the potential for ‘self’ response-ability. Self-responsibility is the basis for Covey’s (1989) first habit of personal mastery. “Be proactive”.

It means more than merely taking initiative. It means that as human beings, we are responsible for our own lives. Our behaviour is a function of our
decisions, not our conditions. We can subordinate feelings to values. We have the initiative and the responsibility to make things happen. (p. 71)

In exercising the freedom to choose, to be proactive, Covey (1989) believes an individual is in mastery by bringing together his or her self-awareness, imagination, conscience and independent will. Through proactivity, the individual begins the journey along Covey’s “maturity continuum”. The maturity continuum parallels the adult development process of the life span psychologists.

The Seven Habits are not a set of separate or piecemeal psych-up formulas. In harmony with the natural laws of growth, they provide an incremental, sequential, highly integrated approach to the development of personal and interpersonal effectiveness. They move us progressively on a Maturity Continuum from dependence to independence to interdependence. (pp. 48-49)

Like Covey (1989), McKeen and Wong (1998) also believe that “mastery” comes from a person’s capacity to be self-response-able. They believe this capacity comes from learning to exercise the will in translating feelings into action. Translating feelings into action comes from self-awareness and from the belief that we can choose how we will act in response to our feelings. “With strength, people develop a growing mastery and competence, which is not necessarily praised or even acknowledged by the external world. People in mastery are aware of themselves and the world around them” (p. 68).

To be present with others, it is first necessary to be present with oneself. The capacity for Covey’s (1989) empathetic listening and habit five, “seek first to understand…. then to be understood” flows from a high level of mindfulness and presence. To listen with your “eyes and with your heart”, to attend to how the other person feels, as advocated by Covey, requires a degree of attention only possible if one is fully present.

Contemplation cultivates mindfulness, and thereby, self response-ability. Contemplation teaches how to be ‘present’ in time and space: to be fully attentive to oneself and to others moment to moment. It engenders an attitude of willingness to be engaged in the world, to not be lost, obsessing with the past or future, and then to respond assertively in choice – responsibly. The mindfulness of contemplation helps
contemplatives to exercise choice and will, to not react without intention. To be self ‘response-able’ is to be in ‘mastery’ moment to moment.

4. Imagination and visualization

Visualization and imagery are tools the practitioners use to enter and strengthen their contemplative practice, to prepare the practitioners for activity (especially difficult or challenging activity), as a vehicle to seek inner wisdom and, most importantly, to heal ‘self’ and others. For Senge (1990), Covey (1989) and Csikszentmihalyi (1990), visioning is less a day to day tool and more a concept or practice used for longer term achievement in life and business. They draw, however, on the same attribute of personal mastery; the capacity of imagination to harness the inner power that lies beyond the normal conscious ‘self’.

Through Wilber’s (1983, 1997) three “eyes” of knowing, we can begin to more fully understand the power of imagination. Metaphorically speaking, Wilber proposes the eye of flesh knows “sensibilium”, the eye of mind knows “intelligibilium”, and the eye of contemplation knows “transcendelium”: Each “eye” represents a different mode of knowing, that is to say, each “has its own specific and quite valid set of referents” that are coexistent in every individual (1997, p. 84). The power of imagination flows in part from its capacity to synthesize all three ways of knowing; to operate at several levels concurrently (Assagioli, 1965) and for the conscious mind to direct that lens.

The power of imagination also flows from the following two psychological “laws” or facts: when will and imagination come into conflict, imagination wins” and, “images and mental pictures tend to produce the physical conditions and the external acts corresponding to them” (Assagioli, 1965, p.144). We commonly know the immense power of images in our experience of hypnosis – suggestion and autosuggestion – and in advertising!

Visualization is the way in which we aim our imagination at our unconscious mind. Visualization is a technique to use imagination to create images – images that may combine any or all of visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic sensation – in a way that draws all three ‘eyes of knowing’ into a single lens. For this reason.
psychosynthesis techniques draw heavily on the power of the imagination and visualization. Visualization is used for projecting the "ideal model" onto our subconscious to evoke desired outcomes (Assagioli, 1965). Drawing on the "motor-drive" of every image, it is possible to suggest through imagination the desired outcome and set the subconscious levels of the mind to work on their realization.

For its transformative power, psychosynthesis also uses visualization as a means to transmit symbols to the subconscious. Symbols are believed to point to, or access, regions of our minds that are unavailable to our conscious mind. Using symbolic imagery, we gain an intuitive glimpse of the world beyond.

[Symbols] train us to understand by seeing directly, jumping the intermediary stage of discursive thinking, which is sometimes more of an obstacle than an aid to understanding. This deeper kind of understanding awakens a faculty whose importance is almost universally neglected: the intuition.

We become intuitively receptive to the essence of a symbolic image by holding it steadily in our mind, letting it irradiate our awareness with its subtle quality. Such contemplation of an image may lead to an identification with it. Whether it happens spontaneously or intentionally, identification enables us to understand symbols from within, and intuition is nothing less than the understanding from within of the formless reality which the symbol represents. (Ferrucci, 1982, pp. 118-120)

In Jungian terms, resonating with the archetypes of the collective unconsciousness, symbols in visualization establish a beneficial conscious relationship with the unconscious (Wilber 1977). Tibetan Buddhism has a parallel understanding.

[Penetration and transformation is only possible through the compelling power of inner vision, whose primordial images of "archetypes" are the formative principles of our mind. Like the seeds they sink into the fertile soil of our subconscious in order to germinate to grow and to unfold their potentialities. (Govinda cited in Wilber, 1977, p. 268)]

Conscious contact through symbols in visualization affords an opportunity to integrate these images into the normal stream of life and consciousness. "It is possible to live the fullest life... [through] ...the agreement of our thinking with the primordial images of the unconscious" (Jung cited in Wilber, 1977, 270). Further, to contact the archetype is to contact the transpersonal. Moreover, in so doing, one's overall perspective is inevitably broadened to become gradually more universal.
Imagination and visualization is a part of contemplative practice. Meditation and prayer frequently employ images and symbols in various forms that communicate directly with the contemplative’s inner ‘self’. In contact with the collective unconscious, contemplatives are able to suggest outcomes and set the subconscious ‘self’ to work on resolution. Through visualization, contemplatives draw on the heritage of humanity’s archetypal wisdom, and align their conscious lives with their ‘true’ inner nature. In contact with the transcendent, the contemplative’s ‘self’ loosens its grip on the cognitive, rational orientation of the mind and shifts more to the universal perspective.

5. Integrating reason and intuition

The practitioners believe that they access a store of knowledge that is inexplicably more than just what they have learned. To paraphrase one of the practitioners, when he can “get out of his own way”, not get “too tight down or too controlled”, he has access to “a great mixing around of ideas and experience… that is inseparable [from him] and the universe”. As discussed at length in Chapter IV, the integration of intuition and reason is an important capacity of those with personal mastery for Senge (1990) and Covey (1989), but neither appear to give much thought to the origin of intuition.

Intuition is the facility of attaining direct knowledge or cognition without evident rational thought. Jung called intuition the irrational function: “this term does not denote something contrary to reason, but something outside the province of reason” (Jung cited in Assagioli, 1965, p. 217). While the mind gleans knowledge symbolically – analyzed and meditated in concepts and rendered in words – intuitive insight occurs as a quick seizure of immediate and global understanding. If rationale knowledge is gained by the reductionistic, comprehension of parts, intuitive cognition is a holistic and sudden apprehension (Ferrucci, 1982). In the words of William James:

There are two ways of knowing things, knowing them immediately or intuitively, and knowing them conceptually or representatively. Although such things as the white paper before your eyes can be known intuitively, most of the things we know, the tigers in India, for example, or the scholastic system
of philosophy, are known only representatively or symbolically. (James cited in Wilber, 1977)

The mind, therefore, finds the directly knowing, synthesizing grasp of intuition, unfamiliar. Cognition by intuition comes not as a thought, though it is apprehended after the fact in thought; it is devoid of feeling, though an individual may attach feelings to it; and, intuitions may be fleeting and easily forgotten despite their vividness (Assagioli, 1965). Ferrucci (1992) recognizes two levels of intuition: the ordinary and the super-conscious. The former may be a simple intuition about the circumstances of a person or the solution to a student's problem. The later is access to a “universal law, of the inter-connectedness of everything with everything else, of the oneness of all reality, of eternity...” (p. 221).

The marriage of intuition and reason proposed by Senge (1990) seems natural. If intuitive wisdom is the “creative advance toward reality”, suggested by Assagioli's work (1965, p. 223). reason's capacity to interpret, validate and implement intuitive insight seems organic. Capra (1975) calls for the two sources of knowledge to be joined in our society. He argues the west needs the intuitive knowledge of the eastern mystics to coexist in a dynamic interplay with western science. Associated with eastern knowing is a certain way of living - cultural, philosophical and spiritual - that the west sorely needs in order to moderate the impact of scientific empiricism. They both offer important and valid world views: “men and woman need both” (p.339).

Intuition is an important vehicle in interpersonal relationships. The capacity to apprehend intuitively, the whole of a person’s aspect, is extremely powerful. It may be a part of what Covey (1989) anticipated in his empathic listening. Comprehending more than just a person’s words – knowing by intuition their feelings, emotional state and context – is the basis for creative and fruitful interaction and inter-dependence.

Intuitive insight, however, can be threatening to the overly rationally oriented. If indeed, intuition is not suppressed by a doubting conscious, intuitive insight can present unsettling insight and troubling dilemmas. A degree of emotional maturity and discrimination is necessary to mediate successfully intuition and reason and to distinguish between true and false intuitions. (Assagioli, 1965).
Contemplation has a role in opening access to intuitive knowledge and in mediating its ‘marriage’ with reason. To the extent that contemplative practices contribute inner awareness and sensitivity to an individual’s rational and non-rational landscapes (and prepare a welcoming attitude), contemplation will facilitate intuitive processing. It is perhaps most useful in preparing the mind in the practice of silence – “quieting all the inner activities, thoughts and feelings, images... that may be screening our the spontaneous flow of intuition” (Ferrucci, 1982, p. 225).

6. Managing polarity and paradox

The practitioners find their contemplative practices useful for managing the tensions of polarity or paradox in their lives. Polarities foremost in the minds of the practitioners are “being and doing”, “letting go” while still being engaged, using reason and intuition, and maintaining vision while holding to reality. For them, contemplation is useful for “stepping back” to a perspective place from where they are able to simultaneously see and hold both ends of a relationship of opposites. The capacity to manage polarity – accepting or ‘holding’ both poles of an opposite, without denying or seeking to change either pole – is a skill of personal mastery for the practitioners.

At least three relationships of opposites are found amongst Senge (1990) and Covey’s (1989) attributes of personal mastery: the use of the conscious and the subconscious, the marriage of reason and intuition and the polarity of current reality and personal vision. Senge (1990) believes that in the gap between two poles in an opposite relationship exists creative tension: “The principle of creative tension is the central principle of personal mastery, integrating all elements of the discipline” (Senge, 1990, p. 151). The energy of creative or “structural” tension is the power of creativity according to Fritz (1984). “One of the great secrets in the art of creating is mastering the force of structural tension. If you attempt to resolve the tension you have established prematurely, you weaken your ability to create the result you want” (p. 240). In other words, the capacity to manage the energy that comes from being in the place between the two poles -- manage creative tension -- is personal mastery.

Johnson (1992) offers a direct perspective on the management of opposites – “polarity management”. To Johnson, a relationship of opposites is not always a
problem to be solved”, but often a “polarity to be managed” (p. 81). If a problem or difficulty is ongoing, (i.e. it can never be solved finally and retired as a concern) and it involves two opposites that exist in an interdependent “both/and” relationship, then a polarity exits. Success flows from successfully distinguishing a polarity from a problem to solve, and then seeing, accepting and reveling in one’s ongoing relationship with its management.

Ferrucci (1982), in developing a rationale for a psychosynthesis technique for the “synthesis of opposites” has a slightly different view. Ferrucci (1982) suggests that a synthesis of opposites is both feasible and desirable and proposes a guided imagery exercise to that effect. Synthesis results in the release of psychological energy and “the appearance of a new quality that includes both opposites and the realization that neither one of the original poles is truly lost” (p. 207).

Senge (1990) and Covey (1989) recognize the importance of embracing polarity in personal mastery. The foregoing strategies of Johnson (1992) and Ferrucci (1982) are also useful tools for managing relationships of opposites. Moreover, the practitioners believe their practice helps them “see” and “hold” both poles of a polarity: the question remains, how?

From a transpersonal perspective, Wilber (1977) looks at the eastern traditions and, in particular, the second century Buddhist teachings of philosopher Nagarjuna. Out of this tradition flows the belief that ‘all is one’, and that paradox, oppositeness, or polarities are simply an illusion created by the dualistic nature of mind.

... language is dualistic or relational. [and thus] any affirmation or denial whatsoever can have meaning only in relation to its own opposite. Every statement, every definition, sets up a boundary or limit: it classifies something, and that it can always be shown that what is inside the boundary must coexist with what is outside. Even the idea of the boundless is meaningless without the contrast of the bounded... (T.R.V. Murti cited in Wilber. 1977. p. 66)

To make sense of the world, Wilber (1979) asserts that our minds create boundaries, which we subsequently mistake as real. It is the boundaries themselves that create the illusion or seeming existence of opposites out of what is really a whole or in ‘unity’. Paradoxically, by dividing that which is whole in the process of seeking
to understand. we separate and alienate ourselves further from that which we seek to be closer to.

Wilber (1979) notes that, through contemplation, the so called “mystical traditions the world over”, practitioners are “freed in this life from the fundamentally non-sensical problems and conflicts involved in the war of opposites... the point is to unify and harmonize the opposites... by discovering the ground which transcends and encompasses them both. And that ground... is unity consciousness itself” (p. 26).

Contemplation, by transcending the mind, yields a perspective that sees the world (again) in unities. Though most of our lives are lived from our minds, not from a place of transcendent consciousness, proximity to the felt sense of unity from contemplation relieves some of the intrinsic anxiety associated with ‘staying in’ and drawing energy and creativity from polarities. Relief from this anxiety, and the ability to revel in the concomitant acceptance of this incontrovertible fact of life, is perhaps the single greatest contribution of contemplation to living with paradox.

E. Contemplation and personal mastery in the new workplace context

Until recently, science had promised the western world that one absolute ‘reality’ existed, and that it was only a matter of time and empirical research before all would be known. This is the empirical or rational worldview. Ironically, one child of modern science, quantum physics, is finding this is not true. Modern science is finding what has been surmised intuitively for some time: ‘Reality’ exists in relationship to its observer: it is relative to the observer’s context. Today we perceive how, if a tree falls in the forest and no one is nearby to hear, it may well be silent. As Wheatley (1992) observed “if quantum matter develops a relationship with the observer, and changes to meet his or her expectations. then how can there be scientific objectivity?” (p. 35).

Such a contextual nature of ‘reality’ is irreconcilable within an empirical framework, which assumes there is only one ‘reality’, and that one ‘reality’ is the objective reality. Today, as this monological, scientific view of the world loosens its grip on our thinking, our workplace is learning to embrace both the subjective, personal reality of the individual along with the objective persona of the professional. In the concept of personal mastery, two worldviews are finally converging: spirit and
business, soul and the workplace; feeling and thinking, intuition and intellect; affect and effect; and, inner and outer, sacred and material.

In this part, we explore the place of personal mastery in a multi-dimensional reality.

1. One "kosmos", multiple concurrent realities

The multi-contextual nature of reality is the premise behind Wilber's (1997) four quadrant model of the "Kosmos". "Kosmos" is defined to mean "the patterned nature or process of all domains of existence, from matter to mind to God, and not merely the physical universe" (p. 19). Within the Kosmos, Wilber suggests "meaning making", or knowing reality, requires us to consider the world simultaneously in the perspective of four distinct quadrants. Wilber's model is constructed from the intersection of two continua: the continuum of the individual/collective (above and below the horizontal) and the continuum of the interior/exterior (either side of the vertical). (See Figure 2.) Wilber proposes that within each quadrant created by the intersection of these two continua, a unique, but concurrently valid, reality exists.
The type of 'reality found in the upper right quadrant ('UR') of the exterior-individual is "propositional truth" (Wilber, 1997, p. 13). In this window, reality is empirical, objective fact. In terms of personal mastery, this is an individual's observable presence, his or her apparent physical health, and demonstrable skill in presentation, communication, or analysis for example. We are accustomed in the workplace to this primary reality of the individual. We often recognize the objective aspect as the 'professional': skilled, competent, fearless, but remote. This is the 'reality' where skills of personal mastery are partly manifest, but it is not the reality where personal mastery resides.
The upper left quadrant ("UL") of Wilber's (1997) model is the interior-individual. It is a person's subjective reality. This is the 'reality' of contemplative practice. Inner peace, unity, letting go, being present, body awareness, insight, and God and spirit, all have 'reality' only here. In contemplation, a person's self-awareness of thoughts, feelings and desires are invisible to others. Yet, this is the source and essence of personal mastery. This is the 'reality' the workplace needs to recognize and nurture because it is the source of strength that lies beneath personal mastery.

The two lower quadrants of Wilber's (1997) model deal with the collective, where individuals interact with other individuals in community, in this case, in the workplace. The reality of the lower right quadrant ("LR") is the reality of the "...objective intermeshing of individual parts, so that the empirical whole --'the total system' -- is the primary reality (p. 16)". Wilber labels this quadrant of the collective/objective "functional fit". In personal mastery, the truths of "functional fit" are the observable patterns of the individual in their interaction with others in the workplace. In systems theory, or in the study of group dynamics, for example, we are familiar with the interplay of the individual and the collective in the objective realm.

Wilber (1997) calls the reality of the interior/collective, the lower left quadrant ("LL"), "justness". The lower left approaches attempt "...to understand how individuals fit together in acts of mutual understanding. In other words, in order to function in a collective, an individual must "...inhabit, not just the same empirical and physical space, but also the same intersubjective space of mutual recognition" (p. 17). In the workplace, the power of personal mastery is found in the capacity to be in relationship with others. In part, self-knowledge and compassion engendered by contemplation contributes to being able to communicate and work effectively with others. A cornerstone of personal mastery for both Senge (1990) and Covey (1989), is compassion and commitment to others. From this connection flows Covey's synergy, "Win/Win or no deal" and Senge's "Learning Organization", the natural home for personal mastery.

In this multi-faceted 'reality', it is possible to understand why personal mastery holds such potency for organizations. Personal mastery in the workplace is,
at once, a blend of all of four realities. When the strength of an externally and
internally integrated individual meets with the same strength of others in the
collective of the workplace, an explosion in synergistic creativity results. This is the
source of excitement in the "learning organization". Embracing the whole individual
in the workplace is a start to creating the super organizations dreamed of for the
future. We see now why contemplation and spirit has a place alongside other skills in
the workplace.

2. Personal Mastery in the workplace: Are we up to it?

From adult maturation or development theory, it is clear that not all adults in
the workplace will be in same developmental stage and, therefore, have the same
capacity for personal mastery. A typical organization employs a cross section of
adult age groups, and each person progresses through the stages at a unique rate.
What if the majority of adults in the workplace lack the very adult developmental
capability to achieve personal mastery? Is personal mastery just an ideal that only a
minority can be expected to achieve, and even then, only late in life?

We have seen that mastery is associated with two very specific adult
developmental levels. "Near mastery" is associated with stage 4 of the developmental
models of Kohlberg (1977), Kegan (1982) and Fowler (1981). "Mastery" is
associated with the stage 5 developmental levels of the same models.

Based on longitudinal studies, Kohlberg (1977) estimates that less than 20% of
the population ever advance to the post-conventional stages of 5 and beyond.
Furthermore, those that do advance to the post conventional stages, do so only later in
life. Kegan (1994) found even stage 4 adults are in the minority. "At any given
moment, one-half to two thirds of the adult population appear not to have fully
reached the fourth order of consciousness" (p. 191). Perhaps in some professional
workplace settings there is found a slightly higher proportion of stage 4 adults. This
appears to be confirmed by a study which found 48% of a sample of university
graduate students to be at stage 4 or higher. As to the ratio of stage 5 to stage 4
adults, in an aggregate sample of 282 adults, not one adult was found to be fully
within stage 5. Only 6% (n=17) adults were between stages 4 and 5 (Bar-Yam cited in
It is tempting to conclude that the majority of people in the workplace are not going to be developmentally ‘up to’ the challenge of personal mastery. If personal mastery is to be achieved within this overall adult developmental profile, it would seem to fall to the “stage four” adults that make up perhaps one half of the work place population. And this level we have characterized as only being “early-mastery”

Earlier, we considered Drath’s (1990) thoughts about how masterful a stage 4 “institutional stage” manager might be in the workplace. Below, Drath (1990) speculates what form of organizations might be created by a stage 5, “interindividual” manager.

[Such an organization might feature] shared and open discourse on mission and goals, personal openness and interpersonal disclosure far beyond what is currently assumed to be required in working relationships, and a shared and collaboratively derived understanding of the socio-historical context of the organization that would lead to informed decision making. The leader’s function would then be to maintain and enhance the processes of the collaborative community that makes the meaning of the organization. Tough decisions would still have to be made, but the equations of analysis would more effectively include the emotional as well as the rational, and the preservation of the meaningfulness of the organization as a whole would be a leading analytical factor. (p. 496)

The similarity in structure and purpose of this imaginary organization with Senge’s (1990) learning organization is compelling. Drath (1990) concludes, though many organizations are trying hard to make this happen. “...we are not there yet. A great deal of personal and organizational evolution and development must still occur.” (p. 498). Kegan (1994) too. concludes we are “in over our heads”. In considering Chris Argyris’ candid reports that even his best students, the highly advantaged, graduate-educated organizationally high ranking adults, have a great deal of difficulty mastering his organizational theories. Kegan muses:

But this should come as no surprise. because what he and the other postmodern conflict resolutionists are asking people to do is organize experiences at a level of complexity beyond the fourth order of consciousness, something few people are yet able to do. (P. 321).

Given the population research data for the adult development models of Kohlberg (1977) and Kegan (1982, 1994), the prognosis for the average mature adult achieving personal mastery is not favourable. Both theories of development place the
developmental capacities of personal mastery outside the grasp of the majority adults. Drath (1990) finds the stage 4 institutional manager competent within the context of the “accountability hierarchy”, but sees an organization akin the learning organization, wherein personal mastery is nurtured and flourishes, only possible under an imaginary stage 5, interindividual manger.

Is personal mastery an ideal beyond the grasp of most of us? Perhaps it is. Adult developmental theory suggests that the mental demands for fifth order tasks exceed the grasp of most adults over most of their lives. Nevertheless, in the spirit of living in the dynamic tension between a personal vision and a starker reality that brackets us all, it seems entirely consistent that we should aspire to the virtues of personal mastery. Living in this tension brings its own rewards. Senge (1990), Covey (1989) and the personal/transpersonal adult developmentalists would suggest this is so. “The journey is the reward” (Senge, 1990).

A hundred years ago, a human being could expect to live only 30 years as an adult (ages 20 to 50). This is about half of the 60 years that an adult can expect to live today (ages 20 to 80). This has profound implications for our world and our workplace. If movement beyond stage 4 development rarely occurs before an adult’s forties, perhaps our increasing longevity will see a significant proportion of our society achieve some personal mastery over a life time. Added to this is the combined effect of vastly improved health, global access to information, vastly higher levels of education and opportunity for life long learning. Imagine the character of the workplace and society where nearly half the population functioned at a conventional level. If even a minority were truly compassionate, if they drew on intuition as we draw on reason, and if they operated from beyond the duality of paradox in transcendental consciousness, imagine how differently we would shape our world and organizations.
Chapter VI: Conclusions:

A. Study summary

This study explores the relationship between personal mastery, contemplation, adult development and the workplace.

As a starting point for this exploration, eleven contemplative practitioners were interviewed to record their subjective experience as to the nature of personal mastery. Each participant was asked, “In your experience, what is the effect of contemplation, meditation or prayer in developing ‘Personal Mastery’?” The meaning of personal mastery presented to each participant was taken from Senge’s (1990, p. 141) workplace definition: “Personal Mastery is the discipline of personal growth and learning wherein a person continually expands their ability or capacity to create the results in life they truly seek.”

In over 250 pages of typed transcripts, the practitioners shared their experiences and views about their contemplative practice and how it contributed to their living their lives in mastery. Flowing from the practitioners’ contemplative experiences, the following specific positive attributes of personal mastery are identified:

- Body awareness and health:
- Managed stress:
- Energy and vitality:
- Use of reason and intuition:
- Mindfulness, presence:
- Visualization, imagination and creativity:
- Tolerance for ambiguity:
- Capacity for duality/paradox:
- Compassion: Self love, self-acceptance and self-response-ability:
- Courage, commitment and surrender.

The attributes of personal mastery identified by the practitioners are considered in the context of two views of personal mastery from the workplace. Senge (1990) and Covey (1989) believe that personal mastery is a life long process
and not an endpoint or ultimate goal; it is based on an attitude of eagerness for continual learning. Basic to personal mastery is the progressive achievement of skills and self-knowledge and the growing capacity for self ‘response-ability’. The capacity for self ‘response-ability’ emerges as an individual matures and moves from a stance of dependence, to independence, and then to interdependence. Self ‘response-ability’ is the basis for Covey’s “habit” of proactivity, and Covey and Senge’s personal vision, personal discipline and commitment to the truth. Covey’s other habits of mastery -- empathic listening and commitment to others in win/win and synergistic relationships -- parallel Senge’s compassion and commitment to others. The integration of intuition and reason and the capacity to manage opposites are central to Senge’s personal mastery. In all, for both Senge and Covey, the attributes of personal mastery fall into two categories: mastery of the self in relation to self, and mastery of self in relation to others.

As to the relationship of contemplation to personal mastery, unlike the practitioners, neither Senge (1990) nor Covey (1989) emphasizes contemplation as a particularly significant means to achieve personal mastery. Senge’s reference to its role is much narrower in scope than the practitioners’ responses would suggest: “Whether it is through contemplative prayer or other methods of simply ‘quieting’ the conscious mind, regular meditative practice can be extremely helpful in working more productively with the subconscious mind” (1990, p. 164). Similarly, Covey’s says little more of his practice of daily prayerful meditation other than to say it is done to “feel renewed, strengthened, centered and recommitted to serve” (p.92).

The study looks next to the research and literature on adult development psychology (or adult lifespan psychology) and transpersonal psychology to further explore the nature of personal mastery and the role contemplation has in its onset. The research and literature on adult development and transpersonal psychology provides some surprising insights. The most significant and striking discovery is that the attributes of personal mastery as defined by both the practitioners and Senge and Covey emerge in the later stages of adult development. It might even be said that the attributes of personal mastery are amongst the defining characteristics of the 5th stage

Implicit in the developmental literature is agreement that adult development is a life long journey of learning and change. In a process paralleling Covey’s (1989) maturity continuum, adult development theory suggests that adults pass through a sequence of progressive stages of development. A distinguishing characteristic of advance through each stage is the progressive internalization of the self and the increasing differentiation of self from others. Over the stages, an individual progresses from an orientation of dependence to independence, then interdependence. The other attributes of personal mastery build on this foundation.

From the attributes of personal mastery defined by the practitioners and by Senge and Covey, four key defining attributes of personal mastery -- interdependence, compassion, intuition, and dialectical sensing or “paradox” -- are identified for use as “markers” or identifiers of personal mastery. The lifespan and transpersonal developmental theories are evaluated to assess with which stage the key attributes or markers are most clearly associated.

As noted, the key attributes of personal mastery are prominent, if not the definitive, developmental characteristics of one particular stage of adult development. This is stage 5 of the adult developmentalists, Kohlberg (1977), Kegan (1982, 1994) and Fowler (1981). The attributes are also found in Maslow’s (1977) stage of “self actualization”, Wilber’s (1996) “centauric” or “stage of vision-logic” and Aurobindo’s (Aurobindo cited in Wilber, 1986), “higher mind”. We also see the prerequisite developmental characteristics that precede personal mastery emerge in stage 4 of the adult developmentalists’ theories.

What then, is the relationship of contemplation to adult development and personal mastery? Contemplative literature and transpersonal psychology provides this study with some further insight on this question. It demonstrates the significance of the fact that the attributes of mastery are found at the stage where lifespan psychological theory ‘tops out’ and where the transcendent in transpersonal psychology begins -- at the cusp of the personal and the transpersonal. Contemplative literature and transpersonal theory postulate that contemplative practices, and
Meditation in particular, play an important role in an individual's integration, in general, and in the transition between stages of development, in particular. In general, contemplative practices increase sensory awareness, reduce stress and anxiety, improve health and energy, alter body image and ego boundaries and improve perception of internal and external events. All of these promote efficacious living and hasten overall learning and development.

Meditation also plays a particular and significant role in the transitions of adult development, according to the contemplative and transpersonal theorists. Especially around the stage of development this study has associated with personal mastery (stage 5 of traditional adult development theory and the early stages of transpersonal development), the 'self' grows in awareness of a higher or transcendental consciousness through meditation. This higher or transcendental consciousness is usually associated with the ineffable universal states -- God, spirit, Brahman, etc. -- that are the object of religious and spiritual traditions. Regardless of one's spiritual orientation, meditation is believed to facilitate and heighten the awareness of the transcendental presence. As awareness grows, the self becomes increasingly associated or oriented to the higher transcendental consciousness and concurrently reduced in its orientation to the lower cognitively mediated state of consciousness. The cycle is complete when the self is fully located or associated with the higher, transcendental consciousness.

With the attributes of personal mastery clearly located in traditional and transpersonal developmental theory, the study moves, finally, to define personal mastery. The attributes of personal mastery of the practitioners and of Senge and Covey are integrated and amplified using the traditional and transpersonal developmental theory. The composite description or definition of the attributes of personal mastery is presented under the following headings.

- Good health -- managed stress and vitality;
- 'Letting go' -- surrender and courage;
- Compassion -- Self knowledge, acceptance, and self love;
- Mindfulness and self 'response-ability';
- Imagination and visualization;
Integration of reason and intuition; Management of polarity and paradox.

The study concludes with a discussion of the implications of personal mastery and contemplation for the workplace. To embrace personal mastery in the workplace a fundamental shift in approach and structure is required. The strength in personal mastery resides in the ‘personal’, not professional’ aspect. Personal mastery gains its greatest strength in community with others. Wilber’s (1997) four-quadrant model is used as a framework for this discussion.

Finally, a look at research into the occurrence and frequency of different stages of adult development in society and the workplace is considered to assess the probability of adults achieving personal mastery over a lifetime. It is concluded that individuals who achieve full mastery are rare.

B. Major findings and Implications

1. Personal mastery is adult development

This study has found the attributes of personal mastery to be the defining characteristics of the later stages of adult development and the early stages of transpersonal growth. This study concludes that personal mastery is a natural, and perhaps inevitable, consequence of the higher stages of adult development or growth. It also finds that not many people achieve full personal mastery over their lifetime.

There are a number of important implications that flow from these conclusions. Personal mastery is a personal developmental process, not a “professional” one. Yet the topic of personal mastery is strongly associated with a “professional” or non-personal workplace context. This implies what has been unacknowledged in the workplace for some time, that the basis for professional excellence is personal excellence or personal mastery. This is not to suggest the workplace has responsibility for personal development, on the contrary, personal mastery would suggest the individual is ‘response-able’ for his or her own growth. It does mean, however, that we are hampered by the proclivity to accept and expect differences between an individual’s ‘personal’ and ‘professional’ modes of
behaviour. Authenticity – the integration of ‘personal’ and ‘professional’ -- is a behavioural hallmark of personal mastery.

If personal mastery is adult development, personal mastery takes a long time to develop! Our expectations and training approaches need to reflect this fact. Development of personal mastery – adult growth – requires a sustained, integrated, and comprehensive personal commitment to learning. It is no coincidence that Senge (1990) depicts a “learning organization” and a process of personal mastery as a life long process.

Finally, according to the lifespan research, not many individuals achieve the personal mastery of the later stages of development, even late in life. Fully formed personal mastery may be an ideal beyond almost everyone. This sobering conclusion, however, overlooks the importance and intrinsic value of ongoing development and personal growth.

2. Contemplation facilitates adult development

The study finds contemplation to facilitate growth at all developmental levels, but particularly at the transcendental level, where the principle attributes of personal mastery emerge. Contemplative forms, particularly forms of prayer and meditation that contribute to altered states of consciousness, can be used to live more richly day to day while at the same time accelerating the maturing and growth process. The study participants believe that, short of achieving the full personal mastery, their contemplative practice is nevertheless important to living meaningfully during all stages of growth.

This conclusion applies equally for the workplace. For example, the practitioners were emphatic about the positive effect meditation had on workplace relationships. Mindfulness and ‘presence’ with others paid very significant dividends in communication skill and therefore, workplace effectiveness.

C. Limitations of findings and further study

The findings of this study bring the subjective personal experiences of eleven contemplative practitioners together with theory and research in the fields of contemplation, workplace personal mastery and traditional and transpersonal
developmental psychology. In the spirit of qualitative research, the study has been explorative in its approach and findings. The views of the study participants are anecdotal and the literature sampled is necessarily selective and limited. The study links the theories of traditional and transpersonal research to contemplation and personal mastery in a unique and unusual way. It makes some important, but speculative conclusions about the relation of contemplation to personal mastery and adult development. However, its strengths are also its weakness: what it offers in breadth, it lacks in depth.

A limited sample of eleven participants is insufficient to extend conclusions about the relationship of contemplation to personal mastery outside of the study group. The study’s conclusion about the relationship of contemplation in facilitating adult development is prima fascia and untested empirically. More research into the nature of contemplative experience in transcendental consciousness would deepen the study’s conclusions about its affect on development and personal mastery.

Foremost amongst future research suggested by this study’s findings is empirical longitudinal testing of the affects of contemplation on the different streams of adult development – moral, cognitive, spiritual and others. Tests of affective and cognitive development are well formulated. For example, the standardized tests of ego development, moral reasoning, altruism, defense mechanisms etc. could be applied longitudinally to contemplatives and control groups and their progress recorded and analyzed. Alternatively, contemplatives with different states of meditative competence could be tested for their developmental stages.

**D. Contemplation and personal mastery – a personal view**

Just moments ago, I was sitting in meditation, torn between my enthusiasm for being ‘lost’ to the composition of these words, and being present to my own meditative process of observing my own thoughts, including these thoughts, from my place of ‘witness’. I am aware that it is still only 6:40 am. I have been up since I gave up the struggle to sleep and got up to write at 4:00 am (due to “thesis head”). Since then, I have been wrestling with my thoughts, trying to get them into some sort of order so that I might write my “conclusions”. In the end, I had to stop a moment to rest my numb brain in meditation.
I have included the foregoing notes of my day’s early start to illustrate an important aspect of living and personal mastery that has gone unacknowledged thus far in this study: personal mastery, like most worthwhile things in life, is ‘messy’. The path to meaning and efficacious living is winding, broken and twisted. Personal mastery is illusive and transitory. Like a riverside trail, it veers tantalizing close to the cool waters of insight, wisdom and hope, and then swings back off into the juggle we call ‘life’ where the hazards and challenges preoccupy us fully with survival. It is also a path without any terminus. We must find our meaning along the way. In our boundless enthusiasm for life and our hope to inspire, we often forget to acknowledge these difficult moments. The workplace literature on personal mastery is particularly guilty of this.

When I first read Peter Senge’s words on personal mastery, I was both mildly encouraged and annoyed. I was encouraged because meditation has been a part of my life every day virtually since I was 17 years old. I have come to regard it as the single greatest contributor to living a rich and, what I regard as, a meaningful and fulfilling life. I was disappointed, however, because Senge made it sound easy, on the one hand, and on the other, his words seemed not to fully appreciate the value of meditation to personal mastery. I found his discussion on the topic lacked depth and substance, falling far short of what I felt the topic deserved. Stephen Covey’s treatment of meditation was also cursory. Here was an opportunity to advance my own knowledge about the topic and to make a small contribution toward the understanding and acceptance of the potential of meditation. And for that, I have Senge to thank.

And learn I have. In meeting and interviewing ten other contemplative practitioners, I was surprised and humbled by the depth and breadth of contemplative practice amongst them. I was even more impressed by how congruent their practices were, despite their broadly divergent backgrounds. For example, the motivation for, outcome of, prayer was so close to that of the meditation, that they appear to be essentially the same process. Analyzing the interview transcripts and writing the “grounded substantive theory” challenged me further to look beneath the surface to find deeper common meanings. My reading, integrating and writing about the three
distinct fields of knowledge surrounding the topic has enriched my knowledge and altered my own contemplative practice.

From this short journey, therefore, four ‘views’ stand out from amongst the sights along the way. The first is that I have emphatically confirmed my opening belief of personal mastery as the outcome of the most advanced stages or phases of adult development. Growth, maturity, learning and experience – by living life intensely and attentively – is the requisite training for personal mastery. As Senge (1990) suggests; personal mastery requires a life long attitude of commitment to learning and change, but this process is only a small fraction of the substance of personal mastery. The attributes of personal mastery are very specific developmental capacities that must be learned and acquired. I do not believe, for example, that we are born with the capacity for intuitive insight. Intuitive insight is not pre-rational understanding that we are regaining, it is trans-rational sensing that we must nurture. Likewise, the capacity to see and live in paradox and polarity is more than a rational skill. It requires experience with, not just knowledge the of, transcendental realm. The capacity for intuition and dialectical cognition are the skills of a mature adult who has journeyed deep within to see beyond and to see without. I think another word for personal mastery is “wisdom”. It had some value before the culture of “youth” took us over. There are reasons most people are not thought of as wise (nor are they foolish, they are simply growing). The developmental capacities of personal mastery are hard won over a lifetime of challenging, but richly satisfying, learning. In this, Senge’s work seems optimistic and perhaps naïve.

Secondly, personal mastery, like life long learning and development, is integrative. Amongst the practitioners, the commitment to integrated health in body, mind and spirit is ubiquitous and persuasive. Stephen Covey recognized this clearly in his seventh habit “sharpen the saw”. Physical health is our necessary platform to stand upon minute to minute, day to day. Further, knowing, loving and being connected with our bodies – ‘being’ in our bodies, not our heads -- is essential to mastery.

If our bodies need health, our minds need compassionate discipline. We need to be more than just aware of our mental landscape. For personal mastery, we need to
be skillful in its use and practiced in its discipline. We benefit from knowing how to relax and rest our minds, it helps us to restore our bodies and it re-centers us in ourselves. As we learn this, we learn how to use our minds as our main vehicle to spirit. Over a lifetime, we grow through our orientation ‘in’ body, to orientation ‘in’ mind, and finally to orientation ‘in’ spirit. To make this passage we need to learn about, and care for, all three.

Thirdly, focused contemplation, through prayer and meditation, assists in achieving personal mastery by facilitating the growth process. This is the main theme of this study and needs no further amplification. However, a related topic is the urgency of de-mystifying the meditational process to make it more acceptable and accessible. In the minds of the broader community, meditation needs to be uncoupled from religion and spirituality. Though I believe the growth process, with or without contemplation, leads to a spiritual awakening, contemplation by itself is not inherently spiritual. As described elsewhere, short of the spiritual domain, prayer and meditation have significant and immediate positive physical and mental effects that are most helpful in ‘just getting through the day’. As a portable and quick avenue to deep rest, lower anxiety, a clearer mind, a more peaceful continence -- all the while speeding growth and maturity-- meditation would sell well if it were marketed it in a bottle.

Finally, a fundamental change in approach needs to occur in the workplace if personal mastery is to be embraced. In Senge’s (1990) words, we need “metanoia”, a shift of mind, in the nature of our attitudes and approach to the relationship between the individual and the workplace organization. Our western culture is a culture built on power, not strength, and our workplace structures reflect this bias. Our relationships with others and our organizations are based on a will for order, certainty and security through control. Our culture contracts on the bases of reciprocity, not personal mastery and unexpressed potential. We too often view humanity with pessimism: we are “sinful”, even evil in essence. In this context, collectively, we fear disorder, change is an anathema, and loss of control is more feared than failure. Our fear and insecurity make us rigid and resistant to learning and growth.
Control over our world is an essential and natural part of our early sojourns in learning and growth, but as a culture we have become anchored here. Personal mastery would have us move as a workplace culture beyond relationships based on power established through fear and controlling structures. Personal mastery lies beyond this place on the learning and growing journey. For success, the workplace needs to be oriented to liberate the strengths of the individual as characterized by McKeen and Wong (1998). In an orientation to strength, individuals seek mastery, not achievement. They seek to individuate, not to individualize; to be authentic, not to be in role; to be self 'response-able', not a victim; to learn to live in the 'both/and', not the 'either/or', and to act from choice, not from 'shoulds' and injunctions.

From my work on this study, I am utterly convinced that a transcendent awakening is a natural and inevitable consequence of adult growth and development. Flowing from transcendent awakening are the attributes of personal mastery necessary to re-make our world, and our workplace organizations. Though personal mastery appears to come later in life, if at all for most of us, we are living longer and better-educated lives in contemporary society, than any civilization before. In western society, we are seeing a new openness to explore and experiment with contemplative practices in all its forms. Perhaps this is a reflection of a growing aggregate maturity and the genesis of the new paradigm believers' optimism for the future.

As a basis for discussion with the practitioners, this study started with Peter Senge's definition of personal mastery:

Personal mastery is the phrase my colleagues and I use for the discipline of personal growth and learning. People with high levels of personal mastery are continually expanding their ability to create the results in life they truly seek. (1990, p. 141)

The practitioners agreed, and lifespan adult developmental theory and transpersonal psychology concur, that personal mastery involves a life long process of development. If the capacities of personal mastery are to be summarized in just a few words, those words would likely be: interdependence, intuition, paradox and compassion. Out of a lifetime of learning, flow the attributes or manifest capacities we have associated with personal mastery. From this, we can conclude that personal mastery is both a process and an outcome. However, the practitioners also believe
that personal mastery is an approach, an attitude toward living to which Senge’s
definition seems insensitive. The practitioners were uncomfortable with the tone of
Senge’s words, “create the results in life they truly seek”. To the practitioners.
“results” might be taken to mean only material outcome and “truly seeking” suggests
ambition and accomplishment over existence and ‘presence’.

In this discussion lies one of the great paradoxes of personal mastery. I believe
personal mastery is, to borrow Johnson’s (1990) term, “both/and” of the above.
Personal mastery is both/and of material gain and spiritual growth, it is both/and of
seeking and surrender: it is both/and of achievement and ‘presence’: it is both/and of
doing and being. Personal mastery, as an approach to living, might therefore be, to
live in the ‘both/and’. We have a sense, more than a cognition, that this requires us to
be mature, to be ‘grown up’ in our approach to life.

On this theme, therefore, the final word on the nature of personal mastery is
left to one of the practitioners.

I often say ... people have to learn to grow up. I think most of us do not do a
very good job of growing up.... To me that is a kind of mastery. Non
mastery is a childish, irresponsible, immature, and unwilling way of being in
the world, where mastery is a sense of being fully in one’s self and in life.
And not mastering life in the sense of controlling or knowing everything or
being fully in charge or anything like that, just being willing to be present and
to be willing to be available and open in the face of life or in concert with
life... I think it’s impossible to be in mastery if one is not responsible. the
more fully responsible one is the more mastery one has. Responsibility is the
recognition of my involvement in life.
References


Leonard, George & Murphy, Michael (1995). The life we are given: A long term program for realizing the potential of body, mind and soul. NY: G. P. Putman and Sons.


Appendix One: Interview Questions

Preliminaries:
How would you like me to refer to your spiritual practice - contemplation?, meditation? prayer?

Do you have any questions or comments on the preliminary Interview information?

In your experience, what is the effect of contemplation, meditation or prayer in developing 'Personal Mastery'?

Practice:
Practice Form - Would you take me on a tour of a typical week of your spiritual practice. - Perhaps you would describe it to me as a picture. Where do you practice? How many times a week or day does your practice occupy you? How long does it last? Maybe you have a special place or things that you do or have or wear to prepare your mood, do you have a particular posture or place. What routines or rituals do you incorporate? When you are in your practice, what thoughts are central in your mind? What thoughts are hovering around the edges?

Body:
I am interested to know if your practice affects you physically. Does it? If so, would you describe how your spiritual practice relates to your body, your health, your self image? Does it affect how you think about or treat your body? Does it play a role in your daily physical routines? Does it affect your capacity to get through the day? Can you give me some examples?

Mind:
I would like to know if there is a relationship between your practice and your mind. Is there? If so, how does your spiritual practice affect your mind? Does it change your thinking? Does it make it more clear or less clear? Does it affect your imagination? Does it have an affect on your abilities in your professional life? In your personal life? Would you describe why you think your spiritual practice is important to your mind? Can you give me some examples?

Spiritual:
Does your practice affect your spiritual beliefs? A lot? a little? Not at all? Does it make your beliefs stronger, weaker? Has it changed WHAT you believe and why you believe it? Is your practice essential to having your spiritual experiences? Is your practice important to developing or maintaining your spiritual beliefs in some way? Is there a link between your practice, your spiritual beliefs and your personal values? Can you give me some examples?

Before we leave this area, is there any other way you think or feel your practice affects you?
Appendix Two: Pre Interview Information Circular

Interview Background
The role of contemplation, meditation and prayer in personal mastery
This background is provided to inform you about the interview process and to help you to prepare your thoughts for the interview. You are encouraged to include any comments you have on this background information during the interview.

Interview Format:
As this is a qualitative research project, the process of information gathering is inclusive and open ended. Unlike the more traditional quantitative research techniques (where the intent is to prove a beginning theory or study thesis), the objective of qualitative research is to find theory in the information collected. Consequently, the interview format is informal and largely unstructured. You will be encouraged to be expansive on the topic.

The study is seeking the personal views and convictions of those interviewed, not necessarily the theories and concepts (paradigms) that may be associated with your meditative, contemplative or prayer practices. This study, therefore, assumes a subjective, rather than objective, perspective will be shared by the interviewees. There are no right or wrong perspectives.

Because the topic of meditation, contemplation and prayer is personal, you may consider some aspects of the topic under review to be private, "spiritual" and perhaps confidential. If there are aspects of this topic you do not wish to discuss, this will be respected, though the information that there are such areas would be useful in itself.

Interview Recording and Confidentially:
The confidentiality of interviewees will be maintained. No identifying information will be included with the written transcripts/notes of the interview or research results. To more accurately record your views, your permission will be sought to record the interview on audio tape. Once the interview is transcribed, the tape recordings will be erased or returned to you.

Interview Length:
The length of this interview will be determined by the time you wish to take in relating your thoughts on the topic. To keep the amount of information collected within the scope of this study, a one hour maximum length interview is suggested.

Study Topic:
There is one main question to explore in the interview:
In your experience, what is the effect of contemplation, meditation or prayer in developing "Personal Mastery"?
Contemplation, meditation and prayer are personal practices of introspection. As such, their meaning is varied and personalized. Early in the interview, you will be asked to describe your form or practice of meditation, contemplation or prayer.
The meaning of Personal Mastery for this study is:

Personal Mastery (PM) is the discipline of personal growth and learning wherein a person continually expands their ability or capacity to create the results in life they truly seek.

This definition of PM comes from the emerging body of knowledge called, "learning organizations" in the broader field of organizational development. PM is one of the five components of "Learning Organizations" You are encouraged to respond from both a personal and professional perspective.

Thank you: I wish to express my gratitude for your gift of time and experience to this study.